

**THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

VOLUME IV

DON DeWELT

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A WORD TO OUR READERS

It has been more than thirteen years since we published Volume One of *The Power of the Holy Spirit* (1963). Each volume has grown in size. Volume One has 150 pages, Volume Two (1966) has 200 pages, and Volume Three (1971), 250 pages. Volume Four (1976) has more than 400 pages. One day, Lord permitting, we shall offer a study in Volume Four of all the references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. At present we want the present material in Volume Four to get into the hands and hearts of those who have waited so patiently for its publication.

Please notice the rather complete bibliography in each of the volumes. Such extensive publishing on the subject of the Holy Spirit should give some indication of His importance to many people.

In the preparation of Volume Four, we have made ourselves acquainted with several books on each verse we have considered on the Holy Spirit. We want our readers to know of the splendid resources available. We quote from a rather large number of authors. Buy these books and read them. You need not agree with everything you read in a book, but read it. Our estimate of the worth of such books many times accompanies our quotations from them.

Because our approach to this subject has been much more personal than that found in some of our other writing we have paused often for a long time before expressing a conviction on the truth being considered. I do indeed want always to be “the first to partake of the fruit.”

Yours in Him,

Don DeWelt

September, 1976

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We are glad to acknowledge our indebtedness to Ira J. Martin and his book *Glossolalia – A Bibliography*, published by Bethany Press, Cleveland, Tennessee, 1970. We recommend that our readers purchase this important book.

We do not by any means endorse all the books here listed. We do believe we should know what is available by various authors.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I CORINTHIANS

THERE ARE 32 REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I CORINTHIANS.

1. “And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” I Corinthians 2:4,5.

A. What Does It Say? The paraphrase of James MacKnight will be of real help in answering this question. He says:

“And my conversation in private, and my preaching in public, were not with persuasive language which human wisdom dictates as most effectual for moving the passions, but I established my mission by the gifts of the Spirit imparted to you, and by miracles wrought in your presence. That your belief of the gospel might not stand in philosophical arguments eloquently expressed, but in the power of God: in the miracles which God enabled me to perform, for proving the gospel.”

It is easy to catch the meaning of the phrase “demonstration of the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is not only the author of the message Paul preached but is also ‘the authenticator. A claim to a miraculous source for one’s message becomes far easier to accept when such a claim is accompanied with a miracle.

B. What Does It Mean? The “demonstration of the Spirit and power” as here used is almost totally used of signs or confirming evidence. The demonstration refers to God’s approval or acceptance of Paul’s teaching and preaching and demonstrating His approval in a visible dramatic manner. He demonstrated His acceptance by miracles of healing or judgment. Just what these miracles were are best understood by reading the record of Paul’s work in Corinth as found in Acts 19:11 ff.

C. What Does It Mean To Me? To make some reference to our preaching or teaching as being “in demonstration of Spirit and power” as if the impact or response we received from the message was a “demonstration” of the Spirit’s work on the hearts of the hearer, and the “power” of God in operation is a sad secondary, unwarranted use of the meaning of the text. This is a good time and place to say that when once God’s word has been established as true by the confirmation of miracles and both the message and the confirmation have been recorded for all time and all People there is no need for a further demonstration. The message was once called into question as to its source and purpose, but once such source and purpose has been identified as divine and so recorded it is the height of presumption to raise an issue that has already been settled. When a case is brought into court, the records are immediately searched for a case of similar nature. If the case is the same, the evidence and decision from the previous case or cases is accepted and the previous decision is followed. The record of evidence and verdict stands!

D. How Can I Share It? It is wonderful to know that our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. We can tell the world that if God has thus accepted the good news that “Christ died for our sins, who are we to reject it?

2.9. “But unto us God revealed them 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. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot know them, because they are

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spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judged all things, and he himself is judged of no man. For who bath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” I Corinthians 2:10-16.

2.9. There are five specific or direct references to the Holy Spirit, and at least three indirect references to Him in this one passage. We shall consider them together.

A. *What Does It Say?*

We shall list the activities associated or attributed to the Spirit:

- (1) The Spirit revealed the will of God by or through the words of God to the apostles.
- (2) The Holy Spirit is the one to share a knowledge of the mind of God and give such deep information to the apostles and prophets.
- (3) He was given to enable Paul and the other inspired spokesmen to teach and preach His thoughts with His words.
- (4) The uninspired man does not receive such revelations or information for such is reserved for those whom God has chosen to receive them.
- (5) He becomes “the mind of Christ” in the apostles and prophets.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

An understanding of the whole second chapter of I Corinthians is necessary to understand these verses. Because of this fact we want to use the words of T. R. Applebury in his BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK on I Corinthians (pages 35-41).

We.....It is important that we keep in mind the antecedent of this pronoun. In 2:1-5, it is clear that Paul is speaking of his own preaching as an inspired apostle. Beginning in verse 6, he includes all of the apostles in the statement, “We speak wisdom.” He does not say “we” just to avoid the use of the first person singular. Note II Cor. 10:1 where he uses the expression, “I Paul myself.” In the light of the context and the history of Pentecost (Acts 2), this could not possibly refer to all Christians. Only the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on that day. But the people, without miraculous aid, did understand what the Spirit said to them through the apostles. The only illumination they needed to realize that they were sinners of the worst sort was the light that fell on their minds through the inspired message spoken through the apostle. The force of the facts about the life, death and resurrection of Christ led them to cry out, “Brethren, what shall we do?” It required no operation of the Spirit other than the command issued through the apostles to let them understand that they needed to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins.

Paul, of course, had all the power of the other apostles. It was necessary for him to include all of the apostles in this reference to the manner in which God revealed His wisdom.

Keeping this antecedent in mind will help determine who the “natural man” is and who is meant by the expression, “he that is spiritual.” See notes on verses 14-15. wisdom.—Once again, Paul points out the contrast between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God revealed by Christ through the inspired apostles. The rulers of this world who crucified the Lord of glory were not acting upon the instruction of the wisdom of God. But on the Day of Pentecost, the three thousand who had been deceived by them reversed the decision they had made when they cried out for Jesus to be crucified, and they got themselves baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-39).

It is evident that man could have understood what God had revealed in the Old Testament concerning the Christ. God evidently intended that His revealed wisdom should guide the thinking of men, not some supposed inner direction of the Spirit.

God’s wisdom is a mystery—”Mystery in the New Testament refers to that which would have forever remained unknowable if God had not revealed it through the inspired apostles and prophets. But since it has been revealed, we are not to assume that it takes additional illumination or miraculous effort of the Spirit to enable us to understand it. Paul clearly showed the Ephesians that God had made this mystery known through him, and that the Ephesians could know of his understanding when they read

what he had written (Eph. 2:1-4).

A few simple rules will help us when we read the Bible: (1) Scripture must be understood in the light of its context. An important illustration of this is found in I Cor. 2:9. Popular interpretation makes this verse refer to heaven, "things which God prepared for them that loved him." But the context clearly shows that it has to do with the wonderful things revealed for us in the Bible. Scripture is always more helpful when taken in the sense intended by the inspired writers. Context refers to what goes immediately before and what follows immediately after a particular verse. It also suggests the necessity of keeping the text and its immediate context in line with the whole thought or theme of the book. In studying First Corinthians (or any other book of the Bible) it is well to read the whole book frequently, keeping in mind the progress of thought at all times. Help in doing this will be had by reference to the charts that picture the development of the theme of the book. (2) Some other rules that will help are these: Know who is speaking and to whom the message is spoken. Note carefully the purpose of the statement, the meaning of words, the antecedents of pronouns, and all other grammatical and syntactical matters. (3) A very important rule to remember is this: The New Testament interprets the Old Testament; the epistles, which were written within the framework of the history given in Acts, interpret the gospels; literal language explains the figurative; plain teaching explains the symbolic. (See *Camel, A Case for Orthodox Theology*, p. 53; the Westminster Press, Philadelphia.) (4) One who seeks to understand the Bible must determine first what the particular passage says and then what is meant by the statement. After this is done one can make application of the verse to the particular problem at hand. (See Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 5; The MacMillian Company, N. Y., 1941).

know.—None of the rulers of the world has known the wisdom of God. Verse 14 states that the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God. But according to verse 12, the inspired apostles did know the things that were graciously given them from God.

The problem involved in these statements hinges on the meaning of the two Greek words which are here translated by the one word "know." The first of these words, which Paul uses in connection with the inability of the natural man and the rulers of the world to know the wisdom of God, means to become aware of through experience or observation. It may also mean to understand. In the light of the context, which of the meanings best fits this passage? Are we to say that the natural or uninspired man cannot understand the message revealed by the Holy Spirit? Some do take this position. But are we to say that God who created man, an intelligent being capable of communicating his thoughts through language, could not speak to His creature in a manner so as to be understood? What is the purpose of God's revealed wisdom if it cannot be understood? But of course, man by his own experience and observation could never know God's mind. The only way he could know it was by the revelation through the apostles and prophets. See II Pet. 1:17-21; Heb. 1:1-2.

The other word which is translated "know" means to know by mental insight, reflection, or by information being given. The revealed wisdom of God clearly falls into this category. That is why Paul uses this word when he says that the Spirit was given to the apostles that they might know (as a result of information given them by the Holy Spirit) the things that God graciously gave to them.

While it is true that these two words are often used synonymously, it will be enlightening to keep the distinction in mind in studying this chapter. The uninspired man could never have produced the Bible; but an intelligent person can, by using the rules that apply to the understanding and interpretation of all language, understand the Bible.

A good example of the meaning of both of these words is found in John 14:7. Jesus said, "If you had known me, ye would have known my Father," The first word for know means to recognize, to know by experience, the second is the word for know, meaning to know by information given. The distinction does not appear in our English translations, but according to the Greek text, what Jesus said was this: "If you had recognized me, you would have know the Father I am revealing to you." But we received, not the spirit of the world, hut the spirit which is from God. —The spirit of the world is that spirit of the rulers of this age which resulted from ignorance of God's will. It was the spirit that led them to crucify the Lord of glory. But the Spirit which the inspired apostles had received was the Holy Spirit which

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Christ promised to them (Acts 1:8) and which they received when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). That is why Paul says, “we the (inspired apostles) received the Spirit (not spirit) from God in order that we might know (by revelation) the things of God.”

“The spirit which is from God” surely refers to the Holy Spirit. The word should be capitalized when referring to the Holy Spirit. “The Spirit which is from God” is the same as “the Spirit” referred to in verse 10. There the word is capitalized as it should be, we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom, teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.—”We” refers to the inspired apostles, not to Christians in general. The apostles did not speak a message taught by human wisdom. It was divinely revealed through the Holy Spirit. See James 3:15-17 for a similar contrast between the reasoning of man and the wisdom from God.

combining spiritual things with spiritual.—There are many different interpretations of this statement. The American Standard Version supplies “words” in italics since it is not in the Greek in this phrase. It is in the immediate context and may be correctly implied in this phrase also. In the footnote, they suggest this possibility: “interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men.” While there is merit in the reading in the body of the text, there is little merit to the view given by the footnote. Chrysom, who lived in the fourth century, suggests that the spiritual things revealed through the apostles are combined with the spiritual things already revealed through the testimonies, types and demonstrations of the Old Testament. He points out that we are utterly dependent on revelation to understand God’s mysteries. It is easy to see that Paul in this very chapter combines the revelation given by him with that which had been written. See verse 9. Those who hold to the “verbal inspiration” theory will find lit-tie support in the Greek text of this verse. It does, however, clearly support the view of revelation through the inspired apostles.

Now the natural man.—Traditional theology makes it difficult for some to see what Paul is saying here. It is contended that no unsaved man can understand the deep things of the Word of God, and that even dedicated scholars are unable to use the Word successfully without illumination of the mind provided miraculously by the Holy Spirit. (See Wuest, *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament*, p. 149; Moody Press, Chicago) If this is true, how can the believer be saved through the message of the cross which Paul preached? (I Cor. 1:21). While the natural man cannot know the mysteries of God’s wisdom by his own reasoning, he can understand the word revealed by the inspired apostles. It would be foolishness indeed if none but the inspired could understand the message after it had been revealed. If it takes miraculous illumination on the part of man to understand the Bible, then the Bible itself is superfluous.

The word translated “natural man” refers to man as an earthly being limited in his knowledge to what he can know by his own mental powers. It contemplates man as an earthly creature without miraculous powers given through the Holy Spirit. It is man by himself without the aid of divine revelation.

The context makes it clear that the natural man is the same as the rulers of this world mentioned in verse 6, that is, man to whom the mysteries of God had not been revealed. The natural man is contrasted with the “one that is spiritual.” The “one who is spiritual” is the inspired apostle or prophet. The natural man, then, is the uninspired man. I Cor. 14:37.

It should be remembered that while in chapter 2 the contrast is between natural and spiritual, in chapter 3 it is between carnal and spiritual. In chapter 2 the inspired apostle is contrasted with the natural man such as the rulers of this age. In chapter 3, however, the contrast is between the one who is undeveloped in Christian character and what they should have been as ones whose lives were dominated by the message revealed through the Holy Spirit. In this connection see Gal. 5:16-24 where the thought of being led by what is spirit is contrasted with what is flesh. The works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit is the Christian character of the one who permits his spirit to respond to the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

foolishness to him.—See 1:25. Foolish things have no meaning. Likewise, the mysteries of God before they were revealed to man had no meaning to him.

he cannot know them.—Paul has explained in 11-12 that no man can know what is in the mind of another except, of course, as it is told to him. So man cannot know what is in the mind of God except through the revelation by the Spirit through the apostles and prophets.

spiritually judged.—The word “judged” in this verse means to sift, examine, investigate. This particular Greek word translated “judge” in our Bible is found in the following verses of First Corinthians: 2:14, 15; 4:3,4; 9:3; 10:25, 27; 14:24. It will be rewarding to read these in the light of the above definition,

The word is often used to describe a preliminary examination or investigation before a decision is rendered. Such investigations may have to do with (1) sifting evidence to be presented at a trial, or (2) investigating the qualifications of one who is to be a witness or who is to sit as judge. It is the word used to describe Pilate’s preliminary investigations of charges against Jesus before he pronounced Him innocent. It is used to denote the action of the inspired apostle who by the Holy Spirit investigated the “deep things of God” and then spoke in language that could be understood by his hearers.

he himself is judged of no man.—Since the word “judge” is used with reference to the investigation of one’s qualifications for a task, it is appropriate to say of the “one who is spiritual” that he is “judged” of no man. Of course, God passed on the qualifications of His apostles. The Corinthians were not qualified to pass on Paul’s fitness to be an apostle, for only the Lord could do that. (I Cor. 4:3-4).

The “spiritual one” is judged by no man. The context makes it clear that this is the inspired apostle, but this does not mean that the apostles were above criticism for mistakes in personal conduct. Peter’s actions at Antioch for which he was rebuked by Paul answers this objection (Gal. 2:11-12). Paul does not say that the world cannot judge the actions of a Christian. Jesus said that men were to see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). The investigation, however, of the fitness of one to be an apostle of Christ is not the right of any man; only the Lord can do this (I Cor. 4:3-4) Thus the inspired apostle, by the power of the Holy Spirit, investigates the deep things of God before he speaks them in Spirit-taught words, but no man passes on his qualifications to be an apostle.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord?—This is the same word for “know” as in verse 14. The question is: Who, by his own reasoning power and without revelation from God, has known the mind of the Lord? This is the same thing that was said of the “natural man” and the rulers of this world. No man could know the mind of the Lord apart from His revealed message. This same thing was made clear in verses 10-13 which deal with the revelation of God’s message through the inspired apostles.

But we have the mind of Christ.—“We” has the same antecedent throughout this section (6-16). It cannot refer to all Christians; context requires us to relate it to the inspired apostles and prophets. They had the “mind of Christ” because the Holy Spirit revealed it to them (see verses 10 and 12). How thankful we should be that God created us with a mind capable of reading and understanding the message revealed through the inspired apostles of Christ.”

What Does 11 Mean To Me?

The eight references to the Holy Spirit in the 15 verses of this chapter should have and do have much meaning for each Christian. There is a lesson in each verse—but our particular interest is in the meaning of the references to the Holy Spirit:

(I) “The demonstration of the Spirit and of power. We have already indicated that we believe this has reference to the miracle working power of the Holy Spirit used by the apostles and prophets to confirm the truthfulness and source of their words. If we had a direct message from God we would need such credentials of confirmation. Unless we are willing to claim one we do not need the other. We refer to the complete word of truth for our message. In the same book that contains our message we have a record of its credibility being demonstrated by the Spirit empowered signs and wonders. The message

needs no confirmation today, since the message we preach carries as a part of it its own confirmation.

(2) The revelation of the mind and message of God to the mind and mouth of men through the Holy Spirit (vs. 9,10) is hardly a claim for today. We believe the Lord will grant wisdom in answer to believing prayer (James 1:5,6) but such wisdom is the best use of knowledge. This heaven-given understanding presupposes the presence of knowledge. The above references to the revealed mystery of God, i.e., “things which eye saw not, ear heard not, and which man could not and did not conceive of himself,” were revealed to the apostles and prophets through the Holy Spirit is hardly a claim for the present day unless we believe God is giving us additional material to include as a part of our Bible.

(3) “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.” This is a further expansion and explanation of the same thought. It is here plainly stated that the apostles received the Holy Spirit for the express purpose of knowing the truth from God.

(4) We do agree with Applebury that the “natural man” and “the rulers of this world” are the same, i.e., uninspired persons. Read in its context this meaning becomes easy to accept. The subject of “inbred sin” or “total depravity” must first be accepted or rejected or modified. Having first decided on this it will be easy to decide what “the natural man” can or cannot do. There is hardly a more important consideration than to decide for yourself what the Bible teaches about the effects of Adam’s sin on mankind. We have considered this most carefully in our study of Romans 5:12-19 and in a special study on this subject, both to be found in our text ROMANS REALIZED, pages 76ff.; 261ff.

C. *How Can I Share It?*

Reading and meditating upon this chapter should give us a deep abiding respect for the word of God. How is it that we have a book in our possession in which we say are the very words of God and yet we treat it as almost any other book? We are *not* suggesting that we worship the Bible, but we *are* saying we should respect and honor it for what it is—the very words of the Spirit of God! We will share the word of God with others when we accept it for ourselves. How is it that we have not memorized every precious word in this precious book? We can only share the word when it dwells richly in us. What an awesome thought! *I can hold in my hand and heart the thoughts of God Himself in the words of the Holy Spirit written in a book!*

10. “Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.” I Corinthians 3:16,17.

What Does It Say?

In contrast and comparison to the building of wood, hay or stubble is the temple of God! God had built a sanctuary; it is built of “living stones” to be indwelt by God Himself. It would seem Paul is appealing to their reasonableness. He wants them to know he is not discussing a building of wood or stone; he is talking about the Corinthians themselves! In what sense did God live in or make His home with these believers? The answer can only be: by representation, i.e., by or in the person of the Holy Spirit God lived in them (cf Eph. 2:20-22). The word here translated “dwelleth in you” could also be translated “dwelleth in the midst of you,” but since the only possible way God could live in their midst was to live in them we see no advantage in using the word “midst” as compared with “in.” We have observed a good number of times before: the personal, literal indwelling of God and Christ by the person of the Holy Spirit is a plain statement of fact. Such an indwelling is based not on the understanding of man but on the omnipresent capacity of the nature of the Holy Spirit.

The destruction of the temple of God was happening in the divisions and carnality of the Corinthian believers. The corporate destruction was a consequence of personal fragmentation. We cannot endure

“fightings within” without producing “divisions without.” It is a sin to worry or to be anxious because it is self-destructive. When a leader is given to anxiety he infects the whole body—or to change the figure of speech—he soon heads up a demolition crew in destroying the temple of God.

What Does it Mean?

This is a crucial text for the Christian. God is pointedly against the fragmenting of the body both personally and collectively. The instructions in this letter are exceedingly helpful in identifying the cause and cure for such destruction. Look at the context of the two previous chapters.

- (1) Destroy yourselves and the body of Christ by a constant argument over who should be your leader or teacher. Cf. 1:10-17
- (2) Destroy yourselves and tear down the temple of God by emphasis upon human wisdom instead of God’s wisdom. Cf. 1:18-31
- (3) Ruin yourselves and the house of God by refusing the revelation of God through the apostles. 2:1-16
- (4) Destroy yourselves and one another by remaining immature and carnal or selfish. 3:1-9
- (5) Prepare yourself and others for destruction on the judgment by using the shoddy materials of human wisdom and selfish ambitions—which amount to wood, hay and stubble. 3:10-15

It would be easy to consider the rest of the epistle in the same manner. The whole letter seems to be a discussion of how to avoid self-destruction.

What Does It Mean To Me?

Is anyone engaged today in the practice of destroying the temple of God –the dwelling place of God? We have missed the point of the apostle. We fail to receive the primary message of this letter for ourselves, i.e., if we do not see ourselves in it. When we insist on our own way at the expense of the happiness of the “called out ones” we have destroyed the temple of God. We have produced destructive forces within others and like the church (temple) at Corinth we have divided or destroyed it. We can easily say that tobacco injures the body and in this sense destroys the temple of God, and if several are tobacco users we have destroyed the individual and collective body or sanctuary of God. This is true, and he who insists on such self-destruction will have to answer to the Creator and owner of our bodies. But there are other more destructive habits than tobacco. Seventy-five per cent of all physical illness is psychosomatic, so someone –yea many people are involved in this practice, and even in this life God is keeping His promise. Those who destroy the beauty of Christian fellowship with anger, wrath, railing, shameful speaking, fornication, uncleanness and passion are also by the same sin destroying themselves.

The answer to this sinful, therefore sick, situation is in a deep constant awareness that we are indeed honored above all creation to be the house of God! To contemplate His presence in us is a never ending source of joy—peace, wonder; what a thought! We all know what it means to sit in the same room with a person we know and consider their possible thoughts and desires—to have such a contemplation confirmed or corrected by their words to us. Would you please pause to meditate on the fact that the almighty God of Love is now present with you in the same room of your sub-consciousness. If you want to share with Him and He with you, ask Him. Open His word and let Him speak to you (into you). Be sure to listen with your inner ear, the ear of your heart. How holy and sacred does the body become when we see it as God sees it. The temple of God in the Spirit!

How Can I Share It?

When we begin to live out the essential meaning of the estimate of ourselves we will be sharing with others. As our Saviour said, “love your neighbor, as yourself.” We do indeed reflect the estimate of ourselves in our estimate of others. If we hate ourselves we cannot and will not love others. Our self-image is a mirror in which we see much more than our own face. If we cannot, or will not, see beauty in God’s handiwork or physical creation, commonly called “nature” we will not, cannot see beauty in the life of our neighbor. Killing, rape, character assassination and so many other destructive acts would all be

avoided if we shared God's estimate of man's body as His dwelling place.

“And such were some of you: 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.” I Corinthians 6:11

What Does it Say?

Three actions are attributed to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God: (1) Washed (we washed ourselves and were washed); (2) Sanctified; (3) Justified. This text reminds us of the beautiful reference of Titus 3:5-7. We shall consider each of these actions separately since each of them is an action of the Holy Spirit:

(1) Washed (washed yourselves). This is indeed “the bath of regeneration” in which and by which we were made new or a new creature or creation through the Holy Spirit (see Titus 3:5). If some reader wants to call this “baptismal regeneration” make the most out of it! We refuse to make less out of the text than what is plainly taught by the words of the text itself. We all know persons who have been baptized either as infants or adults who apparently were not regenerated. Their washing was not “a bath of regeneration.” There was no observable renewal in their life. We are also aware of all the texts that attribute salvation to “faith” or “repentance.” Please read the marvelous book *THE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF BAPTISM* by N. J. Aylsworth (published by College Press). Read this quotation from the illustrious commentator Godet: “All are at one in applying the first of the three verbs to baptism. In fact, outwardly speaking, it was the act which had transferred them from the state of heathens to that of Christians, from the condition of being polluted and condemned to that of beings pardoned and purified. The middle form of the verb was used, ye washed yourselves, expresses the freedom and spontaneity with which they had done the deed; Edwards also compares Acts 22:16.

—The term bathe, wash, is explained by the two following terms. Baptism, when it is done in faith, is not a pure symbol; two purifying graces are connected with it, sanctification and justification. The verbs which express these two facts are in the passive; for they signify two Divine acts, of which the baptized are the subjects. The two verbs in the aorist can only refer both of them to a deed done once for all, and not to a Continuous state. This is what prevents us from applying the term sanctify to the growing work of Christian sanctification. This word here can only designate the initial act whereby the believer passed from his previous state of corruption to that of holiness, that is to say, the believer's consecration to God in consequence of the gift of the Spirit bestowed on him in baptism; comp. Acts 2:38; II Cor. 1:21,22; Eph. 1:13. They entered thereby into the community of saints which is presided over by Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God.”

(2) Sanctified: sanctification in this context is an accomplished fact. There is a sense in which we are constantly being sanctified, but there is another sense in which we have been sanctified. The process of sanctification or growth in holiness is familiar to all Bible students. The fact that we were sanctified, set-aside or consecrated to God at the time of our baptism is not so well known. When Paul writes this to and of the Corinthians he is not speaking of their spiritual growth, for they were sadly deficient in this, but of their positional holiness. In the estimate and sight of God we are set-apart—we belong to Him. Whether we respond to this fact will determine our progressive sanctification. There were many unworthy priests in the service of God; indeed Nadab and Abihu were slain for their sin, but all priests were sanctified or set-apart by the anointing oil and the bath in the laver.

(3) Justified: our salvation man-ward is sanctification, i.e. we are distinct—different—set-apart. God-ward we are justified, i.e. just-as-if we had never sinned. Paul is asking the “saints” at Corinth to live up to their positional relationships. As to sin “ye were washed”; as to the world in which you live you were “set apart” from it, even while you are yet in it. As to God and the judgment you are “justified.” Because of Calvary you are not guilty—there is no record of your sin—there is “no condemnation.” How can you participate in sexual immorality when you remember your relationships? If these words: “washed,” “sanctified” and “justified” mean to you what they mean to God you will not be thieves,

drunkards, slanderers or swindlers. Please reread the text and remember that there are two motivations for the acceptance of our position as washed, sanctified, and justified. They are: (1) the name of the Lord Jesus. (2) the Spirit of our God. Simply expressed this means the authority or Lordship of Jesus and presence and power of the Holy Spirit, it is with the latter we are particularly concerned. How does the Holy Spirit relate to our bath of regeneration? He has a great deal to do with it! “for by (through the influence) of the one Spirit were we all baptized into the one body” (I Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit provided the influences that led us to the waters of baptism to bury us into the one body, His church. These influences were (and are): (a) the word of God, which is the word of the Spirit; (b) the preacher of that word. The preacher’s position and power both come from the Spirit; (c) conviction of sin by the Spirit through the preaching of the word. At the time we were buried with Christ in baptism we were indwelt and renewed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We shall write much more at length on these expressions as we find them in the texts cited, but we want to say here that mouthing or writing words about His indwelling and power or renewal mean utterly nothing without personal appropriation of them to our own conscience.

What Does It Mean?

All that this text meant to the Christians at Corinth it means to Christians everywhere for all time. If God considers us clean how can we think of ourselves as dirty? If we have been set-apart by God for His service can we be involved in some lesser pursuit? When it is God who has justified us, who is he who can condemn us? If our hearts condemn us we need to remember that God is true and not the great accuser of the brethren.

What Does It Mean To Me?

Does the Holy Spirit have some other work to do in my sanctification? i.e., that I have not yet considered? We shall look at every reference on the subject of sanctification and then offer an answer. John 17:17 says “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The Holy Spirit is the author of that word of truth. The more we believe and know the truth the more set-apart or sanctified we will be. Perhaps we should say the more real and meaningful our sanctification will become. Our Lord said in this same chapter of John, “and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (v. 19). Jesus teaches us that there is something we can do about sanctification; we can choose to set ourselves apart for others. The truth will have little effect on others if they cannot see its power of separation in our own lives. Acts 26:17 indicates we are sanctified at the time we are saved. Romans 15:16 says the same thing but attributes the sanctification to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does indeed have a large part in setting us apart as belonging to God (such as the gospel, the preacher, the circumstance). I Cor. 1:2 describes the saints at Corinth as “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” I Cor. 1:30 speaks of Christ as our sanctification. If we will think of the word “devoted” in the sense in which Jericho, vessels of the tabernacle, the sabbath day, and many other inanimate objects and circumstances are “devoted” unto the Lord, i.e. counted as belonging to God, we will get the sense in which the word “sanctified” is used most of the time. There was nothing intrinsically holy about the city of Jericho, the vessels of the tabernacle or 24 hours of time. God’s decision and use of them made them holy or sanctified them. Our Lord is the One in whom we can be considered by God as set-apart and holy, i.e. in Christ we are righteous, redeemed, and sanctified—not by our efforts but by our position. I Thes. 4:3 says “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (wife) in sanctification and honor.” Here is the practical outworking of our position in Christ. If we are in Him we will not have illicit sex relations; we will on the other hand honor our wife or husband by holding them as the set-apart or sanctified one—the only one, for us.

The Thessalonians were set apart, i.e. their triune nature was sanctified (progressively and positionally) by the God of peace. (I Thes. 5:23) II Thes. 2:13 speaks once again of the sanctification given at salvation, “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spirit and belief of the truth.” The work and power of the Holy Spirit is so closely associated with our willing appropriation of truth to our inner self! Our progressive sanctification or the maintaining of our positional sanctification—however we want to view it, is only accomplished when we deeply cherish the truth. II Tim. 2:21 2:2 1 is another good reference on this same thought. There is a very real sense in which we must of our own choice set ourselves aside. Heb. 2:11 brings us back to our sanctifier, even Jesus, and the sanctification He provided for us through the cross. Read Heb. 10:10, 14 for beautiful comparative references for this truth. Cf. Heb. 13:12 for a plain statement as to just where and when and how our “set-apart” position was provided.

I Pet. 1:1,2 –to God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood.” “A Christian is chosen of God in the realm of the Spirit’s work of sanctification.” We were chosen by God only because the Holy Spirit provided the environment out of which such a choice of God could be made. Does this mean God is using the Holy Spirit as His agent in His providential direction of our lives in such a way that we could hear and obey our Lord and be saved? In many lives obedience to the gospel seemed all so natural and ordinary. In others, unusual circumstances brought them to a knowledge of the truth. We believe the Holy Spirit set aside the time and place and person for your salvation. The sanctifying work of the Spirit of God has occurred in and for any one who has been chosen by God through their obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood.

How Can I Share It?

We have written much on this scripture text. Much we have said is so vital to the lives of all Christians. Surely the reader will find several areas of special meaning to share with others.

12. “Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, the twain, saith he, shall become one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” I Cor. 6:16,17

What Does It Say?

Whereas there is a uniform translation in all versions of the word “spirit” with the lower case letter it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is necessarily involved in this relationship. We believe the emphasis is on the intimacy involved. A comparison and contrast are used: in the intimacy of illicit sex with a harlot and a God recognized oneness is established. “Joined to a harlot” is compared to “joined unto the Lord.” It would be by personal choice and in obedience to the sex drive such a relationship took place. How strong, personal, or intimate is our relationship with the Lord? Do we yearn and long after the Lord? Are we filled with a deep desire to be lost in Him and He in us? We could pass off this text with the thought that we have been baptized into Christ and are therefore “joined unto the Lord” and are therefore “one Spirit,” but this does not fit the point of the text in its context and neither does it offer us any motivation to overcome fornication.

What a change in all our lives would be wrought if the deep God-planted desire for oneness with another person were transferred to the Lord as well as to our husband or wife! If we wanted to “know” Him in all the deep loss-of-self meaning involved in the word “know” we then would be filled with Him and thus be filled with the Holy Spirit!

There are a number of blessed comparisons possible here. We need to say that the word “joined” is a strong one, it literally means “glued” to another. This indicates the seriousness of fornication and at the same time the wonder of being so closely identified with our wonderful Lord. We need to point out that in sex union there is the very real and creative possibility of a third person. How very true it is that in our union with our Lord there is always a third person created – a new, different, recreated, regenerated third person called a Christian: one belonging to Christ.

What Does It Mean?

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I CORINTHIANS

We need to give careful consideration to the context of this verse in order to understand its meaning. Please read from the first verse of this chapter. Begin with verse 12 and read down to verse 16 for the immediate context. Here is a very helpful outline by T. R. Applebury:

B. Paul shows them that they were to flee from the sins against the body which is a temple of the Holy Spirit (12-20).

1. He presents the principles upon which he bases his argument for the correct use of the body (12-17).

a) He appeals to the law of experience (12-14).

(1) He states the law and its limitations:

(a) All things have a lawful purpose in God's plan for His creatures.

(b) They may not, however, be used to enslave one.

(2) He gives an example to show what he means:

(a) Food is for the belly; the belly is equipped to handle food.

(b) But both of them will God bring to naught— they, in other words, have only a temporary value.

(3) He applies the principle to their immoral conduct:

(a) The body was not made to serve fornication; it was made to serve the Lord.

(b) The Lord will care for the body for God who raised Christ will raise us up through His power.

b) His second principle is based on the law of marriage, "the two become one flesh" (15-20).

(1) He uses another series of questions to cause them to think on the problem:

(a) "Don't you know that your bodies are members of Christ?" That is, they are members of the body of Christ, the church.

(b) An utterly abhorrent thought is expressed in the next question, "Shall I take the members of Christ's body and make them members of a prostitute?"

(c) The application of the principle of unity: one body (with the prostitute) ; one spirit (with the Lord) ^{1*}

What Does It Mean To Me?

There is so very much in this text for answering the problem of our present sensual society or culture. The principle of v. 12 has such direct bearing on us, i.e.: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Bring up the subject of the modern dance as a contributor to immorality and immediately church members will defend the "lawfulness" of their participation. Two obvious questions can be asked: (1) Is it expedient (good) as an example to others? (2) Have you become addicted to the dance? Remember: "I no longer really possess what possesses me." I have lost my liberty when it actually hurts others or makes me a slave by reducing me to a thing.

If any of our readers have listened to discussions of the present day hedonist they will soon hear them tell you that since God gave us both appetites, i.e. for food and sex, there is nothing wrong with the

¹ T.R. Applebury, Studies in Corinthians, Joplin College Press.

use of either one. They are right! The appetite is God-given and God blessed, but the use of such an appetite is a choice we must make, and for which we will be held responsible, for the simple reason that we are responsible. Both food and the body will soon be gone, but the one who lived in the body and made the decision for its use will live forever. Your body was created by the Lord, for the Lord and by right of purchase belongs to Him! On the other hand it is such a comfort to know that our Lord through His Holy Spirit has a great personal interest in your body—He wants to live in it with you! Your body is for the Lord through His presence in the Holy Spirit and not for your own use through Satan's suggestions.

How often do we need to be reminded that we are not through with this body when we lay it aside in death? God will raise our bodies tip! "The idea of the future resurrection of this earthly body, like to that in which Christ lived, is fitted to impress us with the reverence due to the future organ of our glorified personality."

Since our Saviour and Lord lives in our bodies in the person of the Holy Spirit and since He has purchased them with His own blood our bodies belong to Him. All Christians together make up the body of Christ. Shall we take such members and make them members of a harlot? It is either Christ or a harlot! This should not be a difficult choice to make. To have illicit sex relations is to become a partaker of the one with whom we have such relations. We cannot, and must not act independently. We do give ourselves in our actions. We are in and a part of the action of each member of our physical body; no member of our body acts without the knowledge and approval of our head. We are members of Christ's body; we insult the head when we think we can act apart from the head and not be responsible to Him for our actions.

Even a cursory use of the truths in verses 12-15 can help us so much in our attempts to live by the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

How Can I Share It?

We are well aware of the large overlap in the answers to these questions. Nonetheless we are convinced of their value. My constant prayer and concern is that the meaning of this text will be reflected in personal attitudes toward the world and the flesh. We can share best by our manner of life.

13. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." I Cor. 6:18-20

What Does It Say?

"If we must fight against other sins, we must flee from fornication; witness Joseph's example." (Anselm) Of all inexpedient actions fornication must top the list! We do wonder how it could be said that passion, falsehood, drunkenness and suicide are without the body while fornication is the sin in the body? Perhaps there is a greater guilt incurred, and in this sense it is the only sin within the body. Could it be that in other sins we must use some external substance, but not so with fornication?

All of these explanations seem to fall short of the answer. Godet feels that there is a body within a body, i.e. the outer body of flesh and blood and the inner body of the spirit or soul and that it is against this inner body that man sins in the act of fornication. "It is by and against this inner organism that he sins, while other sins only reach its wrapping, the external body."² This is a valid explanation. In whatever emphasis we must not miss the one Paul used: in a paraphrase we could say, "With all the energy of fear and abhorrence run from fornication (meaning not just the act but those influences that lead to the act). The reason for this attitude and action is that such sexual sins have a pollution all their own: they contaminate the deep inner self. Other sins pollute but they do not reach the human spirit like fornication. There is a rottenness in sexual uncleanness that we must avoid." What does this say to us in

² Godet, *The First Epistle To The Corinthians*, Grand Rapids Press: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971.

our Playboy world?

We realize the above verse has nothing directly to say about the Holy Spirit, but it is such a part, in context, with the 19th verse that we felt we must include it. We should also point out that it is our understanding that the Holy Spirit lives in our inner-self or subconsciousness (indeed the word “sanctuary” means holy of holies). It is this holy of holies that is entered and desecrated by fornication!

Let us now examine every word in verse 19. “Qr”—here is a connective—because of what we have said about the terrible effects of fornication we can proceed to this thought. “Know ye not” is an oft use phrase of emphasis by Paul. The Corinthians did know and this is the force of his question. From vs. 13 to 19 he had already said it. Verse 19 is a commentary on the meaning of “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” “Your body”—and we believe he is speaking not only of the outer body of flesh and bone and blood—but of that inner man. It is our body as to choice and use; we can and do control it. In another sense it is not ours at all. “Is a temple (sanctuary, holy of holies) of the Holy Spirit.”—please accept the ownership and proprietorship of your body. Our inner selves (and therefore our outer selves) belong to the Holy Spirit as His sanctuary! Until this truth is embraced with living, personal faith it becomes only a beautiful thought.

What Does it Mean?

We quote from R. C. H. Lenski whom we have found very poignant on this text:

“Our humble earthly body is nothing less than ‘a sanctuary of the Spirit,’ and Paul writes ‘Holy Spirit,’ for because of its very name a sanctuary’ is holy. He uses the word for the inner sanctuary itself, not that which may mean only the outer temple courts. The genitive ‘of the Holy Spirit’ denotes possession but not in the sense that one may merely own a building without dwelling in it, for Paul adds two modifiers. First the phrase ‘in you,’ which is placed attributively after the Greek article. Only as being ‘within us,’ dwelling in us, does the Holy Spirit own our body as his sanctuary. Paul writes ‘in you’ and not ‘in your bodies’ and thus abides by the fact. For the Spirit dwells in us as persons and makes us ‘one spirit with the Lord,’ v. 17, and in this profound way takes possession also of our body so that this body actually becomes his sanctuary.

“In the second place Paul adds the relative clause: ‘whom you have from God.’ We are the Spirit’s, and he is ours, a blessed mutuality but one that is ‘from God,’ a most gracious gift to us. The moment we hold this fact beside the other that fornication desecrates our body as does no other sinful act, the true character of this vicious sin becomes clear to us.”³

What Does It Mean To Me?

There are two things necessary to make a building a temple: (1) the building must be set aside or dedicated to its holy purpose; (2) it must be indwelt by Deity. Long, long ago Tertullian said (and he speaks to me) “Since all Christians are the temple of God, by virtue of His Holy Spirit sent into their hearts, and consecrating their bodies to His service, we should make chastity the keeper of this sacred habitation, and suffer nothing unclean or profane to enter into it, lest the God who dwells in it be displeased and desert His habitation, thus defiled.” We consecrated our bodies to Him at Christian baptism; He came to indwell His temple at that time. I never cease to wonder at the condescension of the Almighty God in the person of the Holy Spirit taking up residence in me!

How Can I Share it?

“We should make chastity the keeper of this sacred habitation.” “Make me pure within” is the heart cry of every sincere child of God. The motivation for this inward purity is found in this section. The only possible way in which such information of motivation can be shared is: (1) Memorize and meditate daily upon the words of the Spirit. By thus taking these words into the holy of holies we set the keeper of purity at the very gateway; (2) Promise yourself and our Lord you will never memorize without also visualizing and personalizing the text for yourself! (Someone might ask, “What does this have to do with

³ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s first and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

sharing?” The answer is obvious: we only share ourselves with others. If we thus make real to ourselves the sacredness of our body we will unavoidably share it with others.)

14. “But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment: and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.” I Cor. 7:40

What Does It Say?

At first reading it would seem Paul is hesitant in attributing his words to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is not the meaning of the phrase, “I think,” We catch his meaning when we read in 4:9, “For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all.” It is not a question of possibility—this but a polite manner of stating a fact. But what is the fact? The apostle is plainly attributing to himself the intuitive communication of the Holy Spirit in the words he has written to the Corinthians.

What Does It Mean?

What are the implications of saying: my words are the words of the Holy Spirit? My mind is activated and informed by the Holy Spirit so that I write and speak as the Spirit gives me utterance or expression? This is a claim to inspiration, the like of which we cannot assume. We all indeed do have the Holy Spirit, but not in the sense here meant by Paul.

What Does it Mean To Me?

How very hesitant we should be to accept or affirm such a claim from anyone! The faith has already been delivered once for all to the saints from the Spirit of God. We are to defend it, teach it, follow it—but we must not and do not expect more of this divine revelation.

How Can I Share it?

We are doing what we recommend by our expressions concerning the words of the Holy Spirit. We share the meaning and applications of the words of the Spirit of God found in the word of God called the Bible!

15. “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven.” I Cor. 11:4,5 (Please read through the whole paragraph from verse 2 through 16.)

What Does It Say?

We believe the background information presented by several commentators is essential to an understanding of the use and non-use of veils in worship. We quote from R. C. H. Lenski just here:

“Paul now applies the facts which he has stated concerning headship to the customs as they existed in Corinth and elsewhere.

“Generally speaking, among the Greeks only slaves were covered, and the uncovered head was a sign of freedom. The Romans reversed this. The free man wore the pileus, the slave went bareheaded. When the latter was emancipated he was said *vocari ad pileum*. Yet the Romans, and we must add the Germans, were accustomed to pray while they were veiled. The Jews had the same custom, and we should not forget that Paul was originally a Jew. This veiling expressed reverence, the proper feeling of unworthiness to appear before God with an open face. Maimonides says: ‘Let not the Wise Men, nor the scholars of the Wise Men, pray unless they be covered.’ The Jewish covering was called the tallith.

“All of this shows us that Paul is not laying down an absolute rule that is to be observed by Christians of all times in regard to covering the head or leaving it uncovered during worship. Not the custom as a custom is vital but the significance of a custom. If Paul were writing to Jews or to Romans or to Germans, all of whom covered the head during worship because of reverence and shame in God’s presence, he would have to tell them that any man among them who violated this custom thereby showed

a lack of reverence and shame. But to write this to Greeks would be incomprehensible to them. They had an entirely different custom which had an entirely different significance. This significance is sound and good. Hence Paul explains it to the Corinthians at length and bids them to abide by their custom. For to abrogate it and to fly in the face of it means, in their case, not only to violate that significance but at the same time to disavow that significance. The fact that Paul sees this significance with a Christian's eye as pertaining to the true God and not with a pagan's eye as pertaining to idol gods should cause no confusion. The fact that he would use the Christian's eye if he were dealing with the opposite custom of other nationalities and not the pagan's eye is again beyond question. By so doing Paul is not introducing into these national customs something that is foreign and unjustifiable but is unveiling to Christians the full and the true significance of these customs which non-Christians grasped or felt only partially because the glory of the true God was hidden from them.

"The Greek custom that was followed in Corinth brought to view the facts which all Christians should know, that Christ is the head of the man, and that the man is the head of the woman. Because it did this for Christian minds and Christian eyes the Greek custom was good and proper and should be preserved by those concerned. Violating it means to those who have this custom a clash with the divine facts reflected in this custom."⁴

We have yet to discuss the meaning of the word "prophesying"—and most especially in light of Paul's prohibition concerning women prophesying in I Cor. 14:34-36. There Paul forbids them even to speak. Please notice vs. 17, 18, 20 in which reference is made to the public assembly. It is in a public meeting that his prohibitions are to be applied, not in personal or private use. There are many times and places where women could teach other women or children. A prophet or prophetess was primarily a teacher. Outside "the assemblies" the women were free to exercise their gift of prophecy. Read II Tim. 1:5; 3:15 and Acts 18:24-26 for examples of women teachers.

The gift of prophecy was the ability to receive and communicate clearly the word of God. The information came directly from the mind of God to the mind of man. The urgency and other dynamics necessary for effective expression were also a part of this total gift. Both women and men were given it in the early church.

What Does It Mean?

It is necessary to remember that the only churches without the New Testament are those described in the New Testament. The ability to teach is still with us as a gift from the Holy Spirit, but the content of such teaching comes indirectly, not directly. We have our Content for teaching in The-Faith-Once-For-All-Delivered. It is found in the pages of the New Testament. It is very important to hold this distinction clearly before us when we consider the subject of prophesying.

What Does It Mean To Me?

We have no desire at all to limit God or the power of the Holy Spirit. Why would anyone object to the Spirit-enabling ability to receive intuitive information directly from God through the Holy Spirit? But if we did, what we received would be equal to the writings of any one of the eight or nine writers of the New Testament. Is the claim of the New Testament to be "all truth" (John 16:13) adequate to "furnish us thoroughly" and to give us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Tim. 3:15,16) true or not? Are we to believe that anyone who adds to these words will have the sure condemnation of God? (Rev. 22:18,19; II Pet. 1:3) The ability to teach—either verbally or in written form what God has already given us is one thing—direct revelation or information from God to women or men is quite another. I want to claim one, but my common sense and honesty utterly shuts me out from a claim of the other.

How Can I Share It?

We do indeed need to share the information on the subject of customs as they relate to the use and

⁴ R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

non-use of veils. The total subjects of cultural influence in the scripture need to be understood. It would eliminate a great deal of present-day misunderstanding. The universal, eternal principles underlying some customs need also to be shared. An ability to distinguish between the two is devoutly desired.

16-32. There are sixteen direct references to the Holy Spirit in the three chapters of I Corinthians 12, 13, 14. There are numerous other indirect references to the Holy Spirit and His work in these chapters. Because of the concentration of information and overlapping of subject matter we will study these chapters verse by verse. (We have done this once in Volume One, pages 80 through 150.) We consider these chapters as crucial, so no amount of careful word-by-word study is misspent. Let us ask and answer the four questions: (1) What Does It Say? (2) What Does it Mean? (3) What Does it Mean To Me? (4) How Can I Share It? of every verse in these chapters. We want to consider the very helpful outline by T. R. Applebury of the first three verses.

A. Paul explains the basic principles of spiritual gifts (1—11).

1. He shows how the Corinthians were to determine when one was speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God (1-3).

- a) He did not want them to be without knowledge about these things. Evidently this was because of the confusion and division in the church over these gifts.
- b) He reminds them of their experience when they were led away to the dumb idols. They had been led to believe that they were receiving divine direction from their pagan gods.
- c) He makes known to them the test by which they were to know when one was speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God:
 - (1) No one while he was speaking under the power of the Spirit of God could say ANATHEMA JESUS.
 - (2) No one could say LORD JESUS except under the direction of the Holy Spirit. God did not permit the “unclean spirit” to say LORD JESUS.⁵

Now let’s read the verses themselves:

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed’; no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” (New American Standard translation)

It will be very profitable to ask and answer the thoughts and questions we posed eleven years ago when we first wrote on this text. We refer you to Volume One pages 83 thru 150.

I. The word “gifts” is supplied by the translators. What synonym would you supply?

Answer: We could say, “concerning Spiritual men,” i.e., those endowed with the supernatural abilities of the Holy Spirit. It is with such men (and women) Paul is having problems. This and the following two chapters concern the nature and use of such abilities.

2. Why did Paul feel a need for writing on this subject? i.e. what were the conditions in the church at Corinth which prompted such a discussion?

Answer: One word could be used in answer: jealousy! Those endowed with these gifts or abilities could and did decide to use them for personal advantage. The ability to speak in tongues was of particular concern. Such ability was being used at the wrong time and for the wrong purpose. The whole body of Christ was suffering because of these gifted members—the abuse must be corrected.

3. Aren’t the Christians at Corinth still “Gentiles”? Why use the word “Gentiles” as in verse 2?

⁵ T.R. Applebury, Studies In Corinthians, Joplin, College Press.

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Answer: The translation of the New American Standard answers this question. The word Gentiles suggests heathen worship or influence; hence the word “pagans” is better. Once you were unaware of God or Christ or the Holy Spirit. You were in a state of ignorant heathenism. The term is used religiously not ethnically.

4. Who led them away to the idols?

Answer: Their priests or leaders in pagan worship. When one worships an idol he has no authority but those who claim contact with the god of the idol; such persons were easily led.

5. Why call the idols “dumb”? Does this mean “stupid”?

Answer: Since the problem has to do largely with the ability to speak or not to speak in tongues a reference to the inability of idols to speak at all seems particularly appropriate. The idol could neither speak nor give anyone else the ability to speak. Dumb is equal to mute. Such objects of stone or wood were sightless, speechless and could not hear. Stupidity could be attributed to those who worship idols.

6. Why were they so easily led?

Answer: When one wants to believe he can find his own reasons. The text does not necessarily indicate these persons were easily led. The craft and deceit of the priests of Baal is not to be underestimated.

7. How did idols relate to the subject of Spiritual gifts?

Answer: This is a very important question; we are glad to answer it because it opens up the meaning of these verses. The worship of idols involved an affirmation: “Jesus is accursed.” Speech under supposed supernatural idol direction was used in their former worship. The speaking of the idol or of the priests of the idol was done in such a mysterious manner that the devotees were much impressed. The ecstatic utterance of present-day idol worshippers creates the same impression. Satan is well able to perform lying wonders and signs (II Thes. 2:12). But such leaders in idol worship will not and do not accept the Lordship of Jesus. When asked concerning the identity of our Lord they curse Him. It is not necessary for us to understand or explain the unusual happenings of such worship—if they do not confess—(not only with the mouth but from the heart) Jesus as Lord they are not directed by the Holy Spirit. Inexplicable activities cannot be of the Spirit of God without submission to the Lordship of Jesus. On the other hand: the direct communication of the Holy Spirit to the mind of man was the most often used means of communication by God to man in the first century. Either the Holy Spirit spoke directly to the apostles and prophets or persons repeated what the apostles and prophets taught them. In either case the source of such teaching was the Holy Spirit. Confessing the Lordship of Jesus was far more than a mere affirmation of faith—it involved the total commitment of the person to His authority.

8. Please notice that verse 3 is a conclusion of verse 2. What is the promise of this conclusion?

Answer: Verse two discusses the futility of idol worship—and the former willing obedience of these Corinthian Christians to idol worship. This was given because they could not explain the signs and wonders of those idol worshippers who said (perhaps) that they did their work and spoke as the Spirit of God gave them power.

Conclusion: Regardless of how loudly or persistently they claim to do what they do by the Spirit of God, they do not act under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We know this because they will not accept Jesus as Lord. The antithesis is also true.

9. Who was saying ‘Jesus is accursed’ or ‘anathema’?

Answer: We have answered this earlier. The answer is that former leaders of idol worship were saying this. Perhaps they were yet bothering the disciples and were insisting on a hearing.

10. What is meant by saying, “speaking in the Spirit of God”?

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Answer: Speaking under the immediate control of the Holy Spirit.

11. Evidently someone was claiming to speak by the Spirit of God, and was not—who was it?

Answer: We have answered this question at least twice. See above.

12. In what sense are we to understand verse 3b?, i.e., is this a reference to supernaturally saying “Jesus is Lord,” or is it a reference to the ordinary confession of His Lordship? What is the point of the statement?

Answer: We have anticipated the answer to this in our earlier questions and answers. We want to add that any genuine acceptance and confession of Jesus as Lord comes from the Holy Spirit—either directly or indirectly. This confession amounts to teaching—to affirm in the first century that Jesus the Lord of Lords gave me this message or, that is, to affirm His Lordship and ask those who hear us to do likewise.

Examine closely T. R. Applebury’s outline on versus 4 through 11:

2. He explains the variety, manifestations, and classification of the gifts (4-11).
 - a) The various things of spirit are related to the Spirit, the Lord, and to God.
 - (1) There are various gifts, but the same Spirit.
 - (2) There are various services, but the same Lord.
 - (3) There are various workings, but the same God.
 - b) These manifestations of the Spirit are for the benefit of all.
 - c) Nine gifts are mentioned. They fall logically into three groups:
 - (1) Those referring to the revealed truth:
 - (a) The word of wisdom.
 - (b) The word of knowledge.
 - (2) Those referring to the confirmation of the revealed truth:
 - (a) Faith, in the same Spirit.
 - (b) Gifts of healing, in the one Spirit.
 - (c) Working of miracles.
 - (3) Those referring to methods of proclaiming the Word:
 - (a) Prophecy.
 - (b) Discerning of spirits.
 - (c) Tongues (languages).
 - (d) Interpretation of tongues.
 - d) The one Spirit distributes these gifts as He wills.⁶ Now let’s read the text very carefully:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”

Here are seven questions and answers in reference to these verses:

⁶ T.R. Applebury, *Studies in Corinthians*, Joplin, College Press.

13. Please notice and define the three important words: (1) gifts, (2) ministrations, (3) workings.

Answer: Definition of “gifts”: these Holy Spirit inspired abilities are all unearned and are therefore properly referred to as “gifts.” They have their origin in the Holy Spirit. They are equal in respect to their source. Each one is equally divine as they come from the presence of the Holy Spirit within each person.

Definition of “ministrations”: we could use the term ministries—each gift is functional; each has a service to give. Our Lord Jesus decided who will be enabled by this gift or that to serve in this ministry or that. Please read Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11,12 as well as I Peter 4:10,11. If Jesus wants someone to “show mercy with cheerfulness” or to “rule with diligence” He grants such unearned ability to the Holy Spirit within that person. There are nineteen different ministries or ministrations listed in the above references which our Lord has given to various persons at various times and places for the building up of His body in love.

Definition of “workings”: this has reference to the source of the power or energy to carry out or fulfill the Spirit-inspired, Christ-directed unearned abilities. Such power comes from God. McKnight has such a good paraphrase of verse six. He says, “and there are diversities of inworkings on the minds of the Spiritual men, but the same God who worketh inwardly all supernatural impressions on all: so that in respect of the authority by which they act, the Spiritual men are all equal.”⁷ He points out that there is a wonderful oneness and unity in these diverse gifts: (1) Their origin is the same—the Holy Spirit. (2) Their Lord is the same—i.e. they all serve the same Lord. (3) Their authority for acting is the same—i.e. God. Since such is true how can we be jealous of one another?

14. Notice the person who controls “gifts”—the person who controls “ministrations”—the person who controls “workings”—explain the reason for attributing them to different divine beings.

Answer: There are undoubtedly various reasons, but at least one would be to show the diverse but united efforts of the Godhead in the gifts present in the Corinthian Church. If there could be and is such unity in God, can there not also be unity in the use of the gifts He has given? If the Godhead is our example we will not be envious of each other.

15. Define the word “manifestation” as here used.

Answer: This has to do with the expression of the gift or gifts. When the Holy Spirit within expresses Himself through the mind of the person in whom He dwells it is for the purpose of building up the whole body—not to bring honor to the one member in whom He lives. If the gift does not benefit all it has been misused.

16. Who is to profit by the use of the Spiritual gifts?

Answer: We have answered this question, but let’s amplify it:

a. The body of Christ must have information—they must be taught—to be taught the teacher must have content—the Holy Spirit granted to some persons “the word of knowledge” or the divine body of information for teaching.

b. After we are informed we must know how best to apply such knowledge—wisdom is the best use of knowledge—“the word” or “utterance” of wisdom was granted for the purpose of making divinely-directed evaluations. (We cannot imagine knowledge without at the same time wisdom being given to apply it.)

c. When God wanted some unusual event to take place He communicated such information to the mind of some member through the Holy Spirit; the acceptance or belief of such Spirit-directed information was called “faith.” (Faith—all faith comes by hearing of God’s word—whether intuitively or by the written or verbal form. Cf. Rom. 10:17) We could go through the whole list of 19 unearned Spirit-given abilities and show how they are all given to assist the whole body.

⁷ James MacKnight, *Apostolical Epistles*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1960.

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17. We have defined these nine Spiritual gifts—could you now define in your own words these gifts?

Answer: It is so important that each Christian be able to do this. (Not only for these nine abilities but for all 19 of those gifts our Lord gives to members of His church). Here is a little multiple choice test. See what you can do with it. (The answers are printed at the end.)

DEFINING THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

1. *Prophecy*. (Rom. 12:6)
 - a. The ability to foretell the future.
 - b. The ability to read minds.
 - c. The ability to teach and foretell.
2. *Ministry or helps*. (Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 12:28b)
 - a. The office of the minister or preacher.
 - b. The ability to offer assistance in many ways and areas of need.
 - c. The assistant minister.
3. *Teaching* (Rom. 12:7)
 - a. To clearly explain divine truth.
 - b. To be able to speak fluently.
 - c. To explain clearly divine truth and cause it to be received and understood.
4. *Exhortation*. (Rom. 12:8)
 - a. To offer encouragement or comfort.
 - b. To move people to act.
 - c. To apply the truth to the heart.
5. *Giving*. (Rom. 12:8)
 - a. The ability to make money.
 - b. To be moved by the Spirit to give generously to the Lord what money you do have.
 - c. Giving in general—not necessarily money.
6. *Ruling or administration*. (Rom. 12:8; I Cor. 12:28)
 - a. Being able to tell other people what to do.
 - b. Organizing the church for action.
 - c. Being able to coordinate several tasks into a creative design for the good of all.
7. *Mercy*. (Rom. 12:8)
 - a. Forgiving people who have offended you.
 - b. Helping where it is not deserved or expected.
 - c. Being very kind.
8. *Wisdom* (or “utterance” of wisdom). (I Cor. 12:8)
 - a. The best use of knowledge.
 - b. The word of God.
 - c. A really effective teacher.
9. *Knowledge* (or “utterance” of knowledge). (I Cor. 12:8)

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- a. The divine body of information.
 - b. Deep study of the Bible.
 - c. A really effective preacher.
10. *Faith.* (I Cor. 12:9)
- a. What really saves us.
 - b.** The gospel.
 - c. Intuitive instruction from God believed by the recipient.
11. *Healings.* (I Cor. 12:9)
- a. Instantaneous, permanent, no failure cures of all kinds of sickness.
 - b. Real answer to prayer.
 - c. The laying on of hands and anointing with oil.
12. *Miracles.* (ICor. 12:10)
- a. Any inexplicable occurrence.
 - b. An adjustment of the laws of God for a special purpose.
 - c. God's way of looking at life.
13. *Discerning of Spirits.* (I Cor. 12:10)
- a. Identifying demons.
 - b. Reading minds and diagnosing demon possession.
 - c. Supernatural intelligence.
14. *Tongues.* (I Cor. 12:10)
- a. Ecstatic, heavenly languages.
 - b. Various languages of men supernaturally known.
 - c. Prayer languages.
15. *Interpretation of tongues.* (I Cor. 12:10)
- a. A lesson about tongues.
 - b. Translation of languages.
 - c. Speaking under the Spirit's direction.
16. *Apostle.* (Eph. 4:11)
- a. The twelve and Paul who were sent and empowered by Jesus.
 - b. Special spokesmen for God.
 - c. All who God calls and sends.
17. *Evangelists.* (Eph. 4:11)
- a. Those who hold revival meetings.
 - b. God's servants.
 - c. Evangelists of the message who give their whole time to the task.
18. *Pastors and teachers.* (Eph. 4:11)
- a. Local preachers.
 - b. Elders or bishops.
 - c. Two offices in the church.
19. *Hospitality.* (I Pet. 4:10,11)
- a. Feeding the preacher.
 - b. Meeting the needs both physically and spiritually of those who hurt.
 - c. Enjoying the help of others.

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(Correct answers to the quiz.)

1.-c; 2.-b; 3.-c; 4.-a; 5.-b; 6.-c; 7.-b; 8.-a; 9.-a; 10.-c; 11.-a; 12.-b; 13.-b; 14.-b; 15.-b; 16.-a; 17.-c; 18.-b; 19.-b.

18. Who gives Spiritual gifts? For what purpose?

Answer: The Holy Spirit is the origin or source of these gifts. He empowered (through God by the choice of Christ) each gifted person even as seemed best to Him. No glory or advantage could be claimed by one gifted person above another inasmuch as the power is of the Spirit and not of man. Each and every gift was for the building up of the whole body. As each member of the human body complements and augments the function of every other member, so does each member in the body of Christ. There are no unnecessary members—each has his place and the Spirit's equipment for his work to the building up of the whole body.

19. Was there some special need or advantage in granting such gifts to the church at Corinth?

Answer: We believe the church in the Greek city of Corinth was somewhat typical of the churches throughout the Roman empire in the first century. It is so important that we remember—the only churches who did not have the New Testament are those described in the New Testament! There was no information but that divinely-directed. Some of the nineteen abilities had universal permanent purpose such as: (1) helps; (2) teachings; (3) exhortation; (4) giving; (5) administration; (6) mercy; (7) evangelists; (8) pastor-teachers; (9) hospitality; but we cannot see any purpose in claiming continuity and permanence for: (1) prophecy; (2) wisdom; (3) knowledge; (4) faith (as here defined); (5) healings; (6) miracles; (7) discerning of spirits; (8) tongues; (9) interpretation of tongues; (10) apostles—these were authenticating instructional gifts given until “The Faith” once for all delivered could be given to the saints in the form of the New Testament.

Let's take another careful look at the outline of this section: 12:12-31.

B. Paul explains the necessity of maintaining the unity of the church, the body of Christ, although the many members of the body possess different spiritual gifts (12-31).

1. He explains this oneness by referring to the human body with its many members (12-26).
 - a) He lays down the basic principle of unity (12-13).
 - (1) He declares that the principle of the oneness of the body applies to Christ, that is, to His body which is the church (12).
 - (2) He explains how they became one in the church (13).
 - (a) The oneness was the result of all —whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free — being baptized in one spirit into one body.
 - (b) In so doing, all were made to drink of (participate in) one spirit.
 - b) He explains the necessity for the many members in the one body (14-19).
 - (1) He indicates that the distinction between the foot and the hand and between the ear and the eye does not remove the fact that each member is a necessary part of the body (14-16).
 - (2) He asks questions that point out the same thing: What if the whole body were one member, as an eye or an ear, where would the body be? (17-19).
 - c) He explains certain principles that must be observed in order to prevent schism in the body (20-26).
 - (1) The principle of dependence: each one needs the other (20-21).
 - (2) The principle of honor: the relation of the honorable to the less honorable parts of the body

(22-24).

- (3) The principle of divine arrangement: God is the author of the arrangement that promotes mutual concern and allows no schism in the body (25-26).
2. He applies these principles to the church (27-31).
 - a) He reminds his readers of this important fact:
We are the body of Christ, and each member is a part of the body, but not the whole body (27).
 - b) He reminds them that God set the following in the church:
 - (1) Persons: First, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers.
 - (2) Gifts: Miracles, healings, governments, tongues,
 - c) He asks a series of questions implying negative answers to show how the principles apply to the situation at Corinth (29-30).
 - d) He concludes with a two-fold suggestion (31).
 - (1) Desire earnestly the greater gifts.
 - (2) Follow a most excellent way which he is about to show them.⁸
- Please, please, read the text over at least twice — then read our questions and discussion.

20. Please explain the use of the term or name “Christ” in 12:12.

Answer: Christ is the head and director of the body— the head is often identified as the whole; reference is made to “the face” of man when we are discussing the whole man. Our Lord is alive again— not only in heaven at the right hand of God, but in and through His body on earth, i.e. His ‘called out ones.’ What a wonder to contemplate the fact that “we are as He was in the world.” (Cf. I John 4:17) We are each of us and all of us indwelt by the Spirit of Christ and do represent Him as His body.

21. Why the need for the emphasis upon unity as indicated in 12:12?

Answer: There was division in the body of Christ in Corinth over the mutual abilities of the various members. Paul is to draw an analogy from this fact. The point here is: we have many members in our human body, and yet there is solid harmonious unity. Each member respects every other member. Each one has an ability that is not in competition to any other ability. God created and organized both bodies (the human body and the body of the church)—why isn’t there unity in both of them? There can be; God intends that it be so.

22. Does 12:13 teach Holy Spirit baptism for every believer or Christian? If not, what does it teach? Please remember our discussion of this point in an earlier lesson. Please do some work on this point. (Cf. Vol. 1, p. 41 and pp. 94-98.)

Answer: Read the following references and answer the question, “How did such persons get into the body of Christ—His church?”

‘For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.’ Gal. 3:27

“Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”
Rom. 6:4

There is a rule of Bible reading here to be observed: whenever the word “baptism” is used in the New Testament, water is the element of that baptism unless some other element is indicated in the text or context. This is an invariable rule. We are tempted to reproduce all the references to baptism in the New

⁸ T.R. Applebury, Studies in Corinthians, Joplin, College Press.

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Testament to demonstrate how obvious it is, but we do not have the space. Baptism into Christ was obtained by immersion in water. In the same act and at the same time we were immersed or buried into His death. At the time and place of our baptism we met His blood in His death and thus obtained the remission of our sins. There is only one baptism that will place us into one body.

The Holy Spirit is the influence or means of leading us to this baptism. We could accurately say we have been led or influenced by the one Spirit to be baptized into Christ. Consider all the Holy Spirit prompted influences which led us to be baptized into the body of our Lord:

The word of God is the word of the Spirit. It was through this Spirit-inspired word we were taught of our Saviour.

(2) The Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin to the conscience of the one who hears the word preached.

(3) The Holy Spirit had been at work arranging the circumstances of life, all of which have led us to hear, believe and be baptized into Christ. Thus it has indeed been by the influence of the one Spirit that we were all led to be baptized by the one baptism into the One body. At the time we were baptized the Holy Spirit took up His indwelling in our bodies and we were thus all made “to drink” or receive the One Spirit.

Please read carefully the comment on page 94, 95 of Volume One . We repeat a point or two made there: (1) There are only two experiences mentioned in the scriptures as the “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:1-4 –The day of Pentecost experience is so referred to by our Lord in Acts 1:5, speaking to His apostles He says, “You will be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” It happened—but—the apostles were not baptized into the one body of Christ by this experience; they were rather equipped for their task as the personal spokesmen of our Lord. Acts 11:15-17 describes what happened to the household of Cornelius as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but such an experience did not put them into the one body. Peter commanded them to be baptized in water after they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit convinced Peter and the six Jewish brethren that God was accepting the Gentiles. They were lost when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit; they were saved when they were baptized in water for the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit as a permanent guest. (2) Acts 19:1-6 tells us that the twelve men of Ephesus were baptized in water first—after which Paul laid his hands upon them and the Holy Spirit enabled them to speak in tongues and prophecy. These men were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus into the One body and then manifested the powers of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did not baptize them—Paul baptized them by immersion in water into the one body; after such action the Holy Spirit empowered them. (3) The expression “by one Spirit” can be a reference to the Holy Spirit as the agent instead of the element of the action. As an example: I Cor. 12:3—“by” or “in” the Spirit (repeated twice) is to be understood as the enablement of the Holy Spirit. To paraphrase the verse, we could say “wherefore I give you to understand that no one speaking in union with God’s Spirit declares: accursed is Jesus! and no one is able to declare: Lord is Jesus! except in union with the Holy Spirit.”⁹ (Lenski) The Holy Spirit is the agent or means in each case. The Holy Spirit is the source not the element—an instrumental case is clearly indicated. Beginning in the ninth verse of this same chapter we have three uses of the word “by” (or “in”) which show plainly the point we are making. It was by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit that certain persons were able to exercise these various abilities. To paraphrase verse 13 we could say: “For by the influence of the one Spirit were we all immersed (in water) into the one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and we were all given the refreshment of the Holy Spirit as an unseen guest in our bodies.”

23. What two bodies are under consideration in this whole section?

Answer: We have already given some answer to this question, but it will be helpful to answer it more fully. Since the human body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit it becomes a good example for

⁹ R.C.Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1948.

an analogous comparison. Read verses 14 through 27 and notice these obvious and very helpful comparisons: (1) each member has power of its own which no other member has—i.e. the ability to function as a hand is provided by the muscles and sinews and bone structure of the hand; the foot does not and cannot so function. Such power or ability is nothing over which to be either vain or unhappy; (2) each and every member has a responsible and needed, as well as compatible, task to do. The ability and the task is given—not earned. (3) What if envy occurred in the human body as it has in the spiritual body, the church? What a spectacle it would present! The foot wants out of the body if it cannot be a hand. “If the foot, which treads the ground, and is often covered with dirt, envying the hand, shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not a member of the body; is it for this not a member of the body, and free from performing its proper function?” (4) Inferior feelings are false—the ear is not less than the eye. No such anarchy would ever happen in the human body. Why? Each member is responsive to the head and acts accordingly; envy and inferior feelings will be removed from the spiritual body when the directions from the head (via Paul) are followed. (5) If every member in the human body were given its own way and each became what it wanted to, how quickly the whole body would be destroyed. Each is necessary to the other and all to the function of the whole. (6) It is God’s choice and equipment with which we have to do, so to resist His choice or criticize His equipment is a reflection on Him. (7) Neither can we hold a feeling of superiority and be pleasing to Him. We would never consider for a moment the possibility of one member of the human body as considering itself the chief or most important. There are other comparisons we will make as we study in detail every word in this chapter, but these are enough to show the value in comparing the human body to the Spiritual body.

24. What members of the Lord’s body in Corinth were giving special trouble?

Answer: Those who had the ability to speak in tongues were involved. We cannot stress too much the need for definition on this word “tongue.” We have published Knofel Staton’s research on this word. We can offer nothing more helpful than a few excerpts from this book, SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY:

Now we must ask, “What does glossa mean in Acts and in I Corinthians?” Based upon research thus far, it would be expected that the word would be used in one of the two ways it has consistently been used in every other Bible verse.

Luke’s first usage in Acts is in chapter 2. There it is clear that glossa is used as a known foreign language (verses 3, 4, 11, 26). In verse 8, the Greek word *dialektos* (from which we get our English word “dialect,” and which always means a language or a nation), is used interchangeably with glossa found in verse 11.

What does glossa mean elsewhere in Acts? It is used in only two other verses—10:46 and 19:6. The usage in 10:46 is the same as in Acts 2, as explained by Peter in 11:17. He says it is the same (equal in Greek) gift. There is no reason to suspect that Luke changed his usage in 19:6. We have already seen that he considers the usage to be synonymous with *dialektos* (Acts 2:8).

Now how is glossa used in I Corinthians? From a usage analysis elsewhere in the Bible, we would expect one of two usages—(1) physical tongue in the mouth, or (2) a foreign language. If we had no presuppositions, this is the methodology we would follow. If this methodology had been followed by all, many misleading ideas would not have “gotten off the ground.”

The word *unknown* which appears in some versions is not in the original Greek. Its addition to the English text has no textual support. Until I Corinthians, the Bible does not speak about any “unknown” glossa. In fact, I Corinthians 12:10 and 28 says that there are “various kinds of tongues.” The word *kind* refers to a family or genealogy; Paul could not know that one was from a different family than another if they had actually been unknown languages.

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The phrase “There are various kinds” is significant. The Greek word translated various is heteros, which means “different.” Every time this word is used in conjunction with glossa, it refers to a known foreign language. This is the construction in Acts 2:4 and in I Corinthians 14:21.

The latter is a quote from Isaiah 28:11, which is a reference to the Assyrian language. When Luke used beteros and glossa together, he referred to a foreign language.

Paul and Luke traveled together. It is unlikely that Paul would use the same construction to refer to a different phenomenon than Luke had in mind. It is further unlikely that Paul would use an Old Testament reference which speaks about a known foreign language to discuss an ecstatic utterance in an unknown language (I Corinthians 14:21 and Isaiah 28:11).

There is one other important fact to consider in determining the nature of the tongues mentioned in I Corinthians 14. That is the meaning of the word interpret or interpretation. The Greek word is hermeneuo, from which we get our English word Hermeneutics. In one form or another, that word is used thirteen times in the New Testament. What does it mean?

Outside I Corinthians, it is used to mean to translate words from one known language into another known language. See John 1:38,42; 9:7; Hebrews 7:2; Acts 9:36. The only exception to this is in Luke 24:27. There it is used to mean to explain the content-meaning from one known language into the same known language. Never is the word used in the Bible to mean to interpret an unknown language into a known language!

The word hermeneuo used with glossa enhances the position that Paul’s subject in I Corinthians 14 is a known foreign language which is translatable. Thus its nature could be checked out by many who knew the language. It is further noted that the word glossa referred to a known language. It was not used to speak about some language which had not been discovered, or which was being used in isolation.

In answer to the question we would say that those persons who were divinely gifted with the ability to speak in a language they had never learned were exercising this ability in the wrong way. As to just what mistakes were being made we will reserve until later our answer to that question.

25. Notice verse 15—why would the foot become dissatisfied with being a foot? What is the point of the verse?

Answer: We have already suggested one answer: the foot could feel inferior as one who works in dirt and must constantly be cleansed. The point of the verse is that regardless of all complaints the foot will not be released from its position as a member of the body. This has a two-fold lesson for the members of the body of Christ in Corinth— or in any other place or time: (1) to complain about our work in the body is a reflection on the head who has given us our direction—indeed, a reflection on our creator who has made us what we are. (2) All of our complaining will not remove us from the body. God has not given up on us. We understand in all of this discussion that Paul is personifying members of the human body so he can show what could not be seen by a direct reference to the persons involved. Were there some members at Corinth who were going to “quit the church” because they felt they were not appreciated? To coin a phrase, “they were being stepped on. If we do not appreciate ourselves we cannot be appreciated by anyone else. Even if someone else wants to express their sincere thanks for our work, we have such a poor estimate of ourselves we cannot hear it. The message is: you are the foot of Christ; no one else is like you; no one else can do what you can. All complaints will not change your position and actually hinder the important work you are to do.

26. Is Paul trying to show the importance of each member, or of each supernatural gift?

Answer: We believe both thoughts are implicit in his discussion. Each member is important

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because each member has a gift or ability or function. We do not mean that each member in Corinth had one of the nine gifts here listed, but Paul gave other lists, such as those in Rom. 12:6-8 and Eph. 4:11,12. (Cf. I Pet. 4:9,10.) Each member is important because each one was placed in the body for a unique purpose. Each member is empowered and thus enabled to accomplish a job no one else can do. By a simple reading of these verses we can delineate the following abilities all of which were given to someone:

Romans 12:6-8

- (1) Prophecy and prophets
- (2) Ministering or helping
- (3) Teaching
- (4) Exhorting
- (5) Giving
- (6) Government (ruling)
- (7) Showing mercy

I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30

- (8) Wisdom (*utterance of wisdom*)
- (9) Knowledge (*utterance of knowledge*)
- (10) Faith
- (11) Healings
- (12) Miracles
- (13) Discernment of spirits
- (14) Tongues
- (15) Interpretation of tongues

Ephesians 4:11,12

- (16) Apostles
- (17) Evangelists
- (18) Pastors-teachers
- (19) Hospitality (I Pet. 4:9)

We should like to here define each of these abilities:

(1) Prophecy and prophet s—Romans 12:3-8 (The gift of prophecy makes a prophet.) “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith?”

Prophecy has always been a forthtelling of the message of God. A prophet was a teacher of God’s word by intuitive knowledge. He did also have the ability to predict or foretell, but his major work was to forth-tell or teach. Divine knowledge and wisdom were essential equipment for this job. Evidently the prophet had to exercise faith to cause his gift to become operative. We believe God illumined his mind so he would know what to say. He then agreed (or believed) with what he saw (or heard) in his mind and communicated it to those who heard him. These men became the foundation upon which our Lord built His church – Ephesians 2:20. We read of no one praying for the gift of prophecy. We do read of men who prophesied following the laying on of the hands of apostles —Acts 19:6. The only biblical means of imparting this gift is through the hands of the apostles.

We see but little point in referring to present day preachers or teachers as prophets. They do not have the gift or ability to prophesy so why call them prophets?

(We have found much help from Leslie B. Flynn’s book, 19 SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Much of this section is adapted, with permission, from Flynn’s work.)

(2) Ministering or helping (helps)—Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28. Assistance, lending a

hand. Verb form. —Acts 20:35 “support the weak.” Intensive verb form used by Martha—Luke 10:40 “to take one’s turn with.” Illustrated by the seven in Acts 6:1 ff. “The distribution of food is an incidental factor. The essence of the gift is that the temporal help given, whether waiting on tables or whatever enables a Christian worker to devote more time to a spiritual ministry.”¹⁰

The gift of helps is the Spirit-given ability to serve the church in any supporting role, usually temporal, though sometimes spiritual. The gift enables one to serve joyfully and diligently wherever and whenever required. Those served have more time and energy for the ministry of prayer and preaching, resulting in the blessing of others. After the election of these seven deacons, historian Luke comments, “The Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly” (v. 7).

This gift is not for helping the poor, sick, aged, orphans, and widows (which is really the gift of showing mercy), but for lending a hand wherever it will release other workers in their spiritual ministries, and to do it in such a way that it strengthens and heartens.¹¹

Other Biblical Examples: On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas had John Mark as their helper or minister (Acts 13:5). Doubtless he performed many menial, temporal tasks, freeing them to carry on their evangelistic and edifying ministries.

Luke speaks of two men, Timotheus and Erastus, who ministered to Paul (Acts 19:22). These men with their gift of helps, Paul sent into Macedonia to be of help there.

In fact, Paul gathered about him a full team of workers without whom he could not possibly have carried on his great ministry. Luke, the beloved physician, must have been a valuable assistant, especially at the time of beatings stonings, and other privations. Luke often lists others who exercised the gift of helps (Acts 20:4).

At the end of his letters, Paul sometimes mentions several faithful helpers (Romans 16:3ff.; Colossians 4:7ff.). The Romans list contains 26 names, of whom perhaps 10 are women, most of whom are commended directly or indirectly for being helpers. The first person mentioned in the chapter is specifically singled out for the gift of helps or ministering. Paul says, I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea ...for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also” (Romans 16:1,2). The word servant means minister.

(3) Teaching—The gift of teaching is the ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the truth of the Word of God. Since the first teachers did not have the Word of God in written form they had to depend upon the direct communication by the Holy Spirit of divine information. Along with this information (knowledge) was the ability to make proper application (wisdom). In the context of today: we have all the divine knowledge necessary to life and godliness in the Word of God. It is altogether adequate for correction, encouragement, and all other training in righteousness. (II Pet. 1:3; II Tim. 3:16)

Let’s notice its association with the prophetic gift: clear communication of truth is involved in many speaking gifts. The missionary who transplants the Gospel across cultural lines, the evangelist who proclaims the Good News, the shepherd who feeds his sheep the Word of life, all have in common the clear explanation of truth. But the gift most frequently linked with that of teaching is the prophetic.

Prophecy and pedagogy are the only two gifts mentioned in every one of Paul’s three lists.

The two gifts are mentioned together in Acts 5:42: “And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

¹⁰ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

¹¹ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

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In the church at Antioch were “certain prophets and teachers” (Acts 13:1). Two of them, Paul and Barnabas, continued “teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord” (Acts 15:35).

Perhaps one reason Paul gathered a team of helpers around him was to balance the prophesying and the teaching. Some may have been more gifted at announcing or proclaiming truth (prophesying or preaching) while others excelled at explaining (teaching) it. Some pounded it home; others expounded it. Paul combined both gifts. When he dwelt two years as a prisoner in his own hired house at Rome, he received all who came to him, “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28: 30, 31).

Prophecy and pedagogical gifts were also associated in the ministry of Christ. “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23). But far more is said of His teaching than His preaching. He was the Master Teacher.

(4) Exhorting—The word exhort in the original does not imply being bombastic, vociferous, thunderous. It may be translated comfort, console, entreat, beg, implore, counsel. In essence, it is encouragement.

Its noun form is a title for both the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter (John 4:16); whereas the Lord Jesus is called Advocate (I John 2:1). Both words could be translated Paraclete, which means one called alongside to help. The Holy Spirit has been called to our side to assist us; the Lord Jesus has been called to represent us before the Father.

The gift of exhortation involves the supernatural ability to come alongside to help, to strengthen the weak, reassure the wavering, buttress the buffeted, steady the faltering, console the troubled, encourage the halting. Just as the Holy Spirit is an instrument of help, so the Spirit uses this gift to make us instruments of encouragement to fellow saints.

A junior high advisor comes to the Christian Education Director after youth meeting one night ready to resign. The director listens sympathetically, then reminds the advisor that some lives have obviously been changed, and other young people are growing. He points out one or two areas that need correction and gives some suggestion to improve the group. After prayer the junior high advisor, instead of resigning, goes out with chin up, resolved to carry on and do a better job.

The ability to exhort is a gracious ability. It uses not so much sharp admonition as healing word. It works with compassion, not throwing a confessed sin back in the confessor’s face. Without condoning the wrongdoing, the possessor of the gift of exhortation will help the victim see how lie can overcome.

The gift is not so much exercised through public discourse, though this may be involved, as through personal counseling when one is called alongside in moments of misery. It may take time to encourage new believers, comfort the ill, counsel the perplexed, and strengthen the backslider.¹² Cf. Acts 14:21, 22; 16:40; 20:1; 20:17-35; 15:31, 32; 1 Peter 5:1, 2; Hebrews 13:22; II Corinthians 1:3-7; Hebrews 10:25. Barnabas is a classic example of this gift in action.

(5) Giving—Paul says that the gift of giving involves giving “with simplicity” (Romans 12:8). Simplicity, an interesting word, has been translated many ways. Literally, it means without folds—as a piece of cloth unfolded—and is rendered simplicity, singleness of mind, mental honesty, without pretense. When one gives from such openness of heart, one donates freely, with delight. Moreover, he gives generously, with liberality. Simplicity in Romans 12:8 has been translated in all of the above ways by one version or another.

¹² Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

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The person with the gift of giving will give with singleness of mind. No ulterior motive will ruffle the cloth of his mind to make a fold or two in it. He will not give to salve a conscience uneasy because of the way he acquired his money. Nor will he give to gain something in return. Sending a gift, we might sign “love,” but never “I am giving this so that you will admire me.” Nor do we give for public show, as did the Pharisees who blew trumpets so people would be alerted to watch them bestow their gifts. The person who will not donate unless his name is inscribed on the stained-glass window or engraved on the Cornerstone doesn’t understand Christ’s command not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing (Matthew 6:3). The gift of giving permits no alloy of self-seeking in the coin of our gift.

The gift of giving involves giving freely, with delight, and with love. The January issue of a magazine carried an amusing cartoon. A dirty-looking beggar, extending his hat for a handout, carries a placard which reads, “To give after Christmas—that is true compassion.” Real giving is not limited to times and seasons or to a whim of the moment. It reaches from a cheerful heart.

Paul told the Corinthians to give “not grudgingly, or of necessity” (II Corinthians 9:7). The person with the gift of giving will not say, “Oh, if I go to that service they’ll take an offering,” or, “Here comes the plate; I’ll have to put something in, much as it hurts me.” The gift of giving does not create a funeral atmosphere at offering time. Rather, one gives cheerfully, “for God loveth a cheerful giver.” The Greek word cheerful gives us our English hilarious. The gift of giving will make offering time a happy occasion, an opportunity to give cheerfully back to Him who has given so much for us and to us.

(6) Government (ruling)—Despite the universal priesthood of believers which puts all on the same level, despite the lack of biblical backing for domination of laity by clergy, despite the serving-slave characteristic of major church offices, a leadership ministry of some kind is part of the Spirit’s gift to the church. Whether paid or volunteer, full-time or part-time, leadership gifts do exist.

Christ appointed and trained the Twelve who did some ruling in those very early years of the church (Acts 4:37, 9:27). To supervise the Early Church, the apostles remained in Jerusalem when everybody else scattered abroad (Acts 8:1, 4).

The Twelve advised the election of seven deacons to supervise the distribution of food to the needy, thus freeing the Twelve for concentration on prayer and proclamation. These two groups, the apostles and the deacons, were special. But when we read of Paul’s missionary journeys, we soon discover a consistent policy regarding leadership. Sooner or later Paul saw to it that each church had officers. For example, on his return visit to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch on his first journey, he and Barnabas “ordained them elders in every church.”¹³ Acts 14:23). At his first visit when the church was founded, believers would not yet have qualifications for eldership, but by the time of his revisitation some would have matured sufficiently to serve as elders.

Though we do not know when, we do know that elders were appointed at Ephesus (Acts 20:17), and elders (bishops) and deacons at Philippi (Philippians 1:1). Paul left Titus at Crete “that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Titus 1:5). Then Paul listed qualifications for an elder, whom he also termed a bishop (1:6-8). Paul likewise gave preacher Timothy a list of qualifications for church leaders (I Timothy 3:1-13), in which he specifically mentions the bishop (elder) taking care of the church of God (v. 5). Paul said that the elder who ruled well should receive double honor, because he does two things: leads as well as teaches (I Timothy 5:17)

(7) Showing mercy—The gift of showing mercy is the Spirit-guided ability to manifest practical, compassionate, cheerful love toward suffering members of the body of Christ. Paul included the gift in his Romans list: “He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (12-8).

The verb *show mercy* may be translated *to pity, commiserate, have compassion on, show gracious favor to*. When disaster strikes, people invariably feel pity. But too often, this emotion soon dies to wait

¹³ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

the next report of tragedy.

But the pity involved in this gift is not just the stirring of the emotions, but deep-down compassion, supernatural in origin. It's not just kindness springing from man's heart, but is divine love, under the Spirit's guidance, acting in Christ's name, with the object of glorifying the Father.

Whoever has this gift does not steel himself in the face of another's miseries. Rather he is drawn to his suffering brother. He must do something about it. The gift involves more than a feeling of pity; it requires action.*

(8) Wisdom (utterance of wisdom) – I Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30. Wisdom is the best use of knowledge. Some were promised supernatural aid in judgment. This must be different than the wisdom for which every Christian can pray. Cf. James 1:5.

The story is told of an American on his way home from Europe by boat after graduating from a continental university. He was on deck examining his four years of notes when a sudden roll of the boat pitched him against the rail and propelled his notes overboard. He was not injured, but he had to go back to Europe for four more years to gain more notes!

Such knowledge is useless. And even knowledge stored in the mind is useless unless it is applied. This principle pertains to divine knowledge too. It's not enough to be able to grasp and systemize the deep truths of God's Word. Also needed is the ability to relate those truths to the needs and problems of life. This is the area in which the gift of the word of wisdom operates. The ability to apply knowledge to vexing situations, to weigh their true nature, to exercise spiritual insight into the rightness or wrongness of a complex state of affairs calls for the gift of wisdom.¹⁴

(9) Knowledge (utterance of knowledge)—This is divinely imparted information. We cannot separate this from teaching or “utterance.” The teacher would necessarily be equipped with knowledge and wisdom and the supernatural ability to communicate or with “the word of utterance.”

Since knowledge helps others only when communicated, Paul speaks of the word or utterance of knowledge. This ability is closely related to the gift of teaching. In fact, some scholars consider teaching and utterance of knowledge one and the same gift. However, in our lists the gifts are classified as separate. In the gift of teaching, emphasis is on communication or utterance; in the gift under discussion, emphasis is on knowledge.¹⁵

Think of the large place Paul gave knowledge in his ministry in Ephesus. For two years he argued daily in the hall of Tyrannus. A marginal reading in certain manuscripts adds the words, “from the fifth hour to the tenth” (Acts 19:9). Five hours a day for two years would total 3,650 hours of teaching. No wonder “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord” (v. 10). Utterance of knowledge gave content to evangelism and edified those won so that they, not Paul, fanned out into all the provinces to carry the Gospel. This episode has been called one of the most amazing illustrations of the equipping of the saints for the ministry—and it couldn't have been done without the word of knowledge.¹⁶

(10) Faith—We must say that this faith comes by the intuitive communication of the will or word of God. Faith (all faith) comes by hearing—intuitively or by the audible communication, or reading of the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

The gift of faith, listed by Paul in I Corinthians 12:9, is more than saving faith. No one can enter the Christian life without exercising genuine faith. “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). To continue the Christian life also requires faith. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7). However, not all believers possess the faith to remove mountains. The inclusion of mountain-

¹⁴ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

¹⁵ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

¹⁶ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

moving faith in the list of gifts distinguishes it from saving faith (I Corinthians 13:2).

The gift of faith is a Spirit-given ability to see something that God wants done and to sustain unwavering confidence that God will do it regardless of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Stephen, full of faith, was enabled to perform miracles (Acts 6:8).¹⁷

(11) Healings—This was a supernatural ability granted by the Holy Spirit to certain persons for the purpose of authenticating the divine message and messenger. Certain characteristics in the New Testament mark the exercise of this ability: (1) Instantaneous, (2) Permanent, (3) No failures. It would also be well to indicate what this gift does not do: (1) Does not heal every illness. Everyone would live forever on this earth if such were the case.

- a. Epaphroditus was so sick he nearly died and yet was a close friend of Paul. (Philippians 2:25-27)
- b. Timothy had chronic stomach trouble. (I Timothy 5:23)
- c. Paul was not in good health. (I Corinthians 2:3; II Corinthians 11:30; 12:5, 7—10; Galatians 4:13)

Only those indicated intuitively by the Holy Spirit to the healer were healed. This would seem to be an exercise of the gift of faith on the part of the one with the gift of healing.

This gift does not depend on the sick Person's faith. The concept that lack of faith prevents healing is related to the erroneous idea that sickness is the result of sin. The rabbis used to say that dropsy was due to immorality, jaundice to hatred, poverty to pride, liver trouble to backbiting, and leprosy to an evil tongue.

Some illness may indeed be the result of personal sin. Some were sick at Corinth because they abused the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:30). However, though disease and death have come to the human race in general because of Adam's sin, it is a cruel hoax to claim that individual sickness is the consequence of personal sin or that a person of sufficient faith will be healed. Our Lord exploded this false theory when asked whether a man had been born blind because of his own or his parent's sin. He stated, 'Neither . . . but that the works of God should be made manifest in him' (John 9:1-3).

Many precious saints get sick and shut-in who have not committed any sin to cause illness. Was Paul's thorn in the flesh due to personal sin? Was Dorcas' fatal malady due to lack of faith? On the other hand, many openly sinning saints enjoy robust health. To say that sickness comes from personal iniquity is devastating, creating a guilt complex and leading to despairing conclusions: "I must be a bad sinner"/"I lack faith"/"I'm a poor Christian, or I'd get well."

God's main purpose for the believer is to conform him to the image of Christ. Whether or not God heals depends on whether illness or recovery best contributes to that end. Thus, the gift of healing should not be exercised on the basis of the patient's faith but on the condition of the will of God. God's sovereign plan sometimes calls for infirmity to advance divine glory and saintly maturity. Complete deliverance from bodily illness will be ours only at the resurrection of the body. How wrong to affirm that an ailing disciple is out of the will of God, or deficient in faith if his affliction is designed to develop his faith.

The gift does not account for all healing. The gift of healing requires God's power. But not all healing is divine; some is demonic, some psychic. (II Thess. 2:9)

The powers of darkness enabled the magicians of Egypt, Jannes and Jambres, to do many unusual feats (Exodus 7:11, 12, 22; 8:7; II Timothy 3:8). Jesus was falsely accused of casting out demons by diabolical power (Matthew 12:24). The world of the first-century believers was full of demon-energized healers and magic workers (Acts 8:9-11; 13:8-10). Tradition says that multitudes of pagans were miraculously cured in the temple of Serapis at Alexandria, Egypt. A night's sleep by sick pilgrims in the temple in Epidaurus, Greece, reportedly healed thousands. We hear of healings performed during seances, which, from the Christian viewpoint, could well be attributed to demonic power.

Throughout the Christian era, supposed miracles of physical healing have occurred within and without the professing church, both in Roman Catholic and Protestant circles. Because of claimed

¹⁷ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

curative powers resulting from alleged appearances of Mary or a saint at some particular spot, famous shrines have arisen in many parts of the world such as Lourdes in France and Fatima in Portugal. With 75 per cent of illness psychosomatic in origin, all healings need not be classified as either divine or demonic. Many are likely psychological, or mind over matter, as in Christian Science. Someone put it, “Many are either genuine cures of imaginary ills, or imaginary cures of real ills.”¹⁸

(12) Miracles—Miracles relate the laws of God in that they: (1) Set them aside—such as Jesus walking on water, (2) Increase their time of accomplishment—such as some physical illness.

The word miracle is often used quite loosely to refer to biblical wonders like raising the dead, to astronauts landing on the moon, to someone emerging from a car unhurt after crashing into a tree at 70 miles per hour, to finding a dime on the street when one is a dime short for some needed expense. Only the first example fits the biblical definition of a miracle; the other three are, in order, a greater understanding and use of the laws of science, an instance of the law of averages, and the working of divine providence.

Here’s a definition of a miracle in the restricted, scriptural sense: an event of supernatural power, palpable to the senses, accompanying the servant of the Lord to authenticate the divine commission.

Three words appear most frequently in the New Testament in connection with miracles. *Power* is translated miracle 9 times. *Wonder*, occurring 16 times, is always in the plural and always with signs, meaning something portentous or astonishing. *Sign*, appearing about 70 times and meaning miracle on about 60 of these occasions, has the idea of signaling or signifying. For example, the miracles in John’s Gospel were to signal the deity of Christ, causing people to believe in Him. “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples. But these (signs) are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (20:30,31).

These three words most used with reference to miracles each fit a different aspect of the definition.

- *Power*—A miracle is an event of supernatural power.
- *Wonder*—palpable to the senses.
- *Sign*—accompanying the servant of the Lord to authenticate the divine commission.

All three words are used together in the same verse more than once in the New Testament. For example, it was said of Jesus that He was “a Man approved of God among you by miracles (Power) and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you (Acts 2:22).”¹⁹

(13) Discernment of spirits—This is essentially reading the intentions of men or reading their minds: It has also to do with the ability to identify the spirits under the control of Satan or demons and the Holy Spirit. This gift or ability protected the early church from false prophets, false apostles and false documents. Such a gift was a necessity in identifying and casting out demons. We should like to say just here that for there to be any exorcism of demons today the following facts would need to be established:

(1) discerning of spirits operative for the sure identification of demons; (2) the authority to cast out such evil spirits, *i.e.* by whose authority do you presume to do this? “Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?” (Acts 19:15); (3) when did demons inhabit Christians?; (4) where do we identify (in the New Testament) demons as personified sins? such as: “the demon of lust” or “the demon of hate” etc.

Though every believer is responsible for discerning the spirits, some have a particular power to do so. This is the gift of discernment—a special ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. A person with the gift of discernment can discriminate between that which is raised up by God and that which pretends to be. He has the ability to unmask Satan’s trickery, to detect false teachings, and

¹⁸ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

¹⁹ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

to ferret out false teachers. He has the ability to spot a phony before others see through his phoniness.²⁰

(14) Tongues—(The use of the word in the Bible. From Knofel Staton’s book we considered this gift earlier—we refer you to our comments on pages 50-52).

(15) Interpretation of tongues—From the above discussion it will be clear that this ability is the supernatural talent of translating a foreign language.

(16) *Apostles*—We quote again from Leslie Flynn:

They had been with Jesus from the beginning. When Peter listed qualifications for a replacement for Judas, he said, “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John.. .“ (Acts 1:21,22)

They had a personal call from Christ. The Lord chose twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14). He commissioned them, “AS My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you” (John 20:2 1).

They were witnesses of the resurrection. Peter, in listing an apostle’s qualifications, said that he must “be a witness with us of His resurrection” (Acts 1:22).

They laid the doctrinal foundation of the church. Jesus had promised them, “The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. . . When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of himself; ..and He will shew you things to come” (John 14:26; 16:13). The major fulfillment of this promise was the New Testament revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit. Later-century Christians admitted to the sacred canon only those writings which they knew emanated from the apostolic circle, or from their close associates such as Mark, Luke, and James, the brother of Jesus. The test of the New Testament canonicity was apostolicity.

- (5) *They laid the structural foundation of the church.* This involved the use of the keys (Matthew 16:18,19) in opening the door for the Gospel to Jews (Acts 2:38-41), to half-Jewish Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), and to Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48). The church was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).
- (6) They had Power to work miracles. After Pentecost, many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). Three chapters later we read, “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people” (5:12). Another three chapters later we are told “that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given” (8:18). The purpose of this miraculous power was to authenticate the apostolic witness (II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4). A major segment of the church holds that when the apostles died the sign gifts diminished dramatically or disappeared.
- (7) They will one day sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29,30. Also their names will *their names will be inscribed on the 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem* (Revelation 21:14). The apostles were unique in these ways. The word *apostle* had an official usage limited to the Twelve (Acts 9:27; I Corinthians 15:7). No one of a later generation could meet their qualifications. Thus there could never be any such thing as apostolic successors. The office could not be repeated nor transmitted. When the apostles died, the office of apostleship died with them. Those who made false claim to this office were called liars (Revelation 2:2).

(17) Evangelists—All Christians are to be soul-winners, or to share the good news. There are those who are gifted with the ability to spend all their energies in this effort. Flynn has defined it as: “the gift of proclaiming the good news of salvation effectively so that people respond to the claims of Christ in conversion and discipleship.” Please read the lesson on this subject in THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE, page 87-95.

²⁰ Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub.Co.

(18) Pastor-teachers — This is the office of elder or bishop. The study of the office and work of the elder is a large one; it is covered in *THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE*, by Don DeWelt, pub. by College Press, pages 96-107.

(19) *Hospitality*—There is some question as to whether this should be considered as a separate gift. Flynn has this to say about it: “Peter commands us, ‘Use hospitality one to another without grudging’ (I Peter 4:9). Amplification might read, ‘Gladly open up your homes and welcome each other as guests, especially those who need a meal or a room overnight—and don’t complain about the inconvenience.

“Though hospitality is not included in any of Paul’s lists of gifts, the context in which hospitality is mentioned seems to earn it consideration as a separate gift. After Peter speaks of hospitality in verse 9, he immediately goes on in the next two verses to say that whatever gift a person has should be faithfully exercised. The link in Peter’s thinking between hospitality and gifts strongly implies that hospitality is a gift.”²¹

Surely a word must be said as to just how a person could discover his or her gift or gifts. We have found the use of the five following criteria very helpful. We shall put them in the form of five questions and discuss them briefly:

(1) Do you have a deep interest in this gift? i.e. is your concern in helping or teaching or exhorting or giving, etc., more than casual? Unless you find your mind and heart often turning to this activity we cannot imagine God has given such an ability to you. It is the nature of a teacher to teach; it is the nature of an exhorter to exhort, etc. We are not suggesting these gifts or abilities are only natural — some of them are—but others are given at your new birth. We have come to believe that some of the gifts are ours at our first birth to be sanctified and used for the edifying of the body, and others are imparted when we are born again. In either case a particular—personal—interest in one or more of the gifts could mean your possession of it. This alone will not identify your gift. All five criteria must be considered together to arrive at a conclusion.

(2) How much time have you given to a Proper test of this gift? We are saying any attempt on your part to a trial of the gift should be commensurate with its nature. It will take more time and effort to discover your possession or lack of possession of the gift of teaching than it would for showing mercy with cheerfulness. More is involved in the use of the ability to evangelize than to be a helper. We cannot give definite limits to the trial of any one of the gifts but a recognition of this criteria will avoid much discouragement.

(3) Have you asked your sincere friends for their reaction to your efforts? After all, the recipients of your attempts will be able to tell you much. If such persons are being helped by your efforts accept their answers to your questions. On the other hand, however confident you might be that you are doing a good job when those upon whom the good job is done tell you they are miserable as a result of your efforts—believe them! We say again: all five criteria must be held in a balance for a fair judgment. If others do not appreciate your work perhaps enough time has not been given or perhaps your depth of interest is lacking.

(4) What satisfaction do you receive from the act or action involved in expressing your gift? This is crucial! We are not talking about your interest in the gift itself but your personal response to the act of using the gift. Unless there is some solid satisfaction found here you do not have the gift. We are discussing the deep basic satisfaction springing from doing the very thing God gave us to do. When God finished His creative efforts He said of His efforts, “It is very good,” and while doing it He must have had the same response to His efforts. Sharing the nature of God we are creative beings. When we find the

²¹ Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit*, Wheaton, Scripture Press Pub. Co.

creative work God has given us to do we will know it by the sense of joy found in the creating.

(5) What have been the results of your efforts? This by itself cannot be a criteria for us. Even if we are successful by someone's standard and yet take no joy in what has been done, or we are afraid to accept the fruit, we have learned nothing. There must first of all be: (1) a deep personal interest; (2) an adequate trial; (3) an acceptance of the results in the lives of the recipients; (4) a joy in the doing; (5) then we can ask what are the results and expect a true evaluation of them. By fruit we can know when we are sure of the tree. If we have been using an ability for some time and yet have but little fruit that abides we have real reason to wonder—but our concern should be with the other four criteria, not the fruit.

After this very extended answer to question 27 we continue with question 28. (These questions appeared originally in Volume One on pages 83-149).

28. Specify some of the members of the human body which “seem to be more feeble.”

Answer: The paraphrase of MacKnight is helpful here. He says: “Nay, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, because unable to endure external injury, such as the brain, the lungs, and the intestines, are much more necessary to its subsistence than the stronger members.”²² The point is well taken. We need to ask ourselves just who is the important member? When we speak of “feeble” members, are we discussing the usefulness of the member or its inability to operate in an area for which it was never created? The brain is feeble when compared to the hand or the foot in its ability to sustain a blow, but the hand and foot would be more than feeble without the brain. The application is too obvious to need much clarification: stop now in your negative comparisons that have no meaning—febleness is only present when a member will not function in his God-given role.

29. In the completion of the analogy who would be “the more feeble” members of the Corinthian church? Please do not forget that the use and abuse of Spiritual gifts is the subject of the chapter.

Answer: There is a concept missed by present day claimants to Spiritual gifts: the Corinthians were not at all deficient in their possession of these abilities. Paul says of them, “ye came behind in no gift—or in none of the gifts” (1:7) and yet they were carnal and immature, even sensual. Please read these words with real thought: “I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift;” (1:4-7). True spirituality is identified with the fruit of the Spirit, not the gifts of the Spirit. God of His own choice endows certain members with certain abilities. To a large extent the use or abuse of these abilities is the choice of the possessor. In the context of the question under consideration we must say that looking down on any member of the body of Christ and discounting his place or work is a direct reflection on God. The truly feeble members of the body would be those who have not understood the interpersonal relationship of each member. Those who glory in the use of tongues have in this act become feeble, or immature, in their understanding.

30. What are “the comely parts” of the body which have no need of honor?

Answer: We think immediately of the face or the hair or the eyes. These commend themselves to us and to others by their very appearance and use. We need not compliment such (although we often do). There were some “showy” members in the Corinthian church, such as: those who were given the ability to perform miracles, or healings, or to use the gift of faith (and perhaps move a few mountains). These were “comely” indeed! But what of the less conspicuous members? Shall we forget that they too are members of the body and no less gifted by God for the task they perform? It would seem that selfishness was the basic sin here as it is in so many relationships.

31. What “body” is under consideration in 12:25a? (“so that there be no schism (division, discord) in

²² James MacKnight, *Apostolical Epistles*. Nashville, Gospel Advocate, 1960.

the body). Which body in 12:24b? (“But God has tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked;”).

Answer: The answer should be very obvious by this time. The human body is in view in both verses. The whole emphasis is directed toward the body of Christ as analogous to the physical body. Once again the paraphrase of James MacKnight is a help to our understanding: “But our more strong and comely members have no need of defense and ornament. However, God hath united all the members of the body together, by giving to the members which are naturally weak and without beauty, more abundant honour, through their greater efficacy in the nourishment and preservation of the body. This he hath done, that there may be no mutiny in the body, but that the members may have the same anxious care one for another, and particularly that the belly and other inactive members, by performing their functions, may strengthen the hands and feet, the active members.” Implicit in all of this is the use of the supernatural abilities which God has given to the body. If the Corinthian Christians had eyes or ears to see and hear Paul’s teaching they would sustain no jealousy or apathy in the use of the gifts God gave them.

32. What is honor in view of verse 26?

Answer: We would never think of one member either suffering or being rewarded without the participation of the whole body in the experience. It is unnatural and wrong to speak against one another or to complain about our position in the body. “Paul’s analogy vividly illustrates how unnatural, abnormal, unreasonable, outrageous it is for the members of the spiritual body of Christ to act in contravention of the very constitution of their own body.”²³ (Lenski)

33. If the church is the body of Christ, how can it be divided into warring denominational groups?

Answer: It is obvious that division—disagreement, to say nothing of warring against one another—is wrong. It is a contradiction of our purpose and place in the body. The root meaning of the word “denomination” is to name down.” The three denominations among the Corinthians were those named after Peter, those named after Apollos, and those named after Paul. We have them today with many more names. They are as wrong today as they were then. Until we see ourselves as members of the One body and of each other such division will continue. The Spirit-given abilities were given to bring vibrant life to all the body by the contribution of each to the other.

34. In what sense are we to understand the word “set” as used in 12:28?

Answer: A good synonym would be “placed.” God made the choice; we are wonderfully and fearfully made as to our physical-physiological being. Each member has been placed or set there by God. It was God who decided the function of the head and the heart and the hands. Some members must necessarily be “first” in some sense; as we view the whole body some members become the originating sources for the other members.

35. Why would apostles be “first” in the body?

Answer: This is an extremely crucial question. I hope we can give it an adequate treatment. We want to observe first of all that what Paul says here reaches much beyond the Corinthian church; hence Paul spoke of “the church,” the total body of Christ in every place for all time. He is speaking of us and our day. It is obvious that many gifts or functions of many members are not mentioned and only certain prominent persons are named; this is because these prominent members related to the whole body.

We have given a rather full consideration to the meaning of the office of apostle in our previous comments. Suffice it to say here that the church would have no existence or continuance without them. Note: (1) The church was spoken into existence by the apostles; thus did they become “the foundation” of the church (Cf. Eph. 2:20). As God created man in the garden of Eden He used these men to create the body of Christ in Jerusalem on Pentecost. Follow this line of reasoning: who makes up the church?

²³ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

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Christians. What makes a Christian? The gospel (Rom. 1:16). Who first preached the gospel? The apostles on Pentecost. How then did Christ build His church? Through the apostles. (2) The church only grew as it “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching.” (3) The church was directed and protected by the wisdom and words of the apostles as per the example of Peter in his insight into the heart of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). We could hardly exaggerate the vast importance of this office. The prophets are listed second; we must understand their similarity to the apostles and mark carefully their dissimilarities. We want to say first that each are endowed with the task of communicating. In both cases the communication was directly and intuitively given from God through the Holy Spirit to the mind of the apostles and through them to the church. The prophets were not called and taught by our Lord as were the apostles. They were not baptized in the Holy Spirit. Evidently their function or work did not need this equipping experience as did the office of the apostles. Mark and Luke are the two most prominent prophets. They gave to the church three books of the New Testament. We would also class James, the half-brother of our Lord, and Jude, perhaps another of His half-brothers, as prophets upon whom God built the church. Of course we recognize them for the epistles which bear their names. The foundation of a building is laid but once—the apostles and prophets were and are that foundation (with our Lord as the chief cornerstone). We need no more apostles and prophets because we need no further foundations than that which has already been laid. The New Testament, containing all we will ever know about our Lord and His church, was given to us by four apostles: Matthew, John, Paul and Peter and four prophets: Mark, Luke, James and Jude (unless we conclude Barnabas was the author of Hebrews).

36. Who are the “teachers”? Cf. Eph. 4:11,12.

Answer: The teachers are also the shepherds, elders, bishops, all one office with four designations which describe its various functions. They were the pastors, elders, bishops of the local congregations in the first century. We might decide that some elders had the gift of management and thus exercised the ability to “rule well,” of course by the example and not of coercion (Cf. I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17), and others were endowed with the gift of teaching. In whatever conclusion we reach we must say that their ability came directly and not from reading and studying the New Testament, which they did not have. We do not minimize what they heard and remembered from the apostles and prophets, but we already know the apostles never visited many, many of the thousands of congregations of the Roman empire. The prophets were raised up here and there as they were needed. They did not stay in any one place. The field of labor for apostles and prophets was universal; the work of the teachers or elders was local.

The next thing God set or placed in the whole body of Christ was the ability to perform miracles. We have already identified this gift earlier. We want here to observe how important and meaningful it was. Can we attempt to project ourselves back into the environment of the first century? Let us suppose any one of the above persons (apostle, prophet, or teacher) showed up in a town where you lived to tell the story of Jesus—to say there is a God in a place called heaven who came to this earth in the person of His Son. As believable as they make the message, as much as I want to accept it, a miracle would impress me, i.e. make me wonder or worship in the presence of evident approval by or from the God described by the messenger. Miracles appealed to the sight and sound faculties of the hearers and made believing so much more palatable. Miracles are all acts that adjust the laws of God in the world in which we live. We cannot say it too emphatically—the record of such miracles and the message they confirm is in the written word of God. The signs (another way of describing miracles) have already been given, and the product that such signs advertise is also available. A sign is an act or action that points beyond itself. John said that he described the signs (miracles) our Lord did for the express purpose of our reading about them and believing the message which these signs authenticated (John 20: 30,31). If both the message and the evidence that establishes its truthfulness is available in permanent written form what further evidence do we need? If we claim a need for miracles today are we saying the evidence is not conclusive? i.e., more miracles are needed? Do we say that the evidence is not of the kind or quality we can accept? It is an unbelieving generation that seeketh after a sign. Miracles were a supporting gift.

The ability to heal was another supporting gift. All healings were miracles, but not all miracles were healings—one is generic, the other is specific. No gifted person used his ability without his personal faith in the One who gave it to him to make it operable. Neither were these gifts of miracles or healings used without the inward promptings or intimations of the Holy Spirit that here was the time and place and person for the use of such a gift. It should go without saying that the apostles, prophets and teachers were all very much in need of these two authenticating gifts to establish their message in the minds and hearts of those who heard them. There were evidently some persons who had the power to perform miracles or to heal who were not apostles, prophets or teachers, but who none-the-less used their ability to support the message of the apostles, prophets or teachers.

Notice the next gift or ability in this list: it is called “helps.” Once again we refer you to our earlier comments upon this gift. Let us say here that such a gift cannot and should not be minimized as though it were something anybody or everyone can do. We do equate this function with the word “ministry” in Romans 12:7. We shall discuss it further in another question.

37. Are we to understand that 12:28-30 is an abbreviation of what was discussed in detail in 12:1-11?

Answer: From what has been said it should be evident that we so consider these verses. We have expanded upon the subjects in both references.

38. In the order of importance where does Paul place the gift of tongues? Where is it placed today in the churches that claim present-day exercise of these gifts? Why?

Answer: It should be but a self-evident fact that Paul relegated the use of tongues to a place of little importance when compared to the other gifts. It should be equally evident that many people today place it in a very prominent place. Some persons go so far as to say that tongues are an evidence or sign of the fact that we have the Holy Spirit and without such an experience we cannot prove we have the Holy Spirit. Paul’s questions run counter to such a thought. He asks: “Do all speak in tongues?” i.e., do all Christians in Corinth speak in tongues? The obvious answer is “no,” because certain persons exercised this ability to help others without it, just as all were not apostles prophets or teachers; some were thus gifted to help the whole body.

Why then do we have this problem today? I believe there is an answer not often considered: we have today’s problem *because many have believed tongues are ecstatic utterance* or a language not linguistically definable. If we accepted the fact that tongues were and are languages of men presently living upon the earth we would eliminate 99 per cent of the problem. I do not minimize the need for the presence and power of God in the body. This need was present before tongues became an issue and will be a need long after such an issue no longer exists. But such being true, it remains a fact that men and women can practice ecstatic utterance with help or coaching from those who already do it. It is a definite learned capacity. It has been practiced by non-Christian persons for centuries in all parts of the world. Once we are persuaded that the tongue speaking of the New Testament was ecstatic utterance we can soon learn how to speak ecstatically and “lo, we have the gift of tongues! If, on the other hand, we believe that tongues were the languages of men such as those who dwell in Italy or Mexico or Germany or France as compared with those who lived in Elam, Asia or Mesopotamia in the days of the apostles and we will not be able to speak in tongues until we speak such languages, we would have almost no claims to such a gift.

Another important question needs to be asked: “Why do some Bible scholars insist on interpreting the tongue speaking of Corinth as ecstatic utterance? It might not be true of all such writers, but is indeed true of many. They know the practice of ecstatic utterance can be learned. It makes one more convenient method of subtracting the supernatural from the Bible text. Humanism is behind much of the naturalistic-physiological explanations of the text. Speaking a linguistically definable language with no preparation is just too much of an obvious miracle for their humanistic presuppositions.

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39. What are “helps” and “governments”?

Answer: We have answered this question earlier, but we are glad to answer it again. “The word ‘helps’ comes from the verb which signifies: to take a burden on oneself instead of another. Cf. Acts 20:35; Rom. 8:26. This term therefore denotes the various kinds of relief which the church sought to procure for all sufferers, widows and orphans, the indigent, sick, strangers, travelers, etc.” (*Godet*) Some persons were enabled through the ability given by the Holy Spirit to help such persons. We are sure of two things here: (1) The desire to thus serve, *i.e.* the constraint to take on oneself the burdens of another was prompted by the Holy Spirit. (2) Such desire is implemented by or through living faith on the part of the recipient. When the first seven helpers (or servants or deacons) were selected by the church in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit had already placed in their heart the desire to serve. If such persons did not already understand and desire the work they were not gifted with this office or function of “helps.” We believe whether we are officially appointed and recognized by the local assembly, the Spirit does yet prompt a desire to bear the burdens of another and should be accepted and fulfilled. There are so many, many burdens to be lifted, relief to be given. Do not quench the Spirit—be a helper!

“Governments” speaks of ruling and we immediately think of “elders who rule well.” Administration is such a needed gift in today’s church. Are we to conclude that there were some elders who were given the ability to direct or administer, and others were gifted with the ability to teach? We are not prepared to take this position, for all elders are called shepherds and the root meaning of the word “shepherd” is “to feed.” The food was the word of God, so in some sense all elders were teachers, *i.e.* all were to feed the flock. But some were also endowed with the gift of administration. The coordination of work loads, the ability to see how tasks can best be expedited is an ability we so sadly lack and need today. Could there be executives from the secular business world whom God would call into this task? Could not the abilities of leadership or administration be sanctified and used in our Lord’s service? We are unable to make any decision on these questions inasmuch as the scriptures are silent on the subject. We do pose these questions as serious possibilities.

40. If all do not possess these gifts, who does? Why?

Answer: We are here asking just how we shall identify the genuine gift? Once a clear definition has been established it is much easier to identify the possessor. Were some in Corinth claiming one gift or another gift and in fact had neither one? It is obvious from Paul’s series of questions that only some persons, not all, possessed these abilities. Are we to conclude that all possessed at least one gift and Paul was saying do not be jealous of one another; be content with the ability God has given you and use it to His glory? This could indeed be his meaning.

41. What are the greater “gifts”? (Please notice this word is plural.)

Answer: Is Paul saying that an evaluation of the nine gifts just listed should be made by the Corinthians and on the basis of such an evaluation the best of them should be chosen for their pursuit? If such is the meaning, in what way or in what manner are these persons to: “aim at,” “be ambitious,” “earnestly desire,” “set your hearts,” “try your best to have,” “covet earnestly” the best of these gifts? Since all Christians did not have all the gifts, the meaning *cannot* be that each of them is to pray for or in some other manner seek to obtain the gifts they did not have. It rather must be that Paul is asking them to earnestly desire a prominent place and use of the best gifts. The first and foremost of such gifts would be prophecy. Paul is saying: “Get your priorities straight. Put prophecy, wisdom and knowledge ahead of tongues and interpretation of tongues.”

Another possible answer to this question is that Paul is referring to the greater gifts or abilities found from and in the use of love. Development of character is much more important than the development of talents even when they are empowered and implemented by the Holy Spirit. Love provides powers and abilities far superior to any of the nine supernatural abilities. We hesitate to whole heartedly adopt this second view inasmuch as the fruit of the Spirit is not in this context called a “gift.” Be this as it may, Paul

is saying in no uncertain words that the fruit of the Spirit which is love is indeed superior to any of His abilities!

42. Can we substitute the word “languages” in verse 1 for the word “tongues”?

Answer: We want our readers to have the very most complete answer to each of these questions, particularly this one; therefore we refer you to a chapter by Frank Pack in his splendid book entitled TONGUES AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, published by *Biblical Research Press*, reproduced here by permission.

WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE WAS SPOKEN?

For the purpose of our study the problem of the meaning of *glossa*, “tongue,” in the New Testament centers on what kind of language was spoken under the power of the Holy Spirit. Many modern scholars contend that while Acts uses the word to mean foreign languages or dialects, at least in Acts 2, Paul uses it to refer to ecstatic utterances which bear little or no resemblance to any recognizable foreign languages. Certain modern translations in view of this have rendered the word, particularly in I Corinthians 12-14 as “ecstatic utterance” or “language of ecstasy.” Is this justifiable in view of both the usage of the word and the material that we have in the New Testament? A careful study of the various passages where the word is used will help us understand its meaning in the New Testament.

AT PENTECOST

Among the unusual manifestations of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost is their being filled with the Spirit and speaking “in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4). The “other tongues” of Acts 2:4 are clearly the native languages of the multitude in Acts 2:6,8. Luke in this passage used the word *glossa*, “tongue,” and *dialektos*, “language,” interchangeably. *Dialektos* is defined by BauerArndt-Gingerich in their lexicon as “language of a nation or a region.”

A number of different nationalities were present for the feast at Pentecost and the speaking in their various languages done by the apostles attracted the multitude. Luke recorded the amazement of the crowd as they realized that all of the men who were speaking the various foreign languages and dialects were Galilean Jews speaking languages they had never learned so that the natives could understand what was being said. Luke listed the various nationalities present in the multitude, “Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” (Acts 2:9-11). Three times in these verses Luke mentioned that the speaking was in each one’s native language. (2:6,8,11).

In the face of the most unusual happening, the people began to ask one another, “What does this mean?” Acts records the wonder of the crowd in a number of expressions, “the multitude . . . were bewildered” (2:6), “they were amazed and wondered” (2:7), “all were amazed and perplexed” (2:12). Some who were probably Palestinian Jews did not understand the foreign languages and dialects being spoken. They mockingly said these men were drunk, but Peter answered this criticism by pointing out that it was too early in the morning for this to be true. He then showed that this was in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, quoting Joel 2:28-32. This was the pouring out of the Spirit of God in the last days upon all men. The tongue speaking on the day of Pentecost provided immediate communication between the speakers and the hearers because the languages of the hearers were used, and there was no need to have translators or interpreters.

Some scholars have explained the phenomena at Pentecost as a miracle of the ears, of hearing rather

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than the miracle of speaking. The idea is advanced that the apostles were all speaking in one language but the miracle was performed upon the hearers so that each one was hearing in his own language. Some have even suggested the apostles were speaking ecstatically and what Luke intends us to understand is that each nationality understood this ecstatic speech in his own native language, but this seems strikingly against what is the obvious account we have in Acts 2. Acts 2:4 says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues” before the crowd gathered.

Later, when the multitude gathered they “were bewildered because each one heard them speaking in his own language.” (vs. 6). Again Luke says in verse 11, “We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” The power of the Holy Spirit had been promised to the apostles by Jesus. (Acts 1:4,5). They had been told to wait in Jerusalem until the power should come upon them. That power would come “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” (1:8).

As just seen, Acts 2:4 very clearly points out that the Spirit filled them with power enabling them to speak in languages others could understand. The miracle was worked upon the speakers, the ones who had been promised the power through the Holy Spirit coming upon them. It was not a miracle upon the ears, but a miracle upon the speakers.

AT CORNELIUS' HOUSE

The next references in the Book of Acts to speaking in tongues occur in connection with the preaching of the gospel for the first time to Gentiles. It took a miracle in order to direct the God-fearing Cornelius to send down to Joppa for the apostle Peter, (Acts 10:3-6) and two divine interventions were required to lead Peter to go. One was a vision or a trance, (Acts 10:9-16), and the other was the direct command of the Spirit that he go with the three men Cornelius had sent without having any doubts “for I have sent them.” (Acts 10:19-20). The apostle took six Jewish Christians from Joppa with him to Caesarea, and in Cornelius' house the gospel was now preached to Gentiles.

As Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on all the Gentiles who heard the word, much to the amazement of the Jewish Christians. The Gentiles spoke with tongues and magnified God. (Acts 10:44-46). This was not only an amazing occurrence but an entirely unexpected thing both for Peter and the six Jewish Christians from Joppa. He then raised the question with them, “Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 10:47, 48).

When later he was describing these events to the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem Peter stated that while he was speaking the Holy Spirit fell on these Gentiles “just as on us at the beginning.” (Acts 11:15). When the Spirit came upon the Gentiles manifesting His power in the speaking in tongues, Peter declared he immediately thought of the promise the Lord made to baptize in the Holy Spirit, recorded in Acts 1:4,5 before Pentecost. He associated what had occurred at the house of Cornelius with this promise and stated the Gentiles had received the “same” (Gr., *isen*, “same, equal”) gift as God had given to the apostles “when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.” He concluded his plea by saying, “Who was I that I could withstand God?” This was unmistakable proof that God had accepted the Gentiles equally with the Jews to receive the blessings of the gospel. Since Peter called this the same gift, and in Acts 2 Luke makes it clear that the tongues were foreign languages, it seems evident foreign languages are meant here. The same Greek word *glossa* is used here for “tongue” as in Acts 2. There is nothing in the context of this passage that could lead anyone to think these were ecstatic utterances.

AT EPHESUS

On his third missionary journey the apostle Paul found at Ephesus certain disciples of John the Baptist. When he asked them whether they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, they

answered, “No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit:” or, according to some translations, “whether the Holy Spirit was given.” (Compare John 7:39). He inquired what baptism they had received and their reply was John’s baptism. He then said, “‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, on Jesus.’ On hearing this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.” (Acts 19:4-6).

The same word *glossa* is used here as in Acts 2:4,11 and Acts 10:44 without any further explanation. In the light of Luke’s clear usage in Acts 2 it seems obvious the same word has the same meaning here and refers to unlearned foreign languages. Despite the fact there is a tendency in modern lexicons to discount the evidence of Luke’s account in Acts 2 there is no evidence in the Book of Acts itself that the word *glossa* refers to ecstatic utterance. If one takes the text as it stands seriously he must let Luke define the meaning of this word in Acts as he has clearly done in Acts 2.

AT CORINTH

In I Corinthians 12-14 Paul discusses the general subject of “spiritual gifts” (Gr. *pneumatikon*). Speaking in tongues is given as one of these. A careful look at the list of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:8-10 will show they are miraculous gifts, not talents ordinarily possessed by men. Speaking in tongues is mentioned in the lists given in I Corinthians 12:8-10,28,30. Interpreting tongues is mentioned in I Corinthians 12:10,30. While other lists of spiritual gifts are found in Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:7-11, speaking in tongues and interpreting tongues are not mentioned.

Was Paul using the word in a different sense than Luke used it? Some scholars think so. Did he mean by it the kind of ecstatic utterances found in some Hellenistic pagan religious cults of Corinth, Greece, and Asia Minor? Behm and some other scholars think so. They think Luke has misunderstood the circumstances of Pentecost. Others contend that while Acts clearly refers to foreign languages, in I Corinthians Paul is referring to ecstatic speech. Is it to be identified sometimes as “the tongues of angels,” a kind of heavenly ecstatic language in which God and angels converse and which on occasion is granted to man, as some Pentecostals claim? Or is Paul’s meaning in harmony with Luke’s? Does Paul refer to the miraculous power given by the Holy Spirit to speak in a human language that was not only foreign to the speaker but unlearned previously by him? Only a careful examination of the wages of the word in the context of I Corinthians 12-14 can help us arrive at the proper conclusion. (For purposes of clarity it should be pointed out that in recent literature the word “glossolalia” has come to be the technical term used to cover the entire spectrum of meaning of speaking in tongues. It is used by some to mean unintelligible ecstatic utterances devoid of any recognizable message, by others to mean a mixture of syllables and occasional words from some known language foreign to the speaker mixed with ecstatic utterances, and by others to mean authentic speaking in a recognizable, intelligible human language foreign to the speaker and giving a revelation from God’s Spirit. The meaning any person gives this term can only be discerned by the way he uses it.)

An examination of the use of the word “tongue” particularly in Biblical literature shows that it overwhelmingly refers to intelligible human languages. Robert H. Gundry has pointed out, “Outside the passages in question (Acts, I Cor.) Biblical Greek contains only two examples of *glossa* with the meaning of unintelligible speech and in neither instance is ecstasy involved, but rather stammering (Isa 29:24; 32:4 LXX).” (Robert H. Gundry, ‘Ecstatic Utterance’ (N.E.B.) *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 17: Pt. 2 (Oct., 1966) pp. 299-300). He noted the word occurred about 30 times in the Greek Old Testament meaning normal human language. We have already seen that the Book of Acts uses the word to refer to languages normally spoken in various countries. Since Luke and Paul were closely associated in their work for the Lord, the strong presumption is that Paul and Luke would use this word with the same meaning.

Another important indication that Paul intends us to understand “tongues” to mean human languages normally spoken is the group of words he used to signify the “interpretation of tongues.” He used *hermencia* (I Corinthians 12:10; 14:26), *diermeneuo* (I Corinthians 12:30; 14:5, 13, 27) and *diermeneutes* (I Corinthians 14:28). J. G. Davies made a study of these words and their cognates in Biblical literature. He used the lists in Hatch and Redpath, *Concordance to the Septuagint* as well as the New Testament occurrences.

While several typographical errors occur in the lists found in his article, the conclusion is validly stated. (In carefully checking the references given by Davies in his article I noticed he had omitted one reference in John 1:42 to *hermeneuein*, thus giving a total of twenty-two instead of twenty-one instances excluding the seven found in I Corinthians 12 and 14. Daniel 5:1 should be Daniel 5:15; Esdras 10:3 should be Esther 10:3 (additions found in the LXX). For *methermeneuein* Mark 15:23,24 should be Mark 15:22,34 and John 1:38,42 should be John 1:38,41.) “Of the twenty-one instances of the use of *hermeneuein* and its cognates in the LXX and the New Testament, apart from the seven occurrences in I Corinthians 12 and 14, one refers to a satire or figurative saying, two to an explanation or exposition, and eighteen have the primary meaning of translation.” Davies concluded his examination by saying, “that the word used by St. Paul of interpreting glossolalia carries with it the strong suggestion of translating a foreign language.” (J. G. Davies, “Pentecost and Glossolalia,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 3, Pt. 1 (Apr., 1952) p. 230).

Some who have argued in favor of “ecstatic utterances” have insisted that *diermeneuo* and the kindred words used in I Corinthians 14 can only mean “interpreting” the babbling or “ecstatic utterances,” but cannot have the meaning of “translate.” While the word is used once in the New Testament elsewhere for “explain” or “expound” (Luke 24:27), outside of I Corinthians 14, it most often has the meaning of “translate” and this meaning cannot be excluded from consideration in I Corinthians. The gift of “interpretation” is not one of trying to bring some edifying content out of “ecstatic utterances” but the translation given by the Holy Spirit of a foreign language to “the interpreter of tongues” and thus made intelligible to the audience.

Davies found further support for this view in Paul’s quotation of Isaiah 28:11,12 in I Corinthians 14:21. The passage in Isaiah refers to the Assyrians, who were speaking a foreign or strange language, being used by God to bring judgment upon Israel because Israel would not listen to the clear and intelligible message from God given them by the prophet in their own native language. This passage is only one of several found in the Old Testament where the foreign language of invaders is a sign of God’s judgment on Israel because of its unbelief. (Note Deuteronomy 28:49; Isaiah 33:19; Jeremiah 5:1,15). Davies concluded, “Against such a background it is reasonable to assume that St. Paul understood glossolalia to be talking in foreign languages, especially as there is no good ground in the text for thinking otherwise.” (*Ibid.*) Davies’ arguments have never been answered, they have simply been ignored.

An additional point indicating this view occurs in Paul’s argument in I Corinthians 14:10,11. “There are doubtless many different languages in the world and none is without meaning; but if I do not know the meaning of the language I shall be a foreigner (or barbarian, Gr. *barbaros*, one speaking in foreign language) to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.” Just like flutes, harps, and bugles must give clear and meaningful sounds to be effective, so the language must have meaning or else it will be like a foreigner speaking with no understanding by the listener. (I Corinthians 14:7-9).

Those favoring “ecstatic utterances” as the experience of the Corinthian church pointed to by Paul in I Corinthians 12-14 find a point they believe in the opening verse of I Corinthians 13, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels” The expression “tongues of angels” they believe indicates a kind of ecstatic supernatural speech angels use with one another and with God, but is unknown to men. But we have no indication in the Bible where angels spoke any special language. (Certain non-canonical

apocalyptic writings such as the *Book of Enoch*, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and *The Apocalypse of Abraham* reflect a belief in angelic languages within certain Jewish and Christian Gnostic circles.) Paul describes an experience he had in II Corinthians 12:2-4 when he was caught up to Paradise and heard “things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.” One does not get the idea Paul means he did not understand what was being said, but that he was forbidden to report what was being said. According to the scriptures when angels communicated with men they did so in languages men could understand. When men communicated with angels the same thing was true. So far as the Bible is concerned there is no evidence for a “special language of angels.”

Even if such could be proven to exist, Paul is not saying in I Corinthians 13:1 that he spoke in the tongues of angels or that other human beings did, but if it were possible for him to speak not only in all the tongues of men but also the tongues of angels it would still be without profit unless there was love. I Corinthians 13:1-3 has a series of contrasts, each introduced by the Greek conditional particle *ean*, “if,” and the subjunctive to express hypothetical possibility in the future and not necessarily reality. It is not necessary to infer that Paul claimed to speak in the tongues of angels because he spoke in tongues of men (I Cor 14:18,19) any more than it is necessary to infer that he possessed *all* prophetic powers and knowledge, that he had *all* faith, and had given away *all* his possessions or delivered his body up to be burned!

Those who argue for the meaning of “ecstatic utterances as the experiences of the Corinthian church mainly base their arguments on Certain passages found in I Corinthians 14. Verse 2 states that the “one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.” The term “mystery” as used in the New Testament does not refer to ecstatic experiences but rather to spiritual truth that has formerly been hidden by God but now is being revealed. (I Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:9). If the expression “in the Spirit” is translated with a small “s” (See King James Version, American Standard Version, New American Standard Version) it refers to the human spirit. Paul is simply saying that the speaker in tongues is uttering revelations given his spirit which no individual man can understand because there is no one in the assembly that can translate, and the speaker unless he has the gift of interpretation cannot translate. Paul says in verse 9, “So with yourselves; if you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.” The expression “in the Spirit with the capital “S” (Revised Standard Version) refers to the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit’s power that gives the individual the revelations in tongues, but there is no communication unless this gift is accompanied *by* translation.

Paul follows verse 2 by pointing out that the one who prophesies speaks unto men “edification, and exhortation and consolation,” so that *he* edifies the church whereas the tongue speaker, at best, only edifies himself. This is why Paul finds prophecy superior to tongues. But only if speaking in tongues is coupled with translation so that this becomes the equivalent of prophecy can the entire church be edified. For the tongue speaker does not know what he has said unless he has the gift of interpreting to accompany his speaking in tongues since his “mind (Gr. nous) is unfruitful” (Gr. *akarpos*). (Vs. 14). It appears that the edification for the speaker comes primarily from the fact of his experience, not from any understanding of what he said. If he understood what he said he would have the gift of interpreting and could thus tell the church his divinely given message and edify it. But one is “speaking into the air” unless through translation his tongues-speaking becomes revelation that can be understood. (Vs. 9). The point here is not that tongues must necessarily be ecstatic utterances, for it is the absence of the interpreter that makes the tongue speaking unintelligible, not because it is not a language.

The situation described in I Corinthians 14 refers to behavior when the church assembled for worship. We are given insight into the worship of the Corinthian church in which spiritual gifts were being exercised. Scholars have acknowledged the great variety of languages represented in the multitude on the day of Pentecost, and the tremendous sign of God’s power upon the speakers who were Galileans in speaking to these people with their many different languages. In the ordinary worship of the

Corinthian church there would scarcely be such a great variety of languages represented by the audience. Possibly the most common language spoken in the Corinthian church was Greek, although on rare occasions someone might speak Aramaic. In ordinary meetings of the church other languages would not be understood by the audience. An outsider coming into the assembly would be greatly amazed if he heard someone speaking in a foreign language followed by a translator who could bring it into his own speech and would be brought by such a sign to recognize, as Paul says, that “God is really among you.” (Vs. 25). If speaking in tongues were only ecstatic utterances there would appear to be no evident miracle or demonstration of the Spirit’s power, because this kind of behavior was widely prevalent at the ancient religious shrines, such as the Oracle of Delphi, and the shrines of Dionysus. To the outsider, if a Christian were speaking in a tongue, or language he could understand, it would be a sign confronting the unbeliever (Vs. 22) just as it was a sign on the day of Pentecost to the multitude, and a sign to the unbelieving Jewish Christians and Peter at the house of Cornelius that God was including the Gentiles. He would be convinced God was working through the speaker to enable him to speak this language not native to the speaker. For it to be a sign it had to be different from the ecstatic utterances found in Hellenistic pagan religions.

SPECIAL NOTE:

I am indebted to Garth Black for calling my attention to the problem in I Corinthians 14:22,23. Verse 22 says tongues are a sign to the unbeliever, while verse 23 states that tongues were not to be used in congregational worship unless there is an interpreter because it would cause the unbeliever to think the tongue speakers mad or insane. Obviously in the context of verse 23 the unbeliever would not understand the tongue speaker’s message without interpretation. Therefore, verse 22 presupposes that the unbeliever would and could understand the tongue speaker. The implication is that the tongue speaking was an understandable language and was to be used where the language would be known but was not to be used in congregational worship where the language was foreign to the assembly, unless there was an interpretation also given. This would mean that the gift would more properly be used, as in Acts 2, in evangelistic work. For the tongue to be a sign to the unbeliever, it would have to be a language he understood.

Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich have clearly overstated the case in their definition of *glossa* when they say that this has become a “technical term” for religious ecstatic speech, for the main basis upon which they rest this meaning and their concept of a “technical term” is the materials in I Corinthians 12-14, which is the point to be proved. There is nothing in I Corinthians 12-14 demanding the meaning of “ecstatic utterance.” The evidence is overwhelming in light of the usage of the word both in the Old Testament and elsewhere in the New Testament, in addition to the many indications we have in I Corinthians 12-14, that *Paul intended us to understand his meaning here to be that miraculous Power the Holy Spirit gave to speak a known human language foreign to the speaker and unlearned by him.* Nothing in I Corinthians 12-14 goes against this understanding.

R. C. H. Lenski has commented,

The next step is to recognize the fact that Luke’s description as given in the Acts is decisive for what Paul writes in Corinthians. This is reversed by some. They seek to determine what happened in Corinth and then either square Luke’s account with what they think occurred at Corinth and posit two different gifts of tongues. Aside from the time when Luke and when Paul wrote, this method of approach is unsatisfactory. For Luke is the one who fully describes what the tongues are while Paul takes for granted that his readers know what they are and therefore offers no description. Luke writes for a reader (Theophilus) who may never have heard of this gift, at least may never have seen this gift in operation. Paul writes for readers who have often heard members of their own congregation speak in tongues. This is decisive as to the Scriptural starting point. (*An Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1937, p. 504-5 05.)

The Meaning of Glossa in Early Christian Writers

When we leave the period of the New Testament we are struck immediately with the fact that speaking in tongues is rarely mentioned in the Christian literature of the first three centuries. What meaning did the early Christian writers give this word?

Irenaeus (About 185 A.D.) refers to speaking in tongues in *Against Heresies* (V vii)

“For this reason does the apostle declare, ‘We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,’ terming those persons ‘perfect’ who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear (The Old Latin text of Irenaeus, which is older than any Greek manuscript, reads, *audivim us*, the perfect tense, “we have heard many brethren in the church.” The above text reproduces the Greek text of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (V vii 6) which uses the present tense in place of the perfect.) many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms ‘spiritual,’ they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual. (A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I., p. 531).

Irenaeus believed that Paul was able to speak in many languages, and that these languages were human languages he had not learned but was inspired to speak. This is the only reference to speaking in tongues we have until we come to the time of John Chrysostom (About 345-407 A.D.). During the second and third centuries a large number of books dealing with the acts of various apostles and the epistles to various groups were composed in imitation of the canonical Acts and Epistles of the New Testament. These are found in the Apocryphal New Testament, and contain all kinds of marvelous miracle stories. Yet there is no evidence of speaking in tongues in them, although there is the story of a lion talking with Paul in human language. In a list of specific powers mentioned in the Acts of John (Ch. 106) speaking in tongues is absent.

Origen (About 240 A.D.) accounts for the confusion of tongues at Babel in Genesis 11 by summarizing the speculation, already old in his time, that the nations were divided according to the number of angels and each angel was assigned a given group of men to whom he gave his own language. Thus the various languages of the world were actually various languages each angel gave to the varied nations (*Against Celsus* V xxx).

Chrysostom understood the gift of speaking in tongues as the gift of speaking unlearned human languages. While he recognized that by his time these things had ceased (as we shall later discuss), he describes the gift of speaking in tongues in these words.

“So since they, the Corinthian Christians, had no clear knowledge and had not been nurtured in the ancient Scriptures, grace granted them some sensible proof of that energy. And so each began to speak, one in the tongue of the Persians, another in that of the Romans, another in that of the Indians, or in some other language. And this disclosed to outsiders that it was the Spirit in the speaker.” (*Homily on I Corinthians* 12:1-11). Through this entire period there is no other understanding of the New Testament speaking in tongues, *glossa*, than speaking in human languages that one has not learned but which are somewhere spoken among men.

SUMMARY

We have given the evidence from the meaning of *glossa* in the various lexicons of the Greek language. We have seen that scholars of the world are divided over whether speaking in tongues meant

“ecstatic utterances,” or uttering some enigmatic kind of statement that would need to be made more meaningful, such as certain pagan oracles, or speaking miraculously some known foreign human language. In studying the instances of *glossa* in both Acts and I Corinthians we have set forth the case for our own understanding of *glossa* as speaking by miraculous power of the Holy Spirit some known foreign language that was unlearned by the speaker. We have further seen how the usage of this term in the early church in the rare occasions where it occurs is universally given the meaning of speaking known foreign human languages unlearned by the speaker. We believe this makes a strong case that should be carefully considered.

When people today profess that they are speaking in tongues as they did in the New Testament, they are tacitly assuming they know what was done in the New Testament, and they are further assuming that what they are doing is identical with that which occurred on Pentecost, at Cornelius’ house, at Ephesus, and at Corinth. They assume that speaking in tongues is so clearly a phenomenon that it is immediately identifiable and cannot be confused with something else. Most of the time, they understand it to be simply “ecstatic utterances” which are occurring today. Ecstatic utterances can be paralleled in a number of non-Christian religious traditions, and have also been experienced by persons in non-religious settings as well. These have been amply documented by a number of studies along this line. One should be very careful about making the easy assumption that the early church was simply using ecstatic utterances when there seems to be such strong evidence to show otherwise.

Strange as it may seem, to most Pentecostals the pattern for their tongues-speaking, so far as the kind of language used, is to be found in I Corinthians in ecstatic utterances which they believe this passage to teach. Yet in the Epistles there is no teaching on baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues as the initial evidence. They admit that their “pattern” is to be found *only in Acts*, but they do not take their pattern for the kind of tongue-speaking they practice from Acts. Thus according to their claim the Epistles provide the pattern for the kind of tongues, but no pattern for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Acts provides the pattern for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but its kind of tongue-speaking cannot be followed by them. Logic is missing in this type of approach.

SPECIAL NOTE

In the King James Version the expression “unknown tongue” is used in I Corinthians 14:2,4,13,14,19,27. An examination of the text will show that the word “unknown” is printed in italics in the King James Version, which means that there is no word in the original Greek text for “unknown.” Later translations have remedied this by leaving this word, interpolated by the King James translators. out of their translations. Some have seized upon the expression “unknown tongue” to justify their speaking in unintelligible syllables or ecstatically, but the term “unknown” has lies no love.”²⁴

43. Are the “men” of verse I men of various nations? Do angels speak? In what language? What would be superior about the language of angels?

Answer: In answer to the first part of this question we would answer “yes,” he is speaking of the ability to converse in the various languages of the earth. In addition to the supernatural ability to speak the many languages of the nations of men Paul says, “if I had the eloquence of angels but had not love, I would be nothing.” Eloquence involves word choice and word arrangement. When angels spoke men were moved! Of all the capable speakers on earth, angels must top the list. But “we have all felt the brazenness of words without emotion, the hollowness, the unaccountable unpersuasiveness, of eloquence behind which lies no love.”

The only language spoken by angels to our knowledge was the language of men. What a parody on logic to hear someone use ecstatic utterance and liken or compare it to the language of angels or the language of heaven when we knew utterly nothing of the language spoken in heaven. This amounts to

²⁴ Frank Pack, *Tongues and the Holy Spirit*. Abilene, Biblical Research Press, 1972

defining the known (ecstatic utterance) with the unknown, *i.e.* the language of angels in heaven! We would say that eloquence is the distinctive capability of angels and Paul is saying, “If I had the eloquence of angels but had not love I am nothing.”

44. How do we know we have love in our speech? Please attempt an answer.

Answer: Inasmuch as love” is the fruit produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit we believe it is important, as well as pertinent, to answer these questions on the subject of love. Love proceeds from an attitude. The motive behind our speech will indicate whether love is present or not. As we speak what controls our attitude? ‘love suffereth long and is kind’—are we patient in our use of words? When we are overlooked and turned down and another is preferred before us, what do we say? More importantly, *how* do we say it? Does envy or love control our hearts? “Love envieth not.” We could proceed through all of the nine qualities of love, but this would be a discussion of the fruit, or the result, instead of the cause. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the cause. But only to the extent that we consciously identify with His presence does He influence us. Some daily practice of the presence of the living Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit is a practical necessity if we are going to express love in our conversation.

45. Why would man without love be like a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal?

Answer: Imagine a time and circumstance when soft and comforting words are so much needed: You have just lost a near and dear loved one, or you have been deeply hurt by someone in whom you had placed much confidence. In this circumstance what kind of music will meet your mood? How about a number from the brass band? Such might distract or distress you, but it would offer no comfort; it might so jar your sensibilities that you would be much worse. Words without the nine qualities of love listed in verses 4-7 might have much logic, but they sound like the brass band and do not at all meet the need. There is nothing wrong with the brass or the cymbal, but they are out of place.

46. What is emphasized in verse 2 that is not found in verse 1?

Answer: The application of the principle to particular areas is found in verse 2. Look closely at the application: (1) *Love applied to the gift of prophecy.* This is the inspired teacher. Here is the whole source of divine instruction. The revelations and information of God are made known through him. But suppose when he speaks of such revelations he is very impatient with the slow learner or the distracted listener, or he is egocentrically mean in his manner and demeanor? What if he uses the material given him by God interspersed with strong innuendoes of carping cutting criticism against other inspired speakers? Suppose you could see in the curl of his lips, the tilt of his head or the lift of his eyebrows a peacock-like pride showing through all he said? Just suppose he ignores all the conventional preparations to an orderly meeting and interrupts and dominates the meeting with his presence and his words? In each of these suppositional situations the gift of prophecy is horribly hindered by the lack of love. (2) *Love applied to the gift of faith.* Please read again our definition of the gift of faith. To review, let us say: all faith comes by hearing and hearing in particular of the message of God. When God speaks to man and asks Him to remove a mountain, man must affirm or agree with the request God has made of him in order for the gift of faith to become operative. There are four types of faith in the Bible: (1) saving faith—Heb. 11 :6ff. We hear the message of the gospel. If we accept it we are saved; if we reject it we are lost; (2) the faith once for all delivered to the saints—Jude 3. This amounts to the body of doctrine or teaching given to man by God. (3) “We walk by faith and not by sight”—II Cor. 5:7. This is the source of our lifestyle. We conduct ourselves according to the instruction God has given us through his Spirit-inspired word. (4) The fourth and last type of faith is the gift of faith. This we understand to be intuitive information communicated directly to man from God concerning some supernatural activity. All healings were preceded and accompanied with the gift of faith. When God spoke directly into the mind of man and said “I want him—or her—healed” and man agreed and acted, the healing took place. Peter and John could have walked past the lame man at the gate beautiful at least twice on the same day they healed him. The Jewish hours of prayer were nine a.m., twelve noon and three o’clock. The lame man was healed at three o’clock. Why? Could it have been God did not speak to Peter or John at nine o’clock or noon, but

when He did the gift of faith became operative? Peter, with the full assurance of direct divine communication said in a commanding tone, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, *walk!*” (Cf. Acts 3:1-11) Even if we had such a gift and did not use it with love we would be nothing. Review again the nine qualities of love and relate them to this supernatural ability. If it seems strange to the reader that God would even permit the misuse of gifts, *i.e.* in the attitude employed in their use, please remember that our attitude is not always correct as it relates to God’s greatest gift, *i.e.* His Son. Do we always sustain a humble joyful attitude about our salvation? (3) *Love applied to meeting human need and dying for the faith.* Why introduce these two thoughts in the midst of a discussion of supernatural abilities? This would indeed seem incongruous if we did not remember that Romans 12:6-8 contains another list of gifts from the Spirit. Two of the gifts in Rom. 12:8 are “mercy” and “giving.” Are we to see an abuse of the gift of *mercy* in the expression “if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor”? and of the gift of giving in the expression . if I give my body to be burned”? This could well be the thought of Paul. Doesn’t it seem strange to say that we could be so benevolent and yet lack love? How could anyone decide to go bankrupt to help the poor and yet not have love? Doesn’t James equate giving to the poor with real love? Cf. James 1:27. John does the same thing Cf. I John 3:17. As important as these acts are, yet without: (1) *Patience*—“love suffereth long”; (2) *kindness*—“and is kind”; (3) *generosity*—“love envieth not”; (4) *humility*—“love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”; (5) *courtesy*—“doth not behave itself unseemly”; (6) *unselfishness*—“seeketh not her own”; (7) *good temper*—“is not easily provoked”; (8) *guilelessness*—“thinketh no evil”; (9) *sincerity*—“rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth”—our giving is nothing. Our attitude in giving is everything and all things to God and the recipient.

It should be very, very obvious by this time, *i.e.* if the reader has been with the writer through all he has written on the subject that he believes *none of the above qualities can be manifested by us.* To actually express *real* patience, kindness, generosity or humility in any continuing action of life *is an utter impossibility!* Either we allow the indwelling Christ to do it through us or it will not be done! Look at this power-packed verse and say a large personal “yes” to it; “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23. *Please, please notice:* (1) We can and do choose—“If a man”—that is you and I—we can if we will, and we don’t if we won’t; (2) He is so wonderfully lovable “*love me*” – why shouldn’t we love Him? Oh, there are ten thousand endearing qualities found in my Saviour. I want to look at Him again and again until I fall in love with Him all over again! Every time I look at Him I see another reason to love Him. (3) BUT my love *must be—must be—and will be* associated with “His words.” My love for Him comes because I have read about Him. In the experience of the apostles the Holy Spirit returned to their minds *all* the words our Lord had spoken to them, and thus they were able to keep His words. We have *less excuse* than the apostles had for not keeping His words. We have His words in permanent, *imperishable*, *written* form. If we really, truly, poignantly, personally *love* Him *we will* keep His words. (4) We cannot emphasize enough the supreme place *His words* have in our love and His indwelling. His words are alive and produce life—“they are spirit (alive) and life (produce life)” John 6:63. But until we are ready to meditate upon them, which means to *memorize, visualize, personalize* and *finalize* them, they are only black images on white paper. (5) “*keep my words*”—what is involved in the word here used by our Lord? This refers to personal possession—a treasure we have found and have joyfully made it ours! But not once, or twice or thrice, but *every day*, all the time. The act of meditation happens in one action, but it can be analyzed in the five parts we have suggested above. To meditate is to memorize His words; but in the act of committing His words to our memory, we *visualize* and *personalize* the thoughts or truths. If it is a narrative we see and feel and hear—taste and touch all that is being said. If it is an abstract or a didactic passage we imagine conceptions for the abstractions. Such as: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 8 :1. How shall we visualize and personalize the words “*there is*”? See a calendar with the date of today circled in the red blood of the Son of God! See a clock with the minute and sweeping second hand stopped on the second and minute of *now right now*’ “*there is.*” Light up that clock with the effulgent brightness of the shekinah glory of God! “There is” —“*is*”—“*is.*” What about the next word: “therefore”? See the meaning of Romans 1:1

through 7:25 piled up high as a giant pile of truth. Heap it all up in an Everest-high pile of spirit-given facts. *Because* of all that is in all that precedes, “therefore” includes NOW, *present, personal, today* possession! “No condemnation” – see a courtroom and you are on trial and eternity is in the balance! Have you ever been in a court when a sentence of ten to twenty years was given to a prisoner? What would it mean to spend *all eternity* in a place called hell? The great judge of the universe looks at His books and finds not even the record of your crime. Case is dismissed for lack of evidence! No one can bring a charge against the one on trial. There isn’t even a record or trace of our sin!

After we have thus memorized, visualized and personalized, it is inevitable that we will *socialize; i.e.* we will express in our lives what has happened in our hearts. The fifth step to meditation is to finalize, *i.e.* record in writing what you have memorized. With this, record your prayer requests and prayer answers.

(6) “If a man love me, he will keep my words: *and my Father will love him.*” Are we to conclude from this passage that there is some special love from the Father promised to such persons? *I.e.* those who love Jesus and keep His words? What is meant here by “my Father will *love him*”? Are we thinking of the expression of love by the Father? *i.e.* the communicated love of God to man? Or are we considering the approval of the Father held in His heart toward us but not communicated to us except in a statement of fact? We cannot be dogmatic in either position. Surely the latter is the one most popularly held, but I much prefer the former. How I rejoice in a deep sense of joy when I consider the thought that God can and does and will communicate to my spirit through the Holy Spirit within me His definite sense of approval and acceptance because I am keeping the words of His Son! We are pleasing to Him and He lets us know it deep within our consciousness; not because we have earned it, or merited it, or are in any sense better. We are too ignorant and too weak to be saved by anything but grace; however, love not communicated or expressed is no love at all.

(7) and we will come to Him *and make our home with him*— hasn’t this already happened to the Christian? *I.e.* hasn’t God and Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit already taken up residence in us? This is true, but such a relationship must be sustained. Our children come to make their home with us but to make a house a home, care and concern must be exercised on a continuing basis. So it is for our Father and our Lord to feel at home in our house, we must offer the care and concern involved in “keeping His words” and loving Him. What security and comfort is found in this wonderful relationship! It would seem that such a fellowship or communion gives reality to the name “Comforter.” The Holy Spirit is in this circumstance giving assistance and assurance in a most meaningful personal manner.

47. What is the use made of the word “prophecy” in verse 2?

Answer: We have answered this question in our earlier discussion.

48. Is there some distinction in the use of knowledge and mysteries?

Answer: We have answered this question in previous discussion. We should add that the term “mysteries” in the New Testament always refers to divinely revealed information. Revelation and mystery are two sides of the same action. Knowledge refers to the Content of the revelation.

49. What kind of “faith” does Paul have in mind in verse 2?

Answer: We have answered this above.

50. How would love be expressed in the use of faith?

Answer: Read the above discussion.

51. Would verse 3 refer to the “helps” of 12:28?

Answer: Read our comment on verse 28 of chapter 12 and the above comments. In this the reader

will observe we have referred “gives to feed the poor” to the gift of mercy as in Romans 12:8ff and “give body to be burned” to “giving”—also as in Romans 12:8ff.

52. How could a person give to the poor and yet not have love?

Answer: The *motive* in giving is under consideration. It would be indeed possible to have several or various motives that could not be described as love: pride, guilt, or the approval of men could be the motivation instead of love.

53. What possible motive would a man have (apart from love) for giving his body to be burned?

Answer: Both this action and the one preceding it “are suppositions of an extreme action and no more. These acts are apparently prompted by love yet in reality are not the result of love.”²⁵ (*Lenski*) There have undoubtedly been a number of sensational suicides which were prompted by a reckless pride. Among them there no doubt has been those who gave their bodies to be burned even for a good cause.

54. There are many who suffer for a long time. What added element does love give?

Answer: It is easy to answer that love will add kindness to long-suffering, but it is quite another matter to suffer long in kindness. We are all afraid of the influence our nerves have on our temperament. We know it is much easier to be kind if we have adequate rest, but when we are worn out our kindness turns sour. Why? Because there is a very real connection between the condition of our body and the expression of our spirit. It is the picture of the tool and the workman: if the tool is dull or broken, however skillful the workman, he is yet hindered. At the same time we remember that a very skillful workman can soon use even a broken tool for a job the broken tool could not do upon the first or third try. When our body is “offered” the Holy Spirit will find a way through the human spirit to express His character through us regardless of the condition of our body. We are saying that in an extended period the element of kindness *will be* present in our long suffering if we persist in a willing commitment of our bodies to God.

55. What are the evidences of envy? *i.e.* how can we tell when one is envious?

Answer: There are telltale indications of envy: (1) *Suspicion of motives* always follows envy. A jealous person always suspects the motives of the one they envy. Such a person can never quite believe the object of their envy is totally sincere. (2) *Discounting results.* Regardless of the success of the one envied he can really never please the one who envies. Every accomplishment will be divided and diluted through the fog of jealousy. (3) *Satisfaction in failure.* Any unfulfilled commitment, any deviation or mistake is a source of satisfaction to the envious. He keeps an account of failures and hopes for more. The envious are actually unhappy with God for cheating them. Somehow God made them inferior to the one they envy. The answer to jealousy is an acceptance of our own value in the sight of God. We are all so wondrously and uniquely made. There is no competition—each of us is so distinct there should be no comparison, only an acceptance of God’s one-of-a-kind creation. Our love for God, which is an acceptance of His character (love), is the *only* antidote for envy. We must love God first, ourselves second, and only then can we love our neighbor.

56. Why would love prevent pride?

Answer: When we truly love God we cannot Congratulate ourselves. “Nought have I gotten but what I received,” is the testimony of the one in love with God. How can I assume ownership of that which is only loaned to me for a period of time determined by the owner? Love itself presupposes an element of pride. We are proud of the one we love. If we love God and our Lord we will first of all be proud of them. Love also includes Commitment and trust or confidence. Love for God commits us to His concept of life and His evaluation of the affairs of this life.

We need to remember at this juncture the context of these verses: love was sadly lacking in the use

²⁵ R.C.H.Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943

of the supernatural abilities listed in the twelfth chapter. There were evidently those in the Corinthian church who were deeply devoted to their commitment and gifts—even to the extent of giving their bodies for their faith, but they would do it with a sneer and not in humility. Others would give to the poor and expect a write-up in the next morning’s paper. But most of all we need to relate to the use and abuse of Spiritual gifts. To put up with difficult people and a difficult environment for a long time is one thing; to do it with kindness is something else. It could have been the situation in Corinth. Paul is viewing the conflict over gifts in the church and asks the members to patiently share with each other and do it with kindness.

He asks these same persons to break the shackles of envy or jealousy. (We have written at length on this thought in the twelfth chapter.) Such envy must be related to the use of the nine gifts listed in 12:8-11.

The same thought must follow in a consideration of pride. This circumstance raises an important question: ‘If God empowered certain persons with these many abilities, how is it that God did not protect Himself in the possible misuse or abuse of such abilities?’ To state it in another form, “Wasn’t it just as important to have control in the use of the gifts as it was to give them?” We need to recognize the essential separation between motive’ and *ability!* Even those who were supernaturally equipped must choose as to how such ability will be used. God’s control here is the same as it is every’ ‘here: *love!*

57. Why do certain persons become “puffed up”?

Answer: There would be an inevitable temptation to feel honored above others if God through the Holy Spirit endowed one with the ability to perform miracles or to heal the sick or He gifted you with supernatural knowledge or wisdom, not even to mention prophecy. Puffed up people give the constant impression that they are about to explode, and they will indeed if their thin skin of pride is pricked. As we have said before, this is a sad emphasis upon the gift instead of the Giver. Our first love in this circumstance is ourself and our ability instead of God and the body of His Son—the church.

58. Specify some type of “unseemly” behavior.

Answer: We need to answer this in the Context of the Corinthian church. The principle is generic, but the example needs to be specific. We believe Paul cites unseemly behavior in the spectacle of several speaking in tongues at the same time and such a practice without an interpreter.

Note to the Reader:

Whereas we know a careful answer to the questions 6 through 67 would be most helpful, we realize at the same time these questions are not germane to the subject of the Holy Spirit and also that they have been answered in such a meaningful manner in *Volume One* by the discussion of Henry Drummond. Please read these questions on pages 107 and 108, and this grand answer and discussion on pages 108 though 118 of *Volume One*. We continue with question 68 as it relates to the very important passage on the subject of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 13:8-13.

68. Verse 8a is a conclusion to all that has been said on the subject of love. Indicate in what particulars that love never faileth.

Answer: It would be easy to relate this statement to the nine areas where love is expressed and needed, *i.e.* in:

- (1) Patience—love suffereth long.
- (2) Kindness—and is kind.
- (3) Generosity—love envieth not.
- (4) Humility—vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.
- (5) Courtesy-.—doth not behave itself unseemly.
- (6) Unselfishness—seeketh not her own.
- (7) Good temper—is not easily provoked.
- (8) Guilelessness—thinketh no evil.

(9) Sincerity—rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. In all these areas love never fails!

69. Prophecies are to be done away. Why? When?

Answer: To answer this question in the context will be relatively easy: (1) Prophecies are to be abolished or superseded because they are only “in part” or a part of the whole. When the whole is present there will be no need for the partial. (2) Prophecies form a part of the immature state. When the mature is reached there will be no need for the immature. Prophecies will be laid aside by the man as one of the “childish things” of this immaturity. (Please, please read the text and get this conclusion from it, not from the present writer, but this does seem to be a most obvious meaning. We are not at present answering the question as to what is the *complete* or *perfect* or *whole*; nor who is represented by the man or the mature person.) (3) When we see “face to face,” the prophecies which are compared to a mirror will be laid aside. (4) When a full knowledge is present a partial knowledge will no longer be needed. It is clear from what we have said that these two questions of *why* prophecies are to be done away, and *when* this will happen are bound together in the same fourfold answer. They will be abolished, laid aside, superseded, replaced because they are only a part of the whole—a temporary supplement given until the perfect, the whole, the complete is come. When such (whatever it is) comes, prophecies will be no more.

70. We know that languages have not passed away (there are yet hundreds—yea, thousands—of different languages today). Language will be used in heaven (or some form of communication comparable to language) —just when will tongues cease?

Answer: We must understand this term “tongues” to refer to the whole ability to speak in a foreign language without previous preparation. This supernatural ability will cease—not the use of languages per se. We can say in answer to this question what we said in answer to question 69— (1) tongues will suddenly stop when the perfect is come; (2) when the mature is come; (3) when we see face to face; (4) when the whole is present. We have yet to answer the question as to just what is represented in: “the perfect,” “the mature,” “face to face,” “the whole.”

71. When would there ever be a time when we would cease to learn and hence cause knowledge to be done away?

Answer: This is *not* the thought of the knowledge here described. The gift of knowledge was intuitive or directly imparted information from the divine mind to the mind of man. It is this type or kind of knowledge which will be removed. We have answered the question of time twice before, *i.e.*, as related to prophecy and tongues (the other two gifts considered). The supernatural gift of knowledge will be abolished at the same time and for the same reason as the other two gifts.

72. ‘What is “that which is perfect”?’

Answer: This is a *most* crucial question. Indeed the whole meaning and application of this passage depends upon its answer. By reading the paraphrase by MacKnight on page 119 of Volume One, we can see he believes it to be “the perfect gift of complete illumination . . . bestowed on all in heaven,” so the perfect is the perfect understanding obtained in heaven, *i.e.* according to MacKnight.

We quoted from J. W. McGarvey and Pendleton on pages 120-122. In a close reading of these pages (which we fondly hope some will give them) it will be discovered the second coming of Christ is considered “that which is perfect,” and that these gifts were to pass away and cease as a result of the matured church. We would conceive of the matured church the one in which the full revelation resides in the form of the canon of the New Testament.

Knofel Staton produces a very convincing argument for “that which is perfect” being the canon of the New Testament.

We have been helped by a booklet published by R. B. Sweet Co. of Austin, Texas, *Thai Which Is*

Perfect. We quote from it here to give what we believe is the total spectrum of opinions on this subject. (We hope our readers will obtain the whole booklet and read it.) There are six men and their interpretations here listed. The reader will notice the three above treated more fully in these quotations. The statement of purpose from the publisher is very helpful. He says: This booklet has been produced to encourage and assist Christians seeking to better understand the Word of God. The subject of each of these essays is the same—the meaning of one phrase in I Corinthians 13. But this phrase— ‘when that which is perfect is come’ implicitly contains many other issues. The subject was selected both because of the wider questions to which it points and because of its current interest to Christians.

“Each of the contributors is responsible for his own article and the point of view it expresses. No author was allowed to see another’s work before the material appeared in print. The publisher is responsible for the collecting of the articles and placing them in a uniform style of writing. No viewpoint is either endorsed or refuted by virtue of its inclusion in this collection, nor by its failure to be represented. In the interest of fairness, the articles are arranged by the last name of the authors.

LeRoy GARRITT:

““But when the perfect gift of complete illumination is bestowed on all in heaven, then that which is partial, namely, the present gifts of knowledge and prophecy, shall be abolished as useless.”

“This free translation from MacKnight’s Apostolic Epistles puts the traditional King James Version rendition ‘But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away’ in a different light. So does *The Living New Testament*: ‘But when we have been made perfect and complete, then the need for these inadequate special gifts will come to an end, and they will disappear.’ Campbell’s *Living Oracles* says about the same thing: ‘But when perfection is come, then what is in part will be done away.’ Schonfield’s *Authentic New Testament* is similar: ‘But when perfection is reached what is imperfect will come to an end.’

“Many of our teachers in churches of Christ have given the phrase *that which is perfect* in the King James Version a novel interpretation, one hardly defensible either in the light of the context of the passage or modern scholarship. The passage is made to mean something like this: *When the canon of the New Testament is completed or when the church is completely mature in that it has all the revelation God intends for it, then such gifts as tongues and healing will cease.* Since ‘that which is perfect’ (the New Testament) is come, then all the spiritual gifts referred to in I Corinthians 12 no longer apply. So the reasoning goes.

JOHN McRAY:

“The term *to teleion* in I Corinthians 13:10 refers to the inclusion of the Gentiles into the body of Christ according to the promise of Abraham that God would bless all nations (Gentiles) in his seed (Gen. 18:18). The term is used in contrast with another phrase in the same verse *ek merous* which is commonly translated “that which is in part” and which occurs only five times in the New Testament. All of these appearances are in I Corinthians 12 and 13. The four times it occurs in 13:9,10 and 12 are probably to be understood alike, and these four likely mean the same as the fifth occurrence in 12:27 where it obviously means ‘individually.’ The contrast then is between ‘that which is corporate’ and ‘that which is individual.’ The ‘individual’ refers to the individual possession of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the first part of chapter 12, and the ‘corporate’ refers to the body of Christ completed by the inclusion of the Gentiles as indicated by 12:13.

ROY OSBORNE:

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“In I Corinthians, chapter 13, the apostle Paul uses the word ‘perfect’ in the sense of something arriving, of a state to which one comes. He says, ‘When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in all part shall be done away.’ The word perfect in the Greek language is the word *teleion*. The connotation is to move from point A to point B, from the place where one is to the place where one desires to be. This is the reason that sometimes the translators choose to use the term ‘mature’ in the place of the term perfect. An individual who is maturing is in the process of coming from the place where he is to the place where he desires to be or to the place where he should be.

“The apostle Paul goes on to define his term perfect in a little more exact way. He says, when I was a child I spoke, acted and understood like a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things. One does not become a man overnight. One does not lose his childish way of talking, thinking, acting in a twinkling of the eye. This is a process which takes place in time. Each time a child learns to pronounce a word as an adult would pronounce it, he lays aside his childish pronunciation. When he learns other types of adult behavior, he eliminates those stumbling and immature forms quite necessary in the earlier years as stepping stones to the adult person. These stepping stones are not counted as of no value. They are simply counted as having fulfilled their usefulness and rather than hanging onto them, fetish-like, one lays them aside. To return to the childish ways of speaking or any other childish behavior would be considered abnormal. The individual would be called childish.

“So it is in religious matters. Those forms, rituals, or behaviors which were necessary to bring us to whatever point of maturity we may have attained should not be clung to fetishly. They should be laid aside as we move on to higher forms of obedience, service, and relationship to God.

“Now that the apostle Paul has aptly described what he means by ‘when that which is perfect is come,’ it would be foolish for us to suggest that this intends some particular point in time or some exact cutoff point, such as the completion of the Bible or the end of earthly time.

JIM REYNOLDS:

“The perfect is the end of the age when the childish will be done away and we will see face to face, loving and knowing God fully as we have been fully known and loved in this age. Therefore, already in this age love is the more excellent way. Love must control the sharing of God’s gifts.

“Paul’s world view does not envision a collection of scripture. Neither does he anticipate a future revelation before the end. He understood the unity of the body to be a present creation of the Spirit (12:13; Gal. 3:27-4:6). All Christians are admonished to accept and experience the reality of the one new man (Eph. 2:14,15). The gifts of ministry are for the purpose of creating a perfect (*teleion*) man in one body (Eph. 4:11-16). A mature oneness in God was his constant goal and struggle in this age of death, but it is only a completed work in the age to come (Phil. 3:14-21; II Cor. 4:16-5:5; I Cor. 15:24-28; 15:42-44).

RUBEL SHELLEY:

“In a passage closely related to I Corinthians 13:8-10, Paul said that miraculous gifts were ‘for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ’ (Eph. 4:12). Such gifts as the discerning of spirits and miraculous wisdom would certainly have been invaluable to the situation of these earliest Christians as they taught and defended the gospel and established churches over the civilized world. A movement so grand in scope as the religion of Jesus Christ had to have capable leadership from the very beginning. Such leadership was provided through the impartation of special miraculous gifts to men in the infant church. But, in this passage also, Paul clearly spoke of the time when the church would pass from infancy to maturity and indicated that the gift would

cease when that state of maturity was reached. Such manifestations were to last ‘til we all attain unto the unity of the faith’ (Eph. 4:13).

“Notice that miraculous gifts were to last ‘til (or until—a function word to indicate continuance to a specified time) we all attain unto the unity of the faith.’ Has the unity of the faith been realized? ‘No,’ answers one, ‘for it is obvious that believers are still divided and have not reached a state of spiritual unity.’ Paul did not say that miraculous gifts would continue until ‘the unity of the faith’—the system of truth, the gospel—was realized. Miracles and signs would continue until the New Testament was written. And, when the system of faith which is contained therein was available to men in permanent form, the temporary gifts would end. That this is the correct meaning of ‘the unity of the faith’ is obvious from similar expressions in the New Testament’ (cf. Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3). Supernatural spiritual gifts were to last until the truth had been revealed in a complete and perfect form. That time has come. We have ‘the faith’ in a permanent, written, objective form—the New Testament.

CARL SPAIN:

When ‘the perfect comes,’ says Paul, the tongues, knowledge, and prophecies would cease. Knowledge of God would not cease, but rather the ‘knowledge’ which puffs up, that which they possessed without knowing God (8:1-3). These miraculous gifts were not proof of spiritual maturity. Paul does not say ‘that these will cease when Jesus comes again, nor does he say that they will cease when the Corinthians get to heaven. Rather, that in time, during their life on earth, the miraculous demonstrations will cease. After these had ceased, faith, hope, and love would remain. Faith is characteristic of Christian life on earth (Heb. 11:1), as also are hope (Rom. 8:24, 25), and love (I Cor. 16:4). Since the conferring of the temporary miraculous gifts was associated with the apostolic ministry, and apostolic succession is nowhere taught in the scriptures, it seems evident that with the death of the apostles of Christ, the conferring of such gifts would cease.

“I do not believe that ‘the perfect’ refers to the completed canon of Sacred Writings. James does speak of ‘the perfect law of liberty’ (James 1:25). But this perfect law was already at work when James wrote and when Paul wrote I Corinthians. James is not speaking of something in the future when he speaks of the perfect law of liberty. This law was in action before the completion of our twenty-seven books which make up the New Testament Canon. Paul’s gospel was also the law of liberty. It was the word of truth (James 1:18,21,22) or the faith (James 2:1; Jude 3). At the time James wrote, one could look into this law and be blessed in obedience to it. It was the perfect law of freedom because it accomplished what the law of Moses could not do (Heb. 10:1). Through faithful response to the law of freedom in Christ, the faithful hearer and doer of the word is blessed (James 1:25) and made perfect (Heb. 10:14). It is significant in this context that James also speaks of the children of God as being perfect and complete in the church (James 1:4,5). The sacred writings contained in the sixty-six books of the Bible are the complete and final revelation of God. Through these inspired Scriptures ‘the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work’ (II Tim. 3:16,17). But Paul’s goal in I Corinthians is the perfection of God’s people through their faithful obedience to the truth of the gospel.”²⁶

KNOFEL STATON

For the benefit of our readers we reproduce Knofel Staton’s explanation of these verses which we believe is the most satisfactory interpretation we have found: “I Corinthians 13:8-13 is one of the toughest sections in the Corinthian correspondences – especially as read in English translations. Some teachings are clear: (1) love is permanent, and (2) tongues, knowledge, and prophecy are temporary. But some questions arise—

- 1) What is the knowledge and prophecy of verse 9? (Will knowledge *Per se* ever pass away?

²⁶ Sweet, That Which Is Perfect, Austin, Sweet Pub. Co., 1972

- 2) What is ‘the perfect’ in verse 10?
- 3) What does ‘imperfect’ mean in verses 9 and 10?
- 4) What does it mean in verse 12 to ‘understand fully’?

It is my hope that this lesson will not muddy the water more, but will help clear it. It is my intention to look at this passage as objectively as I can. I am not interested in perpetuating any traditions which are not scriptural. As a matter of fact, I prefer to *shatter traditions*. I am not interested in feeding a ‘party-line.’ I want to understand my idea of the truth by the text and not strive to understand the text by my idea of truth.

Permanency of Love

Now let’s dig deeply into I Corinthians 13:8-13. In verse 8, the permanency of love is spotlighted, ‘*Love never ends.*’ The next phrase in Greek begins with a little word which introduces a contrast (*de*) and is translated *but*. This introduces the contrast between the permanency of love just announced, and the transitory nature of three other phenomena. However, a very interesting thing occurs—two different words are used to describe the temporary nature of the three, putting them into two different categories! Prophecies and knowledge are considered together, while tongues (foreign languages) is put into another category.

“The word used with prophecies and knowledge is a word that refers to the setting aside of one thing when something better comes (*katargeo*). This is the connotation of the word in every other place Paul uses it in the Corinthian correspondence (I Cor. 1:28; 2:6; 6:13; 13:14; 15:24, 26; II Cor. 3:7,11,13,14). This word is also commonly used to refer to something giving way to the new revelation of God—the New Covenant (II Cor. 3:7-11,13,14; Gal. 3:17 (negative usage here); Eph. 2:15; II Tim. 1:10; Rom. 7:2,6).

“Paul’s use of this word indicates that knowledge and prophecies will give way to something better, i.e. they will be replaced or superseded. In a sense, they will be absorbed into something better, rather than cease altogether. The word which describes the temporary nature of tongues is not the same, but is a word that means *stop altogether*. There will be no replacing. The tongues will cease when the knowledge and prophecies give way to something better.

“But why will they give way to something better—and when? Verse 9 answers the *why?* and verse 10 the *when?*”

Why Something Better?

We cannot understand verse 10 without first taking a careful look at verse 9, because of the three possible meanings of the word translated *perfect*. That Greek word (*teleios*) can mean:

- 1) Something without a flaw, *perfect*, or
- 2) Something entirely together, *whole*, or
- 3) Something which has reached its goal, *complete*.

Now which is the translation in verse 10? Verse 9 gives us the clue, but that clue is hidden in the RSV rendering.

Verse 9 begins with a very important word, “for” (*gar*). This is a transition word which introduces an explanation or a reason for a preceding statement. (*By the way, not enough writers take seriously the implications of the transition words in Greek.*) Verse 9 GIVES THE REASON for saying that prophecies and knowledge will be replaced. The literal translation is this *For we are (now) knowing from a part (a piece at a time) and we are (now) prophesying from a part.*’ The RSV rendering that ‘our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect’ is too ambiguous and is not helpful. First, the main words are verbs and not nouns. Secondly, the word *imperfect* is too frequently misunderstood. The RSV *imperfect* comes from two Greek words which literally mean “out of a part” (*ek merous*.) Every time the New Testament uses the phrase ‘out of a part’ (*ek merous*) or ‘from a part’ (*apo merous*), it refers to a state of incompleteness—a partial situation which needs wholeness (Rom. 11:25; 15:15,24; II Cor. 1:14; 2:5).

Paul was saying that the knowing and prophesying of verse 8 will be set aside because as a source (*ek*) of revelation, they are piecemeal. A better source was to come—a complete source. The gifts of prophecy and inspired knowledge produced only limited pieces of divine revelation. The whole revelation of God's will was to come, so that a complete knowledge would be available and the partial methods of revelation would be unnecessary.

We should note that in verse 9, Paul did not mention tongues. He did not need to explain why they would give way to something better, because they were not going to be replaced when the need for them had passed.

When Does It Come?

When would that something better come? Verse 10 tells us. Verse 10 begins with that very important transition word (*de*) which introduces a contrast. While verse 9 speaks about the piecemeal source (*out of a part*) for knowledge and speech, verse 10 by contrast introduces a source where the missing pieces are put together, a complete source. Verse 10 should read this way—'*But when the whole (thing) comes, the (thing) out of a part will be set aside.*' This is the literal translation from the Greek. Note that again the phrase 'out of a part' (*ek merous*) appears in verse 10 as well as in verse 9. This phrase is translated in the RSV as *imperfect*. The word *perfect* stands in direct contrast with the words *out of a part* (piece). So, within its context, the only proper way the word *perfect* in verse 10 can be rendered is *whole* or *complete* (instead of *perfect*). It is here the opposite of partial. It means *whole*.

Then what is the whole or complete thing of verse 10? It is the 'put-together pieces' spoken of in verse 9. So what is the understanding of these verses?

During the early days of the church, God gave to various persons special gifts for the purpose of equipping His church. Among these gifts were knowledge and prophecies. Knowledge and prophecies in I Corinthians 13 clearly refer to that knowledge and speech *directly inspired by God*. The early church was built upon men having such gifts (see Ephesians 2:20). These gifts were given to curb subjectivity. Many people were claiming to have a word from God. To curb the ambiguity of so many voices claiming inspiration, God inspired some and gave to others the ability to discern His Spirit. We do not know all the dynamics about this.

All Parts Fit Together

However, we do know this: Each man received just *a part* of God's total revelation. God gave to one man *this* particular word and to another man *that* particular word. Paul recognized that the inspired knowledge and speaking of selected individuals was partial—a word from God here, and a word from God there. Would this partial revelation go on forever? Paul says, 'No.' *There will be a time when the pieces (parts, merous) will be put together!* And when that happens, men will get their knowledge and speech about God's revelation from the whole (*telios*) because the parts will have been absorbed into the whole. Therefore, the inspired knowledge and prophecy of verse 8 which is from a partial source (verse 9) will give way (be set aside) when a better source comes—the whole, the perfect (verse 10). Note again that this passage indicates that tongues will simply cease. As a matter of fact, church history shows that tongues largely did cease even before the writing of the New Testament was entirely finished.

It is my understanding that the *perfect* of verse 10 can refer to nothing other than the completed 'mystery' of God. Paul speaks often of God's revelation as a *mystery*. That was a military word of the first century which meant the overall strategy of a general. Here's the way it was used: before a battle, a general would call in his leaders and give to each one a different order. Each then had *a piece* of the total strategy. Each would pass this on to the men of his charge who were to fulfill it. Often this was done without necessarily knowing that *other pieces* were in existence. Men under different leaders were getting different pieces depending upon their situation. After the battle was won, the general would call

all his leaders together and explain to them the pieces of his battle plan so that each saw *the total strategy*.

This combination of *pieces put together* was called ‘mystery’ (*musterion*). The role of God’s church is to let all men see the total (put together) plan of God’s *musterion* (Eph. 3:9,10). Before God’s new plan was put together, it existed in pieces because He, like a general, gave certain pieces to various men who passed them on ‘to the people of their charge. But later the Commander in chief caused all the pieces to be put together. That strategy (*musterion*) is our New Testament.

The Completed Whole

When the whole comes, the parts are absorbed *into the whole* like a child is changed into the adult (verse 11). To see the whole is to see how all the parts interrelate. It is to see the outline *and details* clearly. That’s what Paul is saying in verse 12. “*We now see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.*” He explains his meaning in the next sentence, which parallels exactly. That is, *I see in a mirror dimly equals I now know out of parts (ek merous), and then face to face equals understand fully.*

‘Face to face’ does not require us to think of standing in the Lord’s presence after the resurrection of the saints. It may be only a vivid expression of the wholeness and clarity of revelation which would be available after the completed Word of God made prophesying unnecessary. Remember how God spoke to Moses ‘face to face’ (Exodus 33:11). Yet when Moses asked to see God, he was told, *Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live*’ (Exodus 33:17-20). We often do not realize how full and intimate a knowledge of God has been given to us in His word. Consider John 15:15; 16:12-15; II Peter 1:3; II Tim. 3:14-17.

The reference to a mirror refers to a partial look, i.e., not a clear look. The outline may be seen, but not any clear details. In the first century, the only mirrors available were polished metal. But polished metal never allowed as clear or full a view as looking directly with the eyes. So the term ‘look into a mirror’ was commonly used to refer to partial knowledge. (Philo uses it to refer to man’s partial knowledge of God.) It is also important to note that the word *mirror* is used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer to a look at the revelation of God (see James 1:23-25; II Cor. 3:18). Since the metaphor *mirror* was used in the first century to refer to our partial knowledge of God and is elsewhere used to refer to looking at the revelation from God, we should so consider it in this passage. Before the pieces of God’s new revelation were put together, our look at it did not reveal all the details; but when *the pieces were put together*, we could see His revelation *face to face*. There is a way to speak of seeing something clearly—to see from a correct or holistic perspective so that both outline and details can be seen. This is further clarified in the next sentence, ‘then I shall know fully.’ In the context, this means *to know the total strategy of God*. As the leaders came to know fully the general’s plan after he put all the pieces together for them, *so we can know God’s completed plan!*

“Verse 13 gives us a clincher—‘Faith, hope, and love abide.’ These will abide after the *perfect* has come. Thus the *perfect* in verse 10 *cannot refer to the second coming of Christ* because when that happens, our faith will be turned into sight and our hope into reality. The gender of ‘perfect’ (*teleios*) in verse 10 is neuter (*teleion*). To suggest that Paul would use this form of the word to speak of his Lord is very unsatisfactory. That would depersonalize Jesus. In fact, Paul is fond of speaking of Jesus and God; and especially so in this letter. He refers to Them directly at least 20 times in the first 9 verses of I Corinthians, and he knows how to speak about the second coming in a clear way (1:7)! God is called *perfect* in Matthew 5:48, but the gender is masculine. To change the gender from masculine to neuter is to say “a perfect *thing*” instead of a perfect person. Every other time this word appears in the New Testament in the neuter gender, it refers to a non-personal thing, and twice it is used to refer to the will or law of God (Rom. 12:2; James 1:25). Thus it is not unusual for God’s revelation to be called *perfect (teleion)*.

The *perfect* in verse 10 in its present context can only refer to God's *completed revelation* which had come from pieces to men here and there, but was later put together into a whole. When that happens, the piecemeal source for inspired knowledge and prophecy will have been set aside by being absorbed into the whole. To understand *perfect* in another way is to say that inspired knowledge and prophecies from pieces (*ek merous*) are valid in the church today. That would mean that *we have no absolute, completed revelation from God*. Church history reveals that the church in the early centuries rejected that kind of thinking. They stood upon the completion and finality of the canon at the cost of their lives.

‘What about tongues? They merely stop –thus, not as significant as knowledge and prophecy. Is this to deny the power of God? No. It is merely to accept the strategy *God has outlined* to make His power known to all generations for all time.’²⁷

78. How strong an expression is “follow after love”?

Answer: This is a very strong word. This indicates “a never terminating action.”²⁸ (Grosheide) This is a commandment to the entire congregation. Love needs to be set up before each member of the church as a goal before the runner. The definition of love as given by Paul in the 13th chapter must be kept as a very practical part of the object called “love.” This would indicate that love is always before us obtained best by a constant pursuit. Cf. Phil. 3:12,14.

79. Who was to desire spiritual gifts?

Answer: This is addressed to the whole church in Corinth. It would seem that there was a reaction on the part of the Corinthians to Paul's strong words on the superiority of love. Paul here wants the Corinthians to know of their need of spiritual gifts. Without knowledge, wisdom and prophecy the church would have no continuance. Not all spoke in tongues, not all were prophets; but without these gifts or Spirit-directed abilities there would have been no church.

80. What does desire have to do with obtaining spiritual gifts?

Answer: Evidently faith must be present before the gifts become operative. God was willing for certain persons to have certain abilities, but the persons must also be willing for these gifts or abilities to function. A loss of interest or a refusal to believe in and accept the Spirit's gifts would short-circuit the power of God.

In 12:31 Paul links this desire with “the greater gifts” —probably referring to the superiority of love or to the gifts of prophecy or knowledge or wisdom or perhaps faith. How were they given?

Answer: No hint is given in the Corinthian letter as to the means of impartation (unless 14:13 indicates otherwise). We *do* have reference to the hands of the apostles in Acts 8:14-19 and 19:1-6. Does Paul allude to this in Rom. 1:11? II Timothy 1:6 plainly states Paul mediated a gift to Timothy by the laying on of his hands. I Timothy 4:14 mentions a gift in association with the hands of the elders. We understand the gift of the eldership to Timothy amounted to his ordination or approval of these men (and the churches of Lystra and Iconium they represented—Cf. Acts 16:1 ff). We believe the Holy Spirit equipped Timothy through the hands of Paul for his work into which he was set by the hands of the presbytery.

We shall deal in detail with I Cor. 14:13 in the progression of our questions. We are not at all unwilling to concede that certain persons received any or all of these gifts or abilities in answer to prayer or by the hands of someone other than an apostle. We are simply at a loss for any Biblical evidence to support such a position.

²⁷ Staton, *Spiritual Gifts For Christians Today*, Joplin, College Press, 1974.

²⁸ F.W.Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, Erdmans Pub. Co., 1953

81. Why was the best gift prophecy? Or the best gift was ‘prophecy’—explain why.

Answer: How woefully inadequate we have been in defining this gift! (See our comments elsewhere in this text.) There are two dozen books listed in our bibliography which espouse the concept of a present-day prophetic ministry. How sad it is to thus dilute and confuse the meaning of the Holy Spirit Himself. One does not need some supernatural aid to learn that the gift of prophecy was the source of divine information and instruction for the churches of the first century. What does this simple reference mean? (Read it carefully.) “So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, *being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*. Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:19,20). If these words mean anything, they refer to the prophets along with the apostles as the persons who first taught the truth to the Christians of the first century. There was no other revelation. The churches of the first century *did not* have the New Testament. They were forced to look to God for direct revelation which He graciously gave them through the prophets and apostles. There were twelve apostles, plus Paul; but thousands of prophets. If we are to think of the congregations throughout the Roman empire as being filled with the knowledge of God *l/icy were filled by the teaching of the prophets*. There was no other source for such information. On a local level apart from an infrequent visit of an apostle or a rare copy of one of the inspired documents we now call our New Testament, there was no other information available than that supplied by these prophets. If such persons are in the churches today their words are equal in authority to the New Testament. Indeed, Luke, Mark, James and Jude were given the gift of prophecy which enabled them to write: the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of Mark, the epistles of James and Jude. The rest of the New Testament was written by four apostles, i.e. Matthew, John, Peter and Paul. So verbally and by the written word the church for all time has been and is built upon the knowledge God gave the apostles and prophets. To claim such a gift for today is an absurdity. We do not lay the foundation of a building more than once!

We can, in its context, see the superlative excellence of the prophetic gift. We can learn from what we have said why Paul recommended this ability above others. We can also conclude that knowledge and wisdom must have been operative in and through the prophet or his work could not have been done.

82. Why would anyone want to exercise the gift of tongues if it did not benefit man?

Answer: The thought is that tongues must be translated to be understood. Hence the use of this ability without a translator communicates only to God. We do not believe Paul is recommending this practice. We understand verse 2 to be a further emphasis of verse 1, i.e. the superiority of love can be seen in the basic function of tongues. Without a translator no one understands. In contrast, everyone understands love everyone understands the prophet. Both love and prophecy are therefore superior to tongues. Tongues, to be of help, must be mediated through a translator or interpreter. The person who is accustomed to exercising this ability but does so without an interpreter is not motivated by love (except for himself). The will of God, not known to man before He through the Spirit made it known through the tongue speaker, was indeed a mystery; even when communicated to the tongue speaker without a translator it was yet a mystery. How sad to have mysteries communicated to the tongue speaker but unknown by those for whom they were given. There is no indication here that even the tongue speaker knew what he said. We cannot imagine how this verse has become a proof-text for the practice of present-day private “prayer-language.” in its context, it teaches just the opposite!

83. In what sense was the speaking in tongues “unto God,” i.e. is this suggesting the gift of tongues was used in personal worship?

Answer: From what we have said above the reader will already have an answer. However, we are very eager to give as complete an answer as at all possible. We gain much from ten commentators on this Corinthian letter. We recommend them to our readers not because we agree with all they say (for we surely do not) but because all these men have made the same conscientious effort we are making to understand the divine text. These men are:

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I CORINTHIANS

- (1) T. R. Applebury. STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS. Joplin, Mo.: College Press.
- (2) F L. Godet. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- (3) F. W. Grosheide. COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- (4) Charles Hodge. AN EXPOSITION OF HE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- (5) R. C. H. Lenski. THE; INTERPRETATION OF ST. PAUL’S FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press.
- (6) .James MacKnight. APOSTOLIC EPISTLES. Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate.
- (7) and (8) THE STANDARD BIBLE COMMENTARY, THESSALONIANS, CORINTHIANS, GALATIONS AND ROMANS,, J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton. Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company.
- (9) & (10) A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians. . Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer. Edinburgh: T & T. Clark.

I consider these men and their books as my dear friends in my study of the words of the Spirit.

In answer to the question before us, Godet observes, “What the speaker in a tongue says remains between God and him, and is a mystery to the hearers. It is possible to explain the dative Greek word in the sense ‘by’ the Spirit—which would then be the Divine Spirit as guiding the man’s spirit—or it may be translated: ‘*in spirit*’; then it is the spirit of the glossalalete (tongue speaker) himself, who is carried away in an ecstasy, and in a manner raised for the time above the exercise of the understanding. Cf. Rev. 1:1²⁹ The question then would be answered. that such a person could exercise this ability in his own private or personal devotion, but it was unadvisable in the public assembly to do so. A word needs to be said about who is included in the expression “no one understands.” This could not be used in the absolute sense since the person who could interpret would understand. We like the words of Lenski here: ‘No one understands’ does not mean absolutely no one, for one who has the gift of interpretation, i.e., who is conversant with the particular foreign language used, would understand. Paul himself speaks about the possible presence of an interpreter, verse 27 and 28; in fact, the speaker himself may be able to act as an interpreter, verse 5, 13. But in this opening statement these ramifications of the subject are not touched.’”*

84. Is it true that no *man* could understand the language spoken?

Answer: We have anticipated this question and its answer in the answer we gave to the previous question.

85. In what sense could no man understand?

Answer: He could not understand the meaning of the words used because they were in a language he could not understand; neither could he understand the purpose of such a person using such a gift in such a circumstance.

86. Such utterances are only mysteries to some people—who?

Answer: We have given a rather complete answer to this question in our earlier discussion.

87. Why call this gift the gift of prophecy if its use is almost solely for teaching?

Answer: The predictive clement was indeed a part of the function of this gift. Cf. Acts 11:27,28 and 21:10,11. The prophet was a foreteller, but his primary function was to be a “forth teller,” i.e. to speak out the information given to him by God. These men in the New Testament assemblies were inspired by the same Spirit who spoke through the men of Old Testament times. We shall treat the purposes of their

²⁹ R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

utterances in our next question.

88. Please define in your own words the three expressions: (1) Edification; (2) exhortation; (3) consolation.

Answer: We are indebted to R. C. H. Lenski for his splendid definition of these terms: “Edification in the Biblical sense of the term is every presentation of divine truth which increases and strengthens faith and spiritual life. It thus includes all true Christian instruction which is often called indoctrination. ‘Edification is accomplished by enlightenment, by enabling the hearers to know and inwardly to grasp the divine truth, to assimilate and to make it their own. Examples of this feature of prophecy are found in the doctrinal part of all Paul’s letters, notably in Romans chapters 1-11; Ephesians chapters 1-3, etc.

“The term translated exhortation could better be translated ‘comfort’ and includes admonitions of all kinds which result in comfort. This feature is well illustrated in the admonitory part of Paul’s letters, Romans 12, etc.; Ephesians 4, etc. Yet doctrinal and ethical content is often interwoven, and the former supports the latter. We cannot, however, say that edification is the genus, and admonition and consolation are the species. The three are coordinate.

‘Consolation’ deals with the Christian’s condition in this hostile and evil world where he must endure persecution and affliction of every kind. Consolation intends to lead him to understand the nature of what he must endure and to enable him to hold out cheerfully and valiantly to the end. Examples of consolation are found in many places in the Scriptures, for instance in Peter 4:12-19; Hebrews 12:1-13.

“Paul’s brief description of the gift of prophecy shows that it does not deal only with special, direct revelations from God to certain chosen instruments (prophecy in the narrow sense as revelatory) but that it extends much farther and includes all the uses that are to be made of all of the divine truth that has been revealed to us.

The prophets in the first century received the truth directly or intuitively. We have in written form what God gave to them. We can and indeed do offer edification, exhortation and consolation by the truth revealed to them.

89. In what sense would the gift of tongues edify its possessor?

Answer: Paul plainly states that both the ability to prophesy and to speak in tongues edifies; however, the limits of such edification is vastly different. Prophecy edifies the whole assembly (as we have noted above); tongues exercised without an interpreter edifies only the user. The sense of God’s sacred presence in the person of the Holy Spirit would be a source of real encouragement to the person involved, but it would not affect anyone else.

Paul is to point out that even when an interpreter is present tongues were only used in the following areas:

- (1) *in Prayer*—*in* the assembly a translator must be present to receive an ‘amen’ from those who agree with the prayer
- (2) *Singing*—*directly* inspired songs – but only a translator can help the song to speak to someone else;
- (3) *Blessing*—*i.e.* adoring or praising—however beautiful and appropriate there must be an interpreter;
- (4) *Giving of thanks*—*how* much we need to thank Him! The use of tongues would restrict it to the tongue speaker unless all could understand through the translator.

90. Are we to understand that a public meeting is in view in the use of the two gifts—tongues and prophecy?

Answer: Please note carefully the last phrase of verse 4—”in order that *the church may receive edification.*” It would seem that the building up of the assembly is before the mind of the apostle. He does not discount the private help tongues would offer the user, but he is not recommending such use. Their intended purpose was much larger than personal use—edify *the assembly*. We do believe the public meeting is the context of these verses.

91. In what sense are we to understand the desire of Paul that he would have all the Corinthians speak with tongues? All of them could not do so (see 12:28,29) –what is meant?

Answer: This is an obvious use of exaggeration to establish a point. Paul is saying that he places no restrictions on the number who speak in tongues—only on the purpose and circumstance. Motive has always been more important to God than what is done. However, if *all* are going to do something for God and His people, why not let all prophesy?

We must not read into this verse the possibility that *all* could or should speak in tongues. God made this choice and He obviously would not grant every member the same function. Paul is simply saying he offers no opposition per se to those who speak in tongues.

92. Why mention the measure of greatness between the use of tongues and the use of prophecy? Did some of the Corinthians feel they were “great” because they had the gift of tongues?

Answer: Paul’s emphasis on greatness related to the benefit derived from the gift or ability and not to the greatness of the person using the ability. It would seem from what has been said earlier that many of the Corinthians did not share his altruism.

Measure greatness by service, not by divine contact. There is much greater service in the ability to prophesy as versus the ability to speak in tongues.

93. Could all who spoke with tongues interpret what they said? Why not? Explain.

Answer: Not all could speak in tongues. Not all who spoke in tongues could interpret or translate what they said. Some did have a double gift. The words spoken in a tongue had meaning, yea a meaning from God through the Spirit, but it was of no value whatsoever until the meaning was made known. Some persons could give that meaning to the assembly by their translation; others could not. It would seem that the number who did not have the gift of interpretation far exceeded those who did.

94. What is meant by speaking “by revelation”?

Answer: There are six exercises of divine direction here discussed. They are: (1) Tongues; (2) Interpretation; (3) Revelation; (4) Knowledge; (5) Prophecy; (6) Teaching. We have identified and discussed three of these six; we need a clear definition (as much as possible) of the remaining three.

Revelation was the act of receiving a communication from God. At times the word refers to the content and at other times to the action involved. To speak “by revelation” obviously means Paul has received some messages intuitively, i.e. within his mind, from the divine mind he wishes to share with the church. Such a revelation would be given in the language understood by all. “*Revelation* is any portion of divine truth that is made known directly by God. Its formula of presentation is: ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ It remains revelation whether it is uttered by him who personally receives it from God, or by others who obtain it at second-hand. Revelation is fundamental, for all knowledge, prophecy, and teaching are based on revelation even to this day.” (*Lenski*)³⁰

Knowledge necessarily refers to the content of revelation. This is an emphasis by Paul on the information (food) involved when he is exercising these abilities. Lenski says: “*Knowledge* is the understanding of any portion of divine truth, a clear insight into what the truth contains.”*

Prophesying. It is very difficult to separate these words; indeed several commentators make no attempt to do so and consider them four parts of one action, i.e. speaking under divine inspiration. We agree with this thought, but there *are four words* and they do have meaning, however closely allied they are to each other. We believe “prophesying” in this context speaks of the communication of the “revelation” — it is the expression of the revelation, the verbalizing of the “knowledge.”

Teaching. We relate this to the results of the preceding—i.e.: when a *revelation* has been given and received, the divine *knowledge* in the revelations is communicated through *Prophesying*, the result is that

³⁰ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

men are *taught*.

Paul poses a hypothetical situation and asks the Corinthians to make their own evaluation. He says in essence, “Suppose I came to you (as indeed I will come to you) but when I came I spoke only in tongues without an interpreter – of what value would I be to you?” Contrast tongue speaking with the gifts or functions of revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching. The conclusion is too obvious to need expression.

95. What is the “knowledge” of verse 6?

Answer: We have anticipated this question and answer in question 94.

96. What distinction is here made between prophesying and teaching?

Answer: We have anticipated this question and answer in question 94.

97. Why begin a discussion of the proper use of a pipe or harp?

Answer: These verses contain an illustration of the point he has made in the two preceding verses. To use tongues without an interpreter is like using a musical instrument without a tune or melody. These inanimate objects have a voice, but unless that voice says something to the listener it is of no value. Some form of harmony must be produced or only noise results.

98. Why say “things without life”?

Answer: Surely man can fulfill His purpose in the body of Christ if he can make and use lifeless objects for their intended purpose. The divine life of the Spirit is there for an intelligent purpose—it is frustrated without someone to translate.

99. Meaning of “distinction in sounds”?

Answers “A flute or a lyre may, indeed, furnish a sound, but unless this includes a distinction in tones, how will one know what is being played? The distinction of tones refer to some melody that is played.” (*Lenski*)³¹

100. Is this a discussion of identifying a tune on the pipe or on the harp?

Answer: We would conclude that both instruments are meant. These represent in the pipe all the wind instruments and in the harp all the stringed instruments.

101. What is the point of the illustration of the proper use of the trumpet?

Answer: The use of the trumpet in battle is the illustration before us. How imperative is the distinction in sounds here. Suppose the trumpeter mixed the trumpet call of charge and retreat? What chaos would result!— Paul is saying to the Corinthians. We see the principle operating in these areas; how easy it should be to apply it to the more important area of the assembly.

102. In what sense “easy to be understood”?

Answer: (We are sure our readers by this time recognize that it is imperative for them to follow closely in the text of I Corinthians chapter 14 in order to give meaning to these questions. This question is based on verse 9.) “And you also, Corinthians, if in your glossolalia you do not speak a distinct language, it will be like an unintelligible voice lost in the air.” (*Godet*)³²

“So also ye, when ye speak by inspiration in your public assemblies, unless with the tongue ye utter intelligible speech, how shall it be known what is spoken? herefore, however important the things ye speak may be, ye will be speaking into the air like madmen.” (*MacKnight*)³³

³¹ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

³² Godet, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Pub. House, 1971.

³³ James MacKnight, *Apostolical Epistles*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1960.

103. Meaning of “speaking into the air”?

Answer: This could well contrast with speaking into the mind, heart or ears of man. This is an appeal to the power of reason. He is saying, “Surely God had a better purpose than disturbing the airwaves in the divine ability He gave you to speak in tongues.”

104. How is the word “voices” used in verse 10? Does this mean languages?

Answer: There is question as to whether the term should be “sounds” or voices. If we are to understand “sounds” we must then relate it to the birds, animals and insects of the physical world, or cosmos. If we are to understand the term to mean voices as related to mankind, then we understand Paul as saying there are numberless languages spoken by men in our world. We much prefer the latter meaning as verse 11 seems to speak clearly about the use of language among men. The term voice in verse 11 obviously means a language. We then would conclude the same word refers to languages in verse 10.

Eleven years ago when we wrote *Volume One* (see page 129) we had the opposite view. *Lenski* uses the term “voices” and does not believe languages are meant. *Godet* translates this “No man or no people is without a language,” or “No language exists without articulate words.”³⁴ The articulation of words and syllables belongs to the essence of human tongues.

105. How are we to understand the word “signification”?

Answer: There was no significance to what was said by those who spoke in tongues without a translator. This was in sharp contrast to any and all languages spoken by men. In every country the words are vehicles of thought and meaning. Isn't it strange that where men speak a language directly inspired by God there is no meaning to it (because there is no translator) but when men speak from their own knowledge there is meaning to what they say? The reverse should be true if there is to be a problem in understanding or significance.

106. How is the word “barbarian” used in this connection?

Answer: The Greeks and Romans called all who were not of their race “barbarians.” It was tantamount to saying “a foreigner” or one who spoke another language. The word “significance” as used in 14:10 could be translated “meaning.” Paul is saying he is the listener to this hypothetical person who is using a “voice” or “sound.” Paul cannot get the meaning. Why? Because the speaker is using a language Paul cannot understand. When Paul speaks the listener cannot understand Paul. Why? Each is a “barbarian” to the other. This meaning of the term “barbarian” is a convincing argument for our position that speaking in tongues was the use of a linguistically definable foreign language.

107. In what sense were the Corinthians zealous of Spiritual gifts?

Answer: Paul offers no criticism for their zeal or intense desire. We cannot read into this exercise of zeal or strong desire the obtaining of the gifts,—rather the use of what has already been obtained. Such a thought is suggested by the fact that Paul speaks of the edifying or building up of the assembly. The apostle is saying that if the zeal of the Corinthians was as strong in their desire to teach as it was to speak in tongues the whole congregation would be helped.

108. What were the Corinthians to seek according to Paul's instructions?

Answer: We anticipated this question and its answer in the answer to question 107. We need to be reminded again that the assembly in Corinth could actually have been made up of several language groups since the city was never less than 200,000 in population and could have exceeded 700,000 (*i.e.* according to reports of those who have done historical research on this Grecian city.) Paul is speaking to the needs

³⁴ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

of a large number of people.

109. In what sense is prayer associated with the gift of interpretation?

Answer: We do hope all readers will acquaint themselves with our comments in POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, Volume One, pp. 130, 131. The use of the verb “pray” in this context suggests the direction or the purpose of the one praying. We might quite literally translate: “pray in the direction of interpretation.” Perhaps we could say —“let no praying in a tongue be done without an intention that interpretation be given.

There are three or four obvious conclusions from this text: (1) all Christians did not speak in tongues, for Paul singles out “him that speaketh in a tongue;” (2) only one language is involved in this expression—the text does *not* say *tongues* but *tongue*; (3) those who used a tongue did not always (seldom) have the ability to translate what they said; (4) prayer is associated with speaking in a tongue—both in the use of the tongue and in obtaining the ability to interpret. Perhaps the paraphrase of James MacKnight will illustrate our point; “For which cause, let him who by inspiration prayeth in the church in a foreign language, pray in such a manner, and at such a time, as someone who is inspired may interpret his prayer to the edification of the church.”³⁵ MacKnight assumes the gift of interpretation is going to be given or exercised by someone other than the one who prays in a foreign language.

110. Does verse 14 teach that a man with the gift of tongues does not understand what he says? Explain.

Answers The answer to this question should be obvious by now. This is part of the problem in the use of tongues —as a general rule the tongue speaker did not have the ability to interpret what he had said. In the specific instance before us it is the use of tongues or “tongue,” *i.e.* a single language used in prayer. Paul cites himself as an example in paraphrase and says, “It would have been of no value to you at all if I came and used a tongue among you but failed to interpret it. What is actually taking place is: my spirit prays under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit—but my understanding is non-operative— there is no edification for listeners in this circumstance.”

111. How would it be possible to pray with both the Spirit and the understanding? Explain two ways.

Answer: We appreciate Lenski’s comment on this question; “When I pray in a tongue, and thus my ‘spirit’ prays, this is by no means an unconscious act. I know that I speak, and I know also and feel that the Holy Spirit moves my ‘spirit,’ and that I am uttering spiritual words and thoughts. But this activity of my ‘spirit,’ although it is conscious enough, extends no further; my understanding is inactive and thus barren, unfruitful, producing no distinct thoughts (which is its ordinary function) and thus producing no reception of thoughts in others who hear my utterance, As far as spiritual benefit is concerned, my spirit alone receives that. And even this benefit is small, for my understanding is inactive.”³⁶ It can be observed from the above explanation that the term “spirit” in this particular connection refers to the human spirit under the control of the Holy Spirit.

112. Under what conditions was the praying and singing done?

Answer: Both the praying and singing *must* be considered here as a public act. The inability to understand is because others were present who needed a translation. This does not suggest congregational singing — but the song sung by the individual tongue speaker as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The praying was done to *God* through Christ inspired by the Holy Spirit—the persons present could hear the prayer, but unless they could understand what was said they would receive no benefit from such a prayer; as Paul says in the next verse “they could not say ‘Amen’ or ‘so be it’ if they did not know what was

³⁵ James MacKnight, *Apostolical Epistles*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1960.

³⁶ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

said.”

113. ‘What is meant here by blessing with the Spirit?’

Answer: There are three expressions prompted or directly produced by the Holy Spirit through the human spirit: (1) praying; (2) singing; (3) blessing—or “giving of thanks.” Paul wants the Corinthians to see themselves in his actions; hence he uses the first person. It should be a source of encouragement to all of us that praying, singing, and praising God are all Holy Spirit approved. In the circumstances described here these expressions are all Holy Spirit inspired.

114. Who is the one “in the place of the unlearned”?

Answer: Much discussion can be found in our attempted answer to this question. We do sincerely hope some of our readers will research this subject beyond what you are presently reading. At least read the two authors to whom we have made reference earlier. You will not be surprised at the diversity but at the unanimity of these writers and others. Of course there is a divergence—but it is in the area of opinion—and in -such an area we can have the widest liberty. Some see in the expression “guests in the assembly”—others those in the “inquirers class” (*i.e.* we would presently describe it as such). All are agreed those persons are important and should — indeed *must* understand what is being said. Those who use tongues in prayer, singing and praising *want* to reach them with their words; such can never happen without an interpreter. The edification of the whole assembly and in particular the who occupies the place of the unlearned” *must* be ever the object or purpose behind the use of tongues. We personally see “the unlearned” as the tongue speaking member—*i.e.* anyone and all who could not understand what was being said in the language used. The tongue speaker was “the learned,” *i.e.* educated instantly by the Holy Spirit—but if he receives no approbation of “Amen” from the ones who hear him, of what value will his efforts or education be?

115. What is meant by saying the “Amen”?

Answer: There was a real audience participation in the Corinthian congregation. We pre-supposed a careful listening and a response from what is heard. “Amen” is the transliterated Hebrew word for “verity” and used in the Greek as now in many languages in order to express full and decided assent. It was customary in the synagogue, at the close of a prayer for all the audience to appropriate the contents of it, solemnly adhering to it by the *Amen* (Deut. 27:15; Neh. 8:6) Justin (1st Apol.) affirms the continuance of this usage in the church: “After the president has closed the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying: Amen! Now the Amen in Hebrew signifies: “So let it be!” Similar passages could be cited. What we have said tongues did indeed bear directly upon this expression.

118. Why thank God that he could speak with tongues?

Answer: I have read several answers to this question. Does Paul mean that he uses the gift of tongues more often than the combined efforts of the Corinthians?— or that he speaks more languages than the Corinthians? We much prefer the thought that he is speaking of the superlative nature or quality of his ability; *i.e.* the Holy Spirit has endowed him in a higher, more pure form than He did the Corinthians; this was true because of his apostolic office. Even in this fact he is not congratulating himself—but thanking God for His gifts.

119. Why did Paul make such great use of tongues? For what purpose did he use them?

Answer: This question pre-supposes a different answer than we have just given to question 118; in *Volume One* pp. 134, 135 it can be observed that we have followed the thought presented by MacKnight in his paraphrase —*i.e.* that Paul spoke more languages or used these foreign languages more often than all the Corinthians. If this were the case the purpose of their use would be evangelism and edification.

120. When are we “in church”?

Answer: The word “church” as here used refers to “the assembly,”—*i.e.* when the “called out

ones” assemble they form “the church.” When the church gathers I would rather speak to them one pithy sentence of five words than address them with ten thousand words in a foreign language that has no translator. This does *not* suggest that Paul could not translate what he said—but if the majority understood one language why ignore them for the minority?

121. How could we speak *without* our understanding?

Answer: The use of the term “understanding” refers to the thought that Paul needed to exercise the gift of interpretation before an understanding could be obtained. However, in the use of a language understood by all there was no time break for interpretation but a direct and immediate communication; it probably took place through the use of the gift of prophecy or teaching. To speak “without understanding” meant to speak in tongues without an interpreter.

122. Didn’t Paul know what he spoke when he spoke with tongues?

Answer: Not until an interpretation was given — either by himself or someone else. The tongue speaker had control over where such an ability was to be used — but not over its meaning until it was translated.

123. Wouldn’t the instruction given by Paul be just as inspired as the tongues? Why the great desire for tongues?

Answer: This question asks us – why not by-pass the tongues altogether and address the whole assembly with the inspired utterance of prophecy or teaching? The answer is found in the fact that the minority who could not understand at all or at least very well, the language in which the prophecy or teaching was being given are also important, they need to be addressed from time to time in their own language. But when such does happen the majority can not be ignored—they must have a translation. This is the problem of a bi-lingual or multi-lingual congregation in which the majority are of one language.

124. Why introduce the thought of being children?

Answer: Immaturity has been mentioned before—whether the Corinthians intended it or not their purposes turned out to be childish—i.e. as related to tongues. This verse (v. 20) is but a preamble to the sign value of tongues as versus prophecy found in vs. 21-25. When tongues are used without an interpreter, attention is called to the user and his gift as if he were a child with his toy. Children like the sensational and exciting—the noise and display. In their abuse of tongues the Corinthians were acting like children.

125. Explain how the Corinthians were using their minds like children.

Answer: We have anticipated the answer to this question earlier. We need to say here that the Greeks used a term for mind that suggested much more than the intellect. It was the word “*circum*”—the whole person is involved. The word “purpose” or “intention” would express the thought. Let your purpose, intention, or mind, be mature, not childish.

126. How does the thought of “malice” fit the context?

Answer: Evidently ill-will had been generated among the members, although the Greek use of the term translated “malice” is stronger: “It is good-for-nothing moral inferiority ...The adjective describes a person or a thing as not being what he or it should be according to nature, idea, or purpose.” (*Lenski*) Please notice that Paul has changed his terms here –not “children” –but “babes.” He is saying –in purpose be as transparent and pure as a babe. Do not look down on one another, do not impugn one another’s motives, be as open and receptive to one another as babes.

127. Is Paul suggesting that in spite of the Spiritual gifts such persons were very immature? Why did God grant such gifts to such people?

Answer: The gifts were tools; how they were used was the decision of the user. Maturity is a capacity of character not a capacity of the gifts. Such persons as the Corinthians were the very ones who most needed these tools – how they used them, or (misused them) is the subject under consideration. Cf. Rom. 16:19; Eph. 4:14.

128. Please read Isa. 28:11,12 and tell why Paul refers to this prophecy as “law.”

Answer: As the term is used here it means the entire Old Testament.—i.e. “In the O.T. it is written.” Cf. John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25. Paul’s quotation is evidently a free translation on his part as it does not agree with either the LXX or the Massoretic text.

129. Who were the men of strange tongues in the days of Isaiah?—Who in Corinth?

Answer: The Assyrians were the men of strange tongues. “Jehovah threatens to send barbarians upon the Kingdom of Judah, namely, the Assyrians with their barbarous speech, which would sound like stammering to the Jews and be wholly foreign to their ears. They would not heed the pleading of the Lord’s prophets, so he will now speak to them through the lips of these cruel, barbarous conquerors. Will God’s obdurate people listen at last? No, even this measure will be in vain: “and not even thus will they listen to me.” Isaiah’s prophecy was duly fulfilled at the time of the Assyrian invasion. (*Lenski*) What point of comparison is to be drawn from this example? The analogy is in the use of foreign languages as they relate to unbelievers. In both circumstances God was speaking to man through tongues; in neither case did they believe. In what way did God hope to reach the unbeliever with tongues? We believe it refers to the impact made on Jews who came to Corinth from another country. (Since Corinth was a very large seaport this is very possible). Upon stepping into the assembly of Christians he is confronted with the message of the Lord, spoken to him in his own native dialect. He is as impressed as those on Pentecost and asks with them “what meaneth this?” Under these conditions he is most willing to listen and heed the message of God. *However*, if no interpretation is given to the rest of the congregation the benefit is surely limited.

130. Why didn’t they hear—i.e., in both cases? Why did God send men to his people?

Answer: We have anticipated this question and answer to question 129. Actually Paul is saying that unless the Corinthian Christians understand the proper use of tongues they are in danger of repeating the error of His people in the days of Isaiah. God sent men speaking a foreign language in both cases for the same purpose—for a sign – a warning – a message. Will the men of Corinth repeat the error of the men of Judah? Will they read the sign and believe its message?

131. Give the meaning of the word “sign” as here used.

Answer: This is an important question and one we want to answer carefully. There are many references to this term in the New Testament here are a few of them:

(Matt. 12:23; John 4:48; Acts 2:22; Matt. 24:30.) In each case a sign advertises something — what is it? The nature of the sign will indicate the nature of the product. A supernatural sign indicates a supernatural product. All the signs our Saviour set up throughout the land from Galilee to Judea were of a supernatural kind—and they pointed beyond themselves to His own Deity. Many people read these signs and many bought the product—i.e. His Deity! Many other signs did our Lord produce that are not recorded by John in his gospel account, but all of them were placed plainly before the people that they might make a personal purchase — or accept Jesus as the Son of God—and many did.

The apostles were equipped with the ability through the Holy Spirit to sell their message by signs— Cf. Heb. 2:4 —Such signs carried an impact and created an impression; those who saw such signs began to wonder if indeed the product was not just what the messenger said it was. Every sign caused wonder— all good advertising produces a question and desire in the heart of the observer.

132. Explain how tongues would be a sign to the unbelievers.

Answer: We are inclined to accept the thought that the unbelievers were Jews from several foreign

countries who were present in Corinth and in attendance at the assembly of the saints. Tongues were a sign to the Jews on Pentecost — they were a sign to the Jews in the days of Isaiah —they were a sign to the six Jewish brethren at the house of Cornelius. It could very well be that God is again using tongues to convince unbelieving Jews. However, this becomes true *only* when they are addressed in their own language by those who have never learned it except through the Holy Spirit—such a circumstance will *never* happen if several are speaking at the same time. It would be equally impossible without a translator. We are actually considering a situation not unlike Pentecost when devout Jews from every nation under heaven heard men speaking to them in their own dialect — men whom they recognized as Galileans— unlearned and ignorant and yet speaking fluently to them in their own language the message of God. The same phenomenon could be happening in Corinth and with the same results; such tongues became a sign to the unbelieving Jews in leading them to “receive the word” and be baptized both men and women. (Acts 18:8~11)* See additional comment on p.8.

133. Explain how prophesying would be a sign for the believer.

Answer: This is easily answered by several of the foregoing comments. When we consider prophecy as inspired teaching the natural response of those Christians who heard such teaching would be a strengthening of their faith. The fundamental or basic purpose of tongues and prophecy are here under consideration. Subordinate purposes are to be considered in subsequent verses. Prophecy has the element of information not found in tongues, (i.e. without an interpreter). Prophecy did in Corinth for the believer what Bible teaching does in today’s church for the same person.

134. How could the whole church speak with tongues —were not some without this gift? (Cf. 12:30)

Answer: This is admittedly an exaggerated circumstance; Paul does help the Corinthians to see themselves in this caricature. All could not speak in tongues, but several could and did. When these persons exercised their ability it was without an interpreter and at the same time someone else was speaking, (or so we would imagine). Let 10 or 15 persons arise in a public assembly and begin to speak in a foreign tongue—and with a loud voice, i.e. adequate to be heard in public)—what chaos! It would sound like the whole assembly was speaking.

135. Just how would you classify the “unlearned and unbelieving” men?

Answer: The “unlearned” could be those unacquainted with the Christian community – i.e. unlearned in the meaning of Christianity. The “unbelieving” would be those who know the claims of Christ but who as yet had not accepted them. We believe “the unbelieving” could very well be Jews. These were the very people the Corinthians should be interested in winning to Christ. They will never be won while Christians are more interested in demonstrating their gifts of tongues than sharing our Lord.

Since writing the above comment more thought has been given to this question—we must not ignore the context in which this statement is made—i.e.: “tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving”—The “unbelieving” in verse 21 were the disobedient Jews in the days of Isaiah—the tongues spoken to them by the Assyrians were a sign of warning and judgment.”³⁷ God speaks to them unintelligibly only because they are deaf to His clear revelation (*Godet*) Regarding signs for unbelievers with this negative effect compare Luke 2:34 where Jesus as a child is set “for a sign which is spoken against” (John 2:18-22). The Temple destroyed and in three days built again was to be such a sign—indeed, it was “the sign of Jonah the prophet—Matt. 12:39; 16:4. The parables of Jesus had a similar effect upon unbelievers; they too, were unintelligible to them, and were even intended to be so. Matt. 13:10.”³⁸ (*Lenski*) In this sense tongues were a sign of judgment to the unbeliever. This is not even thought of in the use of tongues (so called) in our present day.

³⁷ Godet, *The First Epistle To The Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Pub. House, 1971.

³⁸ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

136. Why would such men say the tongue speakers were mad?

Answer: This presupposes *one* obvious fact: the unbelievers could not understand them—they could not understand them for one of two possible reasons: (1) the language spoken to them was not the one the unbeliever understood—or that (2) many were speaking at the same time, and even if their language was being used it was indistinguishable in the babble of voices. We much prefer the second possible explanation. This could explain the mocking of some on Pentecost—i.e. some understood and were impressed (“marvelled”); others could not understand. We do not know why they could not understand except to say it must have been involved in the circumstances of their hearing; i.e. they were too far away from the speakers or in some other way they were distracted from hearing with understanding. When the unbelievers were only curious, to say nothing of possible skeptics, such confusion would make no sense to them at all.

137. How could any good effect come of all prophesying at the same time?

Answer: The words of J. W. McGarvey, written more than a century ago, are so very relevant to our day: “Paul supposes the case of one who dropped into the meeting out of curiosity. If he heard many people speaking at once in an unknown tongue, he would regard the gathering as little better than bedlam, (Acts 2:13) and the more he heard speaking at once, the worse it would be. Therefore the meeting would be to him void of blessing from God, and the sign without any signification, for he would hear his fellow-citizens addressing him in a foreign tongue, which was to him a mere jargon instead of hearing foreigners address him in his own tongue, similar to the miracle on Pentecost. Or, on the other hand, he heard all his fellow-citizens prophesying in his own tongue, he would be reproved by all and the secrets of his heart would be laid bare as though he had been cross examined by a skillful attorney. This would lead him to conversion, and so be of profit to him, and would make him a witness to the divine nature of the church, instead of one who looked upon it as a hive of fanatics. Prophetic preaching must have had great power to make men feel that they stood face to face with God, for even the faithful preaching of our day lays bare the sinner’s heart. He feels that the sermons are aimed at him, and is often convinced that someone has been tattling to the preacher because his life is so fully exposed by the words. It should be observed that if truth is more potent than mere signs, much more is it efficacious in revivals than mere excitement and pumped up enthusiasm.”³⁹

138. What is the meaning of the word “reproved” as here used?

Answer: Three effects are ascribed to prophecy: (1) Conviction, (2) examination, (3) manifestation. The word *conviction* signifies *to consume* of error or sin. Every utterance of the prophet is like a flash, lighting up the heart of the hearer and discovering to him in a general way his guilt and defilement. The word translated “to examine” means “*to judge or is judged.*” The Greek term rather denotes the detailed inquiry than the sentence pronounced. His whole inner way is searched, so to speak, by the words of the prophets. (*Godet*)

139. In what sense is such a person “judged by all”?

Answer: We have answered this question in the answers we gave to the two preceding questions. One after another of the prophetic speakers help him to see himself in God’s mirror as God sees him. (Please refer to *Vol. I* p. 139)

140. Does this indicate anything about the content of preaching or teaching? If so what?

Answer: Indeed, indeed! How we preachers and teachers need to relate to this question and the obvious answer in the text! How often do we reach the conscience of our hearers? Not often enough –too much of our preaching and teaching is neither meaningful nor persuasive. What is today called “communication” is here described as revealing the secrets of the heart. A dialogue *must* be established in all effective communication. If your questions are not being answered by the listener in his heart, both

³⁹ J.W. McGarvey, Standard Bible Commentary, Cincinnati, Standard Pub. Co., 1916

of you had as well stayed home. Every lesson or sermon should *convict* — *examine* and *manifest*; these responses need not always be negative, but the conscience *must* be reached or no action can result.

141. What would cause the unbeliever to fall on his face?

Answer: “Then a sudden penetrating illumination spread over his whole life, is produced in him: he sees himself, as a whole and in the particular details of his life, as God sees him. One might apply this description to the revelation of certain particular circumstances of his life, as when Elisha speaks to Gehazi (II Kings 5:26), or Jesus to Nathaniel and to the Samaritan woman. (Cf. Isa. 45:14; Dan 2:47; Zach. 8:23). But it is simpler to think here of a moral illumination, similar to that of the judgment which shows a man his past and present state in its true light. What passes in him at such a moment resembles what passed in Paul on the way to Damascus. Struck by this light, he casts himself in the dust, not before man, but before God, acknowledging that such brightness can only proceed from the Holy of holies and the Searcher of hearts; and consequently it is He who speaks by the mouth of those into the midst of whom he has come. The term ‘declaring’ may refer only to what passes at the time in the assembly itself. It is a cry escaping from him under the power of overwhelming emotion: ‘Yes, God is among you of a truth!’ But this declaration may be regarded as also extending after his departure from the assembly to those whom he meets.”⁴⁰ (*Godet*) “Thus the discussion ends. Tongues are of little use to the believers, of no use to unbelievers. Even that little use depends on a second gift, interpretation. Prophecy is of the highest value. It edifies all believers and converts unbelievers the ‘unbeliever’ who came in departs as a ‘believer’ and all of this has been accomplished through the gift of prophecy. This is an effect that all the tongues in the world could not produce. Paul adds the final touch — declaring that truly God is among you.’ Where as tongues produce the scoffing reply: ‘ye are mad’! Prophecy produces the reply—“God is among you.”⁴¹ (*Linsky*)

142. What is the meaning of the word “worship”? Where is worship?

Answer: “Do obeisance” is the root of this word; it is the total yielding of the inner man to God, the prostration of the human will before the Divine will. Worship takes place in the heart of man — it is physically expressed in the presence of others by falling prostrate — crying out — praising — singing; but this is only the expression of the condition of the heart which is itself called worship in this verse. Worship happens in the heart, whether in private or in public.

143. In what sense would God be among the prophesying church?

Answer: God is speaking to and through the prophets in the church. We need not discuss further what has been elaborated earlier.

144. Why introduce this section with the words— “what is it then?”

Answer: A very careful and detailed instruction section has just concluded—i.e. vs. 1 through 25; there is to here follow detailed directions regarding procedure in the use of the “charismata” or gifts of the Spirit. The opening question is like that of v. 15 “*What then follows,*” i.e., in regard to the way in which you should proceed with these Charismata in your meetings. (*Lenskj*)

145. Is the coming together the public meeting of the saints at Corinth?

Answer: The answer is an unquestionable “yes.” We like the words of Charles Hodge on this question: “*When ye come together.* That is, as often as ye come together. *Every one of you bath, etc.* *Every One* is used distributively: one has this and another has that. *A psalm,* a song of praise to God. This can hardly mean one of the psalms of the Old Testament; but something prepared or suggested for the occasion. One was impelled by the Spirit to pour forth his heart in a song of praise. Cf. v. 15. *Hath a doctrine,* i.e. comes prepared to expound some doctrine. *Hath a tongue,* i.e. is able and impelled to

⁴⁰ Godet, *The First Epistle To The Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971.

⁴¹ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

deliver an address or to pray in an unknown tongue. *Hath a revelation*, i.e. as a prophet he has received a revelation from God which he desires to communicate. *Hath an interpretation*, i.e. is prepared to give the interpretation of some discourse previously delivered in an unknown tongue. This passage and indeed the whole chapter, presents a likely image of an early Christian assembly.”*

146. What is meant by the expression “hath a psalm”?

Answer: We cannot imagine (Contrary to what we wrote earlier in Vol. I) that in the city of Corinth, Greece, the O.T. book of Psalms was very well known or used. The psalm here sung by the individual was created for the occasion. Perhaps we are to understand in this another one of the abilities granted by the Holy Spirit to members of the body of Christ. “One possesses the charismata of uttering a psalm in a special manner (he may even have composed a psalm or have sung a Christian hymn). Such a gift should not be despised.”⁴² (*Grosheide*)

147. What is “a revelation”?

Answer: This is the uncovering of truth by God through the Spirit in the mind of man. If man does not have the objective revelation in the form of the written word then such a revelation would include the information in the form of the objective word as well as its meaning. This could very well be a covert reference to a prophet and the gift of prophecy.

148. Why not mention the gift of prophecy?

Answer: Perhaps we have the gift of prophecy in the term “revelation.” This could be a discussion of the function of this gift, i.e. the manner in which prophecy was expressed.

149. What is the point of this verse?

Answer: It is to show them how they should conduct themselves in the public meetings—to the edifying of all perhaps in contrast to the way they were conducting themselves. We need to mark out clearly the five expressional gifts here used: (1) *Singing a psalm*; (2) *teaching the word* of God which was either directly received and taught or was written earlier and taught here; (3) *speaking in a foreign language* under the impulse of the Holy Spirit; (4) *translating by the enablement of the Holy Spirit what has been spoken* in the foreign language; (5) *giving voice to the words of revelation* (the gift of knowledge and wisdom) which have appeared by the Holy Spirit in the mind of the prophet. The *one* overriding purpose of thus describing their activity was to ask—”does each one contribute to the building up of the whole body?” “Are all helped by your contribution?” If not you are out of order and are not using your gift as God intended it to be used.

150. Why the limitation on the number who spoke with tongues?

Answer: A curious innovation in understanding is found in the paraphrase of James MacKnight. He understands the terms “two” and “three” to refer to two or three sentences. We have not found among many commentators anyone else to agree with him. It would seem to be a somewhat arbitrary choice on his part; we do not know why it was made. We believe the terms refer to persons and the reason being that the entire time and meeting would have been (and perhaps was) monopolized by tongue speakers if such a restriction had not been placed upon them. The prophets would not have been heard if such regulations had not been given.

151. Meaning of the expression: “in turn.”

Answer: This means one is to follow the other; one must finish before the next speaker begins. It would appear from what is said here that an interpreter must be identified as being present before the speaker began speaking in tongues. We believe the gift of interpretation was just as direct a gift from the Holy Spirit as the gift of tongues. Neither the tongue speaker nor the interpreter knows anything about

⁴² F.W.Groscheide, Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Grand Rapids, Erdmans Pub. Co., 1953

the language he spoke and translated before the Holy Spirit gave him the ability. It is not necessary to assume that only one man did the translating for the two or three—or even that it was necessarily a different person from the tongue speakers. All that was really essential was that an interpreter be present before tongue speaking began.

152. In what sense could a tongue speaker speak to himself and to God?

Answer: “Outside the assembly anyone may speak in a tongue all he desires: “and let him speak to himself and to God,”⁴³ “literally,” and to himself (emphasis) let him speak and to God (again emphasis). “Let him speak to himself” does not mean silently, in his heart, because the word “speak,” which is so regularly used with reference to tongues, means audible utterance. Paul tells this speaker “to speak” in any private way. Yet the sense is not that he and God are to listen to this private speaking. The sense is that this speaking is between himself and God and thus for the speaker’s own edification, (Cf. 14:4 where the same thought is expressed), in that his feelings and his desires, finding outlet in his speaking, rise unto God.” (*Lenski*) This verse along with 14:4 are the favorite proof texts for present day users of what is now called “prayer language”—or the private devotional use of tongues. If tongues in the Corinthian text was a reference to ecstatic utterance we could see in this a modern-day counterpart to what happened in Corinth, but since we do not believe ecstatic utterance or expression was used in Corinth, we see no Biblical defense for the present day prayer language. It becomes just as important as the users of it make it.

153. The same orderly procedure is to be followed in the use of the gift of prophecy. Why such a limitation?

Answer: There are three rules applied to the use of prophecy—or the speaking of the prophets: (1) As to number – two or three; Paul seems to be willing to accept three prophets more readily than he is three tongue speakers for he does not here use the phrase “at the most!” (2) as to mode—“prophecy, like tongues, has its necessary complement:—*discernment*, that judgment by which any impure elements, which might have found their way into it, were to be described as such and removed.” (*Godet*)⁴⁴ There is a large question as to who or how many had the gift of discernment, Cf. *Thess.* 5:20,21; *I Cor.* 12:3,10; *I John* 4:1,2. We believe “the others” must refer to those persons in the congregation with the discernment of spirits; otherwise false prophets could deceive the congregation. Evidently at the mouth of two or three with the ability of discernment would every word of prophecy be accepted or rejected. Perhaps it is right to think of other prophets in the meaning of the term; i.e. some prophets could discern as well as prophesy.

154. How long would such a service last?

Answer: Only an American would ask such a question; at least the Oriental was not as conscious of time as we Occidentals. Even so there seems to be a concern on the part of Paul that limitations be placed on the length of participation and thus on the length of the service; we have no way of knowing how long such meetings lasted.

155. What is the meaning of the word “discern”? Is this the discerning of spirits?

Answer: From what we have already written the reader will know we do indeed believe that the discerning of spirits was a necessary part in confirming the truthfulness of the prophet’s message. We do not know just who had such ability, but it was most likely one of “the other” prophets.

156. To whom does the little phrase “the others” refer?

Answer: Grosheide⁴⁵ has a very interesting comment on this question. He says: “*Let the others*

⁴³ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

⁴⁴ Godet, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971.

⁴⁵ F.W.Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953.

discern:” reminds of 12:10, where the apostle speaks of the discerning of the spirits, and of I John 4:1; ‘prove the spirits whether they are of God.’ The latter passage implies that there were evil spirits at work in the congregations, not indeed in the true members of the church, as is excluded from 12:3, but in them that joined the church without really belonging to it. (Cf. Acts. 5:13) It was possible that such an evil spirit cried or said something during the service. This made proving of spirits necessary.” (see 12:10)

157. What is “a revelation”? Why could it be superior to what was being said?

Answer: We like the expression of *Godet* on this thought “If, while a prophet is speaking, another receives a revelation, both should not speak simultaneously; the first should keep silence. But, it will be asked, why should not the second rather wait till the first is finished? Assuredly, because the freshest revelation will also produce the purest prophecy. It is by lengthening his discourse that the prophet is in danger of mixing what is *his own* with the Divine communication. The apostle’s injunction is well fitted to set aside empty amplifications and veritage. The expression: *to another sitting by*, shows that the prophet speaking was standing, and that he to whom the new revelation is addressed testifies his intention to speak by rising.”

158. How would the prophesying “one by one” cause all to learn?

Answer: if one prophet is to dominate the time and service, the people are being deprived of the messages God is giving to the other prophets present. All can speak under the arrangement Paul suggests and all can hear the whole council of God for that occasion. Suppose one man spoke for an indefinite period of time; he would have prevented the others from declaring what God revealed to them for the instruction and comfort of the church. Edification consists of instruction and application in the word of God.

159. What is meant by the word “exhorted”?

Answer: Comfort or encouragement would be a good synonym. The function of prophecy is the same as all effective preaching or teaching—to instruct or inform and to urge and admonish – to reach the mind and the will.

160. Does Paul here mean that the prophets could control the use of the gift of prophecy? In what manner?

Answer: “The word *spirit* is used here (Cf. vs. 12,14,15) for the divine influence under which the prophets spoke. That influence was not of such a nature as to destroy the self-control of those who were its subjects. It did not throw them into a state of frenzy analogous to that of a heathen pythoness. The prophets of God were calm and self-possessed. This being the case, there was no necessity why one should interrupt another, or why more than one should speak at one time. The one speaking could stop when he pleased; and the one who received a revelation could wait as long as he pleased.” (*Hodge*)⁴⁶

161. Why appeal to the nature of God in vs. 33a?

Answer: “The fact that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets rests on another and ultimate fact: the nature of God.” (*Lenski*)⁴⁷ Since the Holy Spirit shares the nature of God we can expect peace and order, not a topsy-turvy confusion. “The term ‘confusion’ denotes disorder of a whole whose parts are at strife with one another, and ‘peace,’ suggests harmony of a whole, all whose parts act in concert. God dwells only in a whole of this second kind.” (*Godet*)⁴⁸

162. Why suggest or introduce the subject of women in this context?

Answer: *Lenski* says, “Whether they have the gift of tongues or prophecy makes no difference, in

⁴⁶ Charles Hodge, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub Co., 1972.

⁴⁷ R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

⁴⁸ Godet, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971.

fact, Paul's prohibition is intended for just such. And this prohibition is general and complete. From the little that Paul says we cannot properly infer that this question was acute in Corinth, and that women attempted to speak in the assemblies. The question may have been broached, but no more than this had occurred. Paul only rounds out his instructions and thus anticipates any movement in this direction."

Just how inclusive is the silence of the women?

Answers We quote from Grosheide⁴⁹ for a very clear answer to this question: "A new sentence begins in vs. 33. Since the words of vs. 33a refuse to take any further qualification, the clause: *as in all the churches* cannot be taken with the preceding, as some have tried to do. Taken with what follows the words are an appropriate reminder that this commandment is not given to the Corinthians alone but to all the churches. (Cf. 7:17) The sense is then: let that which happens everywhere, also happen with you. This also accounts for Paul's sudden transition from the subject of prophecy to that of the women. Already in 11:5 we learned that some Christian women had the gift of prophecy. Our periscope implies that some of them desired to prophesy in the services. Paul's aim has been to restrict prophecy in its use and in accordance with that the women should not prophesy at all in the services. Women are allowed to prophesy but not when the congregation officially meets. (Cf. chapter 11) This prohibition shows some analogy with Paul's statement concerning glossolalia, namely that it should not be used in the service except under special conditions. This time the prohibition is absolute which is due to the fact that it is given not because of anything inherent in prophecy itself but simply because women ought not to speak in the services. Women who have received the gift of prophecy, are not to use their *exousia* in the meetings of the church."⁵⁰

164. Does this refer to women speaking in tongues?

Answer: We have answered this question in our answer to questions 162 and 163. Whereas questions 165 through 174 are most interesting they yet do not relate to the subject of the Holy Spirit. We will hence leave them to the reader for an answer. Such an answer can be formulated by the reading from Vol. I, p. 147,148.

175. This is the conclusion of three chapters of close discussion. Please give it careful consideration. Here is a criteria for judging the true prophet or gifted man— what is it?

Answer: "a judgment that the Corinthians may pronounce on what Paul writes is really a judgment, not on Paul, and not on his writings, but upon themselves. 'If anyone thinks he is a prophet,' etc., let him prove that he is not mistaken in regard to himself, 'let him make acknowledgment in regard to what I write, that it is of the Lord.' If he fails to see the divine character of Paul's words, the proof is conclusive (*evidential proof*) that this man is no prophet, that he really has no spiritual gift." (*Lensk.i*)

176. To what "things" did Paul refer?

Answer: This refers to all Paul had written and most especially to the instructions of these three chapters on Spiritual gifts.

177. Were there some pretended prophets in the Corinthian church? What was to be done about them?

Answer: Let them either acknowledge and follow the instructions of Paul—which are the words of Christ—or leave them alone in their ignorance.

178. Of what were certain men ignorant? How decide when one was ignorant?

Answer: The subject is the use of supernatural, Holy Spirit prompted abilities. If after reading Paul's letter these persons who claimed such powers were not willing to follow his instructions they were

⁴⁹ F.W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub.Co., 1953.

⁵⁰ F.W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub Co., 1953.

willfully ignorant. It was assumed by Paul that a careful reading of his epistle would enlighten the mind of the uninformed; a refusal to accept what was written constituted a man ignorant as here defined.

179. Is Paul ignoring the need for instruction among some? Explain.

Answer: Far from it! He is telling what to do with those who refuse to be instructed. Willful ignorance shuts out all learning; when such willful ignorance relates to the Divine source of knowledge it becomes very serious. “Where the evidence of any truth is abundant and has been clearly presented, those who reject it should be left to act on their own responsibility. Further disputation can do no good.”⁵¹ (*Hodge*)

180. What does desire have to do with prophecy?

Answer: Paul is saying keep up your strong desire to prophesy; it is the total source of teaching for the church. This strong desire must be balanced with the instruction he has given concerning the subject. Perhaps after all the corrective words he had given concerning the proper use of prophecy, some would be tempted to become discouraged and give it up altogether; do not do that—prophecy is important; seek after a proper use of it.

181. Paul had forbidden speaking in tongues; what does he mean by his statement here?

Answer: His prohibition was only conditional—if there is an interpreter, make use of tongues.

182. Specify just what decency and order means as to tongues and prophecy.

Answer: The obvious answer would be to follow carefully the instructions of these two chapters and decency and order would prevail. “The adjective, the adverbial form of which is here used, means *well-formed, comely*; that which excites the pleasing emotion of beauty. The exhortation therefore is, so to conduct the worship that it may be beautiful; in other words, so as to make a pleasing impression on all who are right minded.”⁵² (*Hodge*)

We do hope the question and answer form has been a help to the reader. We now return to the four questions as they relate to the texts on the Holy Spirit. (It was a long search, but we do not begrudge one word.)

⁵¹ Charles Hodge, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub Co., 1972.

⁵² Charles Hodge, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub Co., 1972.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II CORINTHIANS

THERE ARE 11 REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II CORINTHIANS

1. “Now he that establisheth us, with you in Christ, and *anointed us*, is God; who also *sealed us*, and *gave us the earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts.” II Corinthians 1:21,22

A. *What Does It Say?* “‘Anointed us’ means made us like the Anointed One, Christ. We are being made firm for him because in the first place God sanctified us as he sanctified Christ, by an anointing. Christ and we are anointed with the Spirit. After the act was once performed, the Spirit remains upon us (in us). The act occurred in our baptism as it did immediately after Christ’s baptism. By means of his anointing Christ was placed into his high office and position; our anointing did the same for us. He was made King and Priest in the supreme sense, hence the supreme way in which God anointed him. (Acts 10:38; Matt. 3:13-17) We were made Kings and Priests under Him, (I Pet. 2:5,9) hence the way in which our anointing took place by means of baptism. Those who conceive of baptism as a mere sign and symbol must place the anointing elsewhere than in baptism, a thing that is most difficult to do.”⁵³ (*Lenski*) “Sealed us.” “A seal is affixed for various purposes: for (1) *security*, (2) *concealment*, (3) *distinction*, (4) *authentication*, (5) *attestation*, and (6) *confirmation*. Several purposes are sometimes combined. The idea there is *ownership*: by the seal God marked us for his own. (Cf II Tim. 2:19) The next participle shows how God did this . . . God’s giving the Spirit in our hearts is his sealing of us for himself. We know of no sealing except by the Spirit. . . Anointing, sealing, giving the Spirit all occurred in baptism, in a single act.” (*ibid*)

“*The earnest of the Spirit*”—This is the “down payment” by which he who makes it (who is God) assures the recipient (you and me) of final payment in full— (which will be heaven.) The genitive “of the Spirit” is oppositional: *the Holy Spirit is the pledge or down payment!*. At baptism we receive (1) the holy anointing; (2) the sacred sealing; (3) the gift of down payment. *Please, please* realize we are looking at our baptism from God’s view point—this is what He sees. We many times fail to so understand it. What did God see at the baptism of our Lord – something far different from those who watched from the banks of the Jordan—or even John the Baptizer.

B. *What Does it Mean?* If these two verses mean anything they set us apart in a manner not often considered. We are the anointed of God—indeed a “royal priesthood.” The element used—in this act is a Person—none less than the Holy Spirit Himself. We would like to challenge the reader to consider with me these verses from I John 2:20 and 27:

vs. 20 “And ye have *an anointing* from the Holy One, and ye know all things”

vs. 27 “And as for you, *the anointing* which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his *anointing* teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him.”

Here are some questions we shall attempt to answer as they relate to these verses and the general subject of the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) Just how would you define the expression an anointing” in vs. 20? Is this tantamount to saying, “You have the Holy Spirit from the Holy God”?
- 2) In what sense did these persons to whom this epistle was addressed (“my little children”; 2:1,12) *Know all things*.
- 3) What things did they know, i.e. “all things” about what?

⁵³ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Columbus, Wartburg Press, 1943.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 4) Did this knowledge come from “the anointing”? If so, how?
- 5) Isn't this same promise made to us today? Discuss.
- 6) How shall we understand the expression “abideth in you”?
- 7) Who is the “any one” of vs. 27?
- 8) There seems to be a very serious discussion here about teachers and teaching; what is the subject and who are the teachers?
- 9) Someone is true and someone is false; someone is telling the truth and someone is a liar—please explain.
- 10) What is meant by “ye abide in him” in vs. 27?

I shall not be satisfied until I have turned over every word on this subject of “the anointing.” I do hope you share my concern.

- (1) Just how would you define the expression an anointing” in vs. 20?

Answer: As we have already indicated, all the overtones of being set-apart as a priest and King must be read into this for us. We have been, indeed *we are* set-apart as a priest and King. Every Christian has been so honored. The Christian's anointing occurred at his baptism. We can rule and intercede along with our King and great high-priest. Will the reader please read the example in the O.T. of David's anointing as King and share with him the wonder of the occasion. We, no doubt, feel as unworthy of the position as did the shepherd boy of Bethlehem. We can also stand in court of the tabernacle and respond in amazement as the anointing oil is poured upon our head. We do not deserve it and have not earned it. It is only because we are of the royal and priestly descent; i.e. we have been born again and share the blood of our King and priest that we are so honored by this ordination into the priesthood. Yes, we *are* saying we have received the Holy Spirit given to us from the Holy God. *But* when He gave Him He was in the form of an anointing for us as a King and a priest unto God.

- (2) In what sense did these persons to whom this epistle was addressed *know all things*?

Answer: The thought of deception forms a large part of this text and context. The antichrist of vs. 18 and the defection of certain persons in vs. 19 must not be overlooked. The acceptance of the Deity of Jesus precedes our baptism. Are we to relate the knowledge of the Deity of Jesus to the “all things” of this verse? If we could relate this promise or statement to a certain class of people we would have no problem in associating this with the supernatural gift of knowledge of discernment, but when John encompasses all Christians in the statement it becomes much more difficult. The Holy Spirit has given the knowledge of “all things” to all Christians on what subject or subjects? Surely we could say the Holy Spirit spoke to all candidates for baptism through the gospel and entered their bodies at that time. They accepted Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, and were fully persuaded of His Lordship and Deity at their baptism. There was nothing that they lacked in their knowledge of who He was—they knew all things necessary to accept Him as Saviour. The fact that they have the Holy Spirit is the evidence and cause for their knowing all things about His Deity.

We are not entirely satisfied with this answer but we have not as yet found a better one.

- (3) What “things” did they know? i.e. “all things” about what?

Answer: We have anticipated this question and answer in the preceding discussion.

- (4) Did the knowledge come from “the anointing”? —if so, how?

Answer: We must answer with a firm “yes” in light of verse 27. *However*, we must also ask if this knowledge was subjective or objective? i.e. did these persons receive an intuitive message from the Holy Spirit apart from the spoken word? Or did this knowledge come through the preaching of the gospel? If the knowledge was the Deity, of Jesus, it would be easy to say such knowledge came from the spoken word in which the evidence for His Deity was presented and perhaps supported, or confirmed with

miracles.

(5) Isn't this same promise made to us today? Discuss.

Answer: Yes indeed—provided such knowledge is His deity of Jesus. The Holy Spirit through the written word has taught us all we need to know of the divinity of our Lord. We have “an anointing” who is the Holy Spirit—He has taught us of the deity of Jesus.

(6) How shall we understand the expression—”abideth in you”?

Answer: This refers to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within us. We freely admit a difficulty in accepting a totally objective emphasis on the teaching of “the anointing” in vs. 27. Read it again and see if you do not at least sense the suggestion of direct intuitive instruction from the Holy Spirit? At the same time we also just as freely admit that all Christians of the first century must be included as the participants. Are we to believe that the Holy Spirit offered direct subjective instruction to all Christians? We are not at all prepared to accept this thought.

2. “Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh.” II Corinthians 3:2,3.

A. What Does It Say?

It would be much easier to answer this question if the text read that, “You yourselves are our letter of recommendation written on your hearts, (instead of “*our hearts*”) to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.” (*Revised Standard Version*) This would seem to be a literal fulfillment of Jer. 31:33. The Law by God through Moses on tablets of stone made no one complete. The Law of the Lord written on the human heart by the Spirit of God would do what the law could never do, i.e. satisfy all the deep needs of man. In the context a comparison is made by Paul of two types of letters of recommendation. Certain men had arrived in Corinth with high claims of power and position. They were very critical of Paul and had disrupted his work among the Corinthians. Their letters of recommendation are what commended them to the Corinthians. Paul asks the Corinthians to read the thoughts of their own hearts for his letters of recommendation. Do you find there the joy of forgiveness and the hope of the life that is to come? Remember who wrote such a message upon your heart; through the Holy Spirit, Christ did! But *we* were His postman to deliver to you His message. When other men hear from you or about you and your faith they are reading our letters of recommendation. This letter from Christ written on your heart was penned by the Spirit of God—not by some black ink made of soot.

B. What Does It Mean?

We are particularly interested in the question as to just *how* the Spirit of God wrote the message of Christ upon their hearts. It is the Spirit who gives life; it is the letter which killeth. We have the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit in John 16:7,8. *Conviction* is the promised help of the Spirit. It is “the world” or unredeemed mankind who are to be recipients of this conviction. The day of Pentecost as recorded by Luke in Acts 2: is the best example of just how the message of Christ was written on the hearts of man by the Spirit of God. We need to remember that the word of God is alive! When the message of God is heard and joined with living faith, a new life is created. What happened at Pentecost in Jerusalem happened also at Corinth in Greece (Cf. Acts 18:8) There is no message (or letter) on the heart until faith is present. Faith was present and the Spirit of God did His work on the hearts of the Corinthians.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We strongly suggest that our readers obtain a copy of the commentary by Lenski and read his most interesting discussion of this text. He makes some very helpful and poignant comments for our learning and use. Does the Spirit of God continue His work of writing the message of Christ upon the hearts of men? Indeed He does: not once—but many times. Please, please remember the definition of the *heart*, i.e. from a biblical sense. Before the Holy Spirit can write the message upon our hearts He must have the attention of our: (1) *intellect*; (2) *will*; (3) *emotions*; and (4) *conscience*; for this is our heart. Notice the method used by our Lord: (1) We understand through the Good News that our terrible sin debt has been paid. (2) We believe — which in itself is an act of the will—the volitional nature of believing has been minimized to our own confusion). (3) We emotionally respond to this glorious Good News and our acceptance of it. (4) Our conscience approves of this decision. Behind the good news as an author is the Holy Spirit—Present as a tender observer is the Holy Spirit during the entire transaction described above.

D. How Can I Share It?

We have a two-fold opportunity here: (1) We are read by men—what do they see? Whatever is current on our intellect, will, and emotions—they will read; may we so learn our Lord that men will often read His presence and power in us. (through us) (2) We can be the postmen to deliver this message to others that the Spirit of God might do His work of writing on the hearts of others the letter of our Saviour.

3. “who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: (Spirit) for the letter killeth, but the spirit (Spirit) giveth life.” II Corinthians 3:6

A. What Does It Say?

This is indeed a good question for this text inasmuch as no small discussion can be found as to whether the Holy Spirit or the human spirit is meant in this verse. We believe our answer can be found in the 7th and 8th verses which read: “But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the *ministration of the spirit* (Spirit) be with glory?” Here the two covenants are denominated as: “the *ministration of death*” and “the *ministration of the Spirit*.” Both covenants were given under the direction of the Holy Spirit so this could not be the reason for the use of “Spirit” in association with the second covenant. Perhaps we are to think of the giving of the Spirit Himself as a gift upon our acceptance of the new covenant. “The Spirit gives life, something which law is unable to do (Gal. 3:21). This life is a present possession of the Christian (see John 6:63), and is granted at baptism (Col. 2:13). The Spirit gives life by doing what the law could not do; it acts as a power in the inner man, empowering him to obey the will of God (Eph. 3:16).” (*James Thompson*)

B. What Does It Mean?

This reference to the Spirit needs to be understood in its context. Paul is comparing the agreement God made with Israel through Moses with the agreement God made with sinners (who are to become the Israel of God. Gal. 6:16) through Christ. One resulted in death, the other in life. The Holy Spirit was the cause and the effect of the life; therefore, the second covenant is called a ministration of Spirit—(and *life* in contrast to *death*).

We appreciate James Thompson’s comments in his commentary on II Corinthians in The Living Word Series published by R. B. Sweet Co. He says: “A key word in verses 7-18 is the word ‘glory,’ translated *brightness* or *splendor*. Both words are here a translation of the Greek *doxa* which used to mean ‘praise,’ ‘honor,’ or ‘fame.’ In the Bible the word is used to express the awesome majesty of God.

This majesty, in the story of Moses that Paul is referring to here (Ex. 34:29-35) and elsewhere, is expressed as a brilliant, blinding light. Moses, as God's minister, participated in God's glory or splendor, reflecting his brightness. Thus the Israelites could not look at Moses' face (*atenisai*, the word for *look*, implies a steady gaze.) In contrast to Israel, which could not look at Moses' face, Paul is involved in a ministry in which every Christian is able to look at the glory of Christ (3:18). His ministry is, therefore, superior to that of his opponents, who continue to emphasize the dispensation of death."⁵⁴

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

It will be a tragedy of all tragedies if we use the gospel as a law code to kill each other and ourselves. This is what happens when we forget we are saved out of God's goodness or grace and not by any works of any law—whether it be Moses or Christ. Our works are an expression of the genuineness of our faith and of our gratitude. (Cf. James 2:20)

4: "Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." II Cor. 3:17

A. What Does It Say?

Are we to understand that Paul is here blurring the nature of the Holy Spirit and of our Lord? Not at all. Our Saviour said: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) Paul is saying the same thing here of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the other Comforter. We could say so identical in kind or nature or essence are the Spirit and Jesus, that we could call the Holy Spirit *the other Jesus*. The two are one in nature and cooperate perfectly in their work. On this earth our Lord always works through the Holy Spirit in the members of His body, the church. In contrast to the bondage of the Law under the Old Covenant is the liberty in the Gospel of Christ. Freedom from eternal death, freedom from the dead letter of the law, freedom from the interpersonal strife and bickering that is always associated with keeping or enforcing a code of ethics. What a liberating power is grace! To understand aright the presence and purpose of the indwelling Christ is to step into the exhilarating atmosphere of the unshackled!

A word from author to reader: I believe it is very important that the reader of these words receives them in the same spirit in which they were written. The writer does not consider himself an independent scholar of the text. He is but a serious student of all he can read from as many sources as time and opportunity permit. He will not consciously paraphrase another writer and thus suggest it as being original. At the same time, neither will he fail to attempt original expression when it occurs in the natural course of study. Many, many readers do not have the time or interest to do such research. The writer gladly, even eagerly pursues this course. At the same time amidst his reading, he remembers the faces of students he has taught—young, and some not so young, who can not and will not listen unless they learn. When a lucid passage is found it will be quoted. When there is not such on a given text, we will attempt to write one. *Always* we shall remember the vast majority of our readers are church members not scholars.

B. What Does It Mean?

We quote from Charles Hodge for a splendid answer to this question. " 'The Lord is the Spirit,' that is, Christ is the Holy Spirit; they are one and the same. Not one and the same person, but one and the same Being, in the same sense in which our Lord says, 'I and the Father are one.' It is an identity of essence and of power. Christ is the Holy Spirit, because, being the same in substance, where Christ is, there the Spirit is, and where the Spirit is, there is Christ. Therefore, this same apostle interchanges the three forms of expression as synonymous, 'the Spirit of Christ,' 'Christ,' and 'the Spirit.' Rom. 8,9, 10.

⁵⁴ James Thompson, *The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, Austin. R.B. Sweet Co. Inc., 1970.

The Holy Ghost is everywhere in the Bible recognized as the source of all life, truth, power, holiness, blessedness and glory. The apostle, however, had in the context spoken of Christ as the source of life, as delivering from the death and bondage of the law. He is and does this because he and the Spirit are one; and therefore, wherever Christ is, or in other words, wherever the Spirit of Christ is, or in other words still, wherever the Spirit is, *there is liberty*. By turning unto Christ we become partakers of the Holy Spirit, the living and life-giving, because he and the Spirit are one, and Christ dwells in his people, redeeming them from the law and making them the children of God, by his Spirit. *The' Spirit of the Lord*, as a designation of the Holy Ghost, shows that the Spirit stands in the same relation to the Son that he does to the Father. Therefore, he is called the "Spirit of Christ," Rom. 8, 10, and "Spirit of His Son," Gal. 4, 6. And, therefore, also the Son is said to send and give the Spirit. John 16, 7. All this, of course, supposes the supreme divinity of our Lord. *The liberty* of which the apostle here speaks, must be that liberty which is consequent on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that is, which flows from the application to us of the redemption purchased by Christ. We have not received, says the apostle, the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption. Rom. 8, 15. The liberty here intended is the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom 8, 21. It is the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Gal. 5, 1. This includes, I. Freedom from the law in all its forms, Mosaic and moral, Rom. 6, 14. 7, 4, i.e. freedom from the obligation to fulfill the law as the condition of our justification before God; which involves freedom from condemnation and from a legal, slavish spirit. 2. Freedom from the dominion of sin, Rom. 7, 6, and from the power of Satan. Heb. 2, 14, 15. 3. Freedom from the bondage of corruption, not only as to the soul, but as to the body. Rom. 8, 2 1-23. This liberty, therefore, includes all that is involved in being the sons of God. Incidental to this liberty is freedom from all ignorance and error, and all subjection to the authority of men, except so far as it represents the authority of Christ, and therefore liberty of conscience or freedom from all authority in matters of religion other than that of the Spirit of God. There is not only no reason for restricting the idea of the liberty of which the apostle speaks to any one of these forms, but the context requires that it should include all that liberty of which the presence of the Spirit is the source and the assurance. As no man in this life is perfectly and at all times filled with the Spirit of Christ, he is never in this life a partaker of the full liberty of which Christ is the author."⁵⁵

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

The subject of "liberty" is the point or purpose of the text. Is this *liberty* ours? The Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ is ours, therefore, the liberty should be our possession. But is it? It would be too bad to be free and yet live like a slave. Let us personally appropriate the meaning of this relationship. (1) To have the Holy Spirit is to have freedom from *law*. This is liberation from the law system of salvation. How exceedingly difficult it is to sustain such liberty! The pride of man being what it is, he has a very difficult time remembering that he cannot earn salvation. He feels there *must* be merit in his service. It is not works versus no works; it is a choice of motives. Why do you work? For merit or as an expression of gratitude? What a liberating is ours when we are willing to accept His work for our salvation and not our own! We cannot, and will not, and have not worked or served in a satisfactory manner; i.e. our work has never satisfied us, how much less the perfect One for whom it was done! But what liberty is ours when we accept salvation as a gift! (2) Freedom from the dominion of sins. We ask our readers to consider our comments in POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT VOL. III, pp. 160-203. How we need to read this again and again lest we forget. (3) Freedom from the bondage of corruption, not only to the soul, but to the body. Rom. 8:21-23. This anticipates the wonder of the resurrection when we shall enjoy our ultimate liberty! This also is contingent upon the presence of the Holy Spirit, since God will use Him to raise our bodies even as He did the body of our Lord. Where is the Spirit of the Lord? In our bodies! Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty! May I know its reality!

⁵⁵ Charles Hodges, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972.

D. Should I Share It

If we do not enjoy liberty but live most of our lifetime in the bondage of fear, it would be difficult indeed to share anything. On the other hand we do indeed share just what we ourselves possess. If we are bound and free like a ten-time loser, in and out of the prison house of our own making, then we share this frustration with others. If we are living in the liberty of the children of God this is what we share. The potential of glorious liberty is always present.

5. "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." II Cor. 3:18

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean? C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Please read the whole discussion concerning the removal of the veil of the Law as found in verses 12 through 17. Verse 18 forms a conclusion to this entire section. Read also our earlier discussion of this text in POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT VOL. 11, pp. 12-43.

We purpose to digest every word of this text for our own spiritual growth. "But we all." This means Paul, the persons with him, and the Christians at Corinth. *All* are the possible participants in this glorious experience. We might add, if such a transformation can and did occur in the lives and experiences of the Corinthians, there is hope for all of us! We delight in the inclusiveness of Paul's words to the Christians of the first century church. He does not interrupt the flow of God's power with this exception and that one. There are no impossible cases with our Lord. We do not say this lightly. It is out of more than thirty years of observing examples. We have no solution to thousands of perverse, perverted persons, but *He* has! The power of the life-changing Lord has not failed. He simply has not been tried. Paul could think of his own transformation and that of Timothy and later of Erastus and of so very many in the sin-city to whom he pens this letter.

Total character change is for all of us!

"*With unveiled face.*" We are well aware that once the veil has been lifted it should be permanently removed, but we remember the Galatians and their return to bondage and blindness. We are also painfully aware of our own retrogressions. If we do not daily, even hourly, claim our liberty and our unhindered position before God, we will soon find ourselves again in bondage and blindness. It will be very profitable for us to ask the obvious question, "Why did Moses put the veil on his face?" Verses 7-13 of this chapter seem to say Moses veiled his face so that the children of Israel would not only be protected from the brightness of the reflection on his countenance, but also to hide the fact that this brightness was fading and would soon be gone. Why do we prefer a veil on our face? For the same two reasons. We do not want to hurt the sensibilities of sinners by the brightness of our Lord. We feel we might offend them if they caught a full faced view of His glory! We are here discussing the need for holy boldness. Many of us have been in the presence of the Lord and have rejoiced in such a relationship. However, we hesitate to ask the profane to see His glory through us or from us, and so we veil our words and our attitudes toward them. There is a contrast in this comparison. Moses was right. The brightness would have injured their eyes, but we are wrong to veil our faces. Paul wants the veil off and the glory of the Lord reflected before everyone all the time.

"Oh, to be like thee blessed Redeemerstamp thy own image deep on my heart." Just as important as this desire is that this image be seen by others. The lost world must take knowledge of us that we have been so near our Saviour that His image is reflected from and in us! The second reason Moses put the veil on his face was even more serious. He did not want the children of Israel to see the fading of that brightness. How often we hide our failures with a veil of one kind or another. How easy it is to pretend, to play the game when all the while we know "Ichabod" has been written over the door of our relationship with Him. Our veils are used to protect our own hypocrisy! There is only *one* alternative; return to the mount! Stand again before God. For me, the mount is riot some public meeting, but a time alone with

Him in prayer and meditation. The holy mount can be as near as your living room, kitchen or bedroom.

“beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.” This is the crucial phrase in this verse as it relates to our lives. A mirror has always been a figure of speech describing the Word of God. James 1:23, 24. As we look into the mirror, what do we see? The text says “the glory of the Lord.” Please substitute the word *character* for the word *glory*. The brightness that appeared to Moses was but a reflection of the essence or the essential nature of God. When we look into the mirror today, we see *Jesus only!* The gospels give us the full eyewitness portrait of our Lord. The rest of the New Testament is but a commentary on what we have seen in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word of God was written that we might see Him in all His glory, in a full appreciation of His total character. *“Beholding”* is a continuing acting verb. If we do not keep on looking we will not keep on being changed. It is so important that we emphasize the deity of Jesus. Only when we worship Him do we love Him deeply enough for a change to take place. If we are not going to pause often and tarry before the mirror, we shall never see Him well enough to make any change.

“.....are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” Our likeness to our Lord is a “transformation.” This is the word from which we get metamorphosis when we refer to the change of a caterpillar to a butterfly via the cocoon. A daily meditation before His throne of grace with His mirror before us will set up the environment in which the Spirit of God can work this subtle inward transformation. We need here to speak of an essential prerequisite; we refer to the denial of self. Unless we are deeply hungry and thirsty and unless we simply *must* be like Him, we shall never care enough to truly open the mirror. But once we meet the conditions, we *will* be transformed. We can confidently expect and claim it. A view of POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT VOL. II, pp. 12-43 will give the reader a good look at the many veils we must constantly remove before we can see clearly enough to permit a response. It should also be mentioned here that the mirrors of the first century were not like the clear objects into which we look today. The image reflected on the surface of those polished bronze mirrors was hazy and sometimes distorted. As we relate this thought to our transformation efforts, we need to remember that it is not His mirror which distorts the image. It is our inability to see clearly, or our unwillingness to even look with genuine interest. The fact is, the more we are willing to look, the clearer the image. It should not be necessary to point out that the change “from glory unto glory” is from one degree of likeness to an increasing likeness. This has always been our Lord’s method of change, “from strength to strength,” “from dawn til noon.” Neither should we need to be reminded that the change is almost imperceptible; “it cometh not with observation.” But many of us are so impatient with God’s greatest work that we simply *must* have some observable difference. We need to be reminded that as our Lord grew in the carpenter shop of Nazareth, so does He grow when He lives in the humble and unworthy dwelling called our body. The four brothers and at least two sisters of our Saviour never saw a dramatic or startling change in Him while He lived with them. This is not a reflection upon His deity but upon their spiritual perception. At the same time it helps us in our understanding of the comfortableness and naturalness of such change. On the other hand we need to remember that there is a large difference in the twelve-year-old boy in the Temple and the thirty year-old Messiah at the Jordan. If Jesus has been alive in us for the past eighteen or twenty years and we are no more like Him today than when he first appeared in the temple of our body, we need to ask ourselves some very serious questions, such as: (1) Why am I so unwilling to look and live; (2) Do I have some *one* particular reason for failing to pause often before God’s mirror? (3) Are there other mirrors into which I am looking? Are they changing me? (4) If I ask forgiveness, of what value is it unless I am willing to longingly look into God’s mirror?

“even as from the Lord the Spirit.” Back of all the action and attitudes described above is the inward work of the Holy Spirit of God. This verse is so very much like Philippians 2:12, 13, “So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; *for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*” When we work out, God by His Holy Spirit, works in! If we do not work out, there is no way He can work in. And what a work He performs in us. “Both to will and to

work His good pleasure!” Our largest need is “*fear and trembling*.” It is our holy awe in the presence of God that makes possible His work within us. How is it that we are so often less than reverent? The answer is found in the oppressive secular-sensual society in which we live. We need to often turn aside from it and stand before God’s burning bush. I refer to the Word of God. It is a light that burns and is never consumed. Let God speak into your total consciousness! Let Him reach our hearts, our minds, wills, emotions and consciences. When we do that, time and place will become holy. Only then will the deep sense of reverence arise in our hearts. When we contemplate the character of God revealed in His Word, we are indeed moved to wonder. To consider our personal relationship with God and His Son who are the totality of power and wisdom is to cause us indeed to tremble! To stand before the God of the cosmos and to believe He has an interest in our lives and that we can communicate with Him is an awesome thought. This then is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We are sad when we must admit that for a large share of our time He is unemployed. His basic reason for living in our bodies is to make them indeed the body of Christ. This we are collectively, and this we can become individually. The Holy Spirit came to glorify our Lord. How more effectively can this be accomplished than forming Christ within. With a broken heart Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, saying, “My little children, of whom I am again in travail *until Christ can be formed in you*.” (Gal. 4:19)

6. “But having the same spirit of faith, (or *Spirit* of faith) according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak: we also believe, and therefore also we speak.” II Cor. 4:13

A. What Does it Say?

Charles Hodge believes the word “spirit” should be capitalized and refers to the Holy Spirit. We quote from him.

The same spirit of faith. ‘The spirit of faith’ may be a paraphrase for faith itself; or the word spirit may refer to the human spirit, and the whole mean ‘having the same believing spirit.’ It is more in accordance with scriptural usage, and especially with Paul’s manner, to make spirit refer to the Holy Spirit, who is so often designated from the effects which he produces. He is called the Spirit of adoption, Rom. 8, 15; the Spirit of wisdom, Eph. 1, 17; Spirit of grace, Heb. 10, 29; Spirit of glory, I Pet. 4, 14. The apostle means to say that the same blessed Spirit which was the author of faith in David he also possessed. *According as it is written*, i.e. the same faith that is expressed in the passage where it is written, ‘I believed, therefore have I spoken.’ This is the language of David in Ps. 116, 10. The Psalmist was greatly afflicted; the sorrows of death compassed him, the pains of hell got hold of him, but he did not despair. He called on the Lord, and he helped him. He delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling. David’s faith did not fail. He believed, and therefore, in the midst of his afflictions, he proclaimed his confidence and recounted the goodness of the Lord. Paul’s experience was the same. He also was sorely tried. He also retained his confidence, and continued to rely on the promises of God. The apostle follows the Septuagint in the passage quoted. The Hebrew expresses the same idea in a rather different form. ‘I believed *for* I speak.’ In either way, *speaking* is represented as the effect and proof of faith. See *Alexander* on the Psalms.”⁵⁶

Philip Hughes takes exception with Hodge; he says:

Many of the old commentators understood the expression “the spirit of faith” as a direct reference to the Holy Spirit. Hodge, concurring with this opinion, remarks that the Holy Spirit is often designated from the effects which He produces, being called elsewhere the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15), the Spirit of wisdom (Eph. 1:17), the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29), and the Spirit of glory (I Pet. 4:14). Starting from this premise, Chrysostom deduces from Paul’s words the equal inspiration of Psalmist and Apostle, or, more widely, of Old Testament and New Testament. Calvin, Alford, and others discern in the expression an indirect reference to the Holy Spirit, taking “the spirit of faith” to imply that faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. True though it is to say that saving faith and the operation of the Holy Spirit may not

⁵⁶ Charles Hodges, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972

be dissociated, the term ‘spirit’ as it is used by Paul here is best understood in the general sense of “disposition” or “impulse.”

B. What Does It Mean?

Regardless of our estimate of this passage of scripture, it is true we owe our faith to the Holy Spirit. He is the real author of the Word. “Holy men were moved by the Holy Spirit” to give us the Word of truth. (II Peter 1:21) Our faith comes by hearing and believing the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17) We are particularly concerned here with the response we give to this Spirit-given Word.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Please read the context and decide with David and Paul that since we too believe, we too *must* and will speak. The Holy Spirit is the objective/subjective source of our faith, whichever way we interpret this passage. The real problem, and at the same time the potential power, is that we do not relate to what the Holy Spirit has said in a way that will motivate us to speak. Consider the conditions out of which David expressed his faith. He was near to death; indeed he felt he could almost look beyond the veil to the world of the spirit. He despaired of his life; then he called upon the Lord in prayer and he was helped. At times we have all felt somewhat the same as David. But we have not always been so helped as the psalmist. Why? Consider the specifics of David’s help. (1) his soul (self—conscious life) was delivered from death.” We express our consciousness in three ways: (a) *intellect*, (b) *will*, and (c) *emotions*. David heard or read God’s Word, and with his mind he assimilated God’s view of life. David understood God’s love, God’s interest, and God’s involvement in all of man’s life. He not only understood it, he believed God was speaking to him personally. It was as if David was indeed the sole recipient of all God said in His Word. The *fear* of death is man’s need. David was delivered from this dread by a knowledge of God’s constant involvement and minute interest in all of David’s day-by-day living. If God so cared for him every day, will not His care reach even beyond the last day? There are literally scores of references from the Psalms of David to support each of these thoughts. (2) David committed himself to what he understood. He of his own free will chose to believe God, not to just believe *in* God—he had decided that long ago—but *to believe in the current word* from God. It is this volitional action which makes all the difference in whether God is real or living only in the realm of theory. (3) Now David could weep, or laugh, or in other ways express his faith emotionally. We understand, we decide, and then we feel: (a) intellect, (b) will and then (c) emotion. We could say as we have often before: (1) fact, (2) faith, (3) feeling, and in this in-variable order. Faith is an act of the will based on facts; emotions are always a by-product of these two qualities.

How could David say God had “*delivered his eyes from tears*”? The same study procedure could be used here as was used above, and indeed it should be. The eyes will be freed from tears when we exercise our minds in an understanding of God’s care for us and we commit our total selves to this fact. David’s feet were freed from falling by his faith. And what concretely was this faith? We do hope our readers can answer this question for themselves by this time. It was a simple, but total exercise of his self-consciousness that gave him the confidence which led him triumphantly through the valley of the shadow of death.

David believed and spoke, and we rejoice to read what he wrote. Who will hear us or read of our faith? No one, unless we exercise a faith like that of David and Paul. We could review the trials of Paul as we have those of David and arrive at the same glorious conclusions by the same simple procedure. However, our question is, “What does this mean to me?”—not to Paul or even the sweet singer *of* Israel.

Since we have not only the Word of the Spirit but the author of that Word as a present unseen guest, we do indeed have reason to declare our faith!

D. How Can I Share It?

Since the above discussion has been on the point of communication of our faith, it hardly seems necessary to emphasize it again here.

7. “Now, he that wrought us for the self-same thing (is) God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the spirit.” II Cor. 5:5 (K.J.) “Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” (A.S.V.)

A. What Does It Say?

Please read 4:16-5:5 for the entire context of this passage. The identification of the term “this very thing” is extremely important. We want to know what has God been working in us and for us. It would be easy to answer “for immortality” and all it includes, but it will help much more to mark the specifics in the text. (1) He is at work for us and in us for the purpose of day-by-day renewal of our inward man. God is at work in us for this purpose. The “inward man” is not only the spirit of man, but the spirit of the Christian man. Only his inward man can find the renewal here promised. It is so important to emphasize the method behind this renewal. If we do not each day review His mercies and power, there will be no renewal, for it is meditation on the Word of God day and night that makes His mercies fresh every morning. This, the worldly-minded cannot and do not know. God is at work to give us an eternal weight of glory (4:17). He wrought in us or is working in us so we might understand and enjoy the unseen eternal things of life. (vs. 18) He is at work to show us the house not made with hands (5:1) which waits our release from the burden of this earthly house that we might receive our new house from heaven. We are ready even now for our new garment of glory, so that which is subject to death may be swallowed up of life. For all of this and more, God is at work in us!

B. What Does It Mean?

We need to relate the expression “earnest of the Spirit” to the context in which it appears. This we have just done in the above comments. What is involved in the expression “*the earnest of the (Holy) Spirit*”? We have treated this expression before in 1:22 and we shall again in future references. We need to think here of a down payment. What then is the total possession? In the context of this chapter, the world and life to come can be the only answer. Such a unique down payment on heaven! How appropriate that the Holy Spirit is wholly of the world to come. We must say the strong emphasis here is on the work of God. It is *God* who has done all of this for us. When such a great and strong One is on our side, how can we but exclaim with Paul “being therefore of good courage—”!

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

“The term ‘earnest’ means a deposit which is in itself a guarantee that the full amount will be paid later”⁵⁷ (Hughes) When it is God who has made the deposit, when the deposit is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself, when the whole amount of God’s gift to us is heaven, how can we ask with any point at all, “What does it mean to me?” We already have a part of the whole, and the total will be the wonderful world and life to come!

The present possession of the divine Spirit who is of the very substance of heaven itself, is enough to make us shout with gratitude, but to contemplate the final full payment is more than our poor minds can grasp! J. B. Lightfoot has such a beautiful comment on this thought. “The actual spiritual life of the

⁵⁷ Phillip E. Hughes, Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Christian is the same in Kind as his future glorified life; the kingdom of heaven is a *present* kingdom; the believer is already seated on the right hand of God. Nevertheless the present gift of the Spirit is only a *small fraction* of the future endowment. This idea also would be suggested by the usual relation between the earnest money and the full payment.” (cited by Hughes)

The two figures of “the firstfruit of the whole harvest” (Rom. 8:23) and “the down payment of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:13) are beautiful extensions of this same concept.

D. How Can I Share It With Others?

Whereas all of the above is surely true and full of meaning, unless I can relate to it in a manner that releases it from theory to fact, I have nothing to share.

We are so body-bound to time and space, we have a very difficult time encompassing the thought that we are indeed indwelt by a resident of heaven from the world of the Spirit. When we pause for some attempt, we sense excitement as a response and we feel the same way we did when someone made a down payment on our trip around the world. What will I see and hear and feel? When the final payment was made and the trip was begun, what new, different and interesting places and people we saw!

We feel a deep gratitude. How could we ever repay the debt we owe? God has been and now is so mercifully good to us; how can we ever adequately say “thank you”? We must live constantly in a sense of wonder and awe that He has decided to dwell in and with us. All of these thoughts could be developed and applied, but we trust our readers will each one do this for himself.

8. “Giving no offense in anything, that the ministry not be blamed. But in all (things) approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, *by the Holy Spirit*, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.” II Cor. 6:3-7

A. What Does It Say?

It is always important that a verse be understood in its context. The mention of the Holy Spirit appears in a list of recommendations for the genuineness of Paul’s ministry. He says: “But in all things *approving ourselves as the ministers of God*, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness *by the Holy Spirit*, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.” (6:4-7)

When we say that the first nine recommendations divide into three groups we are only repeating what many Commentators have already said, such as: (1) the first *three—General* (a) afflictions; (b) necessities; (c) distresses; (2) the second *three—Specific* (a) stripes; (b) imprisonments; (c) tumults; (3) the three remaining— *Voluntary* (a) labours; (b) watchings; (c) fastings.

Following the trials are the graces. These also commend Paul to his hearers. It is in the midst of these virtues that the Holy Spirit is mentioned. As with Paul, so with each of us we recommend ourselves by what we *do* and what we *are*. Look briefly at the qualities of Paul’s character. (1) He was *pure* both in conduct and thought. “This includes not merely freedom from the pollution of immoral acts, but pureness and singleness of motive.”⁵⁸ (Hodge) (2) He was *knowledgeable*. Paul had something to say and to write worth listening to. His knowledge was of the direct, intuitive, Holy Spirit-empowered kind that surely commended him to his auditors. We need to point out here that *graces* are not only *virtues* but

⁵⁸ Phillip E. Hughes, Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans.

gifts. Paul had the *gift* of knowledge and the *virtue* of pureness. He had the *virtues* of long-suffering and kindness and the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. We believe this must be the connection in which the reference to the Holy Spirit appears. The presence of the Holy Spirit is very strong proof that God is with Paul. The presence of the Holy Spirit and His supernatural powers convinced those gathered on Pentecost, Peter at Caesarea, and now the Corinthians. As does each Christian, we must say with Paul, "If any man does not have the Holy Spirit he is none of His," and if he does have the Holy Spirit it is convincing proof he belongs to God. (Cf. Rom. 8:9)

B. What Does It Mean?

It was difficult, if not impossible, to answer the first question, *What does it say*, in reference to the definition of the words themselves, without also having a reference to their context. This is not always true as can be observed in many other references we have considered, but it is so here. We have therefore given the meaning in its definition.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

How ready are we to recommend ourselves, or more precisely, to let our actions, attitudes and gifts recommend us to all men? In what sense can we say the Holy Spirit is approving us? Surely the most obvious application of this principle is the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is "an unfeigned love." Without this we have no approval of God or man. We are sorely tempted to define and apply every one of the virtues and graces Paul mentions in this text. However, our purpose is to appreciate the work of the Holy Spirit within and through us. When will it be time for me to so absorb the Word of the Spirit as related to love, joy, peace, and all the other beautiful qualities of Christ-likeness, that they will be reflected in my life? Yes, *today* is the time; now is the hour.

Am I to attribute to the Holy Spirit the deep yearning, longing, to yield myself to Christ? Shall I say I am moved by the Spirit to cast myself at the feet of my Lord in eager, willing obedience to His work and His will in my life? We *know* these thoughts are prompted by the Holy Spirit either objectively through His word or/and subjectively through His indwelling presence. (Eph. 3:16) Until He commends Himself to us, we will never be able to commend ourselves to others.

D. How Can I Share It?

Even as we have just been sharing with you, much of this material is written as an expression of devotion or worship. The particular section just covered was written during the days of a trip to Athens, Corinth, Turkey and Palestine. It was not at all convenient to write, but it was and *is* right and full of help to spend time before Him in prayer and meditation. We believe the fact that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we therefore want to learn more and more of Him.

9. "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or (if) *ye Receive another Spirit*, which ye have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might bear with (him)" II Cor. 11:4

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean? C. What Does It Mean To Me? D. How Can I Share It?

"In verse I the apostle has requested the Corinthians to bear with him in a little 'foolishness' as he speaks of himself, and now the ironical note struck there is intensified as he reminds them that they bear well enough with someone who comes to them with a message, the content of which is subversive of the teaching he himself has given them." (Hughes)

This whole passage from vs. 1 thru 4 *must* be understood as irony, or there is really no understanding it. Paul is asking the Corinthians if they received another Holy Spirit even as (and at that time) they received another gospel? It is so important to recognize in this text (as well as in several other texts) a plain assertion. *All Christians receive the Holy Spirit at the time they accept Christ.* This is not a reference to the powers of the Spirit, but to the Spirit Himself as a gift from God. (Cf. Gal. 3:2) Paul is saying here that to be a Christian is to have the Holy Spirit. To fail in our acceptance of our Saviour is to also fail to receive the Holy Spirit.

Our salvation is surely incomplete and inadequate if we were forgiven of our past sins but were not comforted by the fact that God lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

10. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, *how that Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?" II Cor. 13:5

A. What Does It Say?

"There are two links of association between this verse and what precedes. They had been trying the apostle, seeking proof of Christ speaking in him. He tells them they had better examine themselves and see whether Christ was in them. Hence the antithesis between *yourselves* placed before the verb for sake of emphasis and 'ye seek a proof' of vs. 3. 'Ye would prove me—prove yourselves.' Another idea, however, and perhaps a more important one is this, 'Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, seek it in yourselves. Know ye not that Christ is in you (unless you be reprobates), and if he is in you, if you are really members of His body, ye will know that He is in me.' The expression *Christ is in you*, does not mean 'Christ is among you as a people.' It refers to an indwelling of Christ in the individual believer, as is plain from such passages as Gal. 2:20, 'Christ liveth in me,' and Gal. 4:19; Rom. 8:10. Christ dwells in His people by His Spirit. The presence of the Spirit is the presence of Christ. This is not a mere figurative expression, as when we say we have a friend in our heart—but a real truth. The Spirit of Christ, the Holy Ghost, is in the people of God collectively and individually, the ever-present source of a new kind of life, so that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. Rom. 8:9."⁵⁹ (Hodge)

B. What Does It Mean?

This question relates to context, which point we have made in our quotation from Hodge. We would, however, add a comment or two. The indwelling Christ becomes very important when we use such indwelling as the criterion of genuineness. It is only as we daily contemplate ourselves as the body of Christ that we are called away from the lust of the flesh. Consider: can we actually be the temple for His living and participate in immoral thoughts or actions? How could it be that we are His dwelling place and yet we are in constant pursuit of more and more money? This, when our Saviour had no place to lay His head; yet we are working ourselves to exhaustion—for what? What is this status seeking—when the One who emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation lives in our bodies? His indwelling is a stronger motivation to holiness than a thousand rules and regulations.

It is possible to *seem to be* real and yet be spurious. It is not for someone else to decide this but ourselves. We must *never* assume we are right or true. We need constant testing of ourselves by the life-style of the one we call *Lord*. This will necessitate a constant review and research of the record of His life in the New Testament, not only of the four gospels, but also of the epistles which interpret His life. It is so easy to check today by the record of yesterday instead of returning to the original. We might indeed have succeeded and lived "even as He did." Can we rest on our record for the life of today? Ah, this is the deadly danger of marring the image of Him. Read again today as if you never saw Him before. Let the wonder of being His dwelling place come with fresh, purifying, and renewing impact every morning.

⁵⁹ Charles Hodges, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Much of this material necessarily has an autobiographical emphasis; most especially in the thought expressed by this verse do we relate in a personal way. My experience as a Christian is only mine, but perhaps others can find something typical in it. After the first flush of joy and commitment following conversion at the age of seventeen, the reality of my relationship to our Lord was (and is) sustained by two major factors: (1) an interest in communicating Christ to the lost world (it is difficult to share with others without at the same time speaking to yourself) and (2) a very early awareness of the power of the indwelling Christ, or better stated, an awareness of the power for purity implicit in a knowledge that I am the habitation of our Lord by and through the Holy Spirit. I cannot say that I have always sustained the same degree of awareness or at times any conscious awareness at all (to my own shame and loss). To the extent that I did, I have been the victor instead of the victim, the conqueror instead of the conquered. It *is* possible to simply decide: I *will* see the passing parade of life *through the eyes of Jesus*. I *will* reject, firmly and instantly: Satan's offers to the lust (strong desire) of the flesh, the lust of or for "things that the eyes behold," and the lust of status, or an acceptance by men. It is a happy discovery that we *can* choose, we need not be overcome. We *can be* the overcomer! The basic all-important question is: do 'I really, truly, personally *want* to let Him live in me and through me? "Dear Jesus, I do! I believe you are *the way*, you have and are *the truth*. All else is wandering and false. Wonder of wonders, *I can* decide this, and your indwelling is manifested in and through me!"

I want to say you will be reprobate unless Christ lives in you and you will be genuine when He does, but in your *will and mind* He must make His home or all of this is but pious prattle!

D. How Can I Share It?

We have just tried to share with you, but we are happy for another opportunity. We are grateful for an umpire who can call the rules in this game, which is the holy pursuit after the likeness of our Lord. We refer to the conscience God has placed within every man. Our conscience does *not* make the rules. It must be educated. Its task is only one, to respond to our actions with approval or disapproval. The conscience is God's way of relating the law to life, i.e. in evaluation. The conscience is a wonderful guide when it knows where it is going. We are responsible for the directions used by our conscience. It will only lead to and from those places we have clearly marked out. What I am saying is that we are totally responsible for the education of our conscience. As we have observed, it is a grand umpire, but it can only call foul or fair on the rules *we* supply. *Think* now! What a privilege and responsibility is ours that we can educate our conscience by and through and in the Word of God!

One more word—our conscience is a most apt pupil— it learns what we *really* mean by the rules supplied. If we do not mean them, there is no way to convince our conscience that we do. It can be injured almost beyond repair, or it can answer with a clear, firm agreement. We thank our wise Creator-Father for it, and should tenderly teach it.

11. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and *the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*" II Cor. 13:14

A. What Does It Say?

Because there is current in our day an energetic effort by a group variously known as "Jesus only People" or the "Oneness Group" to teach that there is but *One* person in the Godhead, we feel it very helpful to include a brief study of the triune God. A reference bibliography will be included for those who want to study further on this grand subject.

Charles Hodge⁶⁰ has a splendid comment on this passage; he says: “This comprehensive benediction closes the epistle. It includes all the benefits of redemption. First, *the grace, or favour*, of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the theanthropical designation of our blessed Saviour. It includes or indicates his divine nature, he is our Lord; his human nature, he is Jesus; his office, he is the Christ, the Messiah, the long-promised Redeemer. It is the favour, the unmerited love and all that springs from it, of this divine person clothed in our nature, and who as the theanthropos is invested with the office of Messiah, the headship over his own people and all power in heaven and earth, that the apostle invokes for all his believing readers. Every one feels that this is precisely what he, as a guilty, polluted, helpless sinner, needs. To this glorious, mysteriously constituted, exalted Saviour, Son of God and Son of man, and ultimate salvations is rendered certain. *The love of God*. In one view the love of God is the source of redemption. God manifested his love in giving his Son for us, Rom. 5:8. But in another view the love of God to us is due to the grace and work of Christ. That is, the manifestation of that love in the pardon, sanctification and salvation of men, was conditional on the work of Christ. We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. His death as a satisfaction for our sins was necessary in order to our being actually introduced into the fellowship of God and made partakers of his love. Therefore the apostle puts the grace of Christ before the love of God, as, in the sense mentioned, the necessary condition of its manifestation. *And the communion (koinonia, the participation) of the Holy Ghost*. The primary object of the death of Christ was the communication of the Holy Spirit. He redeemed us from the curse of the law that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, Gal. 3 :13, 14. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost secured in the covenant of redemption by the death of Christ that applied to us the benefits of his mediation. As the gift of the Spirit is secured to all the people of God, they are *koinonia*, joint partakers, of the Holy Ghost, and thereby made one body. This is the ground of the communion of saints in which the church universal professes her faith.

“The distinct personality and the divinity of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, to each of whom prayer is addressed, is here taken for granted. And therefore, this passage is a clear recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. For a Christian is one who seeks and enjoys the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.”⁶¹

B. What Does It Mean? C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We are not at all interested in pure theology, i.e. the search of the mind of man in an attempt to define the mind of God. On the other hand, we are mightily interested in a careful search of the biblical account of our every relationship to God, and most especially to God the Holy Spirit.

The word “communion” means “fellowship” or “partnership,” a “joint-sharing” or a “participation in.” There are a number of uses for this word in the scripture: (1) “The Communion of the blood of our saviour,” I Cor. 10:16, (2) The “communion” or fellowship of the Christians in Jerusalem, Acts 2: 42-47, (3) The possible “communion” or fellowship of demons, I Cor. 10:21.

Let’s catch some of the obvious applications of this thought: (1) To have fellowship there must be a mutual interest. The Holy Spirit might be yearning, yea, *groaning* within us to express and share with us, but we are so woefully ignorant or willfully indifferent to His desires. Such desires *can* be understood by reading His word. Such a relationship reminds me of the attitude some have toward the letter of a loved one, perhaps your wife or husband, son, daughter, mother or father. In this letter all the heart/thoughts are poured out in abandoned profusion, but what is often the response, even from those to whom these dear burning words are addressed? Until they are received in the same spirit in which they were given, there

⁶⁰ Charles Hodges, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972.

⁶¹ Charles Hodges, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972.

can be no real communion or fellowship. Are we truly interested? If so, we will indicate it by doing more than giving a casual look at what He has said to us. (2) To have fellowship there *must* be a mutual sharing or giving one to and for the other. Of course we envision this *communion* as an inward or subjective experience. We are not at all adverse to emotional response or involvement in such a relationship. But please mark carefully just *how* the Holy Spirit communicates His part of this joint-sharing. He will *never* communicate something contrary to what He has already said clearly in His word, the Bible. Indeed, He says it is sufficient to “furnish us completely unto every good work,” II Tim. 2:15. Also, it gives to us “all things which pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue,” II Peter 1:3. We believe it is not His purpose to communicate one word more than what He has already given us in His word. His word *is* the truth, “all the truth” and all of the truth He promised to give to us, John 14:26. However, *He*, the very real person of the Holy Spirit, is alive within our bodies. We have the author as well as His manuscript. The response of the Holy Spirit within us to His Word before us is an interesting and very provocative subject. Will He help us in our understanding of His word? We *do not believe* I Cor. 1:21,22 teaches this. Please consider earlier comments on these verses. We are now in the realm of opinion and as such, I wish to advance the thought that the Holy Spirit’s work here is to give us insights into the application of His Word to our personal lives. Perhaps we could call this the “wisdom” of James 1:5. Wisdom has always been the best use of knowledge. The knowledge involved here is the Word of God. The ability to apply that word to life is the work of the Holy Spirit within us in answer to believing prayer. We want to add that the check and balance of other scriptures must be heeded, or we would be binding upon one another endless regulations which we feel the Holy Spirit has revealed to us personally in our study of His Word. This has already been the source of tragic divisions in the body. We want to recognize the presence and work of the Holy Spirit with *every* believer. If your brother or sister cannot see the same application of the Word you can, he is under no obligation to you. He answers to the Word before Him and the Holy Spirit within him in the same way you do.

On the other hand, there are many who are glad to be taught and eagerly want to share your insights from His Word. These evaluations *must never* become as important as the personal study of the *inspired* source from which they come. (3) In fellowship there will be a mutual enjoyment and appreciation of one another and of what each one contributes to the other. Think of the marriage relationship; if there is not a deep respect for the person of the other, there can be no real partnership. One *must* hold the highest regard for the integrity of the other individual before there can be the trust or faith necessary for fellowship. In marriage each expects to enjoy the contribution of the other and each expects to give as much or more than he receives.

What shall we say of the “communion” or “fellowship” of the Holy Spirit? On the side of the Holy Spirit we can have the highest regard for this blessed One who lives in us! There is no question as to His integrity. We are indeed humbled that He would choose us as His dwelling place. But what of His respect for us? We recognize that such respect *must* be allowed with grace, for we have no righteousness of our own. But there *is* a basic integrity we *can* offer to Him in our mutual sharing, or there is no basis for fellowship.

I should like to comment on the meaning of this integrity. If there is *one thing* static in human nature, it is the ability to say yes or no. We *can* refuse Satan. Our problem is that we do not believe deep down in our subconsciousness that God’s way is the only way. We do not truly believe that all other ways are only lies! This kind of complete surrender to God’s way removes the *Power* of temptation. Temptation is a very real problem, but when we accept only one way, the willingness to capitulate is *not present*. ‘We are totally unwilling to commit the act. When this commitment exists, we *refuse*. We do not only resist; we refuse the suggestion to act. Every temptation, “the lust of the flesh” (which is easiest to define), “the lust of the eyes” (which many of us only define in its grosser forms), “the pride of life” (we are so easily deceived here), is present, but we decided ahead of Satan’s offers to reject his option.

Much of our problem in temptation is that we do not know God's way, and therefore we cannot commit ourselves to it. This fact places an even heavier burden upon us for Bible study. Perhaps we should say that we can see clearly the unlimited opportunities through the study of His word.

D. How Can I Share With Others?

Look over once again the whole subject of the communion" or "fellowship" or "partnership" of the Holy Spirit. What is there in this blessed relationship we can share with others? More and more I am impressed with the fact that the presence and person of the Holy Spirit is an affirmation, not an argument. He is a person to be enjoyed, to be accepted. We are so often reminded of what He does and are asked to accept it, to affirm it, or to enjoy it. We are told of His work in us, but much more often, as in the above text, we are asked to simply accept and enjoy a fact of: (1) the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) the love of God, and (3) the communion of the Holy Spirit. Meditation will be the largest help in our appreciation of His indwelling fellowship. Please pause just now and contemplate what it means for today and all its needs and joys to be His home. There are *two* people in me. Shall I be tenderly aware of Him? Do I care enough to discover His desires in His word and agree totally with them that I might share them when the changing circumstances of life offer the opportunity?

We have enjoyed our pursuit of all the references to the Holy Spirit in II Corinthians. The comments have been written under such vastly different circumstances and places. This has been intentional. If in our search, He cannot meet the needs of any time and place, we have a wrong understanding of His work. Praise God we have found Him wonderfully and abundantly able. At the same time we have discovered anew just how unable we are. This account is but my track record. It should be surpassed a hundred times by those who read it. Please, please read these references concerning *your* unseen guest and answer the four questions, each of them and all of them for yourself!

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GALATIANS

THERE ARE 14 DIRECT REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS.

1-3. “O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, *Received ye the Spirit* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having *begun in the Spirit*, are ye now perfected in the flesh?”

“Did ye suffer so many things in vain? If it be indeed in vain. He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Gal. 3:1-5

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

The reception of the Spirit is both assumed and associated. Paul assumes that *all* Christians have the Holy Spirit (or his question would have no point). The receiving of the Holy Spirit is associated with the initial preaching of Christ crucified. Such an indwelling of the Holy Spirit was so well known by the Galatians that Paul could appeal to them through this knowledge. Perhaps the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit were much more prominent among those early Galatian Christians than they are today and for this reason he could refer to the presence of the Holy Spirit among them. But such could not be said for *all* Christians in Galatia. All did not exercise such powers. (Cf. I Cor. 12:28ff.) How is it then, that all Galatian Christians knew they had the Holy Spirit and the average American Christian does not even know if the Holy Spirit is given? (Cf. Acts 19:1-6) The answer is found in the problem *itself*. We have only one alternative to the “gospel—Holy Spirit—salvation” (being saved by the preaching of the crucified Saviour and receiving the person of the Holy Spirit). It is to be saved by “the works of the law”. There are two principles involved: *grace* and *law*. It is our attitude toward *works* or *law* that makes the eternal difference. If we associate *merit* with or through our efforts we have canceled out grace and have grieved the Holy Spirit. Even when we believe our works are but an expression of the reality of our faith and at the same time we congratulate ourselves that we are now at last pleasing to God *because* we are working, we have lost the grace principle and are insulting the Holy Spirit, “doing despite to the Spirit of *grace*.”

When we insist on earning our way to heaven, we cannot expect the fruit of the Holy Spirit since all such is but the natural out-pouring or spontaneous expression of our gratitude for being saved even when we did not deserve it. No wonder we do not know about His presence in us when we “received the grace of God in vain.”

I want to go on record here as affirming that I believe the average member of the Restoration movement is a victim of the Galatian problem and I begin with myself. What would happen if I accepted in its total meaning the principle of salvation by grace and that *not* through the works of law? Let’s list a few obvious results: (1) a deep sense of wonder in the presence of One who could love like this; (2) an overwhelming desire to love in return in as much a reciprocal action as possible, the One who so loved me; (3) a relaxed feeling not of ease but of peace. Out of my love and faith in Him and out of His love and grace for me (His very nature) He has accepted and does now accept me. Please, please pause here a moment. Some are thinking — like I am. Suppose I do not respond to His love in just the way I should, what then? Will you please specify just how I *should* respond? Meaning, will you carefully spell out my expected actions and attitudes? Even if you cite biblical terms at the best, I can only relatively express these acts and attitudes — such as “put away *all* filthiness, both of the flesh and of the Spirit.” (II Cor.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

7:1) Do I ever do this wholly and perfectly? And even if I did, would it earn anything for me? (4) Since I am accepted, approved, wanted, I can expect the Holy Spirit to be at work within me and through me.

(5) Because there is no limit to His love and grace to those who are “in Christ Jesus,” there must then be no limits to what He can and will do through such persons. It shall be our purpose in the next paragraphs to elaborate on these concepts, especially as they relate to the Holy Spirit.

(1) A deep sense of *wonder* or *awe* in the presence of One who could so love me! And we *are* in the presence of God since He lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. When I say wonder or awe I do not mean *dread*, indeed the very opposite. As we share the close company of a truly intelligent person we are impressed. If such an individual takes a close personal interest in our affairs and comments on our needs and concerns, we are more than impressed, we are deeply grateful. Our God knows all that there is to know about our most intimate interests such as: (a) sex (b) food and (c) money. There is *so* much He has said of this earth-bound triumvirate. We can again and again pause to praise Him and smile inside (and outside) at the soul (life) satisfying explanation He can give for everything we ever wanted to know about sex, food, or money. However, we must take the time to read what He has said.

When a dear friend is full of love as well as intelligence and in his compassion he suffers along with our mistakes and ignorance and is oh so *kind* about it all, we are humbled and comforted and cannot hear enough of his words. Those then are some of the qualities in our wonder. This also has a two-fold relationship. Wonder at His person, His omniscience (absolute wisdom), His absolute love and at the same time, wonder that He could love and share with me!

(2) An overwhelming desire to love in return. Indeed, the inevitable response to a real personal knowledge of His love is to love in return. “We love Him because He first loved us.” Without the Holy Spirit, there can be no real drawing out in what can be described as a desire to totally know the other—to be enveloped in the will of the other. We want to go on record here as saying that love *is* love. The agape-philos- and even eros qualities of love can all be present at the same time. Man is an holistic being and whereas the agape element of our love will be the most prominent in expression, we cannot ignore the fact that our need for fellowship and the giving of our bodies to our Lord forms a very real part of our return of love to Him. God is a spirit, not a man in any sense of the word. But we are flesh and blood and bones and we must express our love to Him with all our mind, heart (emotions), might (energy), strength (body). This is a conscious act of giving our total selves to Him.

(3) A relaxed feeling not of ease but of peace—that He has accepted and does now accept me. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” If there is one large need it is this one—a fear-ridden tension plagues so many of God’s people. They are constantly wondering if God has or has not accepted them. When acceptance is based on law we can understand this attitude, but not when it is out of His grace that we are saved.

(4) Since I am accepted, approved and wanted, I can also expect the Holy Spirit to be at work within me and through me. This is the start of “in the Spirit” of which Paul spoke. We could never expect the direction or work of the Spirit through law. The Holy Spirit is grieved and hindered when we insist on our own efforts at salvation, meaning when we ignorantly or proudly imagine we can *work for* our own salvation with fear and trembling. It is quite another matter to *work for* our salvation as if anything we do would earn acceptance with God. The fruit of the presence of the Holy Spirit is *joy*. What happiness wells up within us at the very thought of being accepted and approved by God. Peace comes from His presence within. Such a settled satisfaction comes to the total being in the knowledge that God loves and wants me! Not once but always. Not because of what I have done but because of the One I have accepted! We could continue this list through the nine qualities of character described in Gal. 5:20,21, but it is unnecessary to point out the obvious. His grandest work within me is to produce His

fruit in my character, all of which is contingent on my willingness to accept His acceptance of me.

(5) Since there is no limit to His love and grace to those who are “in Christ Jesus,” there must then be no limits to what He can and will do through such persons. We refer here not to character development but to the enlargement and the use of the abilities He has given to each of the members of His body. What a power-filled catalyst is grace! What liberating light from the heart of Love? So very much expression and creativeness only awaits a beginning. We fail to start because we feel unworthy and thus all of our efforts must be like ourselves, unworthy. But once we believe that God without qualification *wants me, believes in me and has a place for me*, and indeed has “created me in Christ Jesus for good works,” we learn what a difference such a faith makes! We believe it is the purpose of the Holy Spirit within us to bring form and shape out of formlessness. He broods again and again over the concepts of our minds to give light and life, form and substance to His work through us in the nitty-gritty of daily life and I refer to the very ordinary projects of our Bible School, or any other planned program for the advance of His work through us. We are sorely tempted to enlarge any of these five paragraphs to so much more, but we trust we will have stimulated our readers to make personal use of these principles.

4.”... that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal. 3:14

A. *What Does It Say?*

We must conclude that “the promise of the Spirit” is the Holy Spirit himself. Our Lord referred to the Holy Spirit as “*the promise of my Father.*” (Acts 1:4) Peter used these words, “Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Spirit*, he bath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.” (Acts 2:33) Jesus said “And behold, I send forth *the Promise of my Father upon you*: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:29) Ephesians 1:13 states: “in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with *the Holy Spirit of promise.*”

A part of the *blessing* of Abraham was the personal reception of the Holy Spirit. Isa. 32:15 says ... until *the Spirit is poured upon us from on high*, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.” Ezekiel 36:27 says “And I will *put my Spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.”

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Each Christian is included in the pronoun *we*. As covenant children of Abraham *we* have within us the wonderful promise God made to Abraham, The Holy Spirit Himself.

It should be noted here that such a promise was made “through faith.” We recognize that the law principle and the faith principle are here being compared and contrasted. We either earn salvation (law) or we accept it as a gift (faith). Therefore the Holy Spirit comes to all persons, Gentiles and Jews alike through the preaching of “the faith.” As *Lightfoot* so well expressed it, “Thus the law, the great barrier which excluded the Gentiles, is done away in Christ. By its removal the Gentiles are put on a level with us Jews; and, so united, we and they alike receive the promise in the gift of the Spirit through our faith.” At the same time it is also true that without a personal faith there can be no enjoyment of this gift or relationship. It is pathetically obvious that multitudes have accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour with no personal knowledge that they are indeed the temple of the Holy Spirit. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing of the Word of Christ.” If such persons have not been taught what the scriptures say concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it should be no surprise that they do not know of His presence in them.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

It follows that if the promise of the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit of promise, comes through faith, the more faith I have the more real will be His presence within me. When we speak of *more faith* we realize this comes as a result of a larger and larger knowledge of His Word and at the same time of a personal appropriation of His Word to our own hearts. The pursuit we are making in our study of every reference to the Other Comfortor is a concrete means of increasing our faith and of increasing or enlarging His presence and influence within us. If we are willing to sustain a tender personal submission to what we read in His Word, He can and will mean more and more to us as an unseen heavenly guest.

D. *Should I Share It With Others?*

We have expressed the thought of this text often before. It does bear repeating. We do have the Holy Spirit through faith. Others are following our attitudes much more closely than we know. Our total demeanor toward God and His Spirit is what is seen and believed by others. A relaxed, confident assurance that the Holy Spirit is alive and well within our very bodies (in our hearts) is the most meaningful-sharing relationship we can offer to others.

5. “And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Gal. 4:6

A. WHAT DOES IT SAY?

The word “because” as used here is to be understood in one or two ways: (1) because you are sons, God sent the Holy Spirit to you, or, (2) to make you sons He sent His Spirit to you. We believe the first thought is the one under consideration here. The presence of the Holy Spirit is a proof of sonship. The coming of the Holy Spirit is a birthright “the impartation of the Holy Spirit and the introduction into sonship are alike said to be the immediate consequence of believing on Christ.”⁶² (*Hogg & Vine*)

Luke 24:29 states “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.” Here Jesus is promising the Holy Spirit whereas in our text God is sending forth the Holy Spirit. Cf. John 14:16,26. We could assume from the texts we here cite that there is a joint participation in the coming of the Spirit. ‘Whereas God sends Him, it is our Lord who acts as the communicating agent of the Father.

There are various designations given to the Holy spirit. Here is another one. “*The Spirit of His Son*” C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine list all the designations of the Holy Spirit They are:

- Spirit Matt. 22:43
- The Spirit Matt. 4:1
- Eternal Spirit Heb. 9:14
- Holy Spirit Matt. 1:18
- The Holy Spirit Matt. 28:19
- The Spirit, the Holy Matt. 12:32
- The Spirit of Promise, the Holy Eph. 1:13
- Spirit of God Rom. 8:9
- Spirit of (the) Living God II Cor. 3:3
- The Spirit of God I Cor. 2:11
- The Spirit of Our God I Cor. 6:11
- The Spirit of God, the Holy Eph. 4:30
- The Spirit of Glory and of God I Pet. 4:14
- The Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead (i.e. of God) Rom. 8:11
- The Spirit of Your Father Matt. 10:20

⁶² Hogg & Vine, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Fincastle, Scripture Truth.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GALATIANS

- Spirit of (the) Lord Acts 8:39
- The Spirit of (the) Lord Acts 5:9
- (the) Lord, (the) Spirit II Cor. 3:18
- The Spirit of Jesus Acts 16:7
- Spirit of Christ Rom. 8:9
- The Spirit of Jesus Christ Phil. 1:19
- Spirit of Adoption Rom. 8:15
- The Spirit of Truth John 14:17
- The Spirit of Life Rom. 8:2
- The Spirit of Grace Heb. 10:29

In each of the above we can see a different facet of the Holy Spirit's work. The different designations come out of His various functions; He truly does glorify Jesus. He shows us how our Lord meets our every need.

We have already considered the definition of "heart" as found in the scripture.

We refer the reader to that study. Suffice it to say here that until the Holy Spirit has become a part of our mind, will, affections, and conscience, He has not entered our hearts. We must think His thoughts, will His will—we will then emotionally express this relationship and our conscience will approve of His very real personal presence in our hearts.

We feel it would be very beneficial to all, if we include right here, a little study on the nature of man. It is based upon I Thessalonians 5:23. "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly: and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

WHO ARE WE?

We are spirit beings—i.e. Bodies indwelt by the image, likeness or nature of God. God is a Spirit and He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Cf. John 4:24; Num. 16:22 12:9b; Genesis 1:26-28.

We are souls—When the spirit of God shared with us, united with the body our parents provided (the womb of our mothers) the resultant effect was the soul. The product or person produced by this union was unique because of the one-time, one-of-a-kind genetic combination. The soul is as eternal as our spirit because it is not material nor matter. Because our soul is our distinctive essence, the Bible often refers to us as being a "soul."

We are bodies—This is the seat of desire. We do not say the ability to desire is in the body (a dead body has no desire). Neither do we say certain desires are present without the body for the spirit-filled soul is freed from certain hungers at death and is free from these desires in the other world. In the world to come there is *no sexual desire*—"neither male nor female"—there is no *desire for food* since we are in a body that has no need for physical sustenance. We are eternal beings in an eternal body and will have no need for food. No *desire for "things"* since all things are available to us. Our desire there will not be to obtain any thing but to enjoy all things.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Listen to and obey God's Word. There is nothing more important! There is a lying spirit abroad in the world. He has access to our spirits. All bodies and all spirits are alike in that their capacities are identical. All men have sexual-food-possession desires. As to our spirits: all can be addressed by the spirit-being called Satan. But every man is distinctive and unique as to his soul. He looks at life much like his parents or grandparents or whoever else shared in his genetic combination. (Hebrews 12 :9a). *We only have one choice—who will teach us?* To whom will we give heed? God speaks to our spirits, for we are spirit beings. We respond according to the capacities of our souls and we act with our bodies. We

must read and obey *His* Word. We are either taught of God or Satan. There is no alternate!

WHY ARE WE SO LOST?

The term “lost” is intentional, as well as biblical. Man was created by God for Himself, but since we share the nature of God we can choose. We do not see with the physical organ called the eye. We see with the capacity of sight resident in the spirit. The ability is of the human spirit, which is exercised through the wonderful instrument referred to as the eye. We do not hear with our ears but with our spirit through our ears. The total capacity of intelligence is of the human spirit exercised through the instrument of the human body. Each person expresses his capacities in a little different manner because his soul is distinctive or different from that of every other person.

Satan’s *one* task is to offer man the alternate, because man has an option to every word of God. If we find and follow God’s Word we have found the way. If we do not, we are lost!

We quote from Hogg and Vine for a fine definition of the terms *Abba and Father*: “Abba” properly an Aramaic word, but one which appears in most languages in a form somewhat similar, of English “papa.” It occurs again in Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15. In the Gemara (a rabbinical commentary on the Mishna, or traditional teaching of the Jews) it is stated that slaves were forbidden to address by his title the head of the family to which they belonged.

“Father” — pater, the Greek equivalent of “Abba,” Christ taught his disciples to address God as their Father, Matthew 6:9, and gives them His Spirit to enable them to do so. Father is not to be read in any of these three places as a translation of “Abba,” supplied for the sake of readers ignorant of Aramaic. “Abba” seems rather to approximate to a personal name, while “Father” is, literally, the Father (hopater) and hence may be rendered “Abba, our Father.” The words are to be taken together as the expression of the love and intelligent confidence of the child. “Abba” is the word framed by the feeble lips of an infant: it expresses simple, unreasoning trust, the outcome of feeling rather than knowledge. “Father” is the word of maturity, the considered expression of a relationship intelligently realized.

To call God Father means more than merely to address Him by that name. It means that he who invokes Him, trusts and obeys Him also. It is a word of communion, and confidence and obedience of the son meeting his response in the complacent love of the Father, John 14:23. The Lord Jesus called Him “Abba, Father,” and lived the ideal filial life. He trusted God, Psalms 22:9 saying, “Thy will be done,” and “the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”⁶³

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Matthew 26:42; John 18:11. He obeyed God, learning in suffering what obedience is, Hebrews 5:8 and saying “Lo I am come to do thy will.” and “I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.” Hebrews 10:9; John 8:29. He lived in unclouded communion with God, saying, “I and the Father are One,” and “I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.” John 10:30, 14:11. Into this life of communion with the Father and the Son, the Sons of God are introduced by the Holy Spirit in order that the prayer of the Lord may be fulfilled, “that they may be one even as we are one,” John 17:11, 22.

B. *What Does It Mean?* and C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Several commentaries have pointed out the similarity in the use of the term “sent forth.” It is the same word used in 4:4 where the text says: “But in the fullness of time God *sent forth* His son, born of woman, born under the law.” It is wonderful to consider the fact that God has honored us in sending the Holy Spirit for our new birth as He did for the birth of His only begotten son. He “*commissioned forth*” His son to be born of Mary by the Holy Spirit. He also “*commissioned forth*” the Holy Spirit to take up residence in our hearts at the time of our new birth.

⁶³ Hogg & Vine, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Fincastle, Scripture Truth.

Just when and where and how does the Holy Spirit cry, “Abba, Father”? This is a subjective experience if we ever read a description of one. We think of our Saviour as described by Mark 14:36. It was in prayer that He cried, “Abba, Father.” We would indeed associate this cry with our own attempts at conversing with God. This is another action that must come by faith. If we believe God’s word teaches that the Holy Spirit is present in our hearts (bodies) for the purpose of crying Abba, Father, we then will confidently expect Him to also do this when we pray. Please notice carefully that the text does *not* say we will do the crying, but that the Holy Spirit will do it. Perhaps we should associate this passage with Romans 8:15, 16: “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. ‘When we cry ‘Abba, Father’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.’” In this text we *are* the ones who cry “Abba, Father.” Romans 8:16 explains the interaction of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. When we are moved to express our praise or wonder or gratitude, all we can say is “Abba.” We mean by this what we would mean if we were suddenly surprised by our earthly father with an overwhelming gift that particularly met a need of ours; we would in the flush of excited, unexpected joy, cry out, “Oh, Daddy,” or “Papa,” and in the next instant we would say, “What a wonderful *father* you are!” In this we see the use of the intimate heart-name and the more mature understanding expression of “Father.” The sad fact is the Holy Spirit is most of the time unemployed in the grand work. How often is it that we are surprised by joy and exclaim under the direction or moving of the Holy Spirit, “Oh, Abba, Father”? Perhaps more often than I know; I hope so. My impression is that for some who read these words, such a position is open to suspicion, labeling it as some form of emotionalism. The fact remains we believe this is what the scriptures teach. The Holy Spirit has been sent forth by God into our bodies to direct our minds and wills through His word. When we read of the love of God expressed in the death of His Son and of the tenderness and compassion expressed by His Son, are we not moved to cry out in sometimes tearful gratitude? Who moved us? The Holy Spirit did as He operated through His word which was either read or spoken. We understand and accept and praise Him. All the while we have need to recognize that back of and beneath such expression is the Holy Spirit of God moving us to so voice our adoration. It isn’t that we have not received the Holy Spirit (Cf. Acts 19: 1ff); we just never knew He came. We are as sadly unresponsive to the Second Comforter as were those to whom the first One came. “He came to His own and they that were His own received Him not.” The Revised Standard Version renders this, “He came to his own home, and his own people received him not.” Shall we repeat that sin? The Holy Spirit has come to His own home, our bodies, but have we received Him? The problem with us is so tragically familiar; we do not recognize Him. Those who should know Him do not. Is it that we expect some sensational or dramatic entrance of an all-conquering hero? The role of the Second Comforter is as unobtrusive as that of the first. He, too, is One who comes to live in the Christian “not with observation.” Thousands of people in Judea and Galilee knew not that Immanuel was walking the hills and plains of their land. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify or characterize our blessed Lord. This He does by illumining our minds through His wonderful objective truths found in the New Testament. Thus, if we are willing to think His thoughts and make these truths personal, He has come to make our wills His. We refer to the desire on our part to obey what we intellectually understand. God sends His Spirit into our will in just this manner, and in no other!

The heart of man physically is created with four chambers. The “inner man” or “heart of man” biblically defined is created with four *chambers* or *expressions*— could we call them *functions*? They are (1) the intellect, (2) the will, (3) the emotions, (4) the conscience. Sometimes all capacities or expressions of the biblical heart are compacted into one term, the “inner man.” Such is the case in the text before us. To consider the entrance of the Holy Spirit into our hearts and the response we give to Him necessitates the delineation given above. Until we think His thoughts and will His will, we can never emotionally express in the cry of the Holy Spirit, “Abba, Father.”

Consider an example of this teaching in action: we attempt to stand back and read the record of the incarnation as if we had never read it before. We are staggered at the thought that God had taken human form and was born in a stable! We instinctively fall to our knees and, like the shepherds, begin to wonder and worship before Him. A cry of joy and incredibility comes from our lips as we lift our eyes toward

heaven. “Abba, Father,” we exclaim. Perhaps this is awkwardly stated, but it illustrates the entrance of the Holy Spirit into our mind, will, and emotions. Our conscience would gladly approve of all such expression. We know of no other way the Holy Spirit can influence our inner man (heart). If there is some objective intuitive moving of the Holy Spirit within ourselves, He would make His movements known to our mind, will, or emotions. There are environmental influences we can offer to the Holy Spirit, such as singing hymns and gospel songs, which is another way of allowing the Holy Spirit access to our minds. When we gladly give assent or agreement to what we sing, we let the Holy Spirit have our wills. If we thus give our minds and wills to Him in our singing, we will inevitably emotionally respond to such a relationship. The conscience is always operating “after the fact” as an umpire. He simply approves or disapproves of what is already done. Scripture reading, memorizing and prayer can be the ideal environment for allowing the Holy Spirit to move into and throughout these four areas of our heart.

The act of writing this material is another form of giving the Holy Spirit free course in my heart. I *am* responsible for the choice to do this. I am also responsible for the extent of my personal involvement. Just what per cent of concentration of mind and will shall I give? We would like to think that we always give all, but remember there is another spirit present. His name is Satan.

D. *How Can I Share This?*

Upon re-reading the above, it might appear we have been somewhat carried away from the text. “And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father.” This is not true. We see no way at all to explain the practical aspects of the glad cry of the Spirit in our hearts without such a discussion as we have here given. It will be of little value to anyone to simply tell them that the Holy Spirit can cry “Abba, Father,” and that they also should so express themselves. (Cf. Rom. 8:15,16) Until we know how this can and should happen, we have nothing to share. Once we have understood and have allowed Him to be the Lord of our minds and wills, we shall indeed have much to share with others.

Matthew 22:36,37 seems so very appropriate just here. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt *love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” The use of terms here is a very good example of the point made earlier: there is a specific as well as a generic use of the term “heart.” In this reference it is used specifically, and it refers to the emotions. The will and the intellect are treated separately in the terms “*soul*” and “*mind*.” The point we want here is the use of the term *love*. When we *love* to express our adoration emotionally, when we *love* to commit our wills (soul) to Him, when we *love* to think His thoughts, then and only then will we be the happiest persons alive on earth! This we can share.

6. “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also it is now.” Gal. 4:28,29

A. *What Does It Say?* and B. *What Does It Mean?*

The reading of the historical account of the birth of Ishmael and Isaac in Genesis 16:16 and 21:5 along with the record of the action of Ishmael at the weaning feast in honor of Isaac is essential to our understanding of this text. Evidently something more than play was involved in the actions and motivation of Ishmael. The ill will started here between Ishmael and Isaac has continued down through the centuries of time and has involved millions of people. (Cf. I Chronicles 5:10; Psa. 83:6) Tradition says that Ishmael shot an arrow at Isaac under the pretense of play, but he really intended to kill him. This antagonism forms the basis for an analogy. As it was then, so it has always been. Those who are flesh-born have a strong animosity toward those who are Spirit-born. In the context of the fourth chapter of Galatians, it is a comparison between those who want to be saved by law and those who are saved by grace. The jealousy on the part of the law salvationists toward those who are saved by grace is an unavoidable fact. It is inevitable that Ishmael will not like Isaac any time at any place.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is involved in fulfilling the promise God made to Abraham. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit was Sarah able to conceive or Abraham able to produce seed. When Abraham considered the deadness of Sarah's womb and of his own body, he knew only by the power of God through the Holy Spirit could the promise be fulfilled, but it was. Is there an aversion in the heart of the so-called "good moral man" as he considers God's offer of salvation by grace through faith? To ask the question is to answer it.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

It would seem there are only two thoughts in this text for us as it relates to the Holy Spirit. (1) We are reminded once again of the birth of the Spirit. We are born by, through, and of the Holy Spirit. His entrance is at our new birth. We could call this the birth "of promise inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is given to us in fulfillment of promise. (Cf. Acts 2:39) (2) All who live Godly in Christ Jesus, as a consequence of the birth of the Spirit, *shall* suffer persecution. (Cf. Timothy 3:12) We need not promote persecution, but we should not be surprised when it comes. We might also observe that among those who have been saved by grace and are children of the Spirit are some who, like the Galatians, fall back into the bondage of work-salvation. Immediately the antagonism sets up. All sorts of names or labels are attached to one another. Finally we want to remark that within our own selves a war is being fought in an attempt to balance the place of works and grace in our own relationship with our Lord. This battle is very real and needs to be resolved by a careful study of Galatians and Romans.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

Something of the meekness and commitment of Isaac should be ours as we consider how infinitely good God is to us. "It is nought of good that I have done," but by His grace He has saved me. By His grace I am given the Holy Spirit in my new birth. We can share our joy and praise. Even in persecution we can hold a deep joy since this confirms the reality of our new birth.

7. "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love." Gal. 5:4-6

A. *What Does It Say?* and B. *What Does It Mean?*

We like very much the words of Robert L. Johnson on this text. He says: "There is no let up as Paul continues to press the seriousness of the issue. If the Galatians receive circumcision they will then and there destroy their Christian standing. They will be choosing a method of incorporation into God's people which was open to the Gentiles before the coming of Christ. It would be the same as having nothing to do with Christ. Paul's use of direct address here is more impressive than if he were just stating a general proposition. *You are severed from Christ.* The word *severed* (katergethete) means to 'make ineffective, nullify' or 'abolish,' set aside, having nothing more to do with (Arndt-Gingrich). For those *who would be justified by the law*, their vital bond with Christ will be broken, their sonship will be nullified, they will be estranged and cut loose from the Law of God. Redemption through Christ and justification through law are incompatible methods of obtaining righteousness. The two principles are mutually exclusive. And the yoke of the law was one which no man could bear. (Acts 15:10) Therefore the one who seeks justification in this way has *fallen away from grace*. There is an article in Greek which gives specific meaning to the word "the grace" (tescharilos). This was the grace of God or of Christ which was the distinctive element of the gospel which Paul had preached to the Galatians (Burton). The falling *from grace* is a rejection of the grace system of salvation in Christ by a return to the keeping of the law (Gal. 2:21). According to the legal principle, one tried to earn justification through performance of deeds of righteousness. The acceptance of this principle was a turning away from the God of grace. The

words ‘the grace’ are in opposition to ‘law.’ Obedience to law is something entirely different in nature and operation from faith in Christ. The same position is stated in Romans 11:6. Paul had also stated earlier ‘We ourselves . . . know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.’ (Gal. 2:15,16). Therefore a return to the law principle is tragic, not only because it is impossible of fulfillment, but also because one loses his hold on the favor and blessing of God offered through his grace. Paul does not mince words. The issue is too serious.

“In contrast to the Judaizers as men of law, the apostle now speaks of himself, and others who still cling to Christ, as men of faith. While others might return to law without any hope of satisfying its demands, Paul, with other Christians, will rely on Christ to make them righteous *For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness.* This verse summarizes much of Paul’s teaching, bringing together four of his key words: Spirit, faith, hope, and righteousness. In the greek *we* (hemeis) is emphatic. It is used in contrast to all who hold the legal principle. The article ‘the’ is lacking before ‘spirit,’ but it is almost certain that the Holy Spirit is intended. When one seeks acceptance of God by law, including the rite of circumcision, his reliance is basically upon the flesh. This leads to despair and not to hope. On the other hand, those who trust in Christ expect to attain acceptance with God by faith and through the Spirit. They *wait for* (apekdechometha) or ‘await eagerly’ *the hope of righteousness.* The form of the Greek verb implies intense expectation. The word *hope is* that which is hoped for, or a ‘hoped for righteousness.’ Paul wrote, ‘For in this hope were we saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope.’ (Rom. 8:24) In one sense Paul speaks of righteousness as already attained by the believer (Rom. 9:30 and perhaps Rom. 5:1), but its complete possession apparently comes in the final verdict of acquittal at the judgment (I Cor. 1 :7f; Phil. 3:9-12; I Thess. 5:8). If one interprets the case of ‘righteousness’ as the subjective genitive, then another meaning is possible for the passage. The idea there would be ‘the hope which belongs to righteousness,’ or ‘righteous hope,’ i. e. that blessing connected with righteousness which is the object of hope. Though this view is not preferred, it is quite credible and finds some support in the letter. If the Galatians should embrace the ‘other gospel’ (1:7) with its phantom of a legal righteousness, then their hope would be gone.” (From *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians*, pp. 136-138, published by R. B. Sweet, Austin, Texas)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

We have intentionally included Johnson’s comments on verse four as well as his remarks on the subject of “the hoped for righteousness.” We believe there are many who need to read and heed these words. Our primary concern is with the meaning of the phrase “it is through the Spirit, by faith” In its context this is a very important phrase. “What Paul is saying then amounts to something along this line, ‘Those who yield to the Judaizers have fallen away from grace *because* they refuse to give due credit to the work of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, as to ourselves, we recognize that Spirit as the source of all our striving and of our ultimate victory.’” (William Hendriksen in *New Testament Commentary—Exposition of Galatians*, p. 197.)

The Holy Spirit provides the word by which or because of which we obtained faith. (Cf. Rom. 10:17) It was because of the conviction of the Spirit through the preaching of the good news we were brought to a commitment of our lives to Christ. (John 16:8,9) The Holy Spirit who took up residence in our bodies is but the down payment of the purchased possession, or heaven. “These greater glories to come are definitely in the mind of the writer, for he says that ‘through the Spirit, by faith we *eagerly await* (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; I Cor. 1:7) the hoped for righteousness.’ to be sure, the verdict of acquittal has already been pronounced, so that even now the peace of God has smiled its way into our hearts (Rom. 5:1). But one day, namely at Christ’s glorious return, our righteousness will be declared *publicly*. (Cf. Matt. 25:31-40; Luke 18:1-8; I Thess. 3:3; II Thess. 1:10). To this day and to this blessing *we* through the Spirit, by faith, eagerly look forward, not doubting that God will fulfill his promise. (*Ibid.*)

D How Can I Share It?

Somehow the wonder of the world to come seldom seems a part of our daily routine. Where is the intense eagerness described in this text as the revelation of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps it is because we must appropriate such an eager hope through faith; this faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord, and we are simply not willing to listen to His word. When we do listen, it is not with our whole heart. When we are willing to meditate on what the Holy Spirit has said about the world and life to come and we are ready to make such information intensely personal, we will have something to share—and not until.

8 & 9. “But I say, *Walk by the Spirit*, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 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.” Galatians 5:16,17

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean?

It would seem that in these verses we have a summing up of much that has been said before. Paul’s emphatic recommendation is that we allow the Holy Spirit to control our total outlook on life. The use of the expression “*Walk by the Spirit*” calls up the image of a pathway. He is saying—every day make it your aim not to go anywhere without the direction of the Holy Spirit. We do not believe Paul is suggesting direct intuitive guidance for every decision of life, but a thorough understanding of the basic principles given by the Holy Spirit as a monitor for daily conduct. It would be much easier to believe that we are called upon to learn the principles of life given by the Spirit and are then left free to apply them to every situation, than to imagine that the Holy Spirit would make all the decisions for us. This does not minimize our responsibility, nor does it discount the interest the Holy Spirit has in our lives; however when I try to project myself back to the first century, into the community of believers in Galatia I get a completely different view of this text. We refer to the often forgotten fact that the persons who are mentioned in the New Testament *did not* themselves have a copy of this precious Spirit inspired book. They did have the Holy Spirit, but they *did not* have the Spirit’s book. They did have inspired teachers and prophets and various other gifts or abilities of the Holy Spirit which were distributed among their membership. Let us suppose there were a few thousand Christians in Galatia—to each one of them this letter is addressed. Each one of them is involved in this admonition; “Walk by the Spirit.” How did Paul imagine this injunction was to be implemented? i.e. just how were these Christians in Galatia to Walk by the Spirit? Two or three possibilities occurred to us: (1) each one was given a special “anointing” from the Spirit which enabled them by inner promptings from the Holy Spirit to know what to say or do in any questionable position. The prompting would take the form of a sense of approval given by the Holy Spirit to the human conscience (Or a disapproval if a wrong choice was about to be made). (2) They could listen to the teachers and prophets as often as possible. They would record what they could not remember, ask questions about what they did not understand. In this way they could continue steadfastly in the prophets and teachers’ doctrine. A daily earnest assimilation of this inspired teaching would establish the distinctions between the will of the flesh and the will of the Holy Spirit. In such a manner they could choose to “Walk by the Spirit.” (3) Every, one has a higher nature and a lower nature; all men know the difference. Paul is simply asking the Galatians to choose to walk by the call of their higher nature and not stoop to fulfill the desires of their lower self. We would like to affirm the first of these choices but experience and Bible study do not support such a position. It is not by our higher nature we are to be directed, but by the guidance of a very real Divine Person who is the Holy Spirit. Please read again very carefully the second explanation.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Why are we so reluctant to study the Word of the Holy Spirit? The answer is in the meaning of the term “flesh.” The option or alternate of Walking by the Spirit is to walk by the flesh or to fulfill the lust

of the flesh. William Barclay has put us all in debt to him for his splendid book entitled *FLESH AND SPIRIT*. We quote with permission from Abingdon Press from pp. 21,22.

We want to emphasize again that there is no way to remain neutral. If we are not actively involved in walking by the Spirit we will be walking by the flesh and fulfilling the desires thereof.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We are sharing our attitudes with others every day. If we have our minds set upon the things of the flesh it will be reflected in our demeanor. If we have set our mind upon the things that are above it also will be evident in our attitudes. Our speech will be a barometer of our mind-set. We share conversation with others every day. How often does it take the form of a discussion of “the things of the Spirit” or how often do we discuss “the things of the flesh.”

Please refer to VOLUME THREE pp. 14-40 for a discussion of walking by the Spirit versus walking by the flesh.

10. “But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Galatians 5:18

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?*

Please notice that these words are addressed to *all* the Christians in Galatia. Paul expects *all* members of the body of Christ to receive this word. *All* can be and should be led by the Spirit. No pre-requisite or pre-conditioning is given. *Anyone* who chooses to receive it can follow the instructions of the apostle and be led by the Holy Spirit.

The verb action here is a continuing act. It is better translated “are being led.” This is not a one time leading for a crisis or a special illumination for an insolvable one time problem, but a way of life which will prepare us to meet all circumstances, large or small.

We must view this text as we did the previous two verses. Indeed this is but the other side of the same coin. The subject is the direction or guidance of the Holy Spirit. From man’s viewpoint he must choose to walk by the Spirit’s directions and desires and not by the desires and directions of the flesh. From God’s point-of-view, when man thus chooses to walk by the Spirit he is being led by the Spirit. Our largest problem is our willingness to be led by the Spirit. We know that if we meditate on His Word; if we lift our hearts up to Him in praise and prayer we will in these acts and attitudes be strongly influenced to think His thoughts and will His will. But so often we *will not* do it. Why? Because it is easier to yield to the flesh. It takes moral effort to walk by the Spirit: to choose to be led by the Spirit requires choice. We have for years and years lived in the flesh and have formed habits of thought that indulge the flesh. “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God.” If we do not aggressively pursue the way of the Spirit we will inevitably be living according to the flesh; *we do not have an option*. But those who do thus choose to “Walk by the Spirit” or to be “led by the Spirit (when we choose to walk we will be led) can “breathe the exhilarating and invigorating air of moral and spiritual freedom. Being no longer under law’s bondage they obey God’s precepts with a gladness of heart”.* (Hendricksen)

C. *What Does I/ Mean To Me?*

I look forward to this question because it always jars me out of the academic and speaks to my own response. The question is “what will *you* do about being led by the Holy Spirit?” I must answer for myself regardless of the etymological or contextual meaning of the words. My love for and my obedience to my Lord is the catalyst for my commitment to walk and be led by the Other Comforter. It is because

He is worthy of all my mind, all my will, all my emotions that I am ready to take His yoke upon me and learn of Him. I *want* the Other Jesus in me to be my guide. I am *eager* to find His will for my whole life as revealed in His Word. I am *anxious* to understand what He wants because I know it will be the very best for me. His way is light and life and joy and peace. Why shouldn't I be jealous to search it out and make it mine?

At the same time I must develop a positive hatred, loathing and abhorrence of the works of the flesh. I must develop a revulsion of reaction to the offers of Satan through the flesh. We recommend highly Barclay's work on *FLESH AND SPIRIT* for a careful, very helpful definition of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. (Published by Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tenn.)

D. How Can I Share It?

As we have said so many times before, we *will* share what we are as well as what we have. Our fleshly, indulgent sensual attitude toward life will be shared by all who meet us and know us. Or we can share the tender, yielded compassionate spirit of our Lord. Our total outlook on life is what is shared more often and more significantly than anything else. How much of every day is a walk by the Spirit? In what areas of my day have I been led by the Holy Spirit? Only by an intentional, regular and yielding up my will to Him can I share in who I am the One who lives in me.

11. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who be-long to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Galatians 5:22-24

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean? C. How Does It Relate To Me. D. How Can I Share It?

We have written one hundred and fourteen pages on this scripture in VOLUME TWO (pp. 45-159). We do ask the reader to give careful thought to what has been written (and quoted) in these pages. Volume Two was written nine years ago. In the ensuing years some new thoughts have come to me concerning the fruit of the Spirit. I want to share these with you. Perhaps the best we can offer here in addition to what we have already said is a clear definition of terms. Such as: (1) *What does the word "fruit" mean as here used?* (2) *Why is it in the singular case?* (3) *What is our responsibility in the production of the fruit?* In answer to the first questions we can find no clearer definition than that given by C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine in their commentary on Galatians. "V.22 'But the fruit'—Karpos, which occurs frequently in N.T. in its natural sense of that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism, Matt. 13:8, and also, in a derived sense, of the result, in the spiritual and moral sphere, of the energy of the Holy Spirit operating in those who through faith are brought into living union with Christ, John 15:4,5. 'Fruit' is thus the outward expression of power working inwardly, and so in itself beyond observation, the character of the fruit giving evidence of the character of the power that produces it, Matt. 7:16. As lust manifests itself in works, the restless and disorderly activities of the flesh, or principle of evil, in man, so the Spirit manifests His presence in His 'peaceable,' Heb. 12:11, and orderly fruit."* p. 289.

These writers are equally lucid on the answer to the second question. "The singular form, 'fruit,' is used here perhaps to suggest the unity and harmony of the character of the Lord Jesus which is to be reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit, in contrast with the discordant and often mutually antagonistic 'works of the flesh.' In Christ actually, and in the Christian potentially, the fruit of the Spirit is harmonious, the various elements being mutually consistent, and each encouraging and enhancing the rest in happy coordination and cooperation in that 'new man'."* In answer to the third question we must refer you to pages 183 thru 192 in POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT VOL. II. Please

read this article by Ruth Paxson.” entitled WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LIKE CHRIST.

This section speaks so very poignantly to all of us.

12. “If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk” Galatians 5:25

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?*

We owe our hope of eternal life to the Holy Spirit. He has given us His life-giving seed, the Word of God. He has begotten us again through this incorruptible seed. He has “renewed us” or made us “new creatures” in Christ Jesus. The source of our whole Christian life is the Holy Spirit. If we are to live under His directions now, i.e. if He is to direct our life now, it will be because we read or hear His Word and heed it. The Holy Spirit is the originator and sustainer of the life of the man in Christ.” (*ibid*) If we live at all it is because we sense His presence within us and read His Word before us.

This is the second time Paul asks the Galatians to “walk by the Spirit” (Cf. vs. 16). However two different words are used. The word in vs. 16 is *peripateite* and has reference to general conduct, i.e. in the total activities of daily life let the Holy Spirit give you directions or principles for living. The word in vs. 25 is *stoichomen* and suggests the figure of walking in a row or a straight line. From these two words and their use we could say with *Vine and Hogg*, “He who walks by the Spirit in his private life is the man who, by the same Spirit, keeps step with his brethren.” The obvious way to uniformity of step is that each should keep step with the Leader of all, that is with Christ.”

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This one verse summarizes in a most meaningful manner the total influence of the Holy Spirit in my life. I am to live by Him and walk under His directions both privately and publicly. This I do indeed want to happen, but I am very much aware that such life and direction can not happen without my willing co-operation. My life has no meaning apart from the explanation given in the Word of the Spirit called the Holy Bible. I have found the delight of forgiveness, peace, hope when I have personally appropriated the Spirit’s Words to my life. The option or alternatives offer nothing. Praise God, let me live and walk by the Spirit; this is life with joy!

D. How Can I Share It?

I have shared my own subjective response to the truth of the text in the above comments. We could point out that a failure to take an interest in the Christ-directed unity of Christians could indicate that there was never life from the Spirit. If we have no interest in walking together as we both follow our commander it might be because we have no life in us from the Holy Spirit. This is a serious thought to share, “but let any man examine himself” and then will he know. “If a man fails to bear the fruit of the Spirit in the public assembly there is little hope that he will do so among them that are without. If he cannot love the brethren how will he show love in the world.” (Hogg and Vine) He is called upon to do both. Read II Peter 1:7.

13. “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken (trapped) in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a Spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Galatians 6:1

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean?

We like the thought suggested in the use of the word “trapped” instead of “overtaken.” Satan knows

us better than we know ourselves, and he can anticipate our actions and attitudes. He lays a snare for us and before we can extricate ourselves we are “trapped” or caught! “The Modern Greek version runs, ‘even if a man, through lack of circumspection, should fall into any sin.’ (Hogg, Vine) “One might suddenly, through weakness, fall into transgression or unintentionally fall out of step with the Spirit. (Johnson)

The use of the term “*spiritual*” is our particular interest here. . . . those members of the churches who are more Consistent in following the promptings of the Spirit (5:16; 18:25) should in the spirit of gentleness or meekness (cf. 5:23) restore the one who committed the trespass. This word *restore* means *to mend*, to bring something or someone back to its or his former position or wholeness or soundness.”* (Hendricksen)

C. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

Are we “the Spiritual” or are we in need of restoration. From what we have learned earlier in this letter it would appear that the choice is ours. We *can* choose to be Spiritually Minded. We *can* choose to keep in step with those who are walking to the beat of the drums of the Spirit. We *can* choose to “set our minds upon the things that are above.” We *can* choose to “reckon ourselves crucified together with Christ.” We can choose “to walk in newness of life.” If we live by the flesh it is also because we made our choice to do so.

But even when we have thus decided to walk and live by the Spirit, it is yet necessary to be reminded that our service to one who has been overcome should be given in the right attitude. *We are responsible for our attitudes*. It is not the work of the Holy Spirit to move our will to obey; this is our choice. The Holy Spirit has made known His desires in permanent written form. He has also taken up residence within our bodies. He now awaits our response to what He has said to us. Will we be kind and compassionate as we attempt to restore our ensnared brother? If so the Holy Spirit will agree with (to?) our conscience (Romans 9:1,2) that we have chosen wisely. If not He will be *grieved* and quelched and this too will be felt in our conscience, i.e. if our conscience has been properly educated by the Words of the Spirit.

D. HOW CAN I SHARE IT?

This is indeed what we *do* share with others. Our total demeanor, our whole attitude comes across clearly to other people. If we are rude or boastful or arrogant it will be known. If we are gentle and meek it too will be evident. In the practical application of the Spirit’s indwelling how do we measure up?

14. “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap life eternal.” Galatians 6:7,8

A. What Does It Say?

This is at once a warning and a summing up of the two ways of life. From the harvest field of “the flesh” we can confidently expect a harvest of corruption. From the Spirit’s harvest field we can expect eternal life.

The terms “flesh” and “spirit” are here held in contrast as the objects or goals of men. They are used here to describe the natures of men. The total impression received from one life is “flesh.” The total impression from the other is “Spirit.” The term “Spirit” does not then describe Him but what He does.

B. *WHAT DOES IT MEAN?*

“To sow to the flesh does not necessarily mean to do gross, immoral things, though these would be included in the larger sense of the word; there is nothing in the context, however, to show that it does so here. But if the believer considers only material needs, the needs of the body, devoting his substance solely to the supply of these, then, since the material is temporal, and the body in its present condition must pass away (“meats for the belly and belly for meats; but God shall bring to naught both it and them” I Cor. 6:13), this means harvest ends with this world. But if, taught by the Spirit in the Scriptures, he takes the larger, and the true view of life, and uses his substance to encourage that ministry of the word which God has made necessary to the maintenance and development of the life of his spirit, then, since the spirit is eternal, this man’s harvest will extend into the region of “life which is life indeed.” I Tim. 6:19, and will be reaped in eternity as well as time.⁶⁴ (*Hogg and Vine* pp. 325, 326)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

If there is one text that were chosen to describe the life in America it would be this one. A very large part of America’s sowing to the flesh and even now the harvest of corruption is being reaped. Corruption in the home, in industry, and in government are all too evident indications that many men have spent their whole life times sowing to the desires of the body. We can ignore the principle or haughtily reject it, but the laws of God are immutable and someday there will be a “pay day.”

What has been the pattern of my life? Yea, what has been the pattern of this past twenty-four hours? Have I spent God’s time and my energy in a pursuit of that which passes with the using? Does my life really consist in *things* or in our Lord?

⁶⁴ Hogg & Vine, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Fincastle, Scripture Truth.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EPHESIANS

THERE ARE 14 REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EPHESIANS

1, 2. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with *every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly places in Christ. . . . in whom you also, having listened to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, and having also believed in him *you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*, who is the first installment of our inheritance.” Ephesians 1:3, 13, 14.

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

The reference to “spiritual blessings” in verse three does not refer directly to the Holy Spirit; these blessings proceed from God our Father who is Himself Spirit (Jn. 4:24). However, these heavenly blessings would never be ours without the implementation of the Holy Spirit; i.e., we would never know of them at all without the Holy Spirit’s revelation to the writers who described them for us in words and preached them among men. Neither would any of these blessings find fulfillment in us without the Spirit’s presence in our hearts (3:16). All the spiritual blessings from the Father we have via the Holy Spirit. However, the two direct references to the Holy Spirit occur in verses 13 and 14. We sustain ‘two relationships with Him: (1) *He is our seal*; (2) *He is the first installment of our inheritance*. It is with these two thoughts we are particularly concerned. We have commented on the subject of the Holy Spirit as a seal. (See comments on II Cor. 1:21, 22.) However, we never tire of contemplating His relationship with us. There is some evidence to indicate that the seals of biblical times were sometimes fastened on to the object being sealed as well as at other times being stamped on or into the object. The Holy Spirit as a separate Divine Person lives in our bodies, and yet He as a person does affect our personalities.

There were three reasons for sealing: (1) to declare authenticity or genuineness. “Then the King’s secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded was written to the King’s satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the princes of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language; it was written in the name of King Ahasuerus *and sealed with the King’s ring*.” (Esther 3:12) Compare I Corinthians 9:2 where the Corinthians are figuratively described as the seal of the genuineness of Paul’s apostleship. We are glad that God can see the seal of our sonship; others can only observe the fruit of our sealing. (2) A seal declared to all the ownership of that which was sealed. “*Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm*; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave.” (Song of Solomon 8:6) In this beautiful verse we can hear the soft voice of the Spirit asking us to allow Him to seal our minds, wills and emotions (i.e., our hearts) with His word and presence; if we do, He will also control our hands and feet. (3) A seal was used to protect. “And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.” (Rev. 5:1) Compare Matthew 27:66 where the tomb was sealed to protect it against robbery. How we are comforted in the thought that “greater is He who is within us than he who is within the world.” (I Jn. 4:4) We can claim His protection against all the host of wickedness. He has also given us the whole armor of God that we might be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. (Eph. 6:10-18)

Please notice that we were given this wonderful seal when we became Christians. The text says, “having listened to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, and *having believed in him you were sealed* with the promised Holy Spirit.” If God promised us the Holy Spirit, did He keep His promise? *We know He did!* If so, then we are His and He is ours, and we confidently rest in His ownership and under His protection.

The Holy Spirit is also the first installment on our inheritance, which is the world and life to come. Read Genesis 38:12-19 for a good example of the use of a *pledge* or *guarantee*. We are not unaware of an alternate interpretation in which we as Christians are considered God's pledge, but we cannot agree with its conclusions. For those who wish to pursue this further, we refer you to our bibliography.

We like so very much the thought that God has been so very considerate that He has given us a little bit of heaven right here and right now in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the pledge that God will keep His promise, and the joys of the world to come will indeed be ours. Hodge says: "Those influences of the Spirit which believers now enjoy are at once a prelibation or antepast of future blessedness, the same in kind though immeasurably less in degree; and a pledge of the certain enjoyment of that blessedness. Just as the first fruits were a part of the harvest, and an earnest of its ingathering, it is because the Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance, that his indwelling is a seal. It assures those in whom he dwells of their salvation, and renders that salvation certain." (p. 65)

D. *How Can I Share It?*

How can I say to someone else, "I am sealed with the Holy Spirit." How can I explain to anyone that God has given me the first installment of heaven in the person of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps the very best I can do is to ask such persons, if they are interested, to read the plain statements in these verses and claim them for their own. If such people have no interest in these matters of the Spirit, we can at least reflect to them the wonder and joy we have in the acceptance of our position and possession. The topic of our conversation is so often any other subject than the sealing of the Spirit. Let's become so aware of Him that we will want to discuss our down payment on heaven. This seal and this pledge is Christ in us, our only hope of glory. (Col. 1:21) When He is properly shared, our Lord will be exalted and better known by all.

F. B. Meyer wrote a little book called *EPHESIANS –Key Words of the Inner Life*. It was reprinted in 1968 by the Christian Literature Crusade. He has some positively poignant words on 1:14; we cannot resist sharing them with you. "*He is the Seal and Earnest of our Inheritance.*"

"Upon the yielded soul the blessed Spirit descends, bearing with Him the likeness of Jesus, which He imprints and fixes, as a stamp will leave its die upon the softened wax. Only melted gold is minted; only moistened clay is moulded; only softened wax receives the die; only broken and contrite hearts can take and keep the impress of heaven. If that is thy condition, wait beneath the pressure of the Holy Spirit; He shall leave the image of Jesus upon thee, and change thee into his likeness, from glory to glory. (II Cor. 3:18)

"This gracious operation is God's *seal* of authentication. It is as though by an act that could not be mistaken, He said: This soul is mine—redeemed and appropriated for my own possession; and it shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels. We place our seal on that which is unmistakably our own, and deem to be of value; so the likeness of Jesus wrought on us by the Spirit is the sign that God counts us his, and reckons us to be his peculiar treasure.

"It is also the *earnest of our inheritance*. The love, and joy, and peace, which are wrought in us by the Blessed Spirit, are fragrant with the scent and beautiful with the hues of Paradise. They are the grapes of Eschol; the peaches and pomegranates of the Homeland; the first notes of angelic symphonies; the first flowers of the everlasting spring; the herald rays of a morning that shall rise to the meridian glory of a nightless day. We know that there is a land of pure delight, because we have tasted its fruits; just as Columbus knew that he was drawing near land, when the land-birds alighted on his ship, and the drift of the waves told of human habitations. Nay, more: we know, as we experience the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, the quality, though not the infinite measure of the blessedness of heaven. The Spirit's work

is not only the pledge; it is the specimen of our inheritance.”

3. 4. “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you *a spirit of wisdom and revelation* in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and *what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe*, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.”
Ephesians 1:17-20

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does It Mean To Me?* D. *How Can I Share It?*

In answering these questions we need to be convinced that there is in verse 17 a reference to the Holy Spirit. We have appreciated so very much the splendid work William Hendriksen has done in his commentary on Ephesians. He offers a very convincing argument that there is indeed in verse 17 a reference to the Holy Spirit. He says: “The apostle asks that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation be given to the Ephesians. Most of the translations have ‘spirit’ instead of ‘Spirit’ (the Holy Spirit). In favor of *Spirit*, however, are the following arguments:

“(1) Paul writes .. “of *revelation*” We do not generally associate revelation with the purely human spirit or state of mind.

“(2) As to “of *wisdom*” in Isa. 11:2 this is mentioned as the first of several gifts imparted by the Spirit of Jehovah.

“(3) Such expressions as ‘Spirit of truth’ (John 15:26) and ‘Spirit of adoption’ (Rom. 8:15) also refer to the Holy Spirit.

“(4) Ephesians abounds with references to the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Since the Comforter figured so prominently in this epistle, we may well believe that also in the present instance Paul had him in mind.

“(5) It is rather characteristic of Paul that, having made mention of God the Father and Christ the Son—and both have already been mentioned here in 1:16—he then also refers to the Spirit.. Cf. Rom. 8:15-17; II Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:3-14; 3:14-17; 4:4-6; 5-18-21.⁶⁵

“(6) When the Father gives enlightened *eyes*, does he not do so through the Holy Spirit? See John 3:3, 5. Men cannot *see* the Kingdom of God, *to enter it*, except through the Spirit. Cf. Eph. 5:8; I John 1:7. A question may occur, however, in this connection. It may be asked, ‘But how is it possible that Paul prayed that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation *he given* to those who already possessed that Spirit; in fact according to verse 13, had been sealed by him?’ One cannot escape this difficulty by reading ‘spirit’ (state of mind) instead of Spirit (Holy Spirit). For even then the question would occur: ‘How can the apostle ask that a spirit of wisdom *in the clear knowledge of him* [that is, of God] *be give*:: to those who already knew him so well that they had reposed their trust in him?’ (verse 13). However, this difficulty confronts us not only here in Ephesians, but throughout Paul’s epistles. To give but two examples: contrast Col. 1:4 with 3:13; I Thess. 1:3; 3:13 with 5:15. If Paul could say the one how could he say the other also.

⁶⁵ “Having recently made a contextual study and tabulation of every New Testament occurrence of Tongues, I have arrived at the conclusion that one should not rely too heavily on the rule. When the article is used the reference is to the Holy Spirit: when omitted, the reference is to an operation, influence, or gift of the Spirit. Each occurrence should be studied in the light of its own immediate context.”

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“The answer is provided by Paul himself. It amounts to this: what is already present must *be strengthened*. The Holy Spirit is present, to be sure, but the apostle prays that the Ephesians ‘may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man’ (3:16). The work begun in the heart must ‘be carried on toward completion’ (Phil. 1:6). Love and all the other graces must ‘abound more and more’ (Phil. 1:9; cf. I Thess. 3:12: 4:10). It is clear, therefore, that Paul’s prayer here in Eph. 1:15-23, including therefore also verse 17, is entirely consistent with what he had solemnly declared in verses 3-14. In fact, the connection between verses 15 and 16, on the one hand, and 17ff., on the other, shows that it was exactly because so many spiritual gifts had been received that the apostle takes courage to ask for even more.” (p. 96-98)

We shall now attempt to answer all four questions. We are not concerned about the space or the time involved in this study. It is too important. We simply must know as best we can what is said here by the Holy Spirit through the apostle.

Why is the continuing action verb here used of Paul’s request; i.e., why does he keep on asking or praying? The obvious answer is that since the need is continuous, the request is likewise. Please consider carefully the need here described: that the Holy Spirit would give to the Ephesian Christians wisdom and revelation for the purpose of experientially knowing God, and that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened for the purpose of knowing (experientially): (1) the hope to which God called them; (2) the riches of His glorious inheritance in (for) the saints; (3) the incomparable great power for us who believe. This power is the same power God used in raising Christ Jesus from the dead. (Cf. Rom. 8:9-11)

When we have wisdom and revelation, we will know God better. How so? I do not know how some of our readers respond to this study. *I delight in it!* It is a positive joy to consider every facet of this beautiful jewel. In answer to this second aspect of this question we want to paraphrase the answer we found in the writings of Thomas Goodwin in *An Exposition of Ephesians*, Vol. 1, p. 289ff. He says: “Now you will say, What is *meant* by wisdom? And what is meant by *revelation*? And why is revelation added to wisdom? By wisdom, as I have shown in the eighth verse (‘according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence .’) *here as in verse eight is meant a principle of faith*; and so we take it here (Cf. Jas. 1:5). Now to discuss fully what is meant by the term *revelation*: it is not *extraordinary revelation* as here used. This is not the *revelation* spoken of in Galatians 1:12 (‘For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me *through revelation*., of Jesus Christ.’). In Galatians Paul says he knew the gospel by revelation; it is not such a revelation he here has in mind, although there are similarities in the two, for our Lord said of Christians ‘they all shall be taught of God’ (Jn. 6:45). The reason we relate this type of revelation to an understanding of the spoken and written word of God is that it is that which Paul would have *all* the Ephesian Christians he wrote to grow in and have bestowed upon them. For this reason we cannot think that the direct intuitive communication of the mind of God to the mind of man is involved in this text. Paul plainly said elsewhere that ‘all were not prophets’ (I Cor. 12:29). Whatever is meant or involved in the term ‘revelation’ as here used, it is to be the possession of all Christians.”

Consider three characteristics of this revelation: (1) It was to be given only to certain persons—Christians. “Thou has hid these things from the wise, and has revealed them unto babes.” (Matt. 11:25) Without the faith and willingness of a child we cannot or will not accept what God is saying to us in His word. At the same time we could know nothing of Him or His will for our lives if He had not revealed them. (2) This wisdom and revelation continually grows. It is like a man in semi-darkness examining a precious jewel; it is indeed a thing of beauty and a joy to behold. But let more light in and the same jewel shines forth with new facets of beauty. It is as new in more light as if he had never seen it before. So it is with the word of God and our continuing increase of appreciation for its depth and value. Such appreciation is here called wisdom and revelation. Thus we are given wisdom in answer to prayer (Jas. 1:5), and the consequence of such wisdom as it is applied to the word is the *revelation* of which we here

speak. (3) Please notice that the terms “wisdom” and “revelation” are merged in the term “knowledge.” Read the text again: “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation *in the knowledge of Him.*” When we have “the knowledge of Him,” we shall also *have wisdom and revelation.* We have pointed out earlier that this knowledge is to be experiential; i.e., it is a *communion* or *fellowship* with God. We are here discussing the vastly important subject of meditation upon His word. We could call this “abiding in His word.”

There are two progressive steps in this communion with God through a meditation upon His word. They are (1) *by the way of wisdom.* Wisdom, as we have observed before, is the best use of knowledge. Thus in this step we arrange before us all the truths of God as revealed in His word. We arrange them in proper relation to each other. We work upon them by meditation. We observe their excellencies in this area and in that. From this effort there arises in our heart admiration and praise to the giver of such truth or knowledge; we delight ourselves in His law. This is the ordinary way of communion with God; this is a rational laying of the truths of God together that we might see the harmonizing of those thoughts with another. We are not minimizing this method; we are recommending it! But there is another way of communion with or knowledge from Him. (2) Perhaps this second method is a consequence of the first. It happens in this order: perhaps in a time of prayer, all of a sudden a thought comes into your mind concerning His word as a beam of light from heaven. Many broken thoughts have been put together; there is a contraction of many facets of light, and we seem to know more of God and His word in a quarter of an hour than we learned in the past year. Or perhaps we are reading a passage we have read many times before. As we pause in our reading, there all-at-once occurs to us a sequence of thought we never had before.. We wonder and revel in His illumination of a dark problem in our lives. The apostle prayed that both methods of communion would be perfected in the Christians in Ephesus. We must remind ourselves of the limitations of the first method among the Ephesians, inasmuch as the written word was not available to them to the same extent it is for us. Their continuance in the word was, to a large extent, from the spoken word of God’s many prophets among them. Even the elders must be directly taught of God through the prophets and/or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless the principle carries.

Perhaps we can illustrate the principle after this fashion: the ordinary course of the Christian can be compared to walking in the light of the day time. Whether the day be dark and cloudy or not, he has light enough to go about his business; though he does not see the sun, he yet knows it is shining. So there is an ordinary standing light of faith in which we live and move and do our work. But suppose now upon a cloudy day, all of a sudden a cloud should break and a beam –yea, a shaft of light shine down and let the sun shine through. Such has happened to many of us in the experience of walking in the light of His word; how we praise Him both for the wisdom or light to walk day by day and also for the special application of the truth to our daily life in the areas of our needs!

Sometimes we pray to God, and it would seem there is a curtain between us and God. We know He is behind the curtain; we know He hears and accepts our prayers, yet there is a barrier. But at another time we go to prayer, and all the windows of heaven are opened; all the curtains of access are drawn back. This is revelation as opposed to wisdom. Both are good; both are needed.

Another application of this principle can be found in John 14:2 1. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.” This is a promise made not only to the apostles but to all believers. It is for all who will keep His commandments. The generic principle relates to every believer. Notice carefully what is here involved: it is not enough to know His will—to have it rationally before us in the written or spoken word. We must incorporate His word into our lives and thus obey Him. When we do this, something will happen; a promise has been made which will be kept. Our Lord is saying, “He that loves Me in this way, I will love him in a more special nearness; him will my Father love, and we

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will take him to ourselves to express more love to him.” And how will this happen? Jesus said, “I will manifest myself unto him.”

Here then is some further manifestation than what was had before such obedience. Yet there was faith before; we loved God before. But the promise here is to him that hath the commandments and keepeth them; it is to the one that loveth God. Yet there will be some further expression of love, and that by some special manifestation of God Himself and of our Lord to man’s soul. This is the reward for our having the commandments written upon our hearts and kept in our lives. Get the promise and claim it! “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them: I will love him and manifest myself unto him.” The word “manifest” is a key word here; it means “I will set myself in open light to him” (Beza). Please read the twenty-third verse of John 14: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.” Please mark carefully the expression “we will come,” almost as if they had never come before, so does the expression imply. We have read the words of many martyrs who in their dying moments cried out, “He is come! He is come!” This is a promise of a manifestation in such a manner as has not been given before. Isn’t this the deepest meaning of Revelation 3:20? “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Please remember these words were written to Christians at Laodicea! “I will come” is a manifestation of the presence of the Lord in the sudden manner of a great King who has sent His sumptuous provisions ahead and then all unexpectedly knocks to bring in His food and drink to share with us and we with Him.

The one contingency is a whole-hearted, total surrender of our wills to His will; only when we are thus obedient will He come and set Himself in open light before us. Only then will He come through the door of our heart and sit at our table to nourish our famished souls!

We have extended this discussion far beyond the bounds of our usual length, but we must observe one more thought on this text. We refer you to verses 18 through 20, Ephesians the first chapter: “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” We have read and thought much on these verses as an independent thought or a connected thought; i.e., is Paul praying for something different and in addition to his desire for wisdom and revelation, or are we to use these verses (18-20) to explain the preceding two verses. We much prefer this latter thought. We would then say, “That he may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him and (as a consequence) the eyes of your understanding (will be) being enlightened, etc.”; i.e., as a result of wisdom and revelation, there is the enlightening of the eyes of our heart (or understanding). It is an intriguing thought that our heart has eyes! And even more so to discover these eyes do not always function as well as they might. Why is this? If the reader has been careful in the study of the two preceding verses, he should be able to answer this question. It is simply that we obtain wisdom by the process of a careful study of all God has said on any subject, coupled with believing prayer (Jas. 1:5). Revelations are special insights into the application of His word out of the context of the discipline required for obtaining such wisdom and revelation (Such is also called “the knowledge of Him” or “communion with Him.”). So it is that even our hearts can and do have eyes to see with, and they see not. We would like very much to comment upon what the enlightened eyes see; i.e., (1) the hope for which He called you; (2) the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints; (3) the surpassing greatness of his power with respect to us who believe. But we must confine ourselves to the direct work of the Holy Spirit. The third reality mentioned here would surely include the presence of the Holy Spirit, but we have discussed this subject several times before.

How very, very much is this prayer of Paul needed in the church today! Oh, how we need the Holy

Spirit's wisdom and revelation realized as communion or intimate knowledge of God! How our darkened, dull eyes need to be opened and enlightened! We praise God for the opportunity of study and for a willingness to be enlightened. So much of our consideration of the words of the Spirit is either superficial or second-hand. We need a direct personal search of the New Testament—a time of meditation, and we can confidently expect an enlightenment.

5. “for through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” Ephesians 2: 1 8

What Does it Say? B. What Does it Mean?

We quote from William Hendriksen in his commentary on Ephesians, page 137, for an answer to the first question. “It is through Christ, through him alone—that is, through the shedding of his *blood* (verse 13), the sacrifice of his *flesh* (verse 15), the curse borne by him on the *cross* (verse 16)—that access to the Father was made possible and real. There was and there is no other way. See 3:12; John 3:16-18; 10:9; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:1, 2 (note same sequence of *peace* and *access* there as here in Eph. 2:17, 18; 5:10; Heb. 4:14-16; Rev. 7:14. It was he who supplied the *objective* basis apart from which access would have been impossible. The word *access* occurs only here and in 3:12 and Rom. 5:2. It follows from 3:12 that it may be defined as *freedom of approach to the Father, in the confidence that we Jew and Gentile, have found favor with him*. Subjectively speaking, it is ‘in’ or ‘by means of’ the Spirit that man has access to the Father. Though there are those who reject the common view that the reference is here to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, this departure from the usual interpretation is not well grounded. Here in 2:18, as well as so often in Ephesians (1:3—14; 1:17; 3:14—17; 4:4—6; 5:18—20), there is a clear confession of the doctrine of the Trinity. Besides, elsewhere, too, confident approach to the Father is associated with the indwelling and enabling power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21, 22; Rom. 8:15, 16, Rev. 22:17).”

As to what is meant in the little phrase “access in one Spirit to the Father,” we refer you to Charles Hodge in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, pages 145-147.

...“this access to the Father is by the Spirit. The inward change by which we are enabled to believe in Christ, the feelings of desire, reverence, filial confidence which are essential to our communion with God, are the fruits of the Spirit. Hence we are said to be drawn or led by the Spirit, and the Spirit also as well as Christ is called our advocate, or paraclete; and God, it is said, because we are sons, hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, Gal. 4, 6. The words “by *one spirit*”, are not to be understood as expressing the inward concord or fellowship of the Jews and Gentiles in drawing near to God, nor simply that we are influenced by a common spirit of life, but the words are to be understood of the Holy Ghost.—1. Because the word [used here] without as well as with the article so generally refers to the Spirit in the New Testament. 2. Because the obvious reference to the Trinity in the passage, (‘to the Father, through Christ, by the Spirit,’) demands this interpretation. And 3. Because the same office is elsewhere characteristically referred to the Spirit. The other interpretations are included in this. If Jews and Gentiles are led by the Spirit to draw near to God, it follows that they come with one heart; and are animated by one principle of life. The preposition [*en,*] may be taken instrumentally, and rendered *by*, as in the following verse. Or it may mean *in communion with*. The Holy Ghost is designated here as *one Spirit*, in opposition to the two classes, Jews and Gentiles. Both have access by one and the same Spirit. The two, therefore, are not only one body as stated in verse 16, but they are inhabited and controlled by one Spirit. Thus in I Cor. 12, 11, ‘one and the self-same Spirit,’ is said to divide to every man severally as he wills; and in verse 12, it is, ‘By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.’ Thus has the divine purpose of which the apostle spoke in the first chapter—his purpose to unite all his people in one harmonious body—been consummated. Christ by his cross has reconciled them, both Jews and Gentiles, unto God; the distinction between the two classes is abolished; united in one body, filled and guided by one Spirit, they draw near to God as his common children.”

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This means that my entrance into the presence of God is through our Lord but *by* or *in* the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has supplied to me His word which has told me all I know about our Lord. All I know about God I have learned from the words of the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful cooperation by the Three-In-One to bring salvation to a sinner like me. We like the beautiful words of Francis Foulkes in the *Tyndale' New Testament Commentary on Ephesians* from pages 84 and 85.

“Then further, the apostle says, *through him*, Christ Jesus, we have *access unto the Father*. *Access* is probably the best translation of *Prosagoge*, though it could be ‘introduction.’ In oriental courts there was a *Prosagoges* who brought a person into the presence of the king. The thought could be of Christ as the *Prosagoges*, but the form of expression in the whole clause suggests rather that by Him there is a way of approach (cf. iii. 12). He is the Door, the Way to the Father (Jn. x. 7, 9, xiv. 6); by Him men, though sinners, because they are reconciled can ‘come boldly unto the throne of grace’ (Heb. iv. 16). But it is added that the *access* is for *both* Jew and Gentile in *one Spirit* (cf. I. Cor. xiii. 13). There is one way for all, one *Spirit* by whose work in their hearts they have assurance that they can come to God as children to a Father (Rom. viii. 1sf.; Gal. iv. 6). The personal Spirit of God is obviously intended here, and the form of the phrase should be noted. As Paul repeatedly used the words ‘in Christ’ in this Epistle, so a number of times he says ‘in the Spirit,’ to emphasize that for the new life of the Christian ‘the Spirit is, as it were, the surrounding, sustaining power’ (Westcott) -

B. How Can I Share It?

F. B. Meyer has again said what we have wanted to say and could not. Hear him: “However diverse the saints are, in national birth or religious customs, they become one in the exercise of true prayer. Because as suppliants they pass into the presence of the Father through the One Mediator; and because their prayers emanate from the same Holy Paraclete.

“There are two Advocates or Paracletes: one is on the throne—Jesus Christ the righteous; the second is in our hearts—the Holy Spirit (I John 2:1; Rom. 8:26). And because He pervades all holy hearts, as the wind the variety of organ-pipes, He makes them one. Men as wide apart as Jew and Gentile have access by one Spirit unto the Father. They are therefore no more strangers, but fellows.

“‘If two of you agree on earth,’ said our Lord. The Greek word is *symphonise*’. A symphony is a consonance or harmony of sounds in which there is perfect agreement. Not necessarily the same notes in different keys, but different notes in the same key. Struck by a master hand, they make delightful music. So when souls are touched by the Holy Spirit, though in many respects they differ, yet they may accord in the same prayer. Peter and Cornelius, Saul of Tarsus and Ananias, though far apart and totally diverse in temperament, respond to each other in perfect harmony. And such accord indicates the purpose of God.”

6. “being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; 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.” Ephesians 2:20-22.

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean? C. What Does It Mean To Me? D. How Can I Share It?

Charles Hodge says: “Christ being the corner stone, every thing depends on union with Him. Therefore the apostle adds, ‘In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.’ Christ is the principle at once of support and of growth. He not only sustains the building, but carried it on to its consummation. Union with him is the sole essential condition of our being parts of that

living temple of which he is the corner stone.

“The words [‘each several building’] must here mean ‘the whole,’ and not ‘every building.’ It would destroy the whole consistency of the figure to represent ‘every congregation,’ as a temple by itself resting on Christ as the corner stone. Christ has but one body, and there is but one temple composed of Jews and Gentiles, in which God dwells by his Spirit.

“All the parts of this temple are ‘fitly framed together,’ Intimate union by faith with Christ is the necessary condition of the increase spoken of immediately afterwards. The building however is not only thus united with the corner stone, but the several parts with one another, so as to constitute a well compacted whole. This union, as appears from the nature of the building, is not external and visible, as a worldly kingdom under one visible head, but spiritual.

““Groweth unto a holy temple, i.e. increases so as to become a holy temple. A temple is a building in which God dwells. Such a temple is holy, as sacred to him. It belongs to him, is consecrated to his use, and can neither be appropriated by any other, nor used for any thing but his service, without profanation. This is true of the church as a whole, and of all its constituent members. The money changers of the world cannot, with impunity, make the church a place of traffic, or employ it in any way to answer their sordid or secular ends. The church does not belong to the state, and cannot lawfully be controlled by it. It is ‘sacred,’ set apart for God. It is his house in which he alone has any authority.

“The words *in the Lord*, at the end of this verse, admit of different constructions. They may be connected with the word *temple* immediately preceding, and be taken as equivalent to the genitive ‘Temple in the Lord,’ for ‘Temple of the Lord.’ But as the word Lord must refer to Christ, and as the temple is the house of God, this explanation produces confusion. They may be connected with the word *holy*, ‘holy in the Lord,’ i.e. holy in virtue of union with the Lord, which gives a very good sense. Or they may be referred to the verb, ‘Grows by,’ or better, ‘in union with the Lord.’ This has in its favour the parallel passage 4,16. The church compacted together in him, grows in him, in virtue of that union, into a holy temple.

“V. 22. What was said of the whole body of believers, is here affirmed of the Ephesian Christians. ‘In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ *Builded together*, may mean either, ‘you together with other believers;’ or, ‘you severally are all united in this building.’ The former appears more consistent with the context. *Habitation of God*, is only an equivalent expression to the phrase ‘holy temple’ of the preceding verse. There seems to be no sufficient reason, for considering that the [habitation] of this verse refers to individual believers, and [holy temple] in the preceding, to the united body. So that the sense were, ‘God, by dwelling in each of you by his Spirit, makes you collectively his temple.’ This confuses the whole figure. The two verses are parallel. The whole building grows to a holy temple. And you Ephesians are builded together with other believers so as to form with them this habitation of God.

“The words ‘in the Spirit,’ at the end of the verse, are variously explained. Some make them qualify adjectively the preceding word. ‘Habitation in the Spirit,’ or ‘Spiritual habitation.’ Others express the sense paraphrastically, thus: ‘Habitation of God in virtue of the indwelling of the Spirit.’ This is in accordance with other passages in which the church is called the temple of God because he dwells therein by the Spirit. The Spirit being a divine person, his presence is the presence of God. Finally, the words may be connected with the verb, and the preposition have an instrumental force. ‘Ye are builded by the Spirit into an habitation of God.’ This is perhaps the best explanation. The church increases in the Lord, v. 21, and is builded by the Spirit, v. 22. It is union with the one, and by the agency of the other this glorious work is carried on.”

7. “which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,” Ephesians 3:5, 6

A. *What Does It Say?*

We made an extensive study of the work of the Holy Spirit in His revelation to the apostles and prophets. (See p. 2ff.) We do want a careful exegesis of this text as it relates to the Holy Spirit. We quote from James MacKnight’s *Apostolical Epistles*, page 330, first his paraphrase and then his comment.

“5. Which mystery in former times was not made known to the Sons of men, in the full, Particular, and clear manner in which it is now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets of Christ, by the inspiration of the Spirit;

“Ver. 5. Which in other generations was not made known, &c.]—That the Gentiles were to be blessed in Abraham and his seed, was made known anciently in the covenant with him. But after what manner they were to be blessed in Abraham’s seed, was not made known, either by Moses or by the prophets. The generality of Jews thought the nations were to be blessed in Abraham’s seed, by their subjection to the law of Moses; an idea they were led to entertain by passages in the prophets, where the reception of the Gentiles into the church of God is foretold, under the images of their ‘coming to the light of the Jews,’ and of their being ‘converted to them’ Isa. lx 3. 5. and of their joining the Israelites in worshipping God, according to the rites of Moses. But none of the Jews imagined that the Gentiles were to be made partakers of the unsearchable riches of the Christ merely by faith, and that the middle wall of partition was to be broken down. The apostle, therefore, had good reason to affirm, that the mystery of Christ was not formerly made known, as it was now revealed to him and to the other holy apostles and prophets of Christ.”

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We have made comment several times on the work of the Holy Spirit in revelation. We do like here the words of Albert Barnes. He says: *By the Spirit*. This proves that those who exercised the office of prophet in the Christian church were inspired. They were persons endowed in this manner for the purpose of imparting to the newly formed churches the doctrines of the Christian system. There is no evidence that this was designed to be a permanent order of men in the church. They were necessary for settling the church on a permanent basis, in the absence of a full written revelation, and when the apostles were away. When the volume of revelation was finished, and the doctrines of the gospel were fully understood, the functions of the office ceased.” (From *Notes on the New Testament—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, p. 56.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Among several comments we could make we must notice that here, as in Ephesians 2:20, apostles and prophets are linked together as the recipients of God’s special directions. The word “holy” as here applied to these persons must not be overlooked. God set these men apart for a particular work. They were holy in the sense of being spokesmen on God’s behalf. Their holiness proceeded from the honor bestowed upon them. Please notice that the message could be understood by the very ordinary ability of each and all of the Ephesians. Paul expected the recipients of his letters to understand them by reading them. There is no thought here of a special illumination of the Holy Spirit. How very careful we should be in our reading of the writings of these holy apostles and prophets. The New Testament was written by four apostles (Matthew, John, Peter, and Paul) and four prophets (Luke, Mark, James, and Jude). In truth

we are reading the words of the Holy Spirit and not mere men. Any attempt to identify a present day preacher as a prophet of God is more than absurd.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We must not miss the revelation given by the Holy Spirit to these apostles and prophets. It is: “that the Gentiles (you and I) are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body (of Christ), and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus (the forgiveness of sin and the Holy Spirit) through the gospel.” (v. 6) 8, 9 ... that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:16-21

We have written an extensive study on Ephesians 3:16-21. We reproduce it here in its entirety to answer the usual four questions.

In what sense does the Holy Spirit dwell in us? We can answer by saying ‘in the same sense that our human spirit lives in us.’ For both are spiritual entities. God describes the human body as the dwelling place for both. ‘Now we know that if *the earthly tent we live in* is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal home in the heaven (II Corinthians 5:1). This speaks of the human spirit living in the human body. The Spirit of God lives in you. (Romans 8:9) The only explanation for the indwelling of both the human spirit and the Holy Spirit in the body of man is the plain statement in the Word of God that such is so. We do not emotionally identify the presence of our human spirit because emotion is an expression of our spirit. Neither should we say we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit because we have emotionally identified His presence within us. The fruit of the presence of the Holy Spirit *is* ‘joy.’ But such joy is only expressed through the human spirit. How could we appreciate joy from the Holy Spirit if it was not communicated to and through our human spirit? Nevertheless we want to emphatically state that the Christian body is the dwelling place for two very real spiritual beings: the human spirit (the image of God) and the Holy Spirit. The one we received at our first birth and the other at our second birth.. We should also say that man’s spirit prior to his new birth was ‘dead in trespasses and sins’ (Ephesians 2:1). The word ‘death’ has never meant annihilation in any form; ‘separation’ is the meaning of death. Therefore when we speak of man’s spirit as being ‘dead,’ we mean because of his participation in sin he has removed himself from God. His center of interest is in self and sin and not in God and righteousness, and in this sense he is ‘dead’ or separated from God.

It is so important to understand that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the human body is no protection against Satan and sin unless we are ready to invite our wonderful unseen guest to direct our life. Such direction is obtained from His Word, but until we are ready to receive His Word in willing, eager obedience all such direction is powerless, i.e., of no personal meaning to us.

A problem facing many believers is their inability to emotionally identify the presence of the Holy Spirit in their bodies. As we observed earlier, we *accept* the presence of our spirits in our bodies and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our bodies because the plain statement of God’s Word says that it is so. When we hold firmly to this persuasion there will be an emotional response! Such response succeeds the persuasion. God operates from *fact* to *faith* to *feeling*, and in this invariable order. This *must be* our acceptance progression or we shall be in utter confusion (to say nothing of frustration). Mark it again: (1) *Fact*. The facts are found in the book called the Holy Bible. (2) *Faith*. Because we accept it as God’s Word and authentic, we believe it. ‘Faith comes by hearing (or reading) the Word of God’ (Romans 10:17). (3) *Feeling*. We begin to emotionally respond to what we believe and our feelings are

commensurate to the content of what we believe. If we believe our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) we feel a sense of holy awe or fear. If we believe ‘God is love’ (I John 4:8) we feel a deep sense of peace and happiness. We are saying that our feelings follow the application of the facts to our life.

Satan wants (and does) reserve this God-given order. He wants us to operate on (1) Feeling, (2) Faith, and (3) Fact. In other words because I feel it, I believe it, and thus it becomes a fact. As an example of Satan’s practice: some unusual inexplicable occurrence takes place. We cannot explain this occurrence; but we emotionally respond to it. Some are repulsed by it; others gladly approve of it. The point is that such an occurrence causes an emotional reaction. The second step is to interpret this inexplicable, emotional, responsive experience. Perhaps those who are involved in the experience will be ready to interpret it for you. Do you believe their report? If you do, it becomes a fact. Or if we interpret this experience as being from God because we cannot explain it, then we have pushed it into the realm of fact. Satan wants us to proceed from *feeling* to ‘I believe it because I feel it’ on to: ‘it is a *fact* because I felt it and believed it! What a dangerous practice! *Begin* with the Word of God, not your feelings. *Believe* the Word of God—not your feelings. Only in this order can we find safety and spiritual progress.

Doesn’t it seem strange that two very real persons could abide in your body and you could only be conscious of the presence of one of them? Self-consciousness you identify as your spirit. But what of the other person in your body? Unless we believe that the Holy Spirit somehow communicates to our nervous system or to our intellect or to our spirit, we will believe He is there in our body, but we cannot identify any of His activities; i.e., we cannot separate His activities from ours. We should like to make a careful study of the following text: ‘For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom the whole family of believers in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.’ (Ephesians 3:14-17a) Here are some questions we have asked and tried to answer. (1) What is meant by ‘out of His glorious riches’? (2) In what sense are we to be ‘strengthened’? (3) Will we be sensibly aware of this strengthening? (4) What is the ‘power’ here spoken of? (5) Is this the direct or indirect action of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit? (6) Are we to conclude that some human spirits are weak and therefore in need of being strengthened? (7) Was this to be a one-time action or a continual one? (8) If these believers were already indwelt. by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, 14) why weren’t they already strong? (9) What responsibility (if any) does the believer have in this strengthening? (10) Are we to understand that Christ cannot dwell in our hearts unless such strengthening takes place? (11) What part does faith have in the whole operation? (12) What are the capabilities of a strong spirit or a strong inward man? We are not going to be satisfied until we have ‘dug out’ the meaning of this text (and every other one) related to the work of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. Let’s take time, thought, prayer and meditation in answering these questions.

(1) *What is meant by the phrase out of the glorious riches’?* The antecedent of the pronoun ‘His’ is God. We could say that ‘out of His infinite resources of the eternal spiritual world,’ or ‘out of His power house of spiritual light and life.’ There seems to be a three-stage action here: (1) Man, body, soul and spirit, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (2) God’s riches providing power thru the Holy Spirit. (3) The Holy Spirit powerfully strengthening the spirit of man.

“(2) *In what sense are we to be strengthened ?* We should once and for all dispel two or three misconceptions peculiar to persons of the Restoration persuasion: (a) The Ephesian Christians never had the New Testament canon; therefore this is a subjective experience not at all produced by reading the New Testament. (b) This prayer was prayed for all the Ephesian believers, not just for some of them. Indeed it would seem from verse 14 that the whole world-wide family of believers is included, so what happened to one could and should happen to all. Now, to answer the question: ‘Strengthened’ refers to a need and a result. We are weak in some sense, and we are made strong in the very area where we are weak. The weakness of the inward man *must* relate to the moral realm. This is the area of God’s interest.

In some way then by the riches of God we are powerfully reinforced in our moral resolves. Can this be true without our cooperation? Of course not. But with our cooperation it will and does happen. Please, please note the *whole* sentence: ‘I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*’ (Ephesians 3:16-17a) The purpose and result of the strengthening is that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. When this happens all our needs in the moral realm will be supplied! Our goal, our deepest need is to give our Saviour our will, intellect, emotion and conscience. These are the four functions of the ‘heart.’ To let Christ direct my will, live in my mind, be expressed through my emotions, educate my conscience; this, and this alone is the source of strength for the inner man.

“(3) *Will we be sensibly aware of this strengthening?* Unless we are so powerfully strengthened by His Spirit in our spirit, Christ will not dwell in our hearts. Is not this the causal relationship of these two phrases? Surely such a close or intimate association could not happen within us without our knowledge of it. Then too, our spirit or ‘inner man’ is the *real you* expressed through your soul, or self-consciousness. Surely if your spirit received a powerful reinforcement from God through the Holy Spirit you would know it. You would know it by no other way than the fact that Christ was enabled to live in your mind, will, emotions and conscience much more effectively than before. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians was not prayed for passive pawns whom God would move and use as He chose, but for real flesh and blood people who were to ‘live a life worthy of the calling they had received.’ (4:1) They were to be: ‘completely humble and gentle; patient, bearing with one another in love.’ (4:2) There is a beautiful dichotomy here involved: while we ‘work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,’ we know that at the same time it is God who ‘worketh in us (by His Holy Spirit) both to will and to do His good pleasure.’ (Philippians 2:12, 13)

“(4) *What is the power here spoke U of?* It seems to be the result of the Holy Spirit’s action; i.e., the ‘power’ comes through or by the Holy Spirit. It also is the means of our strength; i.e., our strength comes from this power. The dynamic of the Spirit makes us strong. It is the nature of the Spirit to supply such strength. There are many, many references to the enablement or empowering of the Holy Spirit. ‘Being filled (and because they were filled) with the Holy Spirit’ they were able (enabled) to say or do or be. Our largest concern is not in definitions and analysis, as important and interesting as they might be, but rather in how to release or obtain or tap this power of the Holy Spirit. How can it happen to me? ‘By faith’ includes a daily accounting of our total self (or soul) ‘crucified together with Him’ and that we ‘count ourselves as dead indeed unto sin’ as we hourly participate in the death of our Lord. This being true, we simply accept the fact that God is even now, just now—out of the storehouse of His riches supplying the power thru the Holy Spirit within me to grant strength to me or to my spirit that was not there before. I exercised the faith to make it so! Pause now in meditation and thanksgiving and praise, before God’s throne of grace and exercise your mind and will in a strong affirmation. You understand it and you believe it. Now say with me: ‘I want to be united with Christ in my spirit by His Spirit (II Corinthians 7:17, “But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in Spirit.”) I believe because I eagerly, deeply, continually want this intimate relationship with Him, that it will be so because He has always been ready and eager and is just waiting for me to come to Him.’ When will you exercise your faith? Is it now?

“(5) *Is this the direct or indirect action of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit?* At this juncture in our search we should be well able to answer this question. But here are some details and refinements in the answer that it will be necessary to consider: a great blessing awaits us if we do. There are no conditional phrases in the prayer of Paul. Read it again! ‘I pray that Out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.’ This does *not* say ‘as we read the Bible such a change takes place.’ Such was not true for the very good reason that the Ephesians never had the New Testament, or the Old Testament to which to refer. The obvious answer to the above question is found in the expression of Paul: ‘with power through

His Spirit in your inner being.’ Our acceptance of this by faith is our blessed privilege and power.

(6) *Are we to conclude that some human spirits are weak and therefore in need of being strengthened?* Perhaps we ought to ask who among us is not in need of more strength? We do not believe there is any need to make such comparisons. Paul wants all the saints in Ephesus, and everywhere else for all time, to share in the glorious riches of the strength supplied by the power of the Holy Spirit. Since this was a continual need it would be a continuing experience. Each day we need to meditate on each word in this text and claim by faith the indwelling Christ. There is a negative side to this subject: if we live like much of the world we will be just like some of the Ephesians. *Having lost all sensitivity*, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with continued lust for more.’ (Ephesians 4:19) There is an intriguing comment made by Paul concerning such persons: ‘They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them *due to the hardening of their hearts.*’ (4:18) We catch a glimpse of our deepest need toward God: *a tender, sensitive conscience, intellect and will.*

(7) *Was this a one-time action or a continual one?* We would like to comment on this: the personal appropriation of this text for some people could become what they would call ‘the filling of the Holy Spirit.’ Perhaps such a one is so moved by his need and God’s abundant provision in this text as to wait before Him in prayer, fasting and meditation until he was satisfied that the Holy Spirit had given him His strength. Such would be true only because he accepted by faith the promise of the text. Such a person could testify that Christ much more fully and personally was now living in his heart. Once such an experience, i.e., a time, place, and action, has occurred it will be easier to repeat it. If it has never happened the first time, we have no pattern for repeating it. There is obviously a continual need, but until we have done something more than mentally assent to our need and the truth of this passage it is powerless in our lives. I believe some specific personal action should take place. A regular time of meditation, prayer and fasting will answer Paul’s prayer in our lives. Thus it is one time *and* continual.

(8) *If these believers were already indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1:13, 14) why weren’t they already strong?* This is a crucial question. It speaks to the essential relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. The Holy Spirit is a powerful Divine person within us. He is well able ‘to do abundantly above anything that we ask or think.’ Then why doesn’t He? Because we have offered Him a dirty channel through which to flow, or an unrighteous instrument to use. Basically we grieve Him and thwart His power by wrong motives. He knows our motives and *will not* strengthen our inner being for a selfish, prideful purpose. *Why* do you want to be strengthened in your inward man? Here are some real possibilities: (1) So others will look up to me as a super-spiritual person. (2) So I can congratulate myself that I have at long last beat the devil. (3) To give me the inward reinforcement to overcome some pet sin or sins with which I have been struggling for a long time. (4) We want to boast before others; of course we would do it in a most humble, spiritual manner, but it would be boasting nonetheless. God *will not* accept these motives. You better spend enough time before Him and before your own heart so as to be able to honestly, wholly say your total self, I want to let Christ be glorified or magnified through my spirit, soul and body. When you have thus released your spirit from the bondage of the self-life and claim by faith His interest and work in you, you will ‘be strengthened with power thru His Spirit in your inner being.’

“(9) *What responsibility (if any) does the believer have in this strengthening?* We have already answered this several times, but we never tire of trying to approach the question from a little different angle. It might help if we search Paul’s letter to the Ephesians and determine what responsibilities they had in personal preparation for the answer to the prayer of Paul: (1) ‘We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.’ (2:9) (2) ‘Not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.’ (3:13) (3) Live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Please read chapters 4, 5, and 6 and notice the many, many personal

responsibilities we each have to provide the proper pre-conditioning for the strengthening of our inward man by the Holy Spirit. Here is a list of the references in only one chapter: (1) 4:17; (2) 4:19; (3) 4:20; (4) 4:22; (5) 4:23; (6) 4:24; (7) 4:25; (8) 4:26; (9) 4:27; (10) 4:28; (11) 4:29; (12) 4:30; (13) 4:31; (14) 4:32. With this kind of cleansing and preparation Christ can indeed live in our hearts, through faith. We want to add that all such preparation does not make us worthy as a place for Christ to dwell. This preparation is only an expression of our love for our Lord and an extension of our worship to Him. We know that after doing all we are unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10) and a very humble place for our Lord to live.

“(10) *Are we to understand that Christ cannot dwell in our hearts if such a strengthening does not take place?* To have the Holy Spirit living in us is to have Christ living within us. Indeed, we know of no other way in which Christ does live in us, or that God lives in us except by the Holy Spirit. It is not that Christ cannot live in us, for He can and does in the person of the Holy Spirit. But without the strengthening of our inner being, the loss of self, ‘the magnifying of Christ through our bodies’ is much less.

“(11) *What part does faith have in this whole operation?* Faith is taking God at His Word! Believing that since God said it, it is so! Our problem is discovering what God said. God said through Paul that God would through His Spirit with power strengthen our inner being. As a consequence Christ would live in our hearts. He also prayed that when we are ‘rooted and established in love we might have the power with all other saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to *know* this love that surpasses knowledge. That (as a consequence) we will be filled to the measure of the fullness of God.’ Paul concluded by a doxology full of hope and power: ‘Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.’ We want to operate by God’s order of accomplishment, which is: (1) Fact (His Word), (2) Faith, (3) Feeling. Let us list the facts in these verses.

A. FACTS

1. Paul was praying a prayer for all saints, for the Ephesians and for us. v. 14, 15.
2. God, out of His glorious riches would answer Paul’s request by strengthening, by His Spirit in a powerful manner, the inner being of the saints in Ephesus and everywhere else for all time. v. 16.
3. This would result in Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. v. 17.
4. As we are rooted and established in love we will have power to grasp something of how wide, long, high and deep is the love of Christ.
5. To *know* this love that surpasses knowledge.
6. That we might be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
7. We are encouraged with the assurance that Paul is praying to one who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine.
8. *That such answers will come from the power that is at work within us!*
9. God will receive the glory or honor in and through and because of the ‘called out ones’ (the church).

10. And in Christ Jesus, God will be glorified (world without end) throughout all generations. Amen!

B. FAITH

Please, please read over and over again the *facts* from God. Receive them into your mind, will and conscience. Believe them for yourself, for *your* life, for *your* home, *your* family, *your* job. Take up each one, turn it over, appreciate it; then apply its promise to you and yours. It seems to the writer that points 4 and S above are so essential to the fulfillment of all the rest; read them again. Without a time of prayer, fasting and meditation how will we *ever* begin the application of this text in our lives? We are *not at all* suggesting that in such a time of prayer, fasting and praise we will once and for all time find the fulfillment of these facts in our lives, but we *will* have made a start which will need to be followed from now on with an attitude and further sessions of prayer, fasting, and praise.

C. FEELING

Until we have expedited these applications of faith to these facts we will have nothing to record concerning our feelings. We, of course, must say that feelings will be as varied as the background of the persons involved. There will also be some static emotional response.

“(12) *What are the capabilities of a strong spirit' or a strong inner being'?* We believe we are right in the center of God's will when we say that the inspired instructions Paul gave to the Ephesians were the results he wanted to see in the answer to his prayer for them. They were: (These are all found in chapter four.)

1. May your whole life be worthy of the calling you have received.
2. Be completely humble and gentle.
3. Be patient, bearing with one another in love.
4. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
5. Be no longer infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by cunning craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.
6. Speak the truth in love.
7. Grow up in all things into Him who is the head—that is, Christ.
8. Live no longer as the Gentiles, i.e., in the futility of their thinking. Darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts, they have lost all sensitivity. They have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.
9. We were taught and learned of our Lord to put off our former ways of life, i.e., to put off our old self which even now is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.
10. We can be made new in the attitude of our minds.
11. We can put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
12. We will put off falsehood and speak truthfully to our neighbor because we are all members of one body.
13. We can be angry but in it we must not sin; i.e., do not let the sun go down while you are still angry (In other words, be reconciled to the one who made you angry before sunset.). In this way you will not give the devil a foothold.
14. If you have been a thief, steal no longer. Get a job and live from your work. Share your paycheck with those who cannot work.
15. Do not let any talk come out of your mouth except that which will build and help.
16. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Surely any one of the above would grieve Him and the

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opposite would please Him.

17. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander –away with every form of malice.
18. Be kind and compassionate to one another; forgive others just as in Christ God forgave you.

(In Chapter Five)

19. Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us.
20. Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity.
21. No greed, because this is improper for God's holy people.
22. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are Out of place, but rather. thanksgiving.
23. No immoral, impure, or greedy person. Such a man is an idolator, and has no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.
24. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.
25. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.
26. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.
27. Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.
28. Do not get drunk of wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit.
29. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.
30. Always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
31. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
32. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.
33. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.
34. Love your wives as your own bodies.
35. Love your wife as you love yourself; wives, respect your husbands.

(In Chapter Six)

36. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
37. Honor your father and mother.
38. Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
39. Slaves (employees), obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart just as you would obey Christ.
40. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.
41. Serve whole-heartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not man.
42. Masters (employers), treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.
43. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God.
44. Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
45. Pray for me, that when so ever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

The above forty-five expressions are the faith claims of an inner being made strong by the power of

the Holy Spirit. What we are saying is that we can and should expect to express our faith in these areas. These are only the words of *one* letter in the New Testament. There are others which we shall consider before we cease this search.

10. “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

A. *What Does It Say?*

The “unity of the Spirit” in the connection here suggested is of the heart, not of teaching. The oneness of teaching is described in verses four through six. The *unity* of verses one through three relates to living together in harmony. This is but another way of describing “the worthy walk.” If we will follow the Spirit’s directions through His word and especially as seen in the life of the First Comforter, there will be perfect unity among us. We are here thinking of interpersonal relationships: (1) *lowliness*, (2) *meekness*, (3) *longsuffering*, (4) *loving forbearance*. These are the qualities of The Person living within each Christian. When we refuse to be proud, when we are gentle and patient, when we are full of loving forbearance, we are indeed “one in the Spirit,” and “one in the Lord.”

B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

We *are* responsible for these unifying attitudes. We *will be* enabled, but we are strongly admonished to initiate the action. We *can and must* choose to be lowly-minded and meek instead of ego-centric and harsh. Paul speaks in strong words to the Ephesian Christians. We *can and must* suffer a long time with the inconsistencies and inequalities of life. We *can and must* resist the temptation to strike back. Our forbearance can also be “in love” and not in stubbornness. All of this is but a willing yieldedness to the Holy Spirit within us. It is not natural in the sense that such attitudes do not express our desires apart from an awareness of the indwelling Christ. Perhaps Paul is suggesting that if he as a prisoner of Rome can manifest such qualities, surely the Ephesians could do so. On the other hand Paul considered himself first of all as bound to his Lord and not to the Roman government. His bondage was real as a prisoner; the chains, the bars, the wall, the confinement were all very much with him. But far more real was his relationship to his Lord. Please notice that this is a glad, voluntary bondage—out of a dear, tender love for the One within him. Such a yieldedness presupposes a constant fellowship with the One whose will we want to do.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

This reference, like a score of others, will be inevitably shared. We will be either lowly-minded or proud, meek or harsh, longsuffering or short tempered, lovingly forbearing or aggressively selfish. We will either have harmony through the Holy Spirit, or we shall have no harmony at all. This personal wholeness is a necessary prerequisite to collective unity.

11. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling;” Ephesians 4:4

A. *What Does It Say?*

Unity is the general subject of the first sixteen verses of this chapter. In the first three verses we have considered the interpersonal unity of the believers. In verses four through six we are told of the essential unity existing from God’s viewpoint in: the body (His church), the Spirit (His Holy Spirit), the hope (His heaven), the Lord (His Son), the faith (His body of truth), the baptism (His act of cleansing) the

God (Himself) When we are here told of the one Spirit, we are to relate this to our personal oneness. Since we are all members of one body, we would not and must not imagine that more than one Spirit could or would animate this body. If there is only one body (and there is), then there is only one Holy Spirit. Perhaps the problem in the context of which this verse appears was the unwillingness of the Jews to accept the Gentiles as possessors of salvation and the Holy Spirit.

B. What Does It Mean?

This could well be a commentary on the experience of Peter at the house of Cornelius. The same Holy Spirit who immersed the minds of the apostles on Pentecost immersed the minds of pagan Gentiles in Caesarea. God accepts both Jew and Gentile into the one body; the presence and power of the one and the same Spirit confirm it.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This is a desperately dangerous verse. If anyone has the Holy Spirit he is a member of the body of Christ. To admit the presence of the Holy Spirit within is to identify such a person as a brother or sister in Christ. There are not many bodies— *only one*. There are not many spirits giving life to that one *body*— *only one* Holy Spirit. The question of whether a person has or does not have the Holy Spirit is as basic as can be considered. Our only recourse is a direct reference to His Word. How do we become a member of the one body to be animated by the one Spirit?

D. How Can I Share It?

Isn't it strange that the very verses which God gave to unite the body have become the occasion of all manner of division? This is to be expected. The clearer the line is drawn, the easier it is to see on which side one stands. Let us share the plain word of God with everyone and be confident that He will say the same thing to all of us.

12. "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:18, 19

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean? C. What Does It Mean To Me'?

It would seem the appetite associated with wine is to be compared with the desire for the control of the Holy Spirit in our life. As wine affects the drunkard so the Holy Spirit should affect the Christian. There are many comparisons to be made in this: (1) No one was born a drunkard; all drunks had a beginning. Most of them were introduced by someone else to the desire for wine. No one is born with a desire for the Holy Spirit. (2) Unless one becomes addicted, i.e., develops a really deep personal thirst for wine, he will never become a wino. Unless we somehow obtain a deep abiding thirst for the water of life we can never be filled. Cf. Jn. 7:37-39. (3) Wine is used by many to escape the frustration of life. This does not solve the problems; it simply hides the person from them. There *is* another world into which we *can* escape; "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking," but it *is* joy and peace under the direction and empowering of the Holy Spirit. (4) Drunkenness affects the entire life style of the one who drinks. His wife, his children, his job, his schooling—all of life soon feels the effects of his habit. If we make a real daily—yea, more than once a day—habit out of our relationship with the Holy Spirit, our family, job, school and all of life will soon know it. (5) Eating, singing, story telling and other social exchange are many times shared in drinking. Paul recommends the sharing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs as a spontaneous expression of our joy in the Lord. We could also say that eating the word or the meat of the gospel should accompany our drinking and singing. (6) The first effect of wine is its influence on the

brain as related to judgment, i.e., how we evaluate the world about us. Distance and movement are not clear or sharp. The first effect of being filled with the Spirit is that we take a fresh new look at the world about us. We begin to see people, events and places through the eyes of God; we see them in the light of eternity, not time—in the perspective of heaven, not earth. (7) The addicted person will do anything or use anything to get his bottle; he will hide it, deceive, lie, even steal to get it. He *must* have it! So it is with the real Jesus addict; he will need no handbook on *how to be filled with the Spirit*. He will get to the word and get it in his heart. Drinking liquor relates to everyone’s life style (to destruction). Being filled with the Holy Spirit fits into all life styles—to joy and peace and power!

D. How Can- I Share It?

When there were tables to be served seven men “full of the Holy Spirit” were found for the job. The presence of the Holy Spirit was a discernible quality. Stephen and Philip were recognized as under the control of God’s Spirit. When we are filled with Him other people will know it. This is an unavoidable sharing experience. just as word gets out concerning one’s appetite for wine, so do people soon hear that we are addicted to our Lord and His Spirit-given word.

13, 14. “And take the helmet of salvation, and *the sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons *in- the Spirit*, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, Ephesians 6:17, 18

- A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does It Mean To Me’?* D. *How Can I Share It?*

It is well said that the only offensive weapon of the Christian soldier is the sword of the Spirit. Are we to understand this expression, “sword of the Spirit” to mean the Spirit as a sword; i.e., is it tantamount to saying that the word of God is the Spirit? Such an explanation is utterly incongruous to the text and to the rest of the New Testament teaching on the subject. In addition, the sword is something the Christian soldier wields, and he does not have such control over the Spirit. “The sword of the Spirit” is the sword which the Spirit gives, or the word of God. The whole Bible is the Spirit’s sword. Let each soldier know the use of his weapon. Let him treat it as it is indeed the instrument sent down from heaven to be placed in his hand to do battle against the forces of evil. This weapon is sharper than any two-edged sword because God Himself through the Holy Spirit has honed its edges. The power of this sword is both the wisdom and knowledge of God. “Our Lord promised to give to his disciples a word and wisdom which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist.” (Hodge)

What does it mean to each Christian to have in his hand the Spirit’s words? Each of us should pause often to let the realization take hold of us that we do indeed have in our hands the very mind of God expressed in the words of the book we call the Bible. At what a high cost was this book given to us! We are more than ever persuaded there is a personal evil force at work in our world. How could we otherwise explain our unwillingness to know and use this sword of the Spirit?

The last reference to the Holy Spirit in this Ephesian epistle is in the little expression ...praying at all seasons in the Spirit, This expression either refers to praying in tongues as seen in similar expressions in I Corinthians 14:13, 14, 15, 28, or it refers to prayer directed by the Holy Spirit but not in an unlearned foreign language. We much prefer the latter explanation inasmuch as this letter is addressed to all Christians in Ephesus, and Paul never taught that all Christians were to pray in tongues. Cf. I Corinthians 12:30.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PHILIPPIANS

THERE ARE THREE REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PHILIPPIANS

1. “For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the *supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:19-21

A. *What Does It Say?*

Paul believed, yea, *knew*, he would be saved, either in heaven or by release from prison. Such seems to be the meaning of the word “salvation” as used here. But his release from this life or from prison would be effected by two means: (1) the supplication or prayers of the Philippians and (2) the Holy Spirit. God would supply the “Spirit of Jesus Christ” for the purpose of helping Paul in either his release from confinement or in death.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Just how was the Holy Spirit going to help Paul? The paraphrase of J. B. Lightfoot is delightful. “Is not my joy reasonable? For I know that all my present trials and sufferings will lead only to my salvation, and that in answer to your prayers the Spirit of Christ will be shed abundantly upon me. Thus will be fulfilled my eat-nest longing and hope, that I may never hang back through shame, but at this crisis, as always, may speak and act courageously; so that, whether I die a martyr for His name or live to labour in His service, He may be glorified in my body.” (St. *Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1953 reprint, p. 90, 91.) In this paraphrase, we can connect the two sources of Paul’s help: (1) the prayers of the Philippians and (2) the help of the Holy Spirit. Lightfoot says, “The two classes are fitly connected by the same article; for the supply of the Spirit is the answer to their prayer.” (*Ibid.*, p. 91.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

What grand encouragement there is in this truth. Our prayers and the work of the Holy Spirit are equal in working out the will of God in our lives. “The prayer of the Philippians is not too unimportant, not too human, not too impotent to stand next to that first Magnitude (the Holy Spirit), next to whom, strictly speaking, no second can stand.” (Barth, as quoted by Jas. J. Muller in *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdnian, 1955. p. 57.) It is because someone prayed that the Holy Spirit can and does supply just the provision needed for deliverance in our trials or temptations. It is because we prayed for some fellow servant that the Holy Spirit provided His grant of help in his time of need.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We need to tell every Christian that his prayers *do matter*, that his prayers are indeed far more effectual than we can imagine. The Holy Spirit stands ready to grant His graces of joy, peace, goodness and kindness—not without the willing cooperation of those for whom we pray. But who knows but what they will be willing to be willing because we prayed? The supplies of the Spirit are just such as we especially need. A deep tranquillity in the midst of chaos is often ours because someone prayed and the Holy Spirit supplied His peace. Please read through the twentieth verse (1:20) to catch what Paul

believed the Holy Spirit would do in answer to the prayers of the Philippian Christians. He says: (1) because you prayed and the Holy Spirit supplied my heart needs, therefore in no circumstance will I be ashamed; yea, I will be bold and unafraid; (2) because you prayed and the Holy Spirit was at work (silently and unobserved, but nonetheless at work) Christ has been enlarged, i.e., made evident before the eyes of those in my prison and even further in this imperial city of Rome. This has happened by my manner of life. It could be by my demeanor at death.

2. “If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation (persuasion) of love, *if any fellowship of the Spirit*, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; ..Philippians 2:1, 2

A. *What Does It Say?*

This is the plea of Paul for unity among believers. These verses contain the motivations for oneness. Among other motivations is “fellowship or communion of the Spirit.” He is saying, “If we each have such an intimate association with the same Holy One, how can we be at variance with each other?” This word “fellowship” carries such a meaningful relationship. (We have discussed this earlier in II Cor. 13:14.) “Partnership,” “joint participation,” or “mutual interest” are all a part of this word. It is one thing to know another person has moved into your house; it is quite another matter to discover his preferences and plans and whole-heartedly share in them. Such is the thought here.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Paul knew that if each of the Christians in Philippi would think the thoughts of the Holy Spirit, share the same love as the Spirit, hold to the same purposes as the Divine Spirit, they would indeed be “of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,...” What Paul knew of the Philippians we can know of ourselves. In Philippi appeal must be made to the prophets and inspired teachers to discover the mind and words of the Spirit. The Christians must ask the prophets to define the will of this Other Comforter. Such limitations (if they were such) do not relate to us.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

We have before us the whole truth of the Holy One. We are indwelt by Him and have in our hands His whole will for our lives. He longs to share His presence and purposes with us. If there is an estrangement, a lack of reality, a sense of distance, it is not because the Holy Spirit does not want to participate in every little and large decision of our life. We are unwilling to confide in Him; we do not search His word and sense His presence. Open the New Testament and read it. His words are fresh and new every morning.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

There is *no* relationship we can share that is more meaningful than this one. When we have learned the secret of practicing His presence, our manner of life and our very appearance will say so. Others will know we have been and are living in the presence of the Other Comforter. Since the Holy Spirit is identical in character to our blessed Lord, we are essentially sharing our Savior’s influence in our lives. Jesus is magnified through our bodies.

“And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own; And the joy we share as we tarry there,” none other can ever know (except through our manner of life or words).

3. “For we are the circumcision, who *worship by the Spirit of God*, and glory in Christ Jesus, and

have no confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:3

A. *What Does It Say?*

This is a statement of what directs or motivates worship. In contrast to those who emphasize external rites and ceremonies, Paul’s worship is directed by the Holy Spirit. In what sense does the Holy Spirit relate to worship? We could refer to Romans 1:9 or John 4:24, but in both instances the human spirit seems to be under consideration. The point is well taken as to the contrast in useless external rites and true inward participation in worship, but this text is a discussion of the Holy Spirit’s place in worship. Does the Holy Spirit move us to worship? Does the Holy Spirit share in our worship, i.e., actually express Himself in some manner that we can subjectively identify? Is Paul saying that any worship given to God other than that directed by the Holy Spirit is not acceptable to Him? We must answer all these questions and several others in our discussion.

Worship and services to God were inseparably linked to certain acts in the history of the nation of Israel. To place a spiritual meaning on the word “circumcision” as Paul does here or to suggest that circumcision was of the heart and not of the flesh was very confusing to the Jewish mind. To suggest (or plainly state) that only worship directed by the Holy Spirit in the human heart (Eph. 3:16) was acceptable to God was even more confusing. But it only confused those who never looked beyond the external acts to the purpose in them. Sacrifices and altars and incense only represented something or someone. Now that Someone is present in our bodies and can share and direct our worship and service to God.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

The Holy Spirit has given most adequate instruction concerning our expression of worship; prayer and praise, the Lord’s Supper—all have been described by the Holy Spirit through His writers. However, we could (and do) repeat the mistake of the Jews of Paul’s day. Prayer can be only pious words repeated; praise can be only form when it is oft repeated at a specified time and place; the Lord’s Supper can be a meal of damnation. Until and unless we sense the Holy Spirit’s personal presence within us and share with Him our expressions, we have *not* worshipped God “by the Spirit of God.” After all, it *is* possible to pause at any time or place and remember “we are the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit” and wonder just how *He* views the circumstances of our life at this time. Our prayer, praise, or song would take on a new dimension.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

We have answered some of our questions in the comment above, but we must say that it is not enough to assume we worship by the Holy Spirit because we do what He asked us to do. He asked us to pray; we did it. He asked us to give; we did it. He also asked us in the same context to fast (Cf. Matt. 6:5-18) but we seldom do this since it calls for more than we want to give. He asks us to observe the Lord’s Supper; we did it. The acts of worship under the law of Moses were also directed by the Holy Spirit, but God did not accept it. Spiritual worship is not only worship directed by the Holy Spirit but worship shared in the living presence of the Christ within us.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We worship God in every act of life. As a corporate body we also worship. But unless we make every meal sacred we shall often make the Holy Meal common. Unless we often lift our hearts to God in private, we shall stumble in our words to Him in public. Unless we give our whole selves to Him our money means nothing when tossed into the collection plate.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN COLOSSIANS

THERE IS ONLY ONE DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Whereas there are several references which necessarily include the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their basic meaning, they do not make direct reference to Him. As an example: how could Paul's prayer in 1:9 be answered without the Holy Spirit? He prayed, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all *spiritual wisdom and understanding*. In 1:27 Paul speaks of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is an obvious reference to the presence of the Holy Spirit in each Christian. In 3:10 Paul refers to the new man: "and have *put on the new man*, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him." Cf. 3:3. However, the only direct reference to the Holy Spirit is found in 1:8 (and even this reference is questioned by some).

"Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." Colossians 1:8

A. *What Does It Say?*

We do not agree with some commentators who refer this to an attitude of the human spirit. We agree with the translators of the text that "Spirit" should be capitalized as a reference to the Holy Spirit in such a circumstance love would be the fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

The virtue of love is prompted by His presence. We have said this over many times. To say it again is not at all irksome. Only by Him, from Him, and through Him can the love described by Paul in I Corinthians 13 :4-8 a be fulfilled in our daily conduct. But this does also mean that such love *is* possible. The Colossian Christians were possessors of it. We visited the site of the city of Colossae this past summer. It is located in the country now called Turkey. These were very real people in a very real place. The Holy Spirit "shed abroad in their hearts the love of God." Cf. Rom. 5:5. What He did for them and the Romans (See Vol. III, p. 144-47.), He can do for you and me.

C. *What Does it Mean to Me?*

This is where theory takes on reality. Will I so cooperate with Him that some present-day Epaphras could tell of the evident Spirit-prompted love he found in my life? We pause here to remember a seemingly unrelated reference: "hence forth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but *also to all them that have loved his appearing*." II Timothy 4:8. Paul has reference to the first appearing of our Lord upon this earth. In a very real sense we need to be in love with His appearing in the person of the Holy Spirit. The first Comforter has given life and power through the appearing of the Other Comforter within us. It is our tender, sensitive regard for the presence of our Lord in our bodies in the person of the Holy Spirit that produces His love in our actions and attitudes.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

Epaphras and a thousand of his friends are waiting for us to share the love produced by the Holy Spirit. We shall share it with them when we decide: (1) we *shall* put up with this impossible situation one more time, and we *shall* be kind and thoughtful about it; (2) we will *not* offer the criticism of the one who just got the job we should have had; (3) we will *not* mention our accomplishments or position as related to

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

someone else—or anything or anyone else. Such decisions must be made in the presence of the example of our Lord as found in the gospels, and in the presence of the One who lives in our bodies.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I THESSALONIANS.

THERE ARE FOUR REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I THESSALONIANS

1. “knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance” Thessalonians 1:4, 5

A. *What Does It Say?*

Paul is saying here what he found elsewhere: “We know God has elected you because you have elected to follow Him.” Cf. Acts 13:48; 16:14. Paul is remembering the response of the Thessalonians to his preaching; Paul is also remembering the source of his message. We shall make a few exegetical remarks about this text and then take up the details of the Spirit’s work later. Paul calls what he preached “our gospel.” It was the good news that saved him and those who were with him. Cf. I Timothy 1:15. It was delivered directly to him by our Lord through the Holy Spirit as a commission to be fulfilled. In this two-fold sense it was *his good news*. This good news did not come to the Thessalonians as a simple religious discourse. Words were used to convey the message, but there was something more than words to hear. The meaning in the words carried the very power of heaven to demolish sin and build the sanctuary of God. The Holy Spirit was in and behind every word. Paul and Silas and Timothy all felt a strong confidence that God was at work in the hearts of those who heard the word. The interest shown, the questions asked, the response to the answers—all these factors built strong or full assurance in the hearts of the preachers that God was at work and many would choose His son as their Lord and Savior.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We could read the use of miracles into the word “power.” Did Paul use miracles as signs of the truthfulness of his message? We have no account of such miracles by the historian Luke. Cf. Acts 17:1-9. We much prefer the thought that the term “power” as used here refers to the estimate of the Thessalonians to what they heard. To them it was a very powerful word. Luke says of them, “And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” Acts 17:4. Such a description indicates the power or effect produced by the word preached. What is meant by saying, “Our gospel came to you.., in the Holy Spirit”? We believe this is a reference to the source of the message. These men when they spoke were the mouthpieces of God. The Holy Spirit spoke directly to them and through them to the Thessalonians. At the same time the Content and manner of expression must have convinced their hearers of the obvious Divine Person behind such wisdom expressed in words.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

The message still comes to us by or via the Holy Spirit. The words we read and from which we prepare our messages are the words of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit accompanies them as we preach or teach. He brings conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment. Cf. John 16:7, 8. We need to sense the same three results in our work for our Lord. (1) We are using the power of God, the Good News. Cf. Romans 1:16, 17. (2) The Holy Spirit is the source of our message and is present as we preach. Cf. Jn. 16: 7, 8. (3) Something of the same full assurance or holy confidence needs to be ours—yea, and will be when we have the same attitude as Paul. Cf. I Thess. 1:5b.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We have been sharing with you, dear reader. Will you now share the same things with others?

2. “And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.” I Thessalonians 1:6, 7.

A. What Does It Say?

Careful reading of this verse will reveal that it contains a description of how the Thessalonians received the message of the gospel. It describes the environment prevailing when they became Christians. There were two prominent factors present: (1) persecution, opposition, or affliction and (2) joy from the Holy Spirit because He had told them through Paul, Silas and Timothy of the wonders of sins forgiven, the eternal value of life here, and the beauties of the life to come. Joy as an emotion is a by-product of understanding. We are happy about something. There must be a reason for joy. The angels sang, “Joy to the world,” but there was a reason—the *Lord is come*. The joy produced by the Holy Spirit has a solid base or reason. He spoke through the missionaries the glad good news that all past sins were paid by God through His Son. He will direct our ways through the wilderness of this world. He has a new life and a new world into which He will usher us just on the other side of our last heart-beat. Such knowledge from the Holy Spirit gives joy.

B. What Does It Mean?

There is a further thought in this text. The Thessalonians found in Paul and Silas and our Lord a good example to follow in rejoicing amid tribulations. Paul is saying these dear people in Thessalonica were following their example as Paul and Silas followed the Lord. Jesus taught by word and example that it is possible to be happy while persecuted (Jn. 16:33). The Holy Spirit communicated this same joyous knowledge to Jesus so that “for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross.” Hebrews 12:2. Paul also knew of this happy news. He said, “I have fought a good fight henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life.” II Timothy 4:7, 8.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Our problem is that our memory is so short and we are so strongly influenced by the circumstances of the moment. Somehow we need to hold the truths of the Holy Spirit in our conscious mind. We must keep His truth current. If we meditate both day and night upon what He has said we will have many days and nights when amid tribulation we will have great joy. I see no other way for Him to communicate His joy.

D. How Can I Share It?

It is so very important that we do this. Others are looking for joy amid tribulation. If you cannot share it, who can? Others can hear about the victorious happy Lord, but they are waiting for a living sample. The Thessalonians received the word with open hearts and smiles amid tears because they saw this in the lives of their preachers.

3. “Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you.” I Thessalonians 4:8

A. What Does It Say?

Please read carefully the preceding seven verses of this chapter. These verses contain an exhortation

on the subject of sanctification. In particular it contains instruction concerning sexual purity. Beck has given us a clear translation of these verses in *An American Translation—The New Testament in the Language of Today*. “God wants you to be holy and keep away from sexual sin. Every one of you should know how to get a wife in a holy and honorable way and not in the way of passionate lust like the people of the world who don’t know God. Nobody should wrong and cheat his fellow Christians in business, because the Lord avenges all these things, as we told you and warned you before. God didn’t call us to be unclean but holy. Now, if anyone rejects this, he doesn’t reject a man but God, who gives you His Holy Spirit.” It should be clear from reading the context of verse eight that the reception of the Holy Spirit was the experience of all Christians, even for those in Thessalonica who were involved in the type of immorality here described. It should also be clear this His presence in our bodies is there for the purpose of reminding us that our bodies should be a holy place for this Holy One.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

There is much discussion as to two subjects in this paragraph of 4:1-8. (1) How are we to understand the word “vessel” in verse 4? Is this a reference to the body of the husband or is it a reference to the husband’s wife? We much prefer the thought that it refers to his wife. (Because we are not discussing these verses, we shall not give our reasons.) (2) In what “matter” or “business” is one brother about to wrong another brother? Beck decided it was in the matter of a general business transaction. Others believe it refers to wronging a brother by illicit sexual relations with the brother’s wife. We much prefer this latter explanation. At whatever decision we chose we must not miss the point: if we do not keep ourselves from illicit sex and deception of one another we reject God. At the same time we deny the purpose of God’s gift to us—the Holy Spirit.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

I do want to be brutally honest with my own heart on this vital subject. Today as in no other in recent times America is inundated with what *Time* magazine called the “porno plague.” In New Testament language this is advertisement for “fornication.” None of us escapes such widespread promotion. At the same time I was impressed with the strong emphasis upon the same subject found in the ruins of Ephesus, Rome, Pompeii and many other ancient cities. We might remember as a nation that it is because of such an emphasis that these cities are in ruins.

The Holy Spirit is often associated with moral purity. To reject such obvious and often given instruction is to reject God. At the same time we reject God, we grieve, quench, insult and resist the Holy One who lives within us. Please read again our comments on I Corinthians 6:19, 20.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

Somehow a copy of this paragraph of God’s instructions needs to be fastened to every locker door in every high school in America. It could be —should be—pasted on the mirror in the bedrooms of all the newly married, and many of the not-so-newly married. What about providing it as a stand up sign for the desk in the office where you work? These are only wild ideas, but we are the real live communicators of these words.

4. “Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.” I Thessalonians 5:19-22.

A. *What Does It Say?*

The reader will notice that we have printed verses 19-22 as a unit. We believe all these verses refer to the work of the Holy Spirit and not just the nineteenth verse. In the first century church there was no

New Testament as we now know it. Indeed this letter to the Thessalonians was probably the first inspired document of what now composes the New Testament. In the absence of the New Testament (or for that matter of the Old Testament), God granted the gift of prophecy for “edification, encouragement and consolation.” I Corinthians 14:3. The church was built by and upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets. Ephesians 2:20. At the same time God’s spokesmen were speaking, there were those inspired by Satan who claimed to speak on behalf of God. As a result of the confusion that followed such contradictory messages, those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak were sorely tempted to become discouraged and “quench the Spirit’s” word through them.

“The Spirit *is* subject to the prophet.” I Corinthians 14:32. Others in the Thessalonian church were tempted to make light of such inspired utterance and in this way “quench the Holy Spirit’s” word through God’s prophets. It is so easy to decide that if there is a disagreement on the subject we will not attempt to find the truth on the subject; we will simply dismiss the subject. In this way the Holy Spirit was quenched, prophecy was despised, and God’s work was greatly hindered.

On the other hand God had provided a check and balance; there were those in the early church who were enabled to “discern Spirits.” Cf. I Corinthians 12:10. Thus an inspired test could be made of those who spoke. The instructions in verse 21 are general, but such instruction could apply in a special sense to those endowed with the ability from the Holy Spirit to “discern.” All Christians could compare what they were hearing from men and women who called themselves prophets with what they had heard and read from Paul. In this way (plus the help from the inspired discernment) they could hold fast to the good and true. Some prophets of Satan could well have recommended a continuance in fornication, loafing, or some other form of evil; from such Paul says “abstain.”

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Quenching the Spirit in the particular context in which we find this expression probably refers to the exercise of spiritual gifts; but the principle of resistance to the work of the Spirit is one we need all the time. The tense used in the verb “quench” is continuing and means to cease what is already being done. To quench the work or fruit of the Spirit in another brother is also a means of grieving Him in ourselves. Cf. Ephesians 4:30.

Do these verses, 19 through 22, refer to the responsibilities of the saints when they came together as an assembly? C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine so believe. Their comment is very instructive. We reproduce it here from their book, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Fincastle, Virginia: Scripture Truth Book Company, 1959, p. 195-199.

“The general precept of vv. 19-22 were intended to remind the believers of their responsibilities when they came together, cp. I Cor. II. 17, 18. From I. Cor. 7. 17 and 14. 31-34 it may be assumed that in the Apostolic age all “churches of the saints” followed the general lines indicated in Acts 20. 7, Rom. 12. 3-8, I Cor. 11. 17-14, 40. Eph.4.7-16, IPet.4. 10, 11.

It was characteristic of these churches:—
 that they came together weekly to break breads, Acts 20. 7,
 and for mutual edification, Heb. 10, 25,
 which was secured through a variety of ministry. v. II, I Cor. 12. 4-10,
 appointed by God, I Cor. 12. 18, 28-30, Eph. 4. 8,
 and made effectual by the Holy Spirit, I Cor. 12. II;
 that there were in them men who were qualified for, and called to, the ministry of the Word, Eph.
 4. 11-14,
 and that such alone were to take part therein, I Cor. 14,29;
 that those who ministered did not because of the energizing of the Holy Spirit lose the

responsibility of self-control, I Cor. 14. 32;
 on the contrary, they were to use the gift, or to refrain, as the occasion required, I Cor. 14. 26-30;
 they were to use it diligently and wisely, Rom. 12.6-8;
 with a due sense of the dignity of the ministry and of the insufficiency of the minister, I Pet. 4. 10,
 11;
 and they were to submit to the judgment of others on their ministry, I Cor. 14. 29.

“The peace, order, and edification of the saints were evidence of the ministry of the Spirit among them, I Cor. 14. 26, 32, 33, 40, but if, through ignorance of His ways, or through failure to recognize, or refusal to submit to, them, or through impatience with the ignorance or self-will of others, the Spirit were quenched, these happy results would be absent. For there was always the danger that the impulses of the flesh might usurp the place of the energy of the Spirit in the assembly, and the endeavor to restrain this evil by natural means would have the effect of hindering His ministry also. Apparently then, this injunction was intended to warn believers against the substitution of a mechanical order for the restraints of the Spirit.

“v. 20. Despise Not exoutheneo, to set down as of no account, as in Luke 189 et al.

“PROPHESYINGS,”—propheteia, as in Rom. 12. 6, 1 Cor. 12. 10, *et al.*

“Though much of O.T. prophecy was purely predictive, see Micah 5. 2, *e.g.*, and cp. John 11. 51, prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, foretelling. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means, Matt. 26. 68, it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see Gen. 20. 7, Deut. 18. 18, Rev. 10. 11; 11. 3. The relation between Aaron and Moses illustrates the relation between the prophet and God, Ex. 4. 16; 7. 1.

“In such passages as I Cor. 12. 28, Eph. 2. 20 the ‘prophets’ are placed after the ‘Apostles,’ since not the prophets of Israel are intended, but the ‘gifts’ of the ascended Lord, Eph. 4. 8, 11, and cp. Acts 13. 1, concerning prediction of future events, but cp. Acts 11. 27, 28; 21. 10, 11; the purpose of their ministry was to edify, to comfort, and to encourage the believers, I Cor. 14. 3, while its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man’s heart are known to God, to Convict of sin, and to constrain to worship, vv. 24, 25.

“With the completion of the canon of Scripture prophecy apparently passed away, I Cor. 13. 8, 9. In his measure the teacher has taken the place of the prophet, cp. the significant change in 2 Pet. 2. 1. The difference is that, whereas the message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the occasion, the message of the teacher is gathered from the completed revelation contained in the Scriptures.

“Instructions given to the prophet of Apostolic days serve as a general guide to the teacher now. Building up the saints is to be his sole aim, I Cor. 14. 5, 12, 26, Eph. 4. 12; to this end his words must be distinctly spoken, and his language must be suited to his hearers, I Cor. 14. 7, 9, 16; he must avoid confusion of every kind, since confusion is of the flesh, not of the Spirit, vv. 32, 33. Teachers are to defer one to another, v. 30, nor is any teacher to be judge of the profit, or otherwise, of his own utterances, v. 29. Acceptance of these divine regulations is evidence of spirituality, vv. 37, 38.

In the early churches there was evidently a tendency among the less stable believers to depreciate prophesyings and to exalt ‘tongues,’ which had a greater show of the miraculous, see I Cor. 14. 1-19. On the other hand, the more sober-minded may have been suspicious of professed revelations; the Lord Himself had warned His disciples of the danger, Matt. 7. 15; 24. 11, and Paul’s own experience at Paphos, Acts 13. 6, was probably known at Thessalonica. ‘Deceivers,’ 2 John 7, cp. 2 Cor. 6. 8, and ‘false prophets,’ I John 4. 1, cp. Rev. 2. 20, early’ began to trouble the churches, and, apparently, the Apostle himself had reason shortly afterwards to suspect that this evil influence was at work there also, 2

Thess. 2. 2.

“v. 21. Prove dokimazo, as in 2.4, where, and at 3.5.

“ALL THINGS; _the adjective, which is plural, alone appears in orig., all spiritual gifts, I Cor. 12. 1, including prophecy. The marg. inserts “but” on good authority, and is probably correct.

“From the scope of this injunction not even the utterances of an Apostle were exempt, Acts. 17. 11, 2 Tim. 2. 7, cp. Isa. 8. 20, for the duty kind the right, the responsibility and the privilege, of the individual believer to judge for himself, I Cor. 10. 15, Gal. 1. 8, 9, and to act upon his judgment, Rom. 14. 4, 5, are an essential feature of Christianity.

“While ‘discerning’ or ‘proving’ is itself a ‘spiritual gift,’ I Cor. 12. 10, all spiritual persons are responsible to form judgments on spiritual things, . . . and for this provision is made in the ‘anointing from the Holy One’ which is given to the children in the family’ of God, I John 2. 18, 20, 27, cp. 2 Tim. 2. 7. Spiritual perception, however, like spiritual power depends on the walk of the believer, the slothful and evil-doers are blind, only the godly have discernment in the truth, Prov. 28. 5, Dan. 9. 13, 2 Pet. 1. 9. Moreover, the desire to be impressed, to have the feelings wrought upon, rather than to be instructed in the ways of the Lord, is a common snare to the saints, 2 Tim. 3:6, 7: 4. 3, 4.

“The completed Scriptures, *i.e.*, the O. T. and N. T., became later the sole and sufficient standard by which all teaching, oral or written, could be tested, but long before that time, believers and churches had multiplied widely. During the intervening period, in the case of revelations for the testing of which the O. T. was not available, such as that referred to in Col. 1. 26, *e.g.*, believers were encouraged by the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, John 16. 13, and so to test the prophecy and the spirit that prompted it, I Cor. 14. 29, I John 4. 6, Rev. 2.2.

“In early days a saying, ‘be ye tried money changers’ accustom yourselves to distinguish between the true and false,’ cp. Phil. 1: 10, marg., was commonly connected with these words; cp. I Kings 3: 9, Jer. 15: 19, Heb. 14. By some ancient writers it was credited to the Apostle Paul, by others to the Lord Himself, but it does not occur in N. T.”

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

After reading carefully the comment above it should occur to most of us that we have yet a long way to go to become the careful knowledgeable Bible student we want to be. May the Spirit of God move us all to a daily detailed search of every word in His word.

D. How Can I Share It?

These are principles for personal and corporate worship we could incorporate into our lives. It does seem to me that the regulations for the proper use of the gift of prophecy has much meaning for the effective teacher of today.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II THESSALONIANS.

THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II THESSALONIANS

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” II Thessalonians 2:13, 14.

A. *What Does It Say?*

The most obvious conclusion is that sanctification is a part of salvation and that the Holy Spirit and belief of the truth are the cause or means of such sanctification. Sanctification means to be “set apart.” The Holy Spirit and our belief of the truth will sanctify us or set us apart. How can this be true? To have the Holy Spirit is to be distinctively different from all those who do not have Him. Such information is a part of “the truth” proclaimed by Paul and Silas to the Thessalonians. Sanctification is a process as it relates to being called out of the world into salvation. Notice the last half of the fourteenth verse: *to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is spoken of as a present possession of the believers in Thessalonica. The term “glory” could be thought of as “character” or “nature” of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the *Other Comforter*; to receive Him is to receive the nature or character of our Lord. This is the present possession and ultimate possession of every Christian. God sees us as “in His son” now; we shall one day be even as He is.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

The word “Holy” in the name Holy Spirit should teach us something about sanctification. A holy place or a holy vessel or a holy garment was such because of its use, not its composition. A holy place could be of cloth or skin or wood or stone. A holy vessel could be of earth or metal. etc. The holiness was in its purpose. The worthiness or distinctiveness was determined by whether or not it fulfilled its purpose. Such a purpose made certain demands upon the place, the vessel, the garment, or upon the man if he were to be God’s holy instrument. To be the body of Christ. His church, indwelt by His Spirit is our position. What is our purpose? To show forth the excellencies of Him who called us. To be even as He was in the world. When we recognize our position and purpose, we will fulfill our sanctification.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

We must remember that there is a subjective element at work in our sanctification. While we *work out, it is also God* who by the Holy Spirit *works in us*. Cf. Phil. 2:12, 13. We must not, yea, we cannot imagine that by a simple obedience to the word of God we will live a holy life. For we are not always willing nor obedient. The ‘setting apart’ process as a response to the “setting apart” position goes on silently and imperceptibly. Cf. Eph. 3:16.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We share our attitudes much more often and much more effectively than we share anything else. If we do not see ourselves as the Holy Sanctuary for the Holy Spirit, we will not act like it or talk like it. Our times of relaxation and recreation become a true barometer of our basic relationship to our Lord and hence to the lost world in which we live.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I TIMOTHY.

THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I TIMOTHY

Whereas there are several references to the work of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 1:18; 2:15; 4:14) the only reference in which He is mentioned by name is I Timothy 4:1, 2. “But *the Spirit saith expressly*, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men, that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron;”

A. *What Does It Say?*

We would assume that the Holy Spirit is communicating to Paul. These words are addressed to Paul by the Holy Spirit. Please read Acts 20:29, 30. In this reference Paul is speaking to the Ephesian elders (20:17). Timothy was in Ephesus when he received Paul’s letter (1:3). Only a few years separate these two warnings. “I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” Acts 20:29, 30.

We have been living in the last days or later times ever since Pentecost. Cf. Acts 2:16, 17. The warning by the Holy Spirit is yet relevant to our day. Please notice the work of Satan (who is a spirit being). (1) Some, not all, were involved, but from Acts 20: 29, 30 we could assume these persons would be in positions of leadership. (2) Their sin is in departing or rejecting the written and spoken word of the Holy Spirit. There *was* an objective body of truth which acted in Paul’s day as a statement of faith. We have today that same objective, authoritative revelation in the form of the New Testament. (3) The work of Satan is promoted by hypocrites in the church. These hypocrites are educated by demons. To listen to such hypocrites is to give heed to the teaching of demons.

B. *What Does it Mean?*

As we have said several times these questions are only teaching devices. We *are* interested in the etymology of each word and of every connection in these verses. But there is an unavoidable overlap in answering these questions. One shocking fact in these verses is that the Holy Spirit has told us in words too clear to be misunderstood that Satan is on the attack; he is using demons to speak to certain men. The men who become such servants of Satan are here described: (1) they are knowingly insincere; (2) they speak lies; (3) they are seductive; (4) their conscience is cauterized. Such men are among us today. Satan’s attack has not lessened. We do not have men with us now to whom the Holy Spirit addresses Himself as He did with Paul.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

How very important it is for me to be not only a student of His word or “The Faith” but also to assimilate it into my inmost being. The ones attacked by demons were students of “The Faith” or they could not have departed from it. When I sin it is so important that my repentance be deep and complete. My conscience must receive a careful education from the word of God. I must be ready to obey its voice.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

The more aware we are of the world of the Spirit and of evil spirits, the nearer to reality and eternity will we all be. If we are educating our hearts through the words of the Holy Spirit, we could be giving heed to the seducing spirits under the control of Satan.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II TIMOTHY

THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II TIMOTHY

In 1:6 we have a reference to the gifts granted by Paul to Timothy. This refers to the Holy Spirit's ability granted to Timothy in the work he had to do. One of the Spiritual gifts of I Corinthians 12 or Romans 12 or Ephesians 4 was given to Timothy by the laying on of Paul's hands. We must not forget that the hands of elders were also laid upon Timothy. Cf. Timothy 1 4:14. We have the picture of an ordination service in these verses. Those in Lystra or Iconium who had the gift of prophecy spoke of God's direction in Timothy's life. Such prophecy probably contained encouragement for Timothy to give himself to the work of an evangelist. Whereas all the gifts come from the Holy Spirit, the means of imparting them vary. The gift of "evangelist" was evidently given by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. This should give encouragement for the continuation of this work and office today. At the same time that the elders laid their hands upon Timothy, Paul also laid his hands upon Him. What particular gift did Paul give to this young man? We do not know; we could choose "prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, administration, or government." Whatever it was Timothy was responsible for its efficient operation. The faith Timothy had in the Spirit's ability had a very decided effect on the operation of that ability. Timothy's faith in God's power was to stir the gift into a living flame. The quality of Timothy's confidence or faith in God's power through the Holy Spirit was this: "The Holy Spirit is the power of God. I can by the presence and aid of the Other Comforter love even as my Lord loved me; the Holy Spirit *can* help me to say 'no' when I want to say 'yes' to the temptations and weaknesses of my flesh." William Hendriksen believes the reference to "spirit" in verse seven refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of power and love and discipline." I have not accepted this conclusion, but we can see a very close connection between our attitudes and His work. One definitely affects the other.

The only direct reference to the Holy Spirit in this last letter of Paul's is II Timothy 1:14.

"That good thing which was committed unto thee guard *through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.*" II Timothy 1:14.

A. *What Does It Say?*

Timothy is asked to guard the deposit of the gospel through the Holy Spirit. Just how is this to be done? We have no lack of comment concerning the deposit. Many commentators will tell us of the "precious deposit" or of the "sound or healthy" words" Paul had committed to Timothy. We very much like the thought that the guarding of the deposit was like that of a banker. Not only was the deposit to be kept intact and not altered in value, but it was also actually to be increased. Banker Timothy was to accrue interest on God's deposit. But just *how* was all of this to be done? "Through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us." If we are correct in our application of the term "guard," then we are discussing the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:7, 8) as the deposit used by Banker Timothy.

B. *What Does it Mean?*

We realize the primary meaning in this text is that Timothy not change nor allow others to change the gospel which God through the Holy Spirit has given to him. At the same time the whole purpose in committing the good news either to Timothy, Paul, or anyone else is that it be shared. We are glad to know there is Someone else working with us in the task. We must remember that the Person who inspired the writers of the very message we have is dwelling in us. Why should we be fearful or unwilling to either defend The Faith or give it away?

C. What Does It Mean to Me?

We have not like Timothy received directly and personally the good news from God via Paul. But we do have in our possession this same precious treasure, and there dwells within our bodies the same Holy One. I am glad to do all I can to protect and spread this precious deposit.

D. How Can I Share It?

The person who is constantly on the defensive is over-balanced. On the other hand, if we never offer a strong defense we are also over-balanced. Let's defend The Faith and be sure it gets out-side the confines of our church buildings or church offices. In it all let us remember and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit who is working in us and with us.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN TITUS

THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PAUL'S EPISTLE TO TITUS

“But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing *of the Holy Spirit*, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:4-7.

A. *What Does It Say?*

We have printed the entire text from verse four through verse seven, even though the reference to the Holy Spirit occurs in verse five. These verses are a discussion of our wonderful salvation, but salvation as it relates to a godly life. This salvation has as its source “the kindness of God our Saviour.” Our salvation has its *basis* not in our works of righteousness, but in His mercy. *The means* of our salvation is “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” *The grand results* of our salvation are expressed in “being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Our interest is in *the means* of salvation. Just what is meant by “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”? We could better answer this question if we answered several others. (1) Does this “washing” or ‘bath’ or ‘laver’ include the use of water? (2) Are we to understand regeneration or new birth takes place in this washing? (3) Does the renewing action of the Holy Spirit also happen at this time? (4) When was the “pouring out” done, at or in the bath of regeneration or afterwards or at some other time? (5) Are we to understand that these several words, “saved,” “regenerated,” and “made heirs” are all synonymous describing the same experience from three view points? Let’s be very careful in our answers to these crucial questions.

(1) Does this bath include water? To answer we might ask if we find a bath or washing without water? Some feel that Ephesians 5:26 describes such a bath; let’s read this text. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” (Ephesians ¶:25-27a). The “called out ones’ who make up our Lord’s church were washed with water with the word. It should be easy to see how this happened. On Pentecost when the word was preached those present were told by the word of God through Peter to “repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38). Through the word of God by the mouth of Ananias Saul was told to “arise and be baptized to wash away’ thy’ sins.” (Acts 22:16). Through the word of God spoken by’ our Lord to Nicodemus, he was told to be born again of the water and Spirit. (John 3:3-5). There is no washing of water without the word. the very term “laver” in its use in the Old Testament economy included water; the laver was filled with water and was a place of bathing or washing. We do fervently hope our predispositions do not cloud our investigation. If there is a washing in the Bible that does not include water, please show it to us.

(2) Are we to understand that “regeneration” or the new birth takes place in this washing? The answer is too plain to be missed; it is unavoidable. The answer is yes, this is indeed the bath or washing of regeneration. Regeneration happens at the time of the bath. We need to be careful here. We shall immediately be identified as baptismal regenerationists. Please read the context of this verse and realize we are considering regeneration from God’s point of view. God assumes that the persons involved have

accepted His son as His gift of love. Such persons have understood that Christ died for their sins; they have committed themselves to Him. They come in this frame of mind and heart to the bath. When such conditions are met, baptism becomes indeed a washing of regeneration. The washing is inward—in the blood of our Lord, but we are “baptized into His death.” (Romans 6:4). As the water washes our bodies, the blood sprinkles our hearts from an evil conscience. Cf. Hebrews 10:22.

(3) Does the renewing action of the Holy Spirit also happen at this time? There are two points of view in the answer to this question. We prefer one, but we can accept either one as valid and compatible with the rest of the scripture. The first view states that at the time new life is given to us in our bath of regeneration, the Holy Spirit recreates us into a new creature. In this explanation “the renewal of the Holy Spirit” became but another way of expressing regeneration. The bath of regeneration takes place or becomes valid through the renewal or renewing or recreating of a new person by the Holy Spirit. We can accept this explanation, and it in itself is very attractive. But whereas this is what initially happened at the new birth, we believe the renewal of the Holy Spirit is not only a one time action at the bath of regeneration, but it is also a process throughout the life of the new creature.

(4) When was the “pouring out” done, at or in the bath of regeneration or afterwards or at some other time? The Greek tense of the verb “poured” is very helpful here. It is the aorist tense and means that there was a one time, never repeated, pouring out. This refers to Pentecost when our Lord poured out the Holy Spirit. Cf. Acts 2: 32ff. At the time of our new birth, we do indeed receive once and for all time the Holy Spirit, but the context of these verses refers to the historic event of Pentecost.

Are we to understand that these several words, “saved,” “regenerated,” and “made heirs,” are all synonyms and refer to the same experience from three viewpoints? We must answer with a loud affirmative. But as we do, we realize we are saying that “baptism doth now save us, (I Peter 3:21) and baptism is both the regenerative act and the time and place where justification becomes the personal possession of the sinner.

C What Does It Mean To Me? D. How Can I Share It?

Lest some of our readers might imagine that the present writer and those who are members of the Restoration Movement are the only ones who hold this view on Titus 3:5, we quote from three of many more who could be quoted to support this position.

“Through the washing of regeneration Here we have the means *through* or *by* which God’s mercy saves us. The *washing* or rather laver of regeneration ... found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Eph. 5:26, in exactly the same connection—is the *laver* or *bath* in which the washing takes place. The nature or quality of this bath is described by the words ‘of regeneration’ elsewhere in the New Testament only in Matt. 19:28, where it seems rather to mean the great restoration of humanity at the second advent. The word is used by Cicero of his restoration to political power, by Josephus of the restoration of the Jews under Zerubbabel, and by several Greek authors; and the LXX of Job 14:14 have the phrase, but in what sense is not quite clear. ‘Regeneration’ therefore, very fitly describes the new birth in holy baptism, when the believer is put into possession of a new spiritual life, a new nature, and a new inheritance of glory. And the laver of baptism is called ‘the laver of regeneration,’ because it is the ordained means by or through which regeneration is obtained. And renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is doubtful whether the genitive ... depends upon or upon ... Bengel, followed by Alford, takes the former; ... the latter, followed by Huther, Bishop Ellicott, and others. It is difficult to hit upon any conclusive argument for one side or the other. But it is against the latter construction that it gives such a very long rambling sentence dependent upon ‘The *later* of regeneration and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.’ And it is in favour of the former that the ‘layer of

regeneration' and 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost' seem to describe very clearly the two parts of the sacrament, the outward visible sign and the inward spiritual grace; the birth of water and of the Holy Ghost. So that Bengel's rendering seems on the whole to be preferred. Renewing only here and Rom. 12:2, and not at all in the LXX or in classical Greek. But the verb ... is found in 2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:10. The same idea is in the 'new creature' of 2 Cor. 5:17 and Gal. 6:15, and the of Rom. 6:4, and the of Rom. 7:6, and in the contrast between the 'old man' and 'the new man' of Eph. 4:22-24. This renewal is the work of the Holy Ghost in the new birth, when men are 'born again' of the Spirit (John 3:5). Alford is wrong in denying its application here to the first gift of the new life. It is evidently parallel The connection of baptism with the effusion of the Holy Spirit is fully set forth in Acts 2. (see especially ver. 38; comp. Matt. 3:16, 17.) (A. C. Hervey. *Pulpit Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich., Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 44.)

By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.—*Seeing*, then, that God *has* saved us by His own act, independently of any work of ours, we ask, How has He effected this? The words we are here considering give the answer to the question. The Greek should be rendered, 'by the layer of regeneration.' &c. Then, by means of the layer of regeneration, &c., has God put us into a state of salvation Thus by means of the layer of regeneration, &c, or, in other words, by baptism *in all its completion*—the outward act being accompanied with the inward faith—He saved us, that is, put us into a state of salvation. Of the difference between 'regeneration' and 'renovation,' the first, 'regeneration,' is well explained in the words of the collect for Christmas Day, which speaks of the 'regenerated' as 'made God's children by adoption and grace.' The second, 'renovation,' the same collect goes on to speak of, when it prays that 'the regenerated' 'may daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit.' The first, 'regeneration,' is spoken of by St. John in his words, 'Ye must be born again' (John 3:7); the second is alluded to by St. Paul when he wrote, 'the inward man is renewed day by day' (2 Cor. 4:16)." (H. D. M. Spence. *Ellicott's Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan Publishing House, p. 261.)

"That 'the washing of regeneration,' or (as the margin of the R. V. more exactly has it) 'the *layer* of regeneration,' signifies the Christian rite of baptism, ought to be regarded as beyond dispute. This is certainly one of those cases to which Hooker's famous canon of interpretation most thoroughly applies, that 'where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst' (*Eccl. Pol.*, v. lix. 2). This Hooker holds to be 'a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture'; and although some persons may think that assertion somewhat too strong, of the soundness of the rule no reasonable student of Scripture can doubt. And it is worth our while to notice that it is in Connection with this very subject of baptismal regeneration that Hooker lays down this rule. He is answering those who perversely' interpreted our Lord's words to Nicodemus, 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5), as meaning no more than 'except a man be born of the Spirit,' 'water' being (as they imagined) only a metaphor, of which 'the Spirit' is the interpretation. On which Hooker remarks: 'When the letter of the law hath two things plainly and expressly specified, Water, and the Spirit; "Water as a duty required on our parts, the Spirit as a gift which God bestoweth; there is danger in presuming so to interpret it, as if the clause which concerneth ourselves were more than needeth. We may by such rare expositions attain perhaps in the end to be thought witty, but with ill advice.' All which may be fitly applied to the passage before us, in which it is quite arbitrary and against all probability to contend that 'the bath of regeneration' is a mere metaphor for regeneration without any bath, or for the Holy Spirit, or for the unmeasured bounty with which the Holy Spirit is poured upon the believer.

"This might be tenable, if there had been no such rite as baptism by water enjoined by Christ and practiced by the Apostles as the necessary and universal method of admission to the Christian Church. In Eph. 5:26 (the only other passage in the New Testament in which the word for laver or 'bath' or 'washing' occurs) the reference to baptism by water is indisputable, for the water is expressly mentioned. 'Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having *cleansed it by*

the washing of water with the word.’ And in the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians which, like the one before us, contrasts the appalling wickedness of unbelievers with the spiritual condition of Christians, the reference to baptism is scarcely less clear. ‘And such were some of you: but *‘ye were washed* (lit. ‘ye washed away’ your sins), but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God’ (I Cor. 6:11). In which passage, as here, the three Persons of the Trinity are named in connection with the baptismal act.

“And in speaking to the Jews at Jerusalem of his own admission to the Church, St. Paul uses the same forms of the same word as he uses to the Corinthians of their admission. The exhortation of Anaxias to him, as he lay at Damascus, was ‘And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and *be baptized*, and *wash away thy sins*’ ‘calling on His Name’ (Acts 22:16): words which are very parallel to the exhortation of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost: ‘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 Ghost’ (Acts 2:38; comp. Heb. 10:23). In these passages we have a sacred rite described in which the human and the Divine elements are clearly marked. On man’s side there is the washing with water; and on God’s side there is the washing away of sin and pouring out of the Spirit. The body is purified, the soul is purified, and the soul is hallowed. The man is washed, is justified, is sanctified. He is regenerated: he is ‘a new creature.’ ‘The old thing,’ his old principles, motives, and aims, then and there ‘passed away’ (aorist tense): ‘behold, they are become new’ (2 Cor. 5:17). Can any one, with these passages before him, reasonably doubt, that, when the Apostle speaks of ‘the washing of regeneration’ he means the Christian rite of baptism, in which, and by means of which, the regeneration takes place?” (Alfred Plummer. *The Expositor’s Bible: The Pastoral Epistles*. New York: Geo. H. Doran Co., n.d., p. 285-288.)

B. *What Does It Mean To Me?* D. *How Can I Share It?*

Have I had the bath of regeneration? Has the Holy Spirit made me new, or recreated me? Of course I have been baptized; I have been to the layer, but was it indeed a washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit? If such an experience was based upon my own worthiness or acceptability’, I had just as well forget it. Of course, I want to be born again. I do come to God, my Father, and Jesus, my Lord and Savior in a yielded attitude of faith and commitment. All I can offer is my willingness. This is all He asks. Out of His mercy’ He has initiated our salvation. I can affirm because of His grace that I have been forgiven and I have received the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is so comforting to accept on faith (which is simply taking God at His word) the fact that I am indeed a new person in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit has made me new and will continue the process of renewing as long as I am a willing participant.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HEBREWS

THERE ARE SEVEN REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

1...how shall we 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 manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.” Hebrews 2:3, 4

A. *What Does It Say?*

There are four expressions used here to define God’s witness. They are (1) signs, (2) wonders, (3) manifold powers, and (4) gifts of the Holy Spirit. The witness of God is a form of confirmation. It will be helpful if we define these terms as to their relation to each other and their relation to the whole subject. *Signs* are supernatural acts that point beyond themselves. All signs advertise something other than themselves. A sign has not fulfilled its function until it has sold the product it is advertising. The purpose of a sign was to make people *wonder*. *Wonders* describes the reaction of persons to *signs*. It would seem all wonders in the context of these verses are evidential. The term *manifold powers* describes the energy behind the signs and wonders. Perhaps these four terms are only four ways of looking at one subject. We could cite the example of one of the gifts or abilities of the Holy Spirit, such as *miracles* or *healings* (Cf. I. Cor. 12:8ff.). Such miracles could be performed as a sign to confirm the word being spoken or an action taken. Such a miracle could make the observers wonder; the energy or power granted would be of God. We seriously ask the question: was there ever a time when a miracle or healing was performed when it was not a sign of confirmation that made the observers wonder about its source and purpose? Such action proceeded from the power of God. We believe the answer to the question is an emphatic no. There never was a gift of the Spirit used to call attention only to itself; all were used to confirm the words or actions of God.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We appreciate very much the comments of Robert Milligan. Please read them carefully.

“4. *God also bearing them witness,—God* himself is ever present with whatever agents or ministers he employs to work out any given end or purpose. ‘My presence,’ said he to Moses, ‘shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’ (Ex. 33:14) ‘I am not alone,’ says Christ (John 8:16); ‘the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works’ (John 14:10). So also God was ever present with the Apostles, confirming their testimony with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his own will. There are not so many different kinds of miracles, wrought by God in attestation and confirmation of the truth; but they are rather the same miracles viewed under different aspects. It is plain, as Ebrard says in substance, that miracles may be regarded in a fourfold aspect; first, with regard to their *design*, as signs (*seemeia*), miraculous testimonies in behalf of the truth; secondly, with respect to their *nature*, as wonders (*terata*), supernatural acts calculated to excite wonder and amazement in the minds of those who witnessed them; thirdly, with respect to their *origin*, as manifestations of supernatural powers (*dunameis*) ; and finally, in their specifically *Christian* aspect, as gifts and distributions of the Holy Spirit (*pneumatōs hagios ;merismoi*) imparted to the original witnesses and proclaimers of the truth, according to the will of God. (1 Cor. 12: Eph. 4:11.)” (Robert Milligan. *Commentary on Hebrews*. Cincinnati, Ohio, Standard Publishing Co., p. 91, 92.)

C. *What Does It Mean to Me?*

My salvation does not rest upon the wisdom or experience of men but upon the words of my Lord and those to whom He spoke. The four gospels are replete with the words of our Redeemer and His grand promises concerning our salvation. Those who heard him were endowed with the supernatural understanding of the Holy Spirit. Such endowment or inspiration was confirmed to those who heard them by signs, wonders and manifold powers as explained earlier. I am so glad I can rest my confidence on the solid rock of such divine assurance.

How can I for one moment treat lightly such words? Can I allow anything to take precedence over my Lord and His work? I must not—cannot—will not neglect my meditation upon His word which tells me all I know of this great salvation. Shall I resist His chastening, which is but an indication of His personal interest in me? When my Father blesses me, shall I then grow lax and be destroyed? Let me return again and again to read the confirmation and the word in which I find my hope.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

I am not going to share my testimony of conversion. My evaluation of my own relationship with God could be and undoubtedly is clouded with my own pride and ignorance. I must and will share *His confirmation* of my salvation. To neglect through doubt or mistrust my experience would be easy to do inasmuch as I am only a very fallible human being. But to neglect a salvation so well authenticated by the power of God is indeed a fearful decision.

2. “Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, Like as in the day’ of the trial in the wilderness, “Where your fathers tried me by, proving me, And saw my works forty years.” Hebrews 3:7-9

A. *What Does It Say?*

Such words are most often applied to the non-Christian. The context of the Psalm in which they appear and their position in this epistle both make it obvious that we should relate them to ourselves. How attractive is that single word “today.” The Holy Spirit is speaking it into our ears; what does it mean? With our Holy One there is no yesterday or tomorrow; He lives in the never-ending today. Perhaps He is saying, “As soon as you hear my’ voice, heed it.” He is always speaking, but we are not always listening. We are but creatures of the moment we call time—only for this moment, this fleeting breath or vapor. If in it you hear His voice, how eternally important! Listen! Our enemy is ever ready to suggest tomorrow as a convenient season for listening! Do not heed him. In every today of all of life there is no more important thing to do than to hear His voice. Why’, oh, why’ are we so hesitant to take up the New Testament and allow the Holy’ Spirit to speak to us? Is it because we harden our hearts?

Isn’t it remarkable that we are responsible for the condition of our hearts? They can be tender and responsive or hardened and unresponsive. We must not miss the obvious. We refer to the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who speaks in and through the words of the Psalms. The Holy Spirit was speaking through the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews. Once again we must not miss the point that the Jewish Christians who first read or heard this letter also had inspired prophets who spoke to them the words of the Holy Spirit. Even with all of these means of communication the Holy Spirit often spoke and had no listeners. Having ears does not insure listening. *If* you hear His voice speaking to your need when you read or hear His word, by all means accept it, believe it, and act upon in.

B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Among other thoughts, this text is saying: for each day there is nothing more important than hearing and heeding the words of the Holy Spirit. We should like to list several factors of hardening. Please notice that the hardening or heeding occurs after we have heard Him speak to our needs. As an example,

we want to establish a prayer life; i.e., we do fervently wish to be regular and meaningful in praying throughout the day and in establishing a time for prayers. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in a most unusual circumstance. We have read over the words of Paul a thousand times. He says: “making mention of you always in my prayers.” (Rom. 1:8; Eph. 1:16) It dawns on me that Paul not only prayed (without ceasing) but also had a time for prayers during his busy day. Will I hear His word to me on this important need? I will unless I harden my heart. Do not allow the lust for other things to choke out the word. We all have the capacity for strong desire. Today—when the Holy Spirit speaks to one of my many needs, will I allow the thoughts of the Holy Spirit to grow and develop in my mind until I am filled with a strong desire to do His will? For today there is no more important choice.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

What an example to share with the other members of His body. It would be such an encouragement to be in the company of one who considered the word of the Holy Spirit of primary importance for every day. “What shall I do today?” is an oft asked question. For today we have no larger need or opportunity than to hear and heed the voice of the Spirit.

3. “For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and *were made partakers of the Holy Spirit*, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Hebrews 6:4-6

A. *What Does It Say?*

Please mark the five characteristics of these Hebrew Christians: (1) once enlightened; (2) tasted of the heavenly gift; (3) made partakers of the Holy Spirit; (4) tasted the good word of God; (5) tasted of the powers of the age to come. We do not wish to discuss all these relationships. Perhaps a terse definition would be helpful. (1) *Enlightened* is the privilege of the sons of light. These same persons are so addressed in these words: “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye *were enlightened*, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings.” (10:32) If this does not refer to the conversion of these Jewish believers we are at a great loss to know what is meant. Cf. Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:12; I Thess. 5:5; I Pet. 2:9; I Jn. 2:9-11. (2) *tasted of the heavenly gift*. How utterly ridiculous it is to read attempts to show that tasting is not partaking, as if some tasted but others ate. Will such persons say such of our Lord who “tasted death for every man”? (2:9) To taste, as used here, is to be a partaker or participant. We equate the “heavenly gift” with the new life in Christ. This is the bread that is come down from heaven to give life to the world. Cf. Jn. 6:33. (3) *partakers of the Holy Spirit*. “To be made a partaker of the Holy Spirit is the peculiar favor of God vouchsafed to the Christian. The world cannot receive it, says Christ (Jn. 14:17). But He is freely promised to all who by faith and obedience put on Christ, and so walk in Him. Thus, for instance, Paul says to the Galatians, ‘*Because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father’ (Gal. 4:6).” (R. Milligan. *The New Testament Commentary. Vol. IX. Epistle to the Hebrews*. Nashville, Tenn., Gospel Advocate Co., 1955, p. 176.) Cf. Rom. 8:9-11. This is the most obvious reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, He who is the birthright of all Christians (Jn. 3:3-5). (4) *tasted of the good word of God*. Milligan gives us a most helpful explanation of the grammatical construction in this phrase. “The Greek word for *taste*,... is followed in the fourth verse by a noun in the genitive case; but here it is followed by a noun in the accusative . . . it is probable that the accusative case is used after the verb in this instance to denote the full and experimental enjoyment of ‘the good word of God,’ and of the powerful demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, which none but the obedient believer in the kingdom of Christ is able to realize (John 7:17; Rom. 12:2). To him, the good word of God sustained, as it is by the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, is the food of the soul; sweeter to his taste than honey, yea, than the honeycomb.” (Milligan, p. 177) (5) *the Powers of the age to come*. We are presently living in “the age to come,” i.e., the Christian dispensation. Those of the Old Testament looked

forward eagerly to this age in which we presently live. The powers of this age began with the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets. This then seems to be a most obvious reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing, supporting and carrying forward the truth of the gospel in the first century. There seems to be a definite progression in these five qualities. Notice: (1) enlightened, (2) experience, (3) partaker, (4) shares in excellence, (5) participation in full powers.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

As we relate this text to the Holy Spirit, we can see that He is a very large part of the Christian's experience. He is the one who has enlightened our hearts by the preaching of the gospel. He is the one who has offered us the taste of the heavenly gift. We share His presence and power in our bodies. He is the inspiration behind the giving of the good word of God. We would have no power without Him. Can such a person fall away and be eternally lost? Please remember as we answer this question that we are discussing figures of speech. They, of course, contain truth, but we can pit one figure against another and make nonsense out of the most sensible subject. Notice: our Lord said of Himself that He was the Good Shepherd. John said of Him that He was the Lamb of God. Can one be at the same time a sheep and a shepherd? Jesus said He was the vine and also that He was the door. Can one be at the same time a vine and a door? We encounter no contradictory thoughts concerning our Lord as long as we do not mix these metaphors. Why should we be so troubled when we read of equally contradictory figures of speech in reference to His followers? We are told that we are placed in the Father's hand and given the promise of heaven, or eternal life. While we remain there in the Father's hand, no one can harm us. We are also told of the son who left the Father's house and found himself in a far country feeding swine. The unprofitable servant is still a servant; yet he is cast out. The unprepared virgin is nonetheless a virgin, but she was an outsider. We must learn the lesson from each figure and must never allow one figure to contradict another.

We see no real problem in this text if we simply use the term "while" instead of "seeing." The continuing action verb is present here. *While* such persons continue in their rebellion, they' cannot be reached; their preoccupation with rejection and rebellion makes them deaf and blind to the life and light of life. Does this mean they will forever and ever thus remain? The text does not discuss this; we have no warrant for concluding on either side.

What Does It Mean To Me?

"Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." We *can* become apostates! Milligan quotes Dean Alford with good effect on this point. Why discuss "renewal" of persons in whom no renewal has taken place? "If they never have believed, never have been regenerated, how can it be more difficult to renew them to repentance, that the heathen or any unregenerate person? Our landmark of exegesis must be to hold fast the plain simple sense of the passage, and recognize the fact that the persons are truly the partakers of the spiritual life—regenerate by the Holy' Spirit." (Milligan, p. 179) And then they became apostate. It can happen to any one of us. How diligent, vigilant, watchful we must be.

C. *How Can I Share it?*

We need to say to others, as we say to ourselves, that they who fall away crucify Christ again. This truth was never spoken more eloquently than in the now famous novel *Quo Vadis (Whither Goest Thou?)*. This is a story' of Peter in the Roman arena. The roar of the wild beasts, the screams of the helpless victims—it all assaulted the sensibilities of Peter. And then an opportunity to escape came to him. It surely must have been the Lord Himself who opened the door to flee. And flee he did! Down the Appian Way went the apostle. He had only gone a mile out of Rome when there stood in the center of the road the One whom he served. Peter saw immediately the scars in His hands and the wounds in His feet.

“Whither goest thou, my Lord?” Peter asked. “Back to the arena to there be crucified again for you.” “No, no, not so, Lord.” “If you will not suffer for me, you are crucifying me again.” Peter turned around and returned to the arena and insisted that he be crucified upside down.

4. “When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly’ into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only’ the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. *The Holy Spirit was showing him this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.* This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.” Hebrews 9:6-9 (N.I.V.)

A. *What Does It Say?*

We ask the reader to refer to the author’s text on Leviticus, pages 251 to 271. The Holy Spirit was behind the directions given for the construction of the tabernacle (Heb. 8:5). He intended that lessons be learned in the form or design of the holy place and the holy of holies. It should have been clear to all that the holy of holies represented heaven and the presence of God. Such being true, it was also evident that a way into heaven for the worshippers had not been opened, i.e., while the first tabernacle stood. Something must occur to change the order of worship if a way into the presence of God was to be provided. In the fullness of time a way was given.

Just how did the Holy Spirit interpret the types and shadows of the Old Testament? It was through the prophets. He spoke through them as well as “the Fathers” to give us the meaning to what would otherwise have no meaning beyond its immediate use.

B. *What Does It Mean?* C. *What Does it Mean To Me?*

This text should teach us several things. One of the most obvious truths is that unless the Holy Spirit has interpreted a type through one of the prophets or apostles, we should be very hesitant to accept a present day claim of an inspired meaning for such a type. Perhaps the Holy Spirit has not even indicated that there is a type present in the text being considered. A classic example is the popular use of the life of Joseph to parallel the life of our Lord. There are many beautiful comparisons, and we have used them, but not one of them is signified by the Holy Spirit, i.e., unless we are prepared to claim the direction of the Holy Spirit in the comparisons we produced. Even such a claim would not be contested if others with just as fervent a claim did not offer contradictory revelations or applications from the same Spirit. Let us identify the source of our observations from the text. It is our human opinion that such and such is a fair comparison or application of the text. Let’s admit our limitations as well as His help.

C. *How Can I Share It?*

We are *not* suggesting we are not given very helpful applications of the inspired text. We equate this with wisdom (Jas. 1:5), but we must be careful to let our listeners know the difference between the Holy Spirit’s interpretation and our own human efforts. When the inspired writer says, “This is that which hath been spoken by the Spirit,” we are more than ready to agree with him and teach it with all the authority of the Holy Spirit, but not until and only when such is stated.

5. “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:14

A. *What Does It Say?*

“But what is meant by ‘the eternal Spirit’ through which Christ offered himself without spot to God? In reply to this query, we have given the following hypotheses: (1) that the expression denotes the Divine nature of Christ (Beza, Ernesti, Ebrard, Delitzsch, Alford); (2) that it means the Holy Spirit (Bleek, Tholuck, Moll); (3) that it signifies the endless and immortal life of Christ (Grotius, Limborch, Schleusner); (4) that it has reference to the glorified and exalted person of Christ (Doderlein, Storr); (5) that it represents the Divine influence by which Christ was moved to offer himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (Kuinoel, Winzer, Stuart). That something may be said in favor of each of these hypotheses, is manifest from the names by which they are supported. But that the first is the true one seems most probable for the following reasons:

(1) It is manifestly the design of the Apostle, in using this expression, to heighten and intensify the value of Christ’s offering. And this he could do in no more effectual way than by telling us that the offering was made and rendered perfect by means of his own Divine nature. It was the sacrifice of his perfect humanity, sustained and supported by his own Divinity, that gave to his offering its infinite value. That it was made in some respects through the will and agency of the Father himself, is proved by the fact that ‘the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world’ (I John 4:14); and that it was made also through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is equally manifest from the fact that it was through the Spirit that the Word became incarnate (Luke 1:35), and that Christ afterward performed his miracles (Matt. 12:28, 31, 32). God bestowed on him the gift of the Spirit without measure (John 3:34), so that it may be truthfully said that under its influence he went to the cross, rose from the dead, ascended to the heavens, and there made an offering for the sins of the world. All this is of course conceded. But it is not to any extraneous influence, but to personal dignity, glory, and Divinity of Christ himself, that the infinite value of his offering is to be ascribed.

(2) This seems to be further indicated by the form of the expression. It is not ‘through the Holy Spirit,’ as we have given in a few manuscripts; . . . nor is it ‘through the eternal Spirit,’ as in our English version, but it is, according to our best authorities, simply, ‘through eternal Spirit,’ that Christ offered himself without spot to God. The eternal Spirit that is here spoken of, as Alford justly observes, ‘is Spirit absolute; Divine Spirit; and thus it is self-conscious, laying down its own course, purely of itself, unbounded by conditions. The animals which were offered had no will, no spirit of their own which could concur with the act of sacrifice. Theirs was a transitory life, or no potency or value. They were offered through law . . . rather than through any consent or agency or counter-agency of their own. But Christ offered himself, with his own consent assisting and empowering the sacrifice. And what was that consent? The consent of what? Of the spirit of a man, such as yours or mine, given in and through our finite spirit, whose acts are bounded by its own allotted space and time, and its own responsibilities? *No*: but the consenting act of his Divine personality—his eternal Spirit his Godhead, which from before time acquiesced in, and wrought with the purpose of the Father’.” (Milligan, p. 255, 256.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

It will be observed by reading Robert Milligan that he does not feel we have here a reference to the Holy Spirit. As much as we admire and respect Robert Milligan, we must beg to differ with him on this point. We reproduce here an argument in favor of the expression referring to the Holy Spirit.

“14 *How much more* reasonable is it that *the blood of Christ, who* in obedience to God suffered death, and *through the eternal Spirit,* being raised from the dead, *offered himself* a victim *without fault to God,* should have merit sufficient to *cleanse your conscience from the guilt of works which deserve death;* that is, banish from your mind the fear of punishment, that ye may be fit to *worship the living God* with the hope of acceptance?

“Besides, the common reading is found in most MSS.— Christ is said to have offered himself *through* the eternal Spirit, because he was raised from the dead by the Spirit, I Pet. 3, 18; consequently he

was enabled by the Spirit to offer himself to God; that is, to present his crucified body before the throne of God in heaven.”

2. To worship the living God.) –the epithet *living* is given in scripture to God, to signify the greatness of his power, which might deter sinners from approaching him in acts of worship, if they were not assured of pardon through the sacrifice of Christ. –To give *the blood* or death of Christ this efficacy, was a proper reward of his obedience to death.” (James Macknight. *Apostolical Epistles*. Nashville, Tenn., Gospel Advocate Co., 1960, p. 548.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

If the blood of Christ does not cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God, it will make little difference whether we have here a reference to the Holy Spirit or not. The human conscience is God’s divine umpire, placed in every man to call “the plays” of life. How shall this umpire or monitor of life be cleansed? Please notice first from what he is to be cleansed – “dead works.” When shall we consider a work dead? When it has utterly failed of accomplishment after many, many attempts. Such “works” have moral overtones; i.e., we feel guilty when we do not succeed. It is our conscience that has called “foul” on us and identified our failures. Such faulty attempts have accumulated; the list is very large. Our conscience has accumulated an immense record of “dead” projects, plans of good deeds that turned out to be dead works. Evidently memory functions with our conscience. The conscience could not be cleansed of past failures if it did not have recollections. (We are not unaware of the Old Testament works of the law in view in this text. We are simply choosing a present day application.)

What a wonder and a joy to accept the fact that our blessed Lord as an eternal Being under the direction, approval and power of the Holy Spirit appears in the presence of God as our great High Priest with His own blood to offer on our behalf. This is a continuing action; it is happening right now. *Now* no work is a failure. If it does not succeed, we can confess our failures (sin), and immediately the blood of Jesus will cleanse our hearts (conscience), and the work is gone, forgotten, forgiven. Cf. I John 1:7-9. The sense of guilt must never override the power of the blood. The words of a very often sung hymn speak of this very subject, but they are seldom so understood.

“Would you do service for Jesus your king?

There is power in the blood.

Would you live daily His praises to sing?

There is wonderful power in the blood.”

Actually we can only serve the living God when we claim daily the intercessory work of our eternal High Priest who is always making intercession for us through His own blood. What confidence and freedom we can have in our service for Him!

D. *How Can I Share It?*

It seems we have a constant recurring need for an emphasis of this truth. It is only when we are able to keep a balance between grace and law that we have anything to share with others. Sin *does* make us guilty before God. We cannot, must not, need not continue in sin that grace might abound. Mistakes, failures, sins committed in spite of and in the midst of sincere effort are in view here. An open and immediate confession of them can keep our conscience constantly clean. Our service then is in the joy of a good conscience cleansed constantly by His blood.

6. “And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said, This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws on their heart, And upon their mind also will I write them;” Hebrews 10:15, 16

We have considered the important work of the Holy Spirit in speaking into existence the Holy Scriptures, and the equally important subject of His work of interpreting the Old Covenant. We could say nothing here that we have not said several times before. We refer you to these comments.

7. “of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and *hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*” *Hebrews 10:29*

This verse appears in the midst of a passage on the subject of apostasy (10:26-29). We have so much confusion upon this subject that we have chosen to reproduce Robert Milligan’s splendid comments upon these verses in answer to our first question.

A. *What Does It Say?*

“26. *For if we sin willfully*, etc.—To sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth is the same as to apostatize from Christ, for which there is no forgiveness. See notes on ch. 6:4-6. The use of the present participle shows that the sin is not one of error or inadvertence; not a sin of momentary excitement . . . but rather that it is a sin of *habit*; a sin that is willingly and deliberately persisted in; a sin that is committed with a high hand and in open violation and contempt of God’s law. For the law in reference to these two classes of sins, see Num. 15:22-31. The word rendered *knowledge* means more than a mere objective knowledge . . . of the truth. It rather denotes a full experimental knowledge, such as we gain by the active application of our minds to the study of the truth. And hence it is of ‘those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come,’ that our author speaks. If such persons apostatize from Christ,

“*There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*: or rather, There remaineth *no longer* . . . a sacrifice for sins. The idea of the Apostle is not simply that those who presumptuously reject the sacrifice of Christ can obtain salvation through no other; but further, he means to say that in the case of such high-handed transgressors, even the sacrifice of Christ is no longer available. The man who was once a Christian, a true child of God, and who as such was made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and yet falls away as an apostate from Christ, can obtain no more forgiveness in any way. ‘His desperate condition,’ as Delitsch justly remarks, ‘is both the natural consequence of this willful error, and also a condign punishment inflicted by the Divine hand. He not only shuts himself from grace, but the door of repentance is shut behind him; and he has before him only the prospect of a damnation from which there is no escape.

“27. *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment*.— This is the fearful condition of every apostate from Christ. Cut off from all hope of being saved, nothing remains for him but a certain fearful anticipation of coming judgment and a fervor of fire which will finally consume all the enemies of God. There seems to be an allusion here to the fire which came out from God and consumed the two hundred and fifty Levites who participated in the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16:35); and perhaps also to the destruction of Nadab, Abihu, and other like rebels against the Divine government. . . . So, God himself is represented as a consuming fire (ch. 12:29), before whom all the wicked will finally perish (II Thess. 1:8). This thought our author now proceeds to illustrate still further by a reference to the law of Moses.

“28. *He that despised Moses’ law*, etc.—The Apostle does not speak here of all manner of sins and transgressions committed under the Old Covenant, but only of such as were committed ‘with a high hand,’ and in open rebellion against God and in contempt of his government: such, for example, as the sin of idolatry; the law concerning which was inexorably laid down as follows: ‘If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought

wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: then thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you' (Deut. 17:2-7).

“This is the best possible commentary on our text . It proves beyond all doubt that for the apostate under the Old Covenant there was no forgiveness. And now he proceeds to show by an argument *a minori ad majus*, that the case of the apostate under the superior light and privileges of the New Covenant, is even more intolerable.

“29. *Of how much sorer punishment*, etc.—The lesson is taught by our Lord himself, that wherever much is given, there also is much always required. ‘That servant,’ he says, “who knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more’ (Luke 12:47, 48). And just so our author reasons in the case before us. If the apostate under the Old Covenant was punished with so great severity, much more shall the apostate, who under the superior light of the New Covenant has trampled under foot the Son of God, and accounted the blood of the covenant by means of which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace, suffer the extreme penalties of the divine law. The threefold specification of his guilt is given here for the purpose of more clearly defining the desperately wicked and abandoned course of the apostate. Let us notice each of these in order:

“(1) *He ha/h trodden under foot the San of God*: the ineffably glorious and perfect Being who in infinite condescension became flesh and died to redeem him; who in a word, did all that Heaven could do to save him from his sins, and to make him an heir of honor, glory, and immortality;—this is the Being whom the apostate, as far as he can, now tramples under foot, and treats as an object of extreme hatred and contempt! What else can such a one expect but the extreme terrors and torments of the coming judgment.

“(2) *He bath counted*, etc.—The word rendered *unholy* ... means (a) what is common; and (b) what is unholy or impure. Its secondary meaning is to be preferred here as being more in harmony with the context. The apostate treats this blood, by means of which he was himself once sanctified, as an unholy and impure thing. The use of the word *sanctified* . shows very clearly that the subject of the discourse was once a Christian, a true child of God, and prospectively an heir of glory. But now he is a child of the devil and an enemy of all righteousness.

“(3) *He bath done despite to the Spirit of grace*.—That is, to the Holy Spirit. He is here called the Spirit of grace, because through Him God imparts all grace, comfort, and salvation to our helpless and sinful race. By Him, Christ himself worked all his miracles (Man. 12:28) ; and by Him, he convinces the world of sin, or righteousness, and .of judgment (John 16:8); and by Him, he comforts his saints and helps their infirmities (John 7:39; Rom. 7:26). To insult this Spirit, then, as does the apostate, is manifestly the height of all wickedness, maliciousness, and impiety. And hence, as Christ says (Matt. 12:32), for those who do so there is no forgiveness. Nothing remains for them but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a jealousy of fire which will devour all the adversaries of God.” (Milligan, p. 285-287.)

B. What Does It Mean?

This is the third in the elements used to describe the apostate. He offers insult and outrage to the very Person or Power through whom the highest and best influences come to mankind. It is to a loving, living, gracious Person that such insult is given. All the gifts and graces of the New Covenant are summed up in Him. A more fearful sin could not be imagined. To once know Him as the Holy Comforter and then to turn and blaspheme the very Communicator of Grace is the grossest of sins. Such a sin will surely bring down the vengeance of God.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Could we dare say that such an attitude or action can have but remote application to our lives as Christians? Wait a moment. Take heed! The descriptions here given in the negative sense when reversed describe a devoted follower of our Lord. If such apostasy were not possible, there would be no point to the warning. Let us earnestly endeavor to avoid grieving Him (Eph. 4:30). Here is a reference which has been a help to me. "To this man will I look, (saith the Lord Almighty) even to him that is poor (in spirit), and of a contrite heart, and trembleth at My word" (Isa. 66:2). Dear Lord, make me that man! How proud and self-sufficient I have often been; it is so easy to defend my position rather than to admit my weakness and sin. May I often remember that humility is not weakness. True sorrow for sin is a rare quality today. Contrition should be a daily attitude, not an act of embarrassment when we are caught in sin. Dear God, I want to be that genuinely humble man who hourly recognizes he is living by grace. If we never trembled before, we should tremble now as we stand before this passage of His word! However, unless I can stand in awe before all of His word, the warnings will somehow lose their meaning until it is too late, i.e., when each of them finds fulfillment in fact.

D. How Can I Share it?

It would be most helpful to read this passage of scripture every week, or perhaps more often. In America it is much too easy to lose by default. We do indeed neglect our great salvation. Please remember that if we are not recommending by example the communion and filling of the Holy Spirit, we are recommending by neglect what could ultimately lead to the apostasy here described.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JAMES

THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? *Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?*” James 4:5

This verse is part of a section that begins with the fourth verse and ends with the first half of the eighth verse. believe the understanding of this verse in its context *so* important. For this reason we shall combine all four of our usual questions in a careful discussion of this section by Donald Fream.

“DEDICATION TO GOD ALONE IS THE ONLY ANSWER.

Text 4:4-8a

4. Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever would be a friend of the world, maketh himself an enemy of God.
5. Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?
6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the Scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.
7. Be subject therefore unto God: but resist the devil and he will flee from you.
8. Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you.

Queries

1. “Do you think the term ‘adulteress’ refers to people who commit the physical sin of adultery, or is that used in a figurative sense?”
2. “Assuming that the term ‘adulteresses’ refers to spiritual adultery, are there any other cases in the Scripture where the term is used to your knowledge to refer to spiritual adultery of those who are ‘married’ to God?”
3. “Why do you think ‘adulteresses’ is used in the feminine case here?”
4. “why do you think the King James translators wanted to add the masculine ‘adulterers’ to the phrase? (It is not in the original Greek.)”
5. “Try in this verse to identify the adulteress, the person the adulteress is ‘married’ to, and the person with whom the adultery is committed. (*They* are all referred to in v. 4.)”
6. “What does the term enmity’ suggest to you?”
7. Do you think the adultery described in v. 4 is a very common thing?”
8. “‘The World’ refers to what (Don’t just say ‘world,’ but name what it probably refers to rocks and trees; money; people, a certain kind of people, or what?”
9. “Is friendliness with the unsaved forbidden in v.4. What can ‘friendship of the world’ mean?”
10. “When does the Spirit take up His dwelling within us? (v. 5)”
11. “For what, do you think, the Spirit in us longs?”
12. “Do you think, envy, or jealousy, is too strong a word to refer to the Spirit?”
13. “Can envy be a good thing? If so, under what circumstances?”
14. “Who gives the grace, God the Father or the Holy Spirit? Does it really make any difference? Why so or why not?”
15. “He gives more grace . . . more than what?”
16. “How is the ‘proud’ in verse 6 related to verse 4?”
17. “The term ‘the Scripture’ in v. 6 is not in the original. The subject is not stated. Can you think of

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- anything else that might possibly be the subject other than the Scripture?
18. “‘Humility’ suggests that something is to be surrendered, given up. What?
 19. “Who are the humble of v. 6?
 20. “Grace is an unmerited favor. What is the favor bestowed in v. 6?
 21. “In v. 7, *therefore* refers back to what?
 22. “Note how *being subject* and *resisting* are opposite actions.
 23. “The action of the devil when he is resisted is clearly stated, But what is the action of God? (v. 7) when a person is subject to Him?
 24. “Love begets love, and obviously ‘drawing nigh’ begets ‘drawing nigh’ in v. 8. What might be implied if we resist God.
 25. “Why do you think we wish to classify v. 8a with v. 7 in this section?

Paraphrases

- “A. 4:4. You who break the marriage vows to God by embracing the world, don’t you know better than this? Your affection for the pleasures of this life have made you so hostile to God you have made yourself to become His enemy.
5. Or perhaps you simply think the Word of God does not mean what it says! The Spirit that lives inside us longs for our affection even to the point of jealous envy.
 6. But the Spirit gives us a greater measure of undeserved blessing in order that we might yet accomplish His will. To this end it says, ‘God arranges Himself against the proud but gives unmerited favor to the humble.’
 7. Therefore set yourself under God’s authority and align yourself against Satan, and he will run away from you.
 8. Come close to God and He will come close to you.
- “B. 4:4. You are like an unfaithful wife who loves her husband’s enemies. Don’t you realize that making friends with God’s enemies—the evil pleasures of this world—makes God your enemy? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy the evil pleasure of the unsaved world, you cannot also be a friend of God.
5. Or what do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the Holy Spirit, Whom God has placed within us, watches over us with tender jealousy?
 6. But He gives us strength to stand against all such evil longings. As the Scriptures say, God gives strength to the humble but sets Himself against the proud and haughty.
 7. So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
 8. And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you.

Summary

“Your adultery with the world leaves God’s Spirit yearning for you, so submit yourselves to God, your husband, and resist the devil.

Comment

“Universally, adultery is a particularly obnoxious sin. Because of the devil’s deception and because of sensuous pleasures involved, the obnoxiousness is not always apparent to the participants at the moment of involvement. But to those sinned against, the very thought is repellent. A man’s most prized possession is his wife, and a wife’s most precious possession is her husband. Adultery is the sin that contaminates the preciousness of that possession. A jealousy is provoked, but not as much a jealousy of what is, but a jealousy of what was. A singleness of devotion and a giving of one’s self to only one person is one of the prized rights of marriage. He or she who has lost this single devotion of the mate and has shared their mate’s body with another has been deeply hurt over a terrible loss. And that which was lost cannot be returned in its former singleness and purity. The knowledge of the inability to return to the purity of the former state is part of the irreparable loss.

“It is God who has given man this most precious of all human relations ... marriage. From the very beginning of man, He ordained that a particularly godlike kind of person would be a one-woman man and a one-man woman, and ‘Till death do us part’ is engrained into the entire framework of marriage from the beginning. So emphatically is the sin described in the New Testament that Paul has stated by the Spirit of God ‘Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men ... shall inherit the kingdom of God.’ (I Cor. 6:9-10).

It is recognized that he or she who commits this sin may repent and return to a wholesome relationship with God even as they may repent of any sin. It *is* the continued practice of any sin that makes a proper relationship with God impossible. And this is just the point of spiritual adultery!

As terrible as physical adultery is, there is an adultery more terrible yet! This is spiritual adultery. Of course, he who continues in physical adultery is also committing spiritual adultery. And what is this ‘spiritual adultery?’

Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ. When we obeyed the Lord in full surrender through baptism, He added us to His body, the church. This church body is also called the ‘bride’ of Christ, for whom Christ will one day come and receive unto Himself. After a discussion of the relationship of husband and wife, in which the Spirit speaks of a pure love, being holy and without blemish, He says, ‘For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great: *but I speak in regard of Christ and the church.*’ So we, the members that make up the bride of Christ, are presented to Him ‘a glorious church, not having spot or blemish.’ (See Ephesians 5:22-33).

To embrace the ‘world,’ with its sensuous pleasures and carnal appetites being put ahead of devotion to Christ, *is* spiritual adultery. To love anything or anyone ahead of God is spiritual adultery. The prophet Hosea’s unblushing faithfulness and continued love for a harlot wife is so vividly described that it appears repulsive (and was obviously intended to so appear), and even shock’s one moral sense. And through the prophet’s situation, the lesson from Jehovah went forth to Israel, who had for generations been committing spiritual adultery. The love of Jehovah for his bride is magnificent beyond understanding, and the indifferent adultery of Israel is worthy of all abhorrence. If the message through Hosea could not shock Israel to repent of her spiritual adultery, surely nothing could.

And so it is the Holy Spirit speaks through the same message. The ones who are married to God have embraced the world as their first love, and have thus committed adultery. In this friendship with the world they have made themselves an enemy of God and a friend of His enemy. The Holy Spirit that dwells within the Christian yearns and longs for that saint’s devotion as the bride of Christ.

Loving the world more than loving Christ is a sin so common with Christians that it would seem few know the terrible adultery involved. Yet James says, ‘Ye adulteresses, don’t you know better than this?’ The very nature of sin is to so deceive ‘the sinner that he soon is unable to tell right from wrong. The longer the sin is embraced, the denser is the veil drawn over the eyes of understanding.

For this reason there is a desperate earnestness in admonishing the saint to give up sin and wrongdoing. This is evident in the Spirit’s endeavor to warn the Christian before he embraces sin too long to again see and recognize the truth. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven New Testament books are addressed to Christians and filled with pleas to shun the embrace of the world and to cling steadfastly to Christ Jesus.

The saint, too, should feel the same desperate circumstances when a brother becomes engaged in spiritual adultery. To love the pleasures of this life James calls ‘friendship of the world.’ This perpetual

adultery breaks the heart of God and soon passes the point of toleration of the Christian involved. The Christian who refuses to repent soon finds his love for ungodly things of this life has changed himself into an enemy of God. He actually has a hostility toward God that keeps growing to the point of hatred. This is the meaning of ‘enmity with God.’ Thus one who once loved God can, through continued sin, become a God-hater and an enemy of God.

This continued spiritual adultery is not a sin that is done accidentally, but a life that is lived deliberately and continually. Willful choice is clearly implied by the usage of the word ‘would.’ ‘Whosoever *would* be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.’ The point is, whosoever would wish to be; or would desire or intend to be.

It might even be implied from this section that the desire to be a friend of the world could be in the heart without doing the deeds of sin; and still the person could become an enemy of God because of the adultery in his heart. Thus, a person who names the name of Christ, yet spends his hours and his heart’s devotion in longing and lusting for the sensuousness and rottenness of this life could develop a hearty hostility toward God that would lead him to be God’s enemy. This inner hatred for God might not be evident to the saints of the church, until one day it breaks forth in an act of such hatred toward godliness and such embracing of worldliness that the entire brotherhood is “shocked” by the ‘sudden fall.’

It might appear that ‘overnight’ the person has changed from a devoted saint to a devoted sinner. ‘He’s not in his right mind,’ ‘he must be insane,’ would be typical remarks. In shocked disbelief, the saints who observe such a one might tremble at the possibility of a sudden fall that appears to completely transform the character in an instant. The warnings of the Spirit, however, indicate that the fall is not sudden, but began with a desire in the heart that was fed and nurtured to the point of making oneself an enemy of God.

“Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain?” There is a problem in this portion. What Scripture is speaking in vain? A single passage? A quote that follows? If this is so, then that which follows should be a Scriptural quote: ‘The Spirit which he made to dwell in us doth long unto envying.’ The difficulty is that the particular sentence is used nowhere else in the Bible! Such versions as the Revised Standard that use this sentence as a direct quote are unable to refer the reader to the passage quoted!

The more acceptable reading would be to understand that *all* the Scripture is speaking in vain. It is foreign to the tone and teaching of all revelation that a man could be a friend of God’s enemy and a friend of God at the same time. This lesson is evident in every account of sinful man from the beginning. From Cain and Abel through all the Patriarchs; from the beginning ‘to the end of the children of Israel; within the Lord’s own apostles, the lesson is clear: a man cannot serve both God and the devil. He must hate the one or despise the other. If he is not for the Lord, he is against Him.

The last portion of verse five is more difficult yet. Whether or not it is a quote, it is still difficult to determine exactly what is said. Some of the difficulties in this portion bring up these considerations: Is it a question, or a statement? Who does the yearning? If it is God, or the Holy Spirit that longs, does He, or does He not, long unto envy?

The Revised Standard seems to indicate that God longs jealously over man’s spirit which He made to dwell in man. The American Standard seems to indicate that the spirit of man which God made to dwell in man longs to the point of envy. (If so, he longs for and is envious of what?) The King James, like the American Standard makes the sentence a direct quote. The Revised Standard does not make the sentence a direct quote, but makes it a question. (If the reader is not confused yet, let him look up a few more translations for himself!)

The clearer and most compatible rendering (to this writer) would be to say, ‘Or do you think that the

Scripture (as a whole) speaks to no profit? The (Holy) Spirit which God made to dwell in us longs (for us) to (the point of) envy.’

The preference for the above exposition rests upon the phrase ‘which He made to dwell in us.’ The gift of the Spirit is promised to those who are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38). The Christian’s body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit which he has from God and which dwells in him. (I Cor. 6:19). The saint has the down payment of the Holy Spirit in his heart. (II Cor. 1:22). Since this is one of the major teachings of the New Testament, it seems most natural to understand that it is the Holy Spirit that God made to dwell in us, and He longs for our alienated affections even to the point of envy.

This longing and yearning of the Spirit (or God, if you prefer) for the adulterous saint’s affection is heartbreaking. In this longing we hear Jesus weeping over adulterous Jerusalem; and if we look closely, we will see His fresh tears today as countless members of His bride break His heart afresh. Oh, if we could only realize His love and understand His mercy. How we need to hear the groanings by which the Spirit makes intercession for us. The grace upon grace by which we live should break our hearts. Because He first loved us, we can now love Him with His kind of love. And we can love Him to the point of full surrender—to the point of keeping His commandments.

But He (whoever was doing the longing in the previous verse) giveth more grace.’ This giving of grace comes from the Holy Spirit of verse five (or the Father), but certainly not from man’s spirit. This reinforces the argument that it is not man’s spirit in verse five that is longing. It is man that needs this grace because his adultery has caused the Spirit’s longing. It is a greater grace (marginal reading) that this man needs, as is shown by his sin.

But what is this grace that is given? Grace is usually thought of as an unmerited favor of forgiveness. Justification and forgiveness are truly the greatest graces of all, but certainly not the only graces. Every good gift is from God, and is an unmerited favor. Having done all, I have earned nothing of His gifts. This grace is more likely the attributes necessary to be an overcomer. When a man returns back ‘home’ to the Spirit that yearns for him, and yields himself in full surrender, then the Spirit favors that man with strength and help in living the surrendered life. He would never have the strength otherwise.

‘Because of this (it) saith,’ probably refers to the Scripture; but here, unlike verse five, is a definite quote from Proverbs 3:34, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.’ If it is the Scripture that does the saying, then the subject immediately follows the verb. (The Greek verb is actually impersonal, with no subject: it says).

James use of the Proverbs’ quotation showing God (Jehovah) to be the author of grace is a direct implication of the deity of the Holy Spirit. This is true if the Holy Spirit is the author of the grace in 6a and the longing in 5. This is what should be expected when the unity of the Spirit and the Father are considered along with many scriptural implications concerning the deity of the Spirit.

The meaning of the proverbs quotation is that the proud man centers his life in himself and the gratification of his senses. He makes himself an enemy of God, so God resists him, or arranges Himself against him.

On the other side, the humble man is one who denies himself, and he is more likely to take up the cross and follow Christ. God gives him grace that he might do just this. It is this humble man that responds to the yearning of the Spirit, so the grace is given to him that his response might be complete.

There is a very interesting relationship between the subjection and the resisting in verse 6b and 7. God sets Himself against those who set themselves against His authority. Pride and stubbornness make a

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man arrange himself against the authority of God; and like similar poles on a magnet, our repulsive action toward either God or the devil will likewise draw repulsion in return. Thus, when man is proud in resisting God, then God resists the proud; when man resists the devil, then the devil flees from man.

The opposite action is also clearly pictured: when man gives himself in subjection to God (is humble), then God gives grace. When man gives himself in subjection to the devil, then he is in 'turn devoured by the devil as by a roaring lion. Verse 8 clearly pictures the mutual attraction between God and man: 'Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.'

James makes it quite clear that God has allowed man to be master of his own destiny. Man's choice of heaven or hell rests on man's choice of God or the devil. The amazing thing about the entire system of grace is that God allows man to choose heaven and God's love even though man has earned the devil's destiny. The grace of God gives man the opportunity. The will and choice of man is the key. Man must choose to be with God, so God forces no man into heaven.

God's active participation in the redemption of man is clearly set forth many places in the Scripture. God calls, God loves, God gives grace, God saves. Although God's sacrifice and God's call are universal, the application of that salvation offered is *limited by man's own choice*. 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve' is the plea doubly emphasized in the New Testament. This is the emphasis of James. James, however, is making very clear the principle that the choice of man is not manifest in a passive, non-participating faith. A wishful thought and a vague yearning for God in the man who continually surrenders his life and action to the devil does not constitute a choice for God. We 'draw nigh' with our active life, and we 'cleanse our hands' with a repentant and pure life. (Donald Fream. *A Chat, z of Jewels from James and Jude*. Joplin, Mo., College Press, 1965, p. 161-171)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I PETER

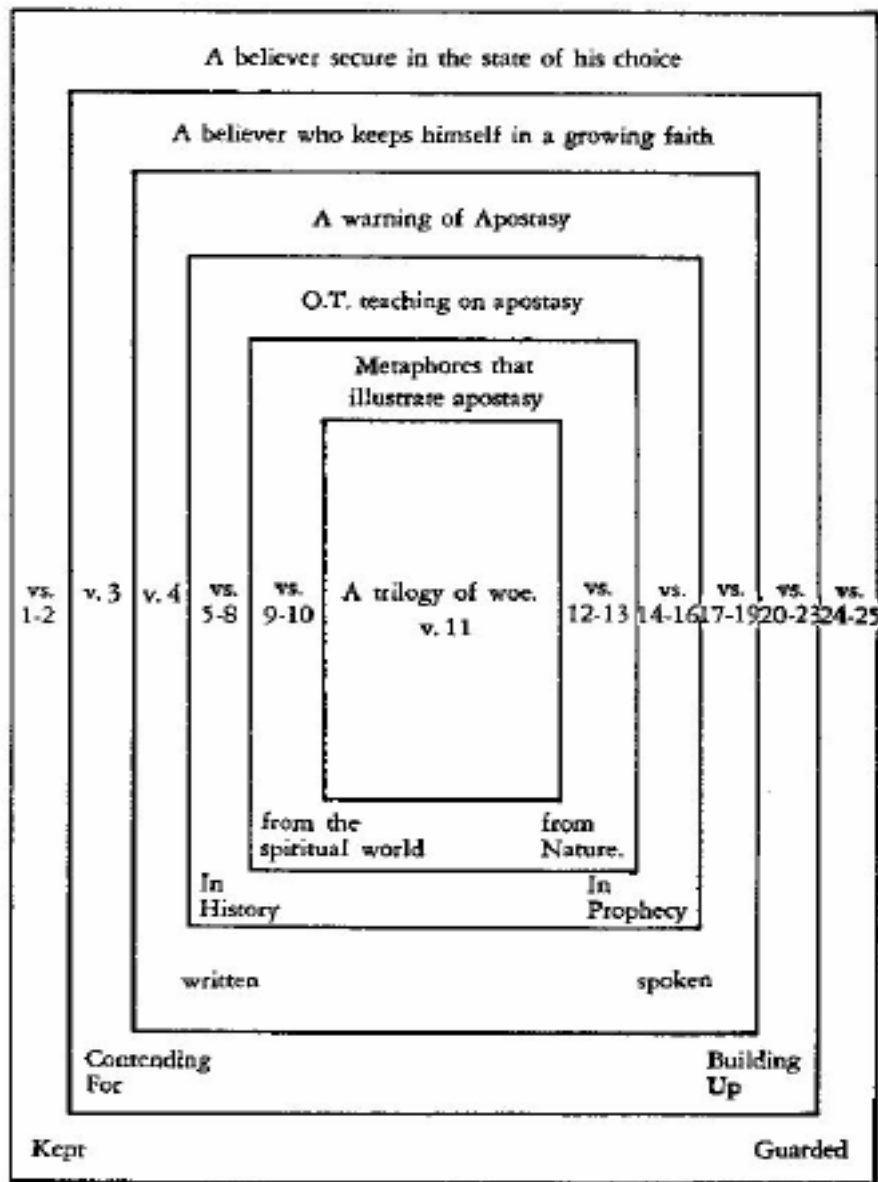
THERE ARE FOUR REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I PETER.

1. “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *in sanctification of the Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” I Peter 1:2, 2

A. *What Does It Say?*

Because Raymond C. Kelcy has said it so well in his commentary *The Letters of Peter and Jude* of the Living Word series, we reproduce them here with permission.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE ON APOSTASY



—ON APOSTASY

“Further describing the people ‘to whom he writes, Peter says, *sanctified by the Spirit*. In the Greek this is in the form of a prepositional phrase and literally rendered would be ‘in’ or ‘by’ sanctification ‘of Spirit.’ ‘Of Spirit’ (subjective genitive indicates that the work of sanctification, setting apart, consecration, is done by the Holy Spirit. The phrase clearly is to be connected with the word *chosen* and indicates that these people were *chosen* in connection with the Spirit’s work of sanctification. *The Spirit* sanctifies, sets apart, through the instrumentality of the word (John 17:17; cf. 1 Thess. 1:4f; 2 Thess. 2:13). There is a sense in which one is sanctified at the ‘time of conversion. Thus Paul can speak to the Corinthians as ‘those sanctified in Christ Jesus’ (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11). However, there is also a sense in which the process of sanctification continues in the Christian. The Christian is to become more holy, more consecrated, more separate. This explains why Paul could pray that Christians may be sanctified ‘wholly’ (1 Thess. 5:23). God calls people for this kind of life (see 1 Thess. 4:7 where the same word used by Peter is translated holiness). A Christian is *chosen* of God in the realm of the Spirit’s work of sanctification.

“Though some prefer to connect the phrase *for obedience ... and for sprinkling* with *sanctified*, it seems more accurate to consider it as the third prepositional phrase to be construed with *chosen*. The purpose for which these people were *chosen* is thus designated. God chose them with the purpose in mind of their being obedient. *Obedience* is a goal or purpose of the choice (see 1:14; cf. 1 Thess. 4:7; Rom. 1:5). Furthermore, God chose them that they might, in addition to being obedient, be sprinkled *with the blood* of Jesus Christ. The thought is that they might appropriate the blood which was shed for them. One appropriates the blood when he becomes a Christian, but he also continues to appropriate it throughout his life. He constantly stands in need of being sprinkled with the blood (1 John 1:7). There is an illusion here to the sprinkling of the people at the time of the giving of the law (Ex. 24:7, 8; cf. Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Heb. 9:15-23; 10:22; 12:24). The word *sprinkling* in the present passage is to be taken figuratively as referring to the appropriation of the merits of Christ’s blood. The figure is borrowed from the Old Testament practice.” (Raymond C. Kelcy. *The Letters of Peter and Jude*. Austin, Texas, R. B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1972, p. 18-19).

B. *What Does it Mean?*

It will be well from time to time to review the essential purpose of these questions.

- (1) *What Does It Say?* refers to the meaning of words in the original language.
- (2) *What Does It Mean?* refers to the meaning of the words in the context in which the reference appears and in other related references.
- (3) *What Does it Mean To Me?* refers to the reference’s personal application to life, the personal use of the principle involved.
- (4) *How Can I Share it?* refers to the evangelistic emphasis, if there is such an emphasis in the text.

Please refer to our comments on II Thess. 2:13 in which we discuss the relationship of the Holy Spirit and sanctification. We have said often before that sanctification is both a position and a process. In what sense can we say the Holy Spirit is the cause of our sanctification? He has become the whole reason for our *set-apart position*. It is because of His presence within us that we want to be holy. Our bodies are sanctified because they are His sanctuary. Our words are sanctified in our awareness of what He wants us to say. The essential means used by the Holy Spirit for our separateness is His word to us. Our whole life becomes different because of Him.

C. *What Does it Mean To Me?*

Without holiness or sanctification no man shall see the Lord—in this life or the life to come. Sanctification by the Spirit is not an optional matter. It should be of real interest for us to notice that in both references in which sanctification and the Holy Spirit are associated (II Thess. 2:13, 14; I Pet. 1:2) obedience becomes a vital part of the subject: “belief of the truth” and “*obedience* accompanied with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” (Cf. Heb. 10:22) We are called upon “to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.” If we are not willing to stay away from literature, television or movies which we know from sad experience will corrupt our hearts there is no way the Holy Spirit can do His work of sanctification in us. If we will not regulate our time in such a manner that we can meditate on His word both day and night, there is no way (short of a crisis) that the Holy Spirit can accomplish His beautiful, fragrant work of holiness in our character. Do you want to be holy or just saved from hell?

D. *How Can I Share It?*

It would have been impossible for the priests and the Levites not to share with the rest of Israel that they were priests or Levites. Their clothes and their lineage and their camp and their camp standard all set them apart, or sanctified them in the eyes of the whole nation. Such external separateness is not ours, except as we make our immodesty or greed a moral issue.. Our holiness is shared in a far more

meaningful manner by our total demeanor, by our attitudes in this and that of daily living. Do we laugh at double-meaning remarks? Worse yet, are we sanctimonious in our holiness or just like our Lord who was a friend of sinners, but God's holy Son?

2. "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time *the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.*" I Peter 1:10, 11

A. *What Does it Say?*

Because we appreciate the careful expression of Raymond C. Kelcy we quote from him again in answer to this question.

"[10] Having spoken of 'the salvation of your souls' (vs. 9), Peter goes ahead to say that *prophets* of old had longed to know more about *this salvation*. He speaks of them as *the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours*. Old Testament prophets had foretold future deliverance for men of all nations and had specifically foretold the inclusion of Gentiles (e.g., Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Isa. 10:11; 52:15; 65:1; Psalm 18:49; Amos 9:11, 12; cf. Luke 1:70; 24:46, 47). In some passages of the New Testament the word *grace* is used in connection with the calling of Gentiles (e.g., Acts 11:23; 15:11; Eph. 3:2, 8). However, the readers were not exclusively Gentiles, and the word *grace* may be used to describe God's blessings provided for all, both Jew and Gentile.

"Though the prophets wrote of a future deliverance, they saw it indistinctly. God did not reveal it to them in plainness of detail. However, they understood enough that their desire was aroused to know more. Hence they *searched and inquired* with eager minds. The word from which *searched* is translated means to seek out or search for (other passages in which the word occurs are: Luke 11:50; Acts 15:17; Rom. 3:11; Heb. 11:6; 12:17). The word from which *inquired* is translated means to inquire carefully and occurs only here in the New Testament.

"[11] As the prophets searched and inquired about the salvation which they foretold, they sought to know *what person or time* was indicated by that which the *Spirit of Christ* revealed to them. The word from which *indicated* comes is a Greek imperfect which shows that *the Spirit* was all along indicating these things. These prophets also desired to know more about *the time* in which these wonderful predictions would find fulfillment. The word in the original indicates that they sought to know what sort of time, something of the character of the age in which their prophecies would be fulfilled.

"Peter speaks of the *Spirit of Christ* within the prophets, evidently referring to the Holy Spirit. Paul also uses this designation to refer to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). New Testament writers refer to the Holy Spirit in this way probably because of the fact 'that the sending of the *Spirit* was the work of *Christ*' (John 16:7; Acts 2:33). In attributing the teachings of the prophets to the *Spirit of Christ*, Peter is in effect affirming that the same *Spirit* which spoke through him and the other apostles also spoke through Old Testament prophets (cf. 2 Peter 1:21).

"The specific truths indicated by the Spirit to the prophets causing them to desire more information were *the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory*. Various Old Testament passages indicate messianic suffering (e.g., Isa. 53; Psalm 22; Dan. 9:25-27; cf. Luke 24:45, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:23). *Glory* following that *suffering* is also a theme of prophecy (Isa. 53:10-12; Psalm 2:1-6; 16:8-11; Cf. Acts 2:27, 28; 3:13). The resurrection of Christ, his ascension, coronation, and other glorious events connected with the gospel age fulfill this item of prophecy. Peter later gives emphasis to the fact that for God's people glory will follow suffering (4:13)." (Kelcy, p. 27-29)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Leighton has some most helpful thoughts on these verses. “The doctrine of salvation, mentioned in the former verse, as the end of our Christian faith is illustrated in these words, from its antiquity, dignity, and infallible truth.

“It is no modern invention; for the prophets enquired after it, and foretold it in former ages from the beginning. Thus the prejudice of novelty is removed, that usually meets the most ancient ‘truth in its new discoveries.

“Again, it is no mean thing that such men as were of unquestioned eminency in wisdom and holiness did so much study and search after; and having found it out, were careful not only to publish it in their own times, but to record it to posterity; and this not by the private motion of their own spirits, but by the actions and guidance of the Spirit of God, which likewise sets the truth of their testimony above all doubtfulness and uncertainty.

“But taking those three verses entirely together, we have in them these three things, testifying how excellent the doctrine of the gospel is: 1. We have the principal author of it; 2. The matter of it; 3. The worth of those that are exercised about it, *viz*, the best of men, the prophets and apostles, in administering it, and the best of all the creatures, the angels, in admiring it.

“1. The first author is the absolutely *first*, the Spirit of God in the prophets, ver. 11, in the apostles, ver. 12. But ver. 11, the Spirit of Christ there, is the same Spirit that he sent down on his disciples after his ascending to glory, and which spoke in his prophets before his descending to the earth. It is the Spirit of Christ, proceeding jointly from him with the Father, as he is the Son of God, and dwelling most richly and fully in him as the Son of man.

“The Holy Ghost is in himself holiness, and the source and worker of holiness, and author of this holy doctrine that breathes nothing but holiness, and urges it most pressingly upon all that receive it.” (*The Works of Robert Leighton, D. D. Archbishop of Glasgow*. London, T. Nelson and Sons, 1860, p. 34.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

It is most difficult for us to attempt to project ourselves back several centuries before our Lord. The careful research done by several scholars is a real help to us. The Holy Spirit, who is “the Spirit of Christ” was present with the apostles and prophets and in them as they wrote; indeed He “carried them along” in their thoughts and word choice. Cf. II Peter 1:21. The particular interest the prophets had in what was given to them of the Holy Spirit was just when and in what way the Messiah would suffer and enter into His glory. It is a little more than difficult to decide to what the last word in the sentence refers. Could it refer to the glories promised to suffering saints? John Brown in his commentary thinks it does. He says:

“The original expression is quite peculiar, and is altogether different from the ordinarily rendered ‘the sufferings of Christ.’ It is literally—‘the sufferings in reference to Christ,’ that is, on Christ’s account, in Christ’s cause; or the sufferings till Christ, that is, the sufferings to be undergone by his body the Church, and by every member in particular, till he come ‘the second time,’ not as a sin-offering, but for their salvation. The sufferings till Christ, and the subsequent glories, are then just ‘the afflictions of the present time, and the glory which shall be revealed to us’ (Rom. 8:18); and the apostle’s statement is, the prophets, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, predicted the sufferings to which Christians are to be exposed in the present state, and the glories which are to be bestowed on them at the second coming of

their Lord.” (John Brown. *Expository Discourses on the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter*, Vol. 1. Marshallton, Del., The National Foundation for Christian Education, n.d., p. 85, 86.)

Brown says in a comment upon this exegesis: “The view we have taken of (this) expression is substantially that taken both by Luther and Calvin.” (Brown, p. 86).

The important question before us is “what thinkest thou?” In either interpretation we need to appreciate and understand the work of the Holy Spirit. It would be a strange travesty to find prophets more interested in the meaning of their predictions than those in whose lifetime the predictions had been fulfilled. This is what happened once when “He came to His own.” Will we let it be repeated? The multiplied references to the inspirational work of the Holy Spirit should be adequate reason for us to *read, meditate, eat* what He has written to us through the men He inspired.

D. *How Can I Share it?*

This question is tantamount to asking, “How can I share the Holy Bible?” In spite of the distribution of millions of copies of God’s word each year, there are many more millions who have never once seen a copy of what the Holy Spirit has given to the world. We cannot do everything, but we can each do *something* about the sharing of His word with our lost world.

3. “To whom 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*; which things angels desire to look into.” I Peter 1:12

A. *What Does It Say?*

Bruce Oberst has given us a splendid commentary on the letters of Peter. We quote from his book.

“1:12 To whom, 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; which things angels desire to look into.

Expanded Translation

“To whom it (i.e., this great plan of redeeming man kind through Jesus Christ) was uncovered and made known, that not unto themselves but unto you were they performing this service concerning these things, and they have now been announced unto you by the Holy Spirit which was sent forth from heaven; into which things angels strongly desire to stoop down and peer carefully into.

“To whom it was revealed

“The word *apakalupto* (‘was revealed’) is compounded from apo—from, off, away from, and *kalupto—to* cover, hide, conceal, throw a veil over. (See 4:8, ‘covereth.’) This plan of redemption through Christ was *uncovered* and that which was hidden was *brought to light*. Revealed to the prophets? No. The Apostle continues:

“that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things

“The word ‘minister,’ *diakoneo*, is the verb form of the noun, *diakonos*, deacon. It means to wait upon, attend upon, serve, and specifically to perform a service by commission. Little did those sages of old realize the significance of their words, or to what great extent they were attending to the needs of those who would be living *twenty-five hundred years later!* What a blessing to live in the Gospel age where many of our privileges are greater than those enjoyed by

the prophets themselves!

“which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you

“Compare Heb. 11:39-40. Peter here shows their own great value as Christians by emphasizing the fact that ‘the concern was *unto you*. We enjoy to the fullest what they could not even comprehend!

“This message was carried to the readers by ‘them that preached the gospel.’ Living in what is now Turkey (See 1:1, notes), they first had the Gospel preached to them by the Apostle Paul and his companions. But the truth here expressed would also apply to every true preacher of the Gospel.

“by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven

“See also v. 11. The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets who *predicted* the message AND He also spoke through the Apostles and others who preached the *fulfillment* of their prophecies. God speaks of the Old Testament as the Holy Spirit’s message (Heb. 3:7, II Pet. 1:21). And here the Gospel Message is shown to have the same source.

“which things angels desire to look into

“Note the Expanded Translation. Peter had said before that this great salvation we enjoy through Christ had gained the keenest scrutiny of the most holy men *on earth* —the prophets. Now he turns to the *heavens—the* inhabitants of the skies!

“The ‘which things’ refer to the matters of prophecy and their fulfillment in the Christian dispensation, mentioned in vss. 10-12. The verb ‘desire,’ *epitheméo*, is the same word so frequently rendered ‘lust’ in our New Testament. It means to set one’s heart upon, have a desire for, long for, etc., used here in a good sense.

“Of particular interest in this phrase is the Greek word translated ‘look into’ (*parakupto*). It is from *para*, be-side, and *kupto*, to bend forwards, stoop down. Thus the meaning is, to stoop to a thing in order to look at it. Notice how the Apostle John employs it: ‘And they (Peter and John) ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and *stooping and looking in*, he seeth the linen cloths lying: yet entered not in. . . But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she *stooped and looked into* the tomb

(Jn. 20:4-5, 11). This same word is employed by James to show how the ‘blessed man’ reads his Bible! (Jas. 1:24, ‘looketh into.’) In that passage as well as this, it implies interest and concern on the part of the observer or reader. Christian, read your New Testament as *the angels would like to! Look carefully into it!*

“Why such interest on the part of angels? Perhaps Heb. 1:14 supplies a partial explanation. But even with their strong desire to understand our salvation, this longing goes on and on *unfulfilled* on the part of the angels. Is our desire to understand God’s scheme of redemption as strong as theirs, *when we are capable of understanding it?*

“The purpose of this latter statement was doubtless to show the greatness of our salvation through the Son of God, and the benefits we have therefrom—neither the prophets nor the angels being able to ascertain the real nature of this great plan of pardon.” (Bruce Oberst. *Letters from Peter*. Joplin, Mo., College Press, 1962, p. 32-34.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

In discussing verses ten through twelve John Brown says: “In the paragraph which forms our text, the apostle takes another equally efficient method of bringing before the minds of his readers the greatness and the certainty of this final salvation, by representing it as one great or leading subject of Old Testament prophecy, apostolic preaching, and angelic study.” (Brown, p. 82.) Brown remarks further on this same subject.

“They preached this gospel ‘with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.’ These words intimate, either that their preaching the gospel was accompanied with miraculous works, proving the truth and the divinity of what they taught,—works which they were enabled to perform by the Holy Ghost, whose miraculous influence was ‘sent down from heaven,’—that is, communicated to them by God,—or that their preaching was accompanied by the influence of the Divine Spirit on the minds and hearts of those to whom it was addressed, leading them to attend to, to understand and to believe it; ‘opening their understandings’ to understand the truth, and ‘their hearts to receive the love of the truth, so as to be saved by it.’ Both these statements are true, and I think it not improbable that the words of ‘the apostle were meant to include both. ‘The Lord the Spirit’ ‘bore testimony to the word of grace’ in both ways. ‘The so great salvation was begun to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them who heard him; and God bore witness by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will.’ When Peter was preaching the gospel to Cornelius and his friends, ‘the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.’ When Paul preached to the Thessalonians, ‘Our gospel,’ says he, that is, the gospel as preached by us, ‘came not to you in word only, but in power, and with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance;’—with abundant evidence given by him, and apprehended by them.” (Brown, p. 94.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

If angels have a great desire to understand this salvation it ill behooves us to have less interest in it. Our particular interest is with the Holy Spirit’s work. What did He do to help in bringing us our great salvation? He was sent all the way from heaven to enable the apostles and prophets to preach it. He not only spoke *through* them; He also spoke *to* them in giving them the content of their message. What does the Holy Spirit do today for our preaching of the good news? We read in Acts 8:4 that all the Christians who were scattered from Jerusalem by persecution went everywhere preaching the word. We are not told, but we could surely surmise that the Holy Spirit accompanied their efforts. Cf. Jn. 16:7, 8. The rapid spread of the cause of our Lord is directly related to everyone telling the good news. Can we imagine the Holy Spirit was present in every effort? I believe we can. We do need to point out one difference: when these Christians of the first century gave the message, there was no New Testament; the life story of our blessed Lord had not yet been written. We have a large advantage; the whole beautiful story is in permanent, printed, portable form in our hands. As we are willing to share it with others, we have several promises: (1) the Holy Spirit will accompany our words to bring conviction of sin, lack of righteousness, and the sufficiency of the righteousness offered by God through His Son for the coming judgment. Cf. John 16:7-11. (2) He (our Lord in the person of the Holy Spirit) will be with us always (Matt. 28:20). (3) He will strengthen our inner man for such a work (Eph. 3:16).

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We simply ask that the matter under the previous point be read and applied to life.

4. “If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because *the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you.*” I Peter 4:14

A. *What Does It Say?*

The wise man Solomon said, “There is nothing new under the sun.” We could add that there is

nothing new under book covers either. More than two centuries ago John Brown made some observations on this verse. These are truly worth our consideration.

“Now, says the apostle, be not discouraged by all this (persecution). If you are really—what these men call you—Christians, you are truly happy, and are possessed of a true inward honour and glory, of which all their malignant abuse can in no degree deprive you. ‘The Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you;’ that is, the Spirit of glory, *even* the Spirit of God, resteth on you; or, the Spirit of God resteth on you as the Spirit of glory.

“There can be no doubt that the reference here is to the Holy (Spirit), personally the divine author of our salvation, so far as it is an inward transformation. (Cf. Titus 3:5.) The appellation, ‘The Spirit of glory,’ may be considered as equivalent to the glorious Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; as ‘the Lord of glory’ means our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. But it seems more probable that the Holy Spirit is here termed the Spirit of glory, to indicate that he is the author of true glory and honour. Unbelieving men reckoned the primitive Christians despicable and dishonourable, and called them so in their reproaches. But were they indeed so? No, by no means. The Spirit of God, who is the fountain of true honour, rested on them, and by his influence formed them to a character which was the proper object, not of contempt, but of approbation and admiration to all good and wise intelligent beings.

“It is as if the apostle had said, “You are really honourable, and your honour is not of a kind of which these reproaches can deprive you. They count you fools; but the Spirit of wisdom and good understanding rests on you, and makes you wise unto salvation: he gives you a sound mind, and makes you of good understanding. They count you weak, and (condemn) you for your imbecility in the sight of the Lord; but he makes you ‘strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;’ he is in you ‘the Spirit of power,’ as well as ‘of a sound mind.’ They reckon you mean, but he gives you true dignity and grandeur of character; he makes you ‘great in the sight of the Lord,’ and decks you with ornaments becoming your dignity as kings and priests unto God, even your Father. Is not the consideration of what he has made you more than sufficient to neutralize the painful effects of all that they can call you? If he has made you wise, what though they call you fools? If he has made you strong, what though they call you weak? If he has made you illustrious, what though they should represent you as despicable? His bearing witness with your spirits that you are indeed the sons of God, ‘and *if* sons then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus,’ is surely more than enough to counterbalance all their false and malignant reproaches.” Such seems to be the import of the motive which the apostle employs to induce Christians to rise about the disheartening influence of reproach for Christ, and even to rejoice in it. If you are Christians indeed, you have a real abiding honour, springing from the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of glory resting on you, dwelling in you, which their reproaches can in no degree affect.

“The meaning and reference of the concluding words of the 14th verse, ‘On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified,’ are somewhat doubtful. They may mean, what from their rendering our translators obviously supposed they did mean, This Spirit of glory which exists in you is evil spoken of, or blasphemed, by those men who reproach you for the name of Christ, who load you with abuse because you are Christians. He made you what you are as Christians, and in reproaching you they indeed blaspheme him. They who mock at Christians, as Christians, play at a dangerous game. The time is coming when the Son of God will say, ‘Inasmuch as ye did it to them, ye did it to me;’ and the Spirit of God will say, “In reproaching them you blasphemed me, in ridiculing my work you poured contempt on my person. Let the men of the world take care. What they think but a jest, may prove a very serious affair. The Jews thought they were putting to death a poor unfriended Nazarene: it turned out that they crucified the Lord of glory. The enemies of vital Christianity may think they are only running down a set of wrong-headed enthusiasts: it may turn out they are coming very near the sin ‘that hath no forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.’ It is as if the apostle had said, Their reproaches are more against the Spirit that animates you than against you.

“But while *they* blaspheme him, *you* glorify him; and surely it is very meet that it should be so. Christians should honour the Holy Spirit, who makes them honourable. They should show forth his praises, giving visible form to his inward work, by proving themselves to be under his influence as ‘the Spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.’ This is the best way of meeting the reproaches of men against ourselves as Christians, and against the Spirit by whom, as Christians, we are animated and guided. Let us show what manner of spirit we are of; that it is indeed the Spirit of glory that rests on us,—a Spirit which makes ‘pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated,’—a Spirit which leads us to think on and to practice ‘whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.’ (James 3:17; Phil. 3:8)

“While this is important truth, and while the words in themselves may be considered as well enough fitted to convey it, I am rather disposed to go along with those interpreters who consider the *verbs* here as used impersonally, and think the apostle expresses this sentiment: On their part there is evil-speaking, blasphemy, reproach; hut on your part there is glory, true honour. They reproach, indeed, but ye are not dishonoured. The Spirit of glory rests on you, and therefore all their reproaches cannot rob you of true honour, cannot make you really contemptible. You are what the Spirit of God has made you, not what they represent you. What a comfort is this to a calumniated Christian, and how well fitted to enable him in patience to possess his soul, amid calumnious reproaches and cruel mockings!” (Brown, *Vol. II*, p. 149-153, parentheses added.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We quote from Rawson J. Lumby.

“*If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye.* It was a joy to the Apostles (Acts 5:41) at the beginning of their ministry that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. Their offence is described as speaking in the name of Jesus, and filling Jerusalem with their teaching. The feeling of their persecutors was so strong that they were minded to slay them, but upon wiser counsel they only beat them and let them go. St. Paul’s commission to Damascus (Acts 9:14) was to bind all that called upon the name of Christ, and his work after his conversion was to be ‘to bear Christ’s name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’ What such preaching would be, we gather from St. Peter’s words (Acts 2:22). They taught men that Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God by powers, and wonders, and signs, had been crucified and slain by the Jews, but that God had raised Him from the dead; that He was now exalted by the right hand of God and was ordained of God (Acts 10:42) to be the Judge of quick and dead; that to Him all the prophets bare witness that through His name every one that believeth on Him should receive remission of sins. St. Paul and the rest preached the same doctrine. All that had happened in Christ’s life was ‘according to the Scriptures’ (I Cor. 15:3, 4) of the Old Testament; Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2), Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 17:18), are the topics constant in his letters and on his lips. And for their doctrine and their faith preachers and hearers suffered persecution and reproach.

“In our land suffering such as theirs is no more laid upon us, but for all that the reproach of Christ has not ceased. Our days are specially marked by a desire for demonstration on every subject, and it comes to pass thereby that those who are willing in spiritual things to walk by faith rank in the estimation of many as the less enlightened portion of the world, and are pictured as such in much of our modern literature. All that tells of miracle in the life of Jesus is by many cast altogether aside, as alien to the reign of law under which the world exists; and the Gospel narratives of the virgin-birth, the wonderful works, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are treated as the invention of the fervid imaginations of the first followers of Jesus; while to cling to them as verities, and to their importance and significance in the work of the world’s salvation, stamps me;’ -c laggards in the march of modern speculation. To accept the New

Testament story as the fulfillment of predictions in the Old is reckoned by many for ungrounded superstition; and among the unbelieving there are keen eyes still which gladly mark the slips and stumblings of professing Christians, and throw the obloquy of individuals broadcast upon the whole body.

“To hold fast faith at such a time, to accept the Gospels as true and their teaching as the words of eternal life, to see in Christ the Redeemer appointed from eternity by ‘the foreknowledge of God, and to believe that in Him His people find remission of sins, to see and acknowledge above the reign of law the power of the almighty Lawgiver—these things are still beset with trials for those who will live in earnest according to such faith; and if we receive less of the blessing which St. Peter here speaks of as accompanying the reproach of Christ, may we not fear that we exhibit less of the zeal and fervor of the Christians to whom he wrote?

“*Because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you.* In the former clause the Apostle, speaking of the joy of believers, exhorted the converts to a present rejoicing, even in the midst of sufferings, because these were borne for Christ’s sake, that so, when He shall appear in whose name they have suffered, their rejoicing may be still more abundant. In the manner he seems here to regard their blessedness in a double aspect. The Spirit of glory rests upon them. A power is imparted to them whereby they accept their pains gladly, and therein glorify God, and the same Spirit fills them with a sense of future glory. Like Stephen before his persecutors, they become filled with the Holy Ghost, their spirits are lifted heaven-wards, and even now they behold the glory of God, and Jesus sitting on the right hand of God. Thus suffering is robbed of its sting, and Christ’s reproach becomes a present blessing.

“St. Paul combines the same thoughts in his appeal to the Roman Christians. ‘Let us rejoice,’ he urges, ‘in the hope of the glory of God’ (Rom. 5:2). This is the glory to be revealed in the presence of Jesus Christ, that eternal weight of glory which affliction worketh for us more and more exceedingly. But he continues, ‘Let us rejoice also in our tribulation,’ knowing that by them we may glorify God in our bodies, and that they are the pledge of glory to come. ‘For tribulation worketh patience, and patience probation, and probation hope, and hope putteth not to shame’—it will not be disappointed; fruition will surely come—’because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.’ This is the Spirit of God of which St. Peter here speaks. It rests like the cloud of glory above the cherubim, and bestows all spiritual power and blessing; it rests on the suffering believer, and gives him rest.

“The Authorized Version has here retained a clause which appears to have been at first but an explanatory note, written in the margin of some copy, and then to have been incorporated with the text: ‘On their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.’ We cannot regret the preservation of such a note. It dates back to very early times. The student who made it could write in the language of the New Testament and in its spirit also. It gives us the sense which was then felt to have most prominence and to be the most important. The way of Christ was evil-spoken of, and it could be no strange thing in those days for His followers to be put to fiery trial. Yet the writer feels that the blessedness of the believer is most secured who, regardless of blasphemers around him strives with all his powers that in his body, whether by life or by death, Christ shall be magnified.” (W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor’s Bible: The First Epistle of St. Peter*, by Rawson J. Lumby. New York, George H. Doran, 1903, p.. 183-186.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

This Scripture has probed my conscience like few other passages on the subject of the Holy Spirit. Can I truly say with meaning that the Spirit of glory and/or the Spirit of God rests upon me? If it is a decision or question answered either by feeling or merit, I am without hope. It must be by faith, not by feeling. We are sure this was the persuasion of the persons to whom this letter was written. There seems to be an obvious reference in this verse to the sermon on the mount. Cf. Matt. 5:11. Peter could

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remember the words and example of our Lord. How did He react under reproach? Jesus always knew who He was and why He was here. If God accepts us, if we are doing His will, what little importance we should place upon the reproaches of men! There is an independence from the approval of men in doing the will of Him who called us and sent us into this world to be His light. There is an acceptance among the common people of the one who shines as a light in the world by holding forth the word of life.

The Holy Spirit is our seal of approval and acceptance. If God be for us to the extent that He has sent His very self into us in the person of the Holy Spirit, who can successfully be against us?

D. How Can I Share It?

Please read the preceding verses (12 and 13). Trials are for testing, i.e., if we have it in our hearts to so receive them. Trials are to be expected; they are not strange. Just how the emotion of genuine joy can be ours amid the railing and abuses from men can only be understood by experience. Now read verses 15 and 16 and remember that some church members deserve the abuse they receive. There is no approval of God in this. Be very careful about self-justification and Satan's devious rationalization of any and all circumstances. The words of our Lord are never more needed than here. "Follow me." Suffer as He did and we can rejoice as He did and for the same reason.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN II PETER

THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF II PETER.

“First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” II Peter 1:20, 21

A. *What Does It Say?*

We have used verse twenty along with verse twenty-one because of the sentence structure. We like very much the comments by Raymond C. Kelsey and reproduce them here with permission.

“[20] When Peter says *first of all you must understand this*, he is urging his readers to recognize a truth which is of utmost importance as they give attention to the prophetic word. The truth is: *that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation*. *Prophecy of scripture* is the prophetic word of the Old Testament.

“*One’s own interpretation* is a phrase that is explained by some to mean that scripture is not to be interpreted by the individual reader but that it must be interpreted by the church. This view must be rejected. The New Testament gives no support to the idea of individuals looking to the church for official interpretation. There are many passages which indicate that the writers expected their readers to understand what they wrote (e.g., Eph. 3:4; 1 Thess. 5:27; 1 John 2:12, 13).

“Other meanings of one’s *own interpretation* are given. Some say that Peter’s meaning is that readers of Old Testament predictions are not to interpret them arbitrarily, assigning to them a meaning according to their own Inclinations. Since these prophecies were given by the Holy Spirit (see vs. 21 below), then men should depend upon the Holy Spirit for their interpretation, that is, they should look to Christ, the apostles, and other inspired men for the true interpretation of prophecy (cf. Luke 24:27, 44-47; Acts 2:16-21, 25-31; 8:30-35). This may well be what Peter is saying. Another view is that Peter means that prophecy does not have its origin in the prophet’s own mind. It was not of his own ‘releasing’ or ‘unloosing,’ as the Greek *epilusis* (the word for interpretation) denotes. False prophets spoke their own ideas (cf. Jer. 23:16; Ezek. 13:2, 3). In the case of true prophets, the prophecy came from God, and the prophet did not by making it known set forth his own interpretation of events that were to occur. This latter view is preferable in that it seems to be more logically related to the statement of the verse following.

[21] The statement of verse 21, to which reference was made above, is: *because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God*. The word translated *came* by the RSV is the Greek *phero*, which occurs also in verses 17 and 18. where the RSV translates ‘was borne’ and ‘borne.’ No true *prophecy* ‘was borne’ *by the impulse of man* as were the utterances of false prophets. The word translated *impulse* is from *thelema*, which means ‘will.’ Peter is saying that human will did not originate the prophecies. On the contrary, the prophets were moved *by the Holy Spirit*. He again uses a form of *phero*, indicating that the prophets were borne or carried along by the Holy Spirit. A form of the same verb occurs in Acts 27:15, 17 where Luke describes a ship being borne along by the wind. The prophets were borne along by the Spirit (cf. Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; 2:4). In his only reference to *the Holy Spirit in the epistle*, Peter makes a clear claim for the inspiration of the prophets (cf. 1 Cor. 2:12, 13; 2 Tim. 3:16).” (Kency, p. 133, 134.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

R. C. H. Lenski gives us a good comment:

“21) Peter speaks of the origin of prophecy: ‘for not by man’s will was prophecy ever brought’; anything that any human being ever willed ... had absolutely nothing to do with divine prophecy. Only false prophets utter prophecies that originate in what they have willed. They want things to happen their way and then so prophesy them; they fix up a certain ... interpretation of their own, and then fix up their prophecies so that men will find that meaning in them. It is their standard procedure. They cry: ‘Peace, peace!’ just because they want peace when peace is the last thing to expect, when God says that there is none and is to be none. False prophets foretold that Jerusalem would never fall, that it would crush the Romans; that is what *they* wanted. They fixed symbolical, allegorical, figurative language to bear such an Interpretation,’ but Jerusalem was utterly destroyed.

“(God) states that true prophecy is the very opposite: ‘on the contrary, as borne along by the Holy Spirit from God men made utterance.’ In v. 21 Peter uses historical aorists. The present participle ... is descriptive: ‘borne along,’ ... denotes the agent with the passive: ‘by the Holy Spirit.’ The verb is used with references to ships that are borne along on a certain course by the wind (Acts 27:15, 17).

“Thus ‘men’ ... ‘spoke,’ ‘made utterance’ (the opposite of keep silence). The verb is not ... as though these human beings contributed anything to the substance of the thought. Peter’s verb makes them only mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit. In Matt. 1:22 the angel expresses the same thought: ‘the thing spoken by ... the Lord by means of ... the prophet.’ These significant prepositions appear often. The Lord God ‘made utterance by the mouth ... of his holy prophets.’ Luke 1:70. The Holy Spirit ‘spoke in advance by means of ... David’s mouth’; so also Luke 3:18, 21; 4:25 ...; what they spoke came wholly ‘from’ him. The readers do well to be heeding ‘the prophetic Word,’ ‘all Scripture prophecy,’ as spoken in this way. Truly, it is the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13), a shining lamp, indeed.

“This is not a caution or a warning on the part of Peter that his readers are not to misinterpret the Scriptures. Peter does not say, ‘Be careful about using this shining lamp!’ He says, “*Use it! It is a shining lamp!*”

“There are men who interpret this passage and never once use the word inspiration. This is one of the great *sedes* for the fact of inspiration ... Peter presents *the fact*, not a theory, not a hypothesis. The fact is that God and the Spirit are the real speakers, the *anthropoi* are their mouthpieces. Our fathers, therefore, called God the *causa efficiens* or *principalis*, the speakers (writers) the *causae instrumentales*. The act itself they called the *suggestio rerum et verborum*, meaning by this what Peter calls ... ‘borne along by the Spirit.’ Since both the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek ... mean breath, wind, Peter’s participle is most expressive to denote the act of inspiration, this word ‘inspire’ (from the Latin) is equally perfect.

“The result attests the divine act. As no man ever spoke like this man Jesus (John 7:46), so no book ever spoke like this Book. None was ever scrutinized down to its every particle like this one; none has had such intensive and extensive commentaries written about it, the last of which is not yet in sight. None has experienced such assaults and has after every surge of attack appeared only the more as ‘the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture’ (Gladstone), a Gibraltar that only smiles at attack.” (R. C. H. Lenski. *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*. Minneapolis, Minn., Augsburg Publishing House, 1966, p. 298-300.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

I can think of no better expression than that used by Bruce Oberst in his commentary. He says:

“Expanded Translation

“Knowing this first (keeping this foremost in your minds): that no prophecy of Scripture exists (or, is created; or, occurs) of the prophet’s own invention (the prophet did not put his personal slants on the message he spoke). For no prophecy ever came (was brought) by the will (purpose, design) of man; rather, men spoke from God, being moved, (borne, carried) by the Holy Spirit.

“These verses tell us *why* the prophecies are worthy of our time and attention; because, when they were given, the *Holy Spirit* was speaking!

“knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation

“There are at least three basic views concerning the meaning of this phrase.

“1. The view of the Roman Catholic Church: Because every part of Scripture was written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit and declared as such by the Church (note the capital ‘C’) *the Church is also to interpret it*. God has promised to guide the Church into all the truth to the end of the world; therefore, we must submit to the judgment of the Church and not depend upon our own fallible and erroneous judgment.

“Thus we are not to trust the meaning *we* would place on Scripture, for the divine task of ‘rightly dividing the word of truth’ is in the hands of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and finally, in the hands of its head, the pope.

“2. That no one can explain prophecy by his own mental power, as it is not a matter of subjective interpretation. To explain it, one needs the same illumination of the Holy Spirit in which it originated. The idea is that Divine assistance is needed. Thus several translators have renderings such as, ‘that no prophecy of Scripture can be understood through one’s own (unaided) powers.

“That there is a degree of truth to this explanation I would not question, though it seems to present several difficulties. Consider a third possibility:

“3. That no prophecy of Scripture exists as a result of one’s private or personal views. The reference in the phrase under consideration is not primarily to the *receivers* of prophecy, but the *writers* or *speakers* of it, the prophets.

“The word *epiluo* (‘interpretation’) is from the verb *epiluo*, which as Macknight points out, primarily signified to untie a knot, to unloose a bundle so as to disclose what it contains. The prophets only released the ‘burden’ God had given them, only *untied the bundle and revealed its contents to mankind for all ages to view*. So Young’s literal translation reads, ‘No prophecy of the Writing doth come of private exposition . . . The writers of Scripture did not put their own construction of the God breathed words they wrote.

...the apostle teaches that the truths which the prophets communicated were not originated by themselves; were not their own suggestion or invention; were not their own opinions, but were of higher origin, and were imparted by God; and according to this passage may be explained . . . that it is a great principle in regard to the prophets, that what they communicated was not of their own disclosure; that it was not revealed or originated by them,” —Barnes.

“for no prophecy; ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being ,moved by the Holy Spirit

“This verse seems to confirm the rightness of our interpretation of verse 20. No true prophecy ever came because some man willed it or decided to manufacture it. Rather, men spoke as though they were the very mouth of God.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“How strongly were the prophets influenced by the Holy Spirit as they spoke? The apostle specified that they ‘were moved’ (*phero*) by its power. (The same word is rendered ‘came’ earlier in the verse.) They were ‘borne along,’ or ‘impelled’ by the Holy Spirit in their speech—not expressing their own thoughts, but expressing the mind of God in words provided and ministered by Him.” (Oberst, p. 155-157.)

D. *How Can I Share it?*

There could be nothing more important to share than our attitude and conviction concerning the inspiration of the Bible. Let’s do it!

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN I JOHN

THERE ARE EIGHT REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

I. “Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know it is ‘the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us. *But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all know.* (Other ancient authorities read, “you know everything.”) I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.” I John 2:18-22 (Revised Standard Version)

A. *What Does It Say?*

We struggled with this passage *in* our comments on II Cor. 1:21, 22. (See our discussion at that place.) We shall work through this passage just as if we had made no earlier comment upon it. We delight in the study of these words of the Spirit about Himself. Please notice several important contextual facts. (1) The knowledge mentioned in connection with the Holy Spirit is associated with the nature of Jesus as the Christ. These Christians to whom John addressed his letter knew all they needed to know concerning the deity of our Lord. (2) There seems to be a play on words in the use of the phrase ‘anointed ones.’ There were those who were *anti-anointed* ones, i.e., *anti-christs*. In contrast to these fakes are the true ‘anointed ones’ or Christians. (3) John is attempting to establish firmly the deity of Jesus and build such a Conviction in the hearts of the readers. To do this He reminds them of what they already knew: (a) Our Lord who is the *Holy One* has set you into the office of priest and king by anointing you with the Holy Spirit. This is an objective fact to be received as such because the apostles and prophets taught it, not first of all because you *felt* it. (b) This same Holy Spirit through the same apostles and prophets taught them concerning the divine nature of Jesus. The Holy Spirit gave them through the apostles and prophets all the knowledge they needed to convince them once and for all that Jesus was God’s anointed son and the only Savior of the world.

Please read again all the words from 2:18 through 2:22. It is so important that we do not lift verse 20 out of its context. The problem is one of Gnosticism, all of which we will consider at some length later.

B. *What Does it Mean?*

At the risk of losing some of our readers, we give the following information upon the problem of the Gnostic heresy: “attempts made at this time, and especially in Ephesus were to divide Jesus Christ into the human Jesus on the one hand, mortal and imperfect as other men, and *the Christ*, a Divine aeon or emanation that descended upon Jesus and was associated with Him from His baptism till the hour of His death. This was to make of Jesus Christ *two* beings, to break up His Divine-human person, as the disciples had known Him, into shadowy and discrepant fragments. Those who taught this, denied the ‘Jesus is the Son of God.’ They denied ‘Jesus Christ came in flesh’ (4:2, 3), they renounced the Incarnation, and thereby abandoned the basis laid by Christianity for fellowship between God and man; they closed the way of access to the Father given us in the Son of His love.” (Georg G. Findlay. *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 195, p. 219.)

When we consider the phrase “you know all things” or “you all know” in the context of this heresy it becomes much easier to understand. To deny the deity of Jesus would be to deny they had received the Holy Spirit. It would also be a refusal of their positions as priests and kings. (This was the purpose

associated with the anointing.) If Jesus is not divine then He could not be “The Holy One”; He could not have sent them the Holy Spirit as a means of commissioning them as priests and kings. But those to whom John wrote knew of the convincing evidence for the deity of Jesus. They possibly had read his gospel and accepted the overwhelming array of signs which Jesus did; they believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and believing they had life in his name (Jn. 20:30, 31).

We want to give our readers as much help in the study of these references as at all possible. We have tried to be as dedicated to the task of investigation as any careful medical doctor or attorney at law would be in his pursuit of the truth in a different area of search. For this reason we have given as many sources of references as we believe will be of real aid in understanding. Here is a quotation from W. E. Vine in his book *The Epistles of John: Light, Love, Life*.

“VERSE 20. *And ye have an anointing from the Holy One,—*’And’ is the rendering of the Greek *kai*, not ‘but’ (as in the A. V.) The Apostle is simply putting two contrasting subjects side by side. There are the future Antichrist and the present antichrist on the one hand, and the true Christ and the children of God on the other. There is no need to render by ‘but’ in order to show the contrast. That is sufficiently brought out by the emphatic pronoun ‘ye’, which requires due stress on the part of one who is reading aloud.

“The ‘anointing’ (*chrisma*), preferable to the rendering ‘unction,’ signifies that which is carried out by the act of anointing, and thus stands here for the effect of the act itself, the impartation of the Holy Spirit, who was symbolically set forth by the material oil with which the act was carried out in the former age in the nation of Israel in the case of kings, priests and prophets. For the figurative use of the anointing see, *e.g.*, Is. 61:1; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22. The word *chrisma* is found only here and in v. 27 in the New Testament.

“While Christ Himself was anointed by the Holy Spirit in the days of His flesh (Acts 10:38), here He, as the Holy One, is the Anointer. For the title ‘Holy One’ see Psa. 16:10. For the anointing of the priests in the nation of Israel see Ex. 29:7, 21; Lev. 8:30. All believers are priests unto God (1 Pet. 5:9; Rev. 1:6). They become so, not by attainment, but in virtue of the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is received at the new birth, and from that time indwells the believer. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not contingent upon maturity in the Christian life, not upon degree of spiritual attainment. Upon believing we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13, where the R. V. rightly has ‘having also believed, ye were sealed’; there is not ‘after’ in the original, as in the A. V.). The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer is His Guide ‘into all the truth’ (John 16:13), and this has an important bearing upon the present passage.

“~*and ye know all things,*’—Even the babes in Christ have the power of the Holy Spirit given to them in order that they may know the truth and disown what is opposed to it. There is much to be said for the marginal ‘reading of the R. V., ‘and ye all know,’ in which case the beginning of v. 21 is parenthetical and the statement is resumed in the words ‘ye know it’ (the truth). But in any case the meaning is much the same as in the text, for what the Apostle is pointing out is, that it is his readers, and not the false and antichristian teachers, who possess the true knowledge, and that it is possessed in virtue of the anointing, which the false teachers lack.

“The believer is therefore not justified in praying for the anointing, for that is his by reason of his regenerate condition. He may pray that the power of the Spirit may be experienced, and that he may be filled with the Spirit, but to ask for the gift that has already been imparted indicates a lack of the apprehension of the goodness and grace of God in having bestowed it.” (W. E. Vine. *The Epistles of John: Light, Love, Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1970, p. 37, 38.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Another helpful comment is by Donald W. Burdick in his book *The Epistles of John*.

“*The believers* (2:20-21). In contrast to the anti-Christian teachers who left the fellowship of the saved, John’s readers ‘have an unction from the Holy one’ (2:20). They have been anointed with an anointing which comes from God. This anointing does not come *from* the Holy Spirit; instead it *is* the Holy Spirit whom the Father sends. In 2:27 the anointing is said to perform the function of teaching, an act possible only for a personal being.

“According to the Authorized Version those who possess this anointing from the Holy One ‘know all things,’ which is a most pretentious claim. The better Greek text, however, reads, ‘and all you know.’ Believers do not possess all knowledge, but they all possess knowledge of spiritual truth. The Gnostics boasted that they alone enjoyed genuine knowledge. To counteract this false claim, John assured his readers that they, by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit, were the recipients of true spiritual knowledge. They were far more knowledgeable in spiritual things than were the Gnostic boasters. In this verse John echoes the teaching of Jesus (Jn. 14:26; 16:13) and agrees with the declarations of Paul (1 Co. 2:11-12) concerning the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

“John is not penning this epistle to those who ‘know not the truth’ (2:21). In fact, quite the opposite is true. There are two basic facts which underlie his writing. First, he addresses them because they know the truth, and it is to this knowledge that he now appeals as he warns them against the threat of false teachers. Second, he writes because it is evident that ‘no lie is of the truth.’ That is, truth does not produce falsehood. This is a general principle, applicable to all truth and all falsehood, but John no doubt has in mind the more specific application to the truth of Christ’s incarnation. That truth and the Gnostic denial of it are diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive. Since this is true, those who know the truth will naturally reject falsehood when it is presented to them, because they will recognize its contradiction of the truth.

“Knowledge is always the most effective antidote for error. If we possess a genuine, firsthand knowledge of Christ and know, at least, the basic facts of the Christian faith, we will be able to recognize false teachings and to avoid its seductive snare.” (Donald W. Burdick. *The Epistles of John*. Chicago, Illinois, Moody Press, 1970, p. 42, 43.)

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We really cannot and will not share this passage with its true meaning unless we know something of the Gnostic heresy. For this reason we offer this very important quote from W. E. Vine.

“One of the special objects for which this Epistle was written was to counteract the errors of the Gnostics. There were three sects whose heretical teachings began to influence the churches in the latter part of the first century: the Ebionites, followers of Ebion, who denied the Deity of Christ, teaching that He was merely a creature; the Docetists, who denied the humanity of Christ, teaching that He was merely a visionary being, a phantom, void of corporeal nature, and that He had not come in flesh; and the Cerinthians, followers of Cerinthus, who denied the union of the two natures in Christ, *i.e.*, the human and the Divine, prior to His baptism. The Apostle therefore sets forth the truth relating to both the essential Deity of Christ, and to His true humanity.” (Vine, p. 7.)

As we have noted earlier, it is not biblical to talk about “getting a fresh anointing.” We have already been anointed; did the priests of the Old Testament request a fresh or new anointment each time they grew lax? They did not. They *did* often return to God in deep repentance and sincere confession of sin. Anointment relates only to initial activity. At the beginning of our Christian life we were anointed with the Holy Spirit by the Holy One and this cannot and will not be repeated. We need to become

increasingly aware of our priesthood and its holy functions. We need also to remember that we have been anointed as kings. A king can disgrace his high position, but he cannot and will not repeat his coronation. It is past time that we begin acting and reacting as the kings we are.

2. “As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal. These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him. And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. I John 2:24-28

A. *What Does It Say?*

We like both the paraphrase and the comment of James MacKnight.

“24. Therefore, let what ye have heard us preach from the beginning, concerning the Word’s being made flesh, abide in you. If what ye have heard from the beginning concerning the matter abide in you, ye also shall abide in the fellowship of the Son and of the Father chap. i.3.

“25.... *For this is the promise which he hath promised to us, EVEN the life which is eternal.*

“25. And great will be your felicity in that fellowship! *For this is the promise which the Father hath promised to us by his Son, even a life of happiness in heaven, which will be eternal.*

“26. These things I have written to you, concerning the antichrists who endeavour to deceive you, that ye may shun all familiar intercourse with them.

“27. Although I know that the gift of discerning spirits, which ye have received from the Holy Ghost, remaineth in you, and that ye have no need that any one should teach you how to judge of these deceivers and their doctrines, unless to exhort you to judge of them as the same gift teacheth you concerning all things, and is a real, not a feigned gift. Wherefore, as it hath taught you that these teachers are antichrists, reject their doctrine, and abide in the truth concerning him.

“28. *Now, therefore, my dear children, abide in the doctrine and precepts of Christ, that when he shall appear to judge the world, we, your teachers, may have confidence concerning your acceptance, and may not be put to shame by him at his coming, on account of your errors and vices.*

“Ver. 25. This is the promise which he hath promised to us, even the life which is eternal]— ...— This promise John hath recorded in his gospel, chap. 17:1 ‘Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.’ —From these words, so solemnly pronounced by Christ in an address to his Father, we learn, that the great end of his coming into the world was to glorify his Father, by procuring through his own death eternal life for all good men, and by bestowing it on them after the judgment.

“Ver. 26. These things I have written to you,] namely, the things beginning ver. 18.

“Ver. 27. And ye have no need that any one should teach you,] —Here two things claim the reader’s attention: —1. That when John said to his disciples, ‘ye have no need that any one should teach you,’ his meaning was, that they had no need to be taught how to distinguish pretenders to inspiration from those who were really inspired. This the connexion sheweth plainly. 2. That the persons who had no need of this kind of teaching were those only who had an unction from the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, as it appears from 1 Cor. 12:10 that the discerning of spirits was a gift bestowed, not on believers in general, but on some individuals only, it is evident, that when the apostle said, ‘ye have an unction from the Holy Spirit,’ his discourse was directed only to such as possessed the gift of discerning spirits: consequently he did not

mean, that Christians in general had no need of being taught the doctrines of the gospel in the ordinary method; but that those who had received the unction from the Holy Ghost, needed nothing but to be directed or exhorted to judge of teachers pretending to inspiration, and of their doctrine, according as the unction which abode in them led them to judge; because that unction being a real gift, if they followed its suggestions, they would judge truly concerning all things; that is, concerning teachers and their doctrines. —From these things it is plain, that the Quakers and other fanatics, who, from what is said in this and in the preceding 20th verse, infer that all believers have still an unction or inspiration from the Holy Ghost, and hold that inspiration is superior to the scriptures, are in a most dangerous error, as they dignify the productions of their own distempered brain with the name of *revelations of the Spirit*. —They likewise err greatly from the truth, who, on pretense that the inspiration of the Spirit is continued to *believers in every age, contend that the outward ministry of the word, by pastors and teachers set apart to the office, and even the scriptures themselves, are unnecessary in the church. Holding such principles, is it any wonder that these enthusiasts and fanatics have fallen into the grossest extravagances and licentiousness?*

“Ver. 28-1. Now, therefore, little children,] —The adverb ... is used here as an interjection of beseeching. The word... *little children*, comprehends the whole body of the disciples to whom this epistle was written, and whom John had before divided into three classes.

“2. That when he shall appear] ... being the term by which Christ’s appearing in the flesh was expressed, chap. 1:2 ... when applied to Christ’s second coming, it signifies that he shall then be the object of men’s senses by means of his body, as he was at his first coming.... (MacKnight, p. 658, 659.)

B. *What Does it Mean?*

We quote from Dale Moody for a splendid Comment upon these verses.

“27. And as for you the *chrisma* which you received abides in you, and you have no need that any should teach you.

“but his *chrisma* teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie.

(And just as it taught you, abide in him.)

“That the *chrisma* is the Holy Spirit has already been discussed (2:22), but it is now expanded (2:27). The first two lines would lead to misguided enthusiasm if they were detached from the last two. The *chrisma*, the anointment with the Holy Spirit, is first teacher. This is a clear parallel with the second saying about the Paraclete (John 14:25-26). In the second place, the *chrisma* is truth. This means its teaching is in harmony with the apostolic truth and a refutation of the Gnostic lie. This has a parallel in the fifth Paraclete saying (John 16:12-15). Here again ‘all things’ is the object as in the above translation of 2:20. The text of *Coder Vaticanus*, which omits *hos* (as), has been followed.

“The last line could be translated with ‘just as he taught,’ if the human teacher is in mind, but ‘it taught’ makes it a reference to the *chrisma*, the Holy Spirit. Both are true, but it seems to be a comment about the *chrisma*. The two statements in parentheses form a balance between the external witness of *Scripture and internal witness of the Holy Spirit. The anointment and the abiding are now brought together in preparation for the exhortations about the parousia. The ‘him’ seems to be God the Father who is light. Fellowship with him (1:6-10), knowing him (2:3-6), and abiding in him (2:27) seems to be God in this first division, even though the Son is twice included (1:3; 2:24). Abiding in God is abiding in the light (2:10). The distinction between ‘him’ and ‘that One’ who is Jesus has already been noted (2:6; cf. 3:3). This is a God-mysticism mediated through Christ.” (Dale Moody. *The Letters of John*. Waco, Texas, Word Books, 1970, p. 55, 56.)*

C. *What Does it Mean To Me?*

There is much in this text concerning the subject of *abiding*. To abide in a house is to live in it. A house becomes very familiar to us when we have spent many days, weeks, or years in it. The furniture, walls, pictures—all of it takes on sentimental meaning because of the life events we associate with them. Note the applications of the word *abide* in this text. *Abide* in what you have heard from the beginning. We take this to refer to the teaching concerning our Lord. Perhaps the contents of John’s gospel would be “that which they had heard from the beginning.” These Christians were to live in the word, and the word was to live in them. If and when this happened they would also abide or live in the Son and in the Father. Their interest in our Lord would be so great and constant that He would become the walls around them and the roof above them. We cannot and will not live in the word without living in the Son and the Father, because they are the content of that word. It seems to me that such abiding in the word necessitates constant reading, memorizing, meditating and writing.

Our purpose is a discussion of the *abiding* of the Holy Spirit within us and our abiding in Him. The anointing is the Holy Spirit; we should not need a biblical defense of this thought since it has been so fully discussed earlier. The anointing is a person. He lives in our bodies as His house. John has a most startling statement to make! He says of these first-century Christians, “*You really do not need a teacher.*” This is a not too subtle thrust at the Gnostic teachers who claimed superior knowledge. These early disciples had already learned and were constantly learning from the Prince within them. The Holy Spirit, their anointing, was their teacher. John does not suggest that some were teachers and others were learners; he states in words hard to misunderstand that “ye need not that *any one teach you*; but *as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things*, and is true, and is no lie, and *even as it taught you, ye abide in him.*” (vs. 27) Let’s examine what this text *does not* say as well as what it *does* say: (1) It does *not* say that the Holy Spirit had already taught these Christians *all* they needed to know about *all* subjects. If this were so, the letters of John, as well as his gospel and the book of Revelation, would have been superfluous. (2) It does *not* say some were listening and others were teaching; all were being taught. It *does* say: (1) the context of this verse would cause us to think of the nature of our Lord as to the subject being taught. This is the subject at issue. (See vs. 26.) (2) The anointing or the Holy Spirit is the teacher. Does this fact negate the possibility that His teaching was to come through the apostles and prophets? This verse *does not* say so, but if we are to harmonize the rest of the scriptures on *how* the Holy Spirit taught, we could easily read this thought into this text The Holy Spirit was living in each of the Christians. He through the prophets and apostles, teachers and elders, was at work teaching every Christian. The one central truth taught was that Jesus was the anointed of God.

I find it impossible to accept unqualified conclusions to the words “ye need not that any one (or man) teach you”; men were their teachers, but not only men. These men were but instruments or organs. The Holy Spirit was the real teacher through these men.

“Concerning all things.”—These disciples like all disciples did not know *all* things or they would cease to be disciples. But they did know through the inspired teaching *all things* necessary to settle the controversy of the nature of our Lord. Having once answered the question, “Who say ye that I am?” *abide* or live in the reality of His deity. On the day when He manifests Himself for all men to see Him even as He is, you will not be ashamed; indeed, you will welcome Him with joy for He is the One in whom your whole life has been hidden.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

There *is* very, very much to share in this verse. (1) *We have been anointed*; we are now living in an awareness of our anointing. As our Lord was constantly aware of the fact that He was the Christ (or the

Anointed One), so we should live and move in a self-conscious awareness that we are Christians (i.e., the anointed ones). We take the expression “the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you,” to mean just what we have said above. This is more than a reference to the fact of the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We need to respond to His indwelling with the kind of holy, humble dignity that characterized our blessed King in the days of His flesh. (2) *We have within us the source of our teaching.* Our Teacher lives in our bodies. No man is as knowledgeable or as capable as He. Of course, we know the method He used for His instruction. In the days before He wrote His word, He taught through His apostles and prophets, He spoke through these inspired teachers. There must have been hundreds, even thousands of such Spirit-directed teachers in John’s day. (Many of them were prophets.) The Christians in Ephesus were to look no further than to these inspired men. The same Holy Spirit who was present in them as their anointment would teach them through these mouthpieces of the Holy One. No man taught them, even if the Holy Spirit spoke through men. (3) *Any teaching claiming to be from God that does not come from the Holy Spirit via His inspired men is a lie and is not the truth.* The Gnostic teaching appealed to the pride of life. The members of this so-called Christian cult were admitted to an inner circle of the elite super-spiritual by certain mysterious initiation rites. John is saying to these suffering saints: it is a lie. There is neither truth nor need in it or for it. There is no merging of the margins, no equivocation, no apology. They are liars, and what they teach is error. (4) *Abide* ye in Him and in the truth. We have commented on this word *abide* be-fore, but it is used so often in this epistle we deem it necessary to point out again that it means to make our Lord our home in our bodies—to make His word our home. When our Lord left heaven He for a few brief years came to *abide* with us. When Jesus left heaven He did take a total interest in this world. He came to live here. When we leave this world, He expects us to live in Him. The life of our Lord as recorded in the gospels and interpreted in the rest of the New Testament must become our daily, yea, hourly abiding place. There is *nothing* more important or more necessary than this intimate relationship with Him through abiding in His word.

3. “And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him, and hereby we know that he abideth in us, *by the Spirit which he gave us.* 1 John 3:24

A. *What Does it Say?*

Robert Law has some penetrating comments on the whole concept of our abiding in God and God abiding in us. Please read his words carefully. “The ‘abiding’ of God in us is the continuous and progressive action of that same self-reproducing energy of the Divine nature the initial act of which is the Divine Begetting. By the same power and mode of Divine action Life is originated and sustained. The Epistle, it is true, seems to give two slightly diverse conceptions of this matter. As the human parent once for all imparts his own nature to his offspring, so, in virtue of the Divine Begetting, the Divine nature is permanently imparted to the children of God (...‘His’ *i.e.* God’s, ‘seed abideth in him’). But, whereas in the human relationship the life-germ thus communicated is developed in a separate and independent existence, in the higher relationship it is not so. The life imparted is dependent for its sustenance and growth upon a continuous influx of life from the parent-source. Thus the analogy followed is taken from the facts of vegetable rather than of animal life; originally, as has been said, from the similitude of the Vine and the branches. The branches of a tree are actually children of the tree. Structurally, a branch is a smaller tree rooted in a larger. Even a single leaf with its stalk is simply a miniature tree, exactly resembling what the parent tree was in its first stage of growth, except that it derives its sustenance from the parent tree instead of from the soil. Thus a great vine is, in fact, an immense colony or fellowship of vines that vitalises all the branches, ‘weaves all the green and golden lacework of their foliage, unfolds all their blossoms, mellows all their clusters, and is perfected in their fruitfulness.’ So does the Life of God vitalise him in whom He abides, sustaining and fostering in him those energies—Righteousness, Love, and Truth, —which are the Divine nature itself. The language used is in no sense or degree figurative. Rather are the Divine Begetting and Indwelling the realities of which all creaturely begettings and indwellings are only emblems. Though the manner of it is inexplicable, as all vital processes are, this

actual communication of the actual Life of God is the core of the Johannine theology.

“But this abiding of God in us has as its necessary counterpart our abiding in Him. In this reciprocity of action, priority and causality belong, as always, to God, without whom we can do nothing; yet not so that the human activity is a mere automatic product of the Divine. We can invite or reject the Divine Presence; keep within or avoid the sphere of Divine influence; open or obstruct the channels through which the Divine Life may flow into ours. Hence, ‘abiding in God’ is made a subject of instruction and imperative exhortation (2:27, 28; cf. 2:15; 5:18, 21). And when the word ‘abide’ ... is thus used, the idea of persistence of steadfast purpose, which is inherent in it, comes into view. As the abiding of God in us is the persistent and purposeful action by which the Divine nature influences ours, so our abiding in God is the persistent and purposeful submission of ourselves to that action. The only means of doing this which the Epistle expressly emphasizes is steadfast retention of and adherence to the truth as it is announced in the Apostolic Gospel (2:24; cf. John 8:3 1) and as it is witnessed by the Spirit (2:27). Yet, although ‘keeping God’s commandments,’ ‘abiding in love,’ and ‘confessing’ Christ are exhibited primarily as the requisite effects and tests of our abiding in God, these effects become in their turn means. It is by these that practical effect is given to the message of the gospel and the teaching of the Spirit; and thus only is the channel of communication kept clear between the source and the receptacle of Life.” (Robert Law. *The Tests of Life; a Study of the First Epistle of St. John*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1968, p. 198-200.)

B. *What Does it Mean?*

Students of the word will not find better comments than those given by W. E. Vine. Hear him again.

“VERSE 24. *And he that keepeth His commandments* The participial phrase ‘he that keepeth’ describes what *is* to be the characteristic habit of the believer.

“The plural, ‘His commandments’, takes us back to verse 22, which speaks of keeping His commandments. Verse 23 is somewhat parenthetical, yet there is an intimation in verse 24 that Christ, who ‘gave us commandment’, is also now spoken of in the pronouns His, Him and He, there being no sharp distinction drawn between the Divine Persons.

“*abideth in Him, and He in him.*—Connect with this 2:28 and 2:3 and see notes at each place for the significance. This abiding in, or indwelling, suggests the most intimate union, and the indwelling is mutual, as in John 15:4. That it is an abiding both in the Father and in the Son, is clear from John 17: 21, 23, 26. This holy association is not the result of keeping God’s commandments; on the contrary the latter is the result of the mutual indwelling, and a testimony to his existence.

“*And whereby*—*Lit.*, ‘in this’, as in 2:3, 5; 3:16, 19; 4:9, 10, 13, 17 and 5:2. Probably the reference here is to what follows.

“*we know that He abideth in us,*—We know by experience ... The Apostle does not repeat ‘and we in Him’, but it is implied from what has preceded.

“*by the Spirit which He gave us.*—This is the first actual mention of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle, though the anointing mentioned in 2:20 and 27 was figurative of His Person and work. Believers were there said to have received Him and to possess Him; here He is mentioned as the One who was given to them. The word rendered ‘gave’ is in the aorist tense, pointing to the definite occasion upon which the Holy Spirit was given. He is received by the believer at the moment when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit is there and the seal of God’s work in the heart of the believer, and the earnest, or pledge, of his future inheritance: ‘in whom (that is, Christ), having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance’ (Eph. 1:13, 14—the A. V., ‘after that ye believed’ is misleading; there is no preposition in the original, the sealing is simultaneous with believing). It should be noted in Acts 19:2 that the disciples whom Paul found in Ephesus had not heard whether the

Holy Ghost 'was given' (not as in A. V. 'whether there be any Holy Ghost'; they knew of His existence but did not know what had taken place at Pentecost).

"This is the fourth evidence of the new life in the believer. They are as follows:

- (1) Keeping God's commandments (2:4),
- (2) the doing of righteousness (2:29),
- (3) loving in deeds as well as word (3:18),
- (4) the possession of the Spirit (3:24).

"The following are mentioned in this Epistle as abiding in the believer:

- (1) The word of God (2:14),
- (2) The anointing (2:27),
- (3) The seed (3,9),
- (4) the love of God (3:17),
- (5) God Himself (3:24; 4:12, 13, 15),
- (6) Christ (implied in 3:34. See also John 6:56 and 15:5." (Vine, p. 68, 69.)

C. *What Does it Mean To Me?*

Such comments as we have just read shock us. Most of us are so far away from the ideal here described that it seems that surely this is a description of another world and superhuman persons. Wait a moment. Read the text again. *Can* we keep His commandments? He wouldn't have given them if we couldn't keep them. John expects us to digest his gospel and understand just what His commandments are. All we can ever offer to God or our blessed Lord *is* a total willingness to do His will. We can offer a deep desire to follow His example and what He has said. We can give a glad, warm, happy willingness to absorb His word with the intention that we shall give it free course in our life.

When the above conditions become more than idle dreams, we will in this very action be *abiding in Him*. We cannot recommend too highly the daily practice of memorizing the scriptures. But do this in the act of meditation, which consists of four points.

- (1) *visualizing—seeing*, hearing, tasting, and touching the persons or concepts described in the text.
- (2) *personalizing—putting* yourself into the text; receiving into your deepest self-consciousness the personal application of the truth to your life.
- (3) *socializing—sharing* in conversation with others what you have seen and heard. If you do not express it, you will not possess it.
- (4) *finalizing—putting* down in some permanent form what you have learned. Record it on tape or paper. Then read it or listen to it later. This becomes your spiritual track record.

We are constantly assured by John and Paul that the Holy Spirit abides in us. This is a truth of fact that must be accepted by faith, i.e., taking or accepting God at His word. God said it! I believe it; that settles it! The Holy Spirit (and God and Christ representively) does in deed, in fact, in truth live in me!

D. *How Can I Share It?*

Man wants assurance first, and then he can act. God wants action on faith first, and by this action He gives assurance. "The Holy Spirit uses our obedience to the commandments—our love of fellow believers 'in deed and in truth'—to impart the sure knowledge that we are in vital, saving union with God." (Burdick, p. 66.) Subjective assurance is a result of objective action.

4. and 5. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye *the Spirit of God*: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of the anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already. Ye are of God, my little children, and have overcome them: because greater is *he that is in you* than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:1-4

A. *What Does It Say?*

Once again we refer you to W. E. Vine.

“Introductory Note

“The Apostle now seeks to give his readers a means of assurance that what has been ministered is the truth, in contrast to the errors advanced by false teachers. He shews that there are two spirits in the world, and sets these in sharp contrast. The one is the Holy Spirit who abides in the believer, as mentioned at the end of the 3rd chapter. The other is the spirit of the Antichrist which is in the world. The one is the Spirit of truth, the other is the spirit of error. We are to be assured as to whether we are being led by the Spirit of God, or by the spirit of error. We are therefore to prove the spirits whether they are of God, that is, whether they proceed from God. The main connection between this chapter and the preceding one is that, Chapter 3 shows the necessity of proving our relationship to God by our actions; the beginning of Chapter 4 continues the theme, but puts it another way, namely, that confession of truth attests the fact of relationship of God. The immediate connection between the two chapters lies in the mention of the Spirit of God.

“VERSE 1. *Beloved,—...*

“*believe not every spirit,—This* is set in contrast to the mention of the Holy Spirit at the end of the preceding chapter. While we have the assurance that Christ abides in us by the Spirit which He gave us, yet we are to be on our guard against deceptive spirits. Our assurance should be the means of increasing our powers of discernment in regard to contrary influences. The tense of the verb is continuous, it suggests that we are to be in the habit of refusing to believe every spirit. Not that all who come to teach us are to be regarded as false simply because we are unacquainted with them and their antecedent associations. There must be discernment.

“*but prove the spirits,—Dokimazo*, ‘to try, is to be distinguished from *peirazo*, a word with a similar meaning. That they resemble one another is evident from their association in 2 Cor. 13:5, and Psa. 25:2 in the Lxx. John rarely uses either. This is the only place where *dokimazo* is found in his writings. *Peirazo* which is frequent in the New Testament he uses only four times (John 6:6; Rev. 2:2, 10; 3:10). *Dokimazo* is never used in the sense of proving, as is the case of *peirazo*. Broadly speaking the proving signified by *dokimazo* suggests a good motive, the hope that what is tested will stand the test, whereas *peirazo* frequently suggests the hope that what is tested will be found wanting. Though this is not always the case, for *peirazo* is used once of God in Heb. 11:17, and once of the Lord Jesus (John 6:6), with whom the purpose always is the benefit of the one who is tested. As an example of the former see 1 Thess. 5:21. So here the object of the command to prove the spirits is to see whether they are of God, so that what is of God may be accepted and what is not of God may be rejected. While the proving of spirits is itself a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:10), yet all believers are responsible to form a judgment concerning spiritual things, and, as the Apostle has pointed out, provision has been made for this under the ‘anointing from the Holy One’ (2:18, 20, 27; cp. 2 Tim. 2:7). Yet the power of spiritual perception depends on the spiritual state and conduct of the believer in response to the anointing. Discernment of the truth belongs only to the godly (Prov. 28:5; Dan. 9:13; 2 Pet. 1:9).

“Moreover, the desire to be impressed, to have the feelings wrought upon, rather than to be instructed in the ways of the Lord, is a common snare to the saints (2 Tim. 3:6,7; 4:3, 4).

“The completed Scriptures, i.e., the O. T. and N. T., became later the sole and sufficient standard by which all teaching oral or written could be tested, but long before that time believers and churches had multiplied widely. During the intervening period, in the case of revelations, for the testing of which the O. T. was not available, such as that referred to in Col. 1:26, e. g., believers were encouraged, by the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, John 16:13, to compare utterances claiming to be spiritual, 1 Cor. 2:13, and so to test the prophecy and the spirit that prompted it, I Cor. 14:29; I John 4:6; Rev. 2:2.

“whether, they are of God;—That is, whether they have God as their source. The claim of any authority to Divine doctrine must be tested by the Scriptures, which, as they themselves testify, have their origin in God. Gal. 1:8, 9 makes clear that no new revelation was to be added. Neither the dictates of the Church nor those of conscience are a sufficient guide as to Divine truth and the will of God. Conscience may be entirely mistaken. Church dictates may consist of accretions to the faith. We must neither mistake self-will for conscience nor accept doctrines which add to, or detract from, the Word of God.

“because many false teachers are gone out into the world. —Cp. 2:18. The false prophets here spoken of include the antichrists there mentioned as having already arisen. Christ had foretold that false prophets would arise, and similar warning had been given in the Epistles (Matt. 7:15; 24:4, 5, 24; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3, e. g.) The false teachers, of which the Apostle had already spoken in 2:18, had identified themselves with believers before they went out from their midst. Those referred to here were apparently more numerous and had arisen in other ways. They include those who had not professed the Christian faith, as well as the more dangerous type who had done so. That they are said to have gone out into the world suggests their having had a mission from spiritual powers of darkness, whose object is to deceive men. The ‘world’ stands for the mass of unregenerate humanity, which lies in the evil one. The purpose of wicked spirits, through their human agents, would be to maintain unbelievers in a state of alienation from God, and to lead astray the saints. The perfect tense ‘have gone out’ suggests that the evil influence had come to stay.

“VERSE 2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God:— ‘Hereby’ is literally ‘in this’, as frequently elsewhere in the Epistle (e.g., 3:16, 19, 24). The phrase points to what follows, which provides believers with the necessary test. The verb for ‘know’ is *ginosko*, and the meaning is ‘you know by experience of facts and so are able to recognize.’ The experience is comprehensive and belongs to all true believers. The Spirit of God is to be recognized as a result of trying the spirits, and the nature of any testimony will be recognized by its agreement with the doctrines of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, of which the Holy Spirit is the source.

“every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:—The phrase ‘every spirit’ does not refer to other beings than human, but to the person whose spirit is acted upon by the Holy Spirit, through whose instrumentality he confesses the truth. It is to be noted that the Apostle says ‘in the flesh’, not ‘into the flesh.’ The statement is directed against the Gnostic error promulgated by Ceninthus, that the Christ descended into an already existing man. As the Gospel states, ‘the Word became flesh’ (1:14, R. V., not ‘was made, in the A. V.). Christ ‘was born of the seed of David according to the flesh’ (Rom. 1:3, R. V., not ‘was made’, as in the A. V.). Cp. Gal. 4:4, R. V. Christ partook of flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14).

“It is possible to render the original as follows: ‘every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus is Christ having come in flesh’, or again ‘confesseth Jesus Christ having come in flesh.’ All the Gnostic sects denied this truth. They maintained a distinction between Christ (whom they called an aeon) and the man Jesus. The Apostle maintains the truth that Jesus Christ is one inseparable Person and that He has become flesh. Cp. Col. 2:9.

“The perfect tense ‘having come’ should be noted. It represents an abiding effect. From His

Incarnation onward Christ was, and ever is, possessed of true Manhood. Involved in this is the truth that He is the ‘one Mediator between God and Man, Himself Man, Christ Jesus’ (1 Tim. 2:5, R. V.). Every spirit who confesses this truth is of God, *i.e.*, is derived from God, the person himself having been born of God. (See 2:16; 3:10, and John 8:47.

“VERSE 3. *and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God* :—The R. V. is to be taken as correct, according to the most authentic MSS. The confession of ‘Jesus’ includes what has been said in verse 2, while specially stressing the Lord’s humanity. For other occasions of the use of the single title see Rom. 3:26; 10:9; 1 Thess. 4:14; Heb. 2:9, etc.

“*and this is the spirit of the antichrist* ,—T bough the sword ‘spirit’ is not in the original, something must be supplied, and this is undoubtedly the best insertion after what has been said in verse 2. The Antichrist will deny the truth relating to Christ, as he will not merely be opposed to Christ but will be Satan’s substitute for Him. See 2:22, 23.

“*whereof ye have heard that it cometh*;—That is, the spirit of the Antichrist, the spirit that opposes Christ, substituting another instead of Him. The personal Antichrist will indeed come, but what the Apostle next says shews that he has in view the anti-christian spirit. The present tense ‘cometh’ expresses the fact that such a spirit would be present, and would issue in the advent of the Antichrist himself. This the Apostle had taught the saints when he was with them.

“*and now it is in the world already*.—‘Already’ is put last to add stress. Cp. John 4:3 5, where the original puts ‘already’ last in the sentence. Here the word gives an Intimation that, while the spirit of the Antichrist is present in the world, something more is to follow. The spirit which is now present is preparing the way for the Antichrist himself. Cp. what the Apostle Paul says about ‘the mystery of lawlessness’ in 2 Thess. 2:7, where the stress is on the word ‘lawlessness.’

“VERSE 4. *Ye are of God, my little children* ,—The ‘ye’ is emphatic and is thus set in marked contrast to the false prophets (verse 1). Inasmuch as the Apostle has said that every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh ‘is of God’ (verse 2), and now he says ‘ye are of God’, his readers are one in Divine relationship with those who have taught them the truth.

“*and have overcome them* :—That is to say, the false teachers. The overcoming consists in having refused to listen to them. The fact that the anti-christian spirit is in the world, means conflict for the children of God and victory for the faithful. It also means their practical identification with Christ, Who said, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world’ (John 16:33). See also John 10:5.

“*because greater is He that is in you than he is in the world*.—The power for victory lies, not in the child of God himself, but in the One who indwells Him. The realization of this gives triumphant confidence in face of spiritual foes, confidence, not in self, but in God. See Zech. 4:6; 1 Cor. 15:57; Eph. 6:10.

‘He that is in you’ is the Holy Spirit; ‘he that is in the world’ is the evil one, ‘the prince of this world’ (John 12:31), ‘the god of this world’ (2 Cor. 4:4). Cp. John 8:44. In the strength, then, of ‘the Spirit which God gave us’ (3:24) we are to fight against the influence which permeates that system of human society which lies in spiritual darkness and is organized, socially, intellectually and morally, by the evil one and his hosts, against God and His Christ.” (Vine, p. 73-77.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Please read carefully these words from Alexander Ross in his book *The Epistles of James and John*.

“The mention of the Spirit (3:24) leads John to write a warning about false teachers who claim to have deep spiritual insight, who indeed often claim to have the Holy Spirit, but who are really animated and inspired from another source. *Test the spirits*, John says to his *beloved children*. The verb he uses was used of the testing of metals; Paul uses it in 1 Thess. 5:21, ‘Test all things; hold fast that which is good.’ The Spirit of God is the source of your sonship and the Spirit of God can give you spiritual insight, so that you can distinguish between the fine gold of heaven and base metal, between true teaching and false. Such a warning is needed, because many false prophets have gone out into the world, some of them apostate Christians (2:19). Think of Our Lord’s words in Mt. 24:24, Paul’s words in Acts 20:30 and Peter’s words in 2 Pet. 2:1. Paul’s words were addressed to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, and now John, whose sphere of activity was largely at Ephesus, warns the Christians of that city and the surrounding neighbourhood. A. T. Robertson says that ‘it is absolutely essential, in the medley of conflicting voices which we have today—such as atheism and materialism and pantheism and humanism and Unitarianism and Christian Science – that the disciples of Jesus be able to “recognize the Spirit of God.”’ In order to do that they do not need any Pope; they have the infallible guide to religion and morals in themselves.

“2. John now tells us how we can recognize the Spirit of God. ‘Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ *as come in the flesh is of God.*’ It should be carefully noted that John does not say ‘come *into* the flesh,’ but ‘*in* the flesh.’ Christ did not descend into an already existing man, as Cerinthus and others were teaching, but He came in human nature; He became flesh (Jn. 1:14) Further, John does not say that the confession is to be of a Christ who *came*, but of a Christ who *is come, who came and who abides in the flesh*—a perfect tense being used. As the Westminster *Shorter Catechism* says, Our Lord ‘was and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct natures and One Person, for ever.’

“3. Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus, that is, in the sense explained, is not of God. A very interesting reading, which is at least as old as the 2nd. century has here: ‘Every spirit which *severs* Jesus (or, as in the margin, which *annuls*) Jesus.’ This reading can scarcely be genuine, because it is not found in a single Greek MS., nor in any version except the Vulgate, but it certainly describes in quite a felicitous way the heresy of Cerinthus and those who thought like him. Westcott explains it as meaning, separates the divine from the human, divides the one divine-human Person.’ The dangerous teaching which John is refuting is an expression of that spirit of Antichrist to which he had already referred (2:18).

“4. *You*, in emphatic contrast with the false teachers, are born of God and have overcome them, with a victory the results of which abide—another perfect tense. You have been able to prevent their pernicious teaching from corrupting the Church, and that not in any strength of your own, but in the strength of Him whose Word abides in you (2:14). The ultimate source of the false teaching is ‘he that is in the world,’ ‘the ruler of the world,’ (Jn. 12:31), ‘the ruler of the powers of the air’ (Eph. 2:2). On that verse in Ephesians G. G. Findlay (*Expositor’s Bible*) quotes these words of Beck: ‘The Power of the air is a fitting designation for the prevailing spirit of the times, whose influence spreads itself like a miasma through the whole atmosphere of the world.’ Great is the subtle power of the enemy of God over the human soul, but God is mightier, and he is in you.” (Alexander Ross. *The Epistles of James and John* in *New International Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1960, p. ~

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

The simple souls in John’s day are not the only gullible people in history. Men today are as ready to believe ‘every spirit’ as they were in the days of the Apostle. We have commented often on the obvious fact that in the total absence of the New Testament canon there must have been thousand upon thousands of prophets and inspired teachers. It would then have been easier to assume that because a man was earnest and/or excited or authoritative in his manner that his message was from God. There must be an

objective test. We need to be constantly reminded of the very real presence of two spirits in our world. These spirit beings have immediate access to our spirits. Man is essentially spirit. Behind every prophet there is a spirit—the Holy Spirit or the spirit called Satan. Please notice that the test of proving is to be done by all Christians. John did not appeal to some official dignitary to make the decision. The source or origin of teaching can be and must be identified. How can that be done? Here is the procedure: When someone comes to you with a word purporting to be from a divine source, pay particular attention to his attitude toward our Lord. If he will not openly confess that He is indeed the Messiah and Son of God, be careful. If he is hesitant to plainly acknowledge that Jesus is Immanuel, i.e., God with us—if he wants to explain the nature of Jesus on some other basis than the fact that He is our Messiah who has come in a body of flesh—reject his word. He is false, and his teaching comes from the evil one.

The expression “Hereby know ye *the Spirit of God*,” is discussing the work of the Spirit which is to make known His will to men. The purpose of the coming of the Spirit was to glorify or honor our Lord. He does this through the teachings which He has brought to us. Cf. John 15:26; 16:13-15. We need to remember that evil spirits recognized the deity of Jesus. Cf. Mark 1:24; 3:11; 5:7, 8; Acts 19:15. But they did not acknowledge Him as Lord or openly teach His Lordship. Any teaching which brings honor to anyone or any thing else but our Lord is open to question as to its source or origin. The spirit of the antichrist is a very real present threat. *The Antichrist* and *many antichrists* are two different subjects. The one person described by Paul in II Thess. 2:1 ff. is the Antichrist. The same attitude is portrayed by many, and they are called antichrists. They were present in John’s day. The power of Satan cannot be ignored. “He that is in the world” is a great power proceeding from a person. Satan can only operate through people. It is in the world of persons that the evil one has his power. But it is also true that the Holy Spirit lives in people. “Greater is he who is in you (the Lord Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit) than he (Satan through demons) who is in the world (in the persons who are willing to have him live in them).” In what way is the Holy Spirit in us *greater* than Satan who is in the world? He is greater in purpose; the temporariness and disappointment of Satan’s purpose is offset by the eternal satisfying purpose of our Lord’s indwelling. He is greater in the nature of the One who thus lives in us. Satan is but a created being; the Holy Spirit is the omnipotent eternal God. He is also greater in the ultimate; the end of Satan is death. The end of the Spirit-possessed is “life and peace.”

D. *How Can I Share It?*

Read again these four verses and choose one of your acquaintances with whom you will share the meaning of these words of the Holy Spirit.

6. Hereby we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit..” I John 4:13

A. *What Does It Say?*

We quote from W. E. Vine.

“VERSE 13. *hereby know we that we abide in Him, and He in us*, because He hath given us of His Spirit.— Literally, ‘in this we know’, *ginoska*, that is, we know by Continuous experience. This statement is parallel to, and a slight expansion of, the latter part of 3:24, ... There is an addition in regard to the statement of our experience, in that the Apostle now says that we know ‘that we abide in Him.’ Though he had put it as a matter of fact in the first part of 3:24, the twofold fact is put here as a matter of experience, both that we abide in Him and He in us.

“There is another change, too, from 3:24. The Spirit was there stated as the Source of our experience. Here the fact that God has given us of His Spirit, is proof in our experience that we abide in

Him and He in us. Further, in 3:24 the gift of the Spirit was connected with the keeping of His commandments; here it is connected with the exercise of love. There is, however, practically no distinction in this respect, as we who manifests love have fulfilled the Law.

“The statement that God has given us of His Spirit does not mean that He gives the Spirit by measure or in portions; it is definitely stated in John 3:34 that He does not do this (the words ‘unto him’ in the A. V. of that verse are not part of the original). The significance of the phrase ‘of His Spirit’, seems to be, that, while each child of God has the Holy Spirit, the love which we manifest is the outcome of that gift. In other words, the exercise of love is involved in the possession of the Spirit.” (Vine, p. 83 84)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Donald W. Burdick has some helpful comments on this verse.

“In 1 John the word ‘hereby’ usually refers to that which follows it rather than what precedes it (cf. 2:3; 3:16; 4:3). Its use here in verse 13 seems to be no exception. ‘Hereby’—that ‘he hath given us of his Spirit’— ‘know we that we dwell in him, and he in us.’ In verse 12 love for one another is evidence of God’s indwelling; in verse 13 the presence of the Spirit is evidence of the same fact. These two proofs, love and the Holy Spirit, are really not independent of each other, for Paul reveals that love is produced in the believer’s life by God the Spirit.

“It is with purpose that John says ‘he hath given us *of* his Spirit’ rather than ‘he hath given us *his* Spirit.’ When the New Testament refers to the giving or receiving of the Spirit as a person, the word ‘Spirit’ occurs as direct object of the verb (cf. Jn. 20:22; Ac. 8:15; 10:47; 15:8). Here, however, the phrase ‘of [*ek*, ‘from’] his Spirit’ indicates that God gives His Spirit by measure to men. Only Christ received the Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34). (Burdick, p. 75-76.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Please read again the opening sentence of the comment by W. E. Vine: in this we know, *ginosko*, that is, *we know by continuous experience*.” Let’s get the point of this passage; we know that we are living in God and God is living in us by the means of the indwelling Holy Spirit whom God has given to us. But this subjective witness is only obtained, or perhaps we should say, *sustained* by our Continuous experience of this fact. We must Constantly remind ourselves of this incredible truth that we are the sanctuary for God by the Spirit. When we verbalize in prayer or song the fact that we have the Holy Spirit, we sense by this expression that we are abiding in Him and He in us. Lest this become too elusive, we need to read the fifteenth verse in which the same principle of reciprocal action is expressed. “Whosoever shall confess (keep on confessing) that Jesus is the Son of God, *God abideth in him, and he in God*.” The sixteenth verse asserts the fact that when we *abide in love*, God also abides in us. The one point to be emphasized is the continuous action involved in all these relationships. (1) When we keep on reminding ourselves that we have the Holy Spirit, we are abiding in God and God is abiding in us. (2) When we keep on confessing before men that Jesus is the Son of God, by this action He is abiding in us and we in Him. (3) When we keep on abiding (living) in His love, God lives in us and we in God.

D. *How Can I Share it?*

If we follow the suggestions made above, we will indeed be sharing with others.

7. and 8. “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one. 1 John 5:7, 8

A. *What Does it Say?*

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We must read verses five and six of this same chapter to get the context of verses seven and eight. “Who is it that overcomes the world but he, who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with water only but with the water and the blood.” This is a strong affirmation of the incarnation as seen in our Lord’s baptism and in His death. We quote now from J. W. Roberts in his book *The Letters of John*.

“*Three witnesses*, 5:7, 8. [7] There is another testimony to the incarnation. To John’s former affirmation, he adds, *And the Spirit is the witness*, or more literally, ‘the Spirit is that which bears witness’ (or testimony). John means that the Spirit bears witness to the facts which have been asserted; the Holy Spirit collaborates in confirming the truthfulness of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. The reference probably is to the entire revelation of the Holy Spirit in the experience of the church, first of all in the apostolic proclamation of the gospel by the inspired apostles, prophets, and preachers who preached the gospel ‘through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven’ (1 Peter 1:12). Secondly the Spirit’s testimony was shown in the signs he gave confirming this word (Acts 14:1, 2; Heb. 2:1-4). Then eventually this led to the Christian Scriptures, and so there remains the testimony of the Spirit within the church even for us. That testimony, as represented by the four Gospels, the preaching imbedded in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the epistles of Paul, Peter, etc., confirms the doctrine of the divine incarnation of Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16; John 1:1, 14; 6:51; Cot. 1:22; Heb. 2:14; 5:7; 1 Peter 4:1).

“The Spirit is peculiarly qualified to bear this testimony *because the Spirit is the truth*. He is often called the Spirit of truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 1 John 4:6). He is thus simply called *the truth*, sharing with the Godhead the character of not being able to lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18).

“[8] The combination of the *Spirit* with the two witnesses previously mentioned, *the water and the blood*, provides *three witnesses* who testify that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. There is significance from the viewpoint of the Old Testament in having at least three witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16). There seems little reason not to give *the water and the blood* the same meaning that they had in verse 6, Christ’s coming both ‘by water and blood.’ There is most naturally means that his earthly incarnation included his baptism and his death. So here John probably means that the Spirit’s testimony is joined to those of these two significant events from Jesus’ life which helped to identify him as the Christ the Son of God.

“Some commentators think that John (using the continuous action tense of the substantive participle) intends to stress the witness which was still being borne at the time he wrote. It is the most natural, they think, for John to mean by water and blood here the two things which take their origin from these two events of Jesus’ life: Christian baptism from Jesus’ baptism and the Lord’s supper from the death of Jesus. But there seems to be no reason to stretch John’s meaning beyond the more obvious meaning, especially since through the testimony of the inspired witness of the early church the record of these events is so stressed that they are still effective for testimony.

“John emphasizes that the *three witnesses . . . agree*. They give the same testimony, all witnessing to the truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. The reality of the incarnation of the Christ in the human Jesus is what these witnesses specifically testify. Against these witnesses the denial of the false teachers is to be weighed. The curious grammatical construction of this sentence is variously interpreted. It literally reads in Greek, ‘and the three unto (*eis*) the one are.’ Some see *eis* as introducing a prepositional phrase giving the object of the witness, ‘the three are directed to this one, namely, in their thus unanimous witness.’ It seems better to take the *eis* answering to the Hebrew *le* and introducing predicative nominatives. The construction is frequent in the New Testament both in quotations from the Septuagint (Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16; 2 Cor. 6:18; Heb. 1:5) and elsewhere (Luke 13:19; John 16:20; Rev. 16:19; 1 Thess. 3:5). The correct meaning is that the three witnesses are one; they agree in giving the same testimony.” (J. W. Roberts. *The Letters of John*. Austin, Texas, R. B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1968, p. 132, 133.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Please read carefully this splendid comment by W. E. Vine.

“VERSE 7. *And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.*’—That is to say, the Holy Spirit; see 3:24; 4:13. ‘That beareth witness’ translates the article with the participle, which is virtually a noun ‘the Witness-Bearer.’ So in John 6:63, ‘the Spirit is the Life-Giver.’

“The threefold witness is about to be given (see verse 8), but, as a preliminary to this, the Person of the Holy Spirit is mentioned first alone, as being in the Godhead. The Spirit of God bears witness by His operation in the heart concerning the Person and Work of Christ. On the day of Pentecost and subsequently He bore witness through the Apostles and others. He bears witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16), and through testimony in accordance with them the Scriptures constitute the truth because ‘the Spirit is the truth.’

“The Apostle conveys through this latter statement the Deity of the Holy Spirit, ‘God is true’ (Psa. 31:5). Christ is ‘the truth’ (John 14:16), and ‘the Spirit is the truth.’ He is the one in Divine nature with the Father and the Son.

“The special witness to which this passage refers is the identity of Jesus with the Son of God, and to this great fact the Spirit of truth bears witness. See John 14:26 and 15:26. “The alternative rendering ‘it is the Spirit that beareth witness that the Spirit is the truth’ is possible, but is not borne out by the context.

Notes on Verse 7 in the A. V.

“The 7th verse, given in the A. V. is not part of the original. No Greek manuscript earlier than the 14th century contains the passage. No version earlier than the 5th century in any other language contains it.

“Only Latin versions contain it previous to the 14th century. None of the Greek or Latin ‘Fathers’ in all their testimonies in the first four and a half centuries about the Trinity, quote the passage. Again what the passage states about the witness in heaven is not confirmed by any other passage in Scripture. Moreover, the statement makes a break into the sense of the whole passage. It must, therefore, be regarded as an interpolation by some copyist.

“VERSE 8. *For there are three who bear witness,*— The present continuous tense indicates the permanency of the witness.

“*the Spirit, and the water, and the blood:*—The triple witness is a witness concerning life (see verse 11, R. V., which is to be connected immediately with this verse.) The Spirit of God applies to the believer’s heart the realization of the efficacy of the blood of Christ and the ministry of what is set forth by the water. All this constitutes a ministry of life, and what has been said above as to the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14), and the preparation of the priests for their service (Ex. 28 and Lev. 8), has to do with the bestowal of life through cleansing, on the one hand (for the leper, instead of living and dying apart, could come into the camp), and, on the other hand, of a life of service to God. In each case water and blood and oil were applied, the oil being emblematic of the Holy Spirit.” (Vine, p. 98, 99.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

We appreciate very much the words of Clinton Gill in his commentary *Hereby We Know*.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“This is the one who came through water and blood, ‘Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in the water and the blood.’

“In the American revival which filled the church houses just following World War II, signs could be seen on every major highway entreating passerby to, ‘*find yourself through faith.*’ Perhaps the revival proved to be more a bust than a boom because the signs failed to tell us ‘faith in what?’

“Faith is not merely a positive attitude toward life. It is more than self-confidence. Faith must have an object. It is a trusting awareness of that object.

“The object of the Christian faith is a Galilean Carpenter, who, through certain phenomenal events in His life, was revealed to be the uniquely begotten Son of God; a visitor to this dimension from another arena of activity. Of these phenomena, John selects two which suit the purpose of this epistle: His baptism and His death.

“One form of gnosticism, propounded by the followers of a philosopher named Cerinthus, claimed that whatever was divine about Jesus came upon Him at His baptism and left Him on the cross. This John flatly denies. This One did not come *from* water to blood, that is, *from* His baptism *to* the cross. He came *through* them both. “He was Deity incarnate before His baptism, and when He shed His blood on the cross, He was still *God as man*. Otherwise, the death of Jesus loses its meaning. If Jesus was not God from the beginning, before His baptism, the Word was not *as* man but *in* man and Jesus’ victorious life of obedience to God was a farce. If He did not remain God as man when He died, then God did not express His love to the world on Calvary.

“c. Evidences of faith.. v. 7-10

“(7) ‘And the Spirit is the one testifying, because the Spirit is truth. (8) For they are three, the ones testifying; the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are for the one thing 9) If the testimony of men we are receiving, the testimony of God is greater; because this is the testimony of God, for He has testified concerning His Son. (10) The one believing in the Son of God is having His testimony in him. The one not believing God has made Him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony which God has testified concerning His Son.’

“To the evidence of Jesus’ baptism and death, John now adds the testimony of the Spirit. Perhaps the most obvious allusion here is to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism. To the septic this is no evidence at all, but to the one who was begotten of God and himself been anointed by the Spirit this argument is clearly conclusive in itself. It will never make sense to the one who thinks as a materialist, refusing to accept anything as real unless he can understand it through the physical senses. But the testimony of the Spirit is conclusive proof to the one who has learned from Christ that the realm of the spirit is the real world.

“The testimony of all these three witnesses is for one thing: ‘That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name.’ (John 20:3 1)

“In our day the testimony of the Spirit includes not only our awareness that He is within us as well as His testimony throughout the life of Jesus; it includes the written word which He inspired John and the others to write.

“Such evidence is also meaningless to the person who must subject everything to the test of human reason. Inspired scripture is unacceptable to one who will not believe what he cannot dissect in a laboratory or analyze chemically. But it is the precious proof to the one who is in tune with the infinite.

“The attack of modern rationalism against the deity of Jesus began with an attack on the *written* testimony of the Spirit. The claim that Jesus was a deceiver rather than a deliverer depends upon the destruction of Scriptural evidence to the contrary.

“For this reason we are told that the Bible is a collection of forgeries and myths. No honest scholar can deny that the writings of the Scripture claim for Jesus exactly what the rationalist (as well as the gnostic) cannot accept; that He is God as man. Since this is obviously the claim of these writings, it becomes necessary to disprove the reliability of the writings themselves. To do so is to deny the inspiration, or to use John’s term, the testimony, of the Spirit in the Bible, and especially the New Testament.

“To the child of God, the most meaningful evidence available to prove the incarnate nature of Jesus is the testimony of the Spirit in written word.

“John’s statement, in verse 10, that the believer has God’s testimony in him is another allusion to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Perhaps the greatest need among modern Christians, in this respect, is to realize that the Holy Spirit is not simply a divine influence, but a person. The Bible never refers to the Holy Spirit as ‘It’, but always as ‘He’ or ‘Him.’ The presence of this Divine Guest within our lives is evidence of the Deity of Jesus, for it was Jesus Who promised Him to us. (Cf. John 16:7ff) It is upon obedience to Jesus that the Spirit comes to us. (Cf. Acts 2:38-39)

“The person who does not believe that Jesus is the Incarnate Son of God has made the Spirit a liar. It is impossible to imagine a greater sin. It is impossible to imagine any more certain assurance of being eternally lost than this denial of what the Holy Spirit has claimed to be true. This is the epitome of self-worshipping egoism.

“It is through the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the child of God that faith becomes power. Firm conviction, even personal trust, *alone* is not enough to bring about victory over what John calls the world.

“Real victory comes through an acute awareness of unseen reality. The awareness must be deep-seated within the heart of a person. It is not something which can be understood academically and then clung to tenaciously in the face of apparent contradiction. Awareness of the kind necessary to give us victory over the limitations of physical senses is ours only when our trust opens our hearts and allows the Divine Representative to live in us. One is less likely to doubt the reality of spiritual life when the Spirit Himself is his constant companion. (Clinton R. Gill. *Hereby We Know; a Study of the Epistles of John*. Joplin, Mo., College Press, 1971, p. 129-132.)

D. *How Can I Share It?*

If we all read carefully the above comments, we shall all have much to share.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JUDE

THERE ARE TWO REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

1. “These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and *do not have the Spirit.*” Jude 19, N.I.V.

A. *What Does It Say?*

Begin at the opening of the paragraph in verse seventeen and get the context of verse nineteen. We commend to you the words of Daniel Fream in the *Bible Study Textbook Series*.

“Once again a strong denunciation of the libertines is preceded by an appeal to prophecy. This time, the prophets are the New Testament apostles. ‘Remember their words,’ says Jude. If the readers remembered hearing the apostles speak the words (and more than one apostle is included), then the epistle could not have been written far into the second century, nor could Jude be quoting from a book that was not completed until the second century. The fact that the readers could remember the apostle’s words harmonized with the evidence that Jude, the Lord’s brother, wrote the epistle.

“Some seem to see a repetition of 2 Peter 3:2,3 in this passage. The two passages are not parallel, however. Peter does not indicate that the apostles’ words were spoken, but Jude does so indicate. What they mock in each case is entirely different. With Peter, they are scoffing at the second coming of Christ. These apostates in Jude are mocking God’s dealing with themselves and the surrendered life and conditionalities of the gospel. Note also the different verbs used.

“Paul also warned against apostasy in I Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; and Acts 20:29,30. Jesus also prophesied of the seducers in Mark 13:22,23 as Peter reminds us in the 2 Peter passage. These all prophesied of apostasy to come whereas Jude writes that it has come. Although this seems to date Jude after 2 Peter, it is probably not very long after. The warnings are too similar in context and expression.

“The content of the apostles’ prophecy again pinpoints the men whom he describes. These men make a mock of sin, and without shame follow their own ungodly lusts. In mocking the reality of sin, they also mock God and His righteousness.

“The phrase ‘in the last time’ may give some difficulty, but it need not. The last days were ushered in with the coming of Christ, and that ‘great and notable day of the Lord’ the day of salvation, actually began on the day of Pentecost. Paul writes to believers upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (I Cor. 10:11). God has spoken to us ‘at the end of these days.’ Heb. 1:2)

“In this connection we might also note Heb. 9:26; I Peter 1:5, 20; and I John 2:18.

“All history looked forward to the coming of Christ. All redemptive prophecy looked forward to that great and notable day when salvation would be offered, and the writer of Acts says, ‘This is it!’ The two thousand years since Christ have been an unfolding of that great and notable day, wherein the Spirit and the bride say, ‘come.’

“These are the men prophesied against. These are the sensual, who have not the spirit. Who have not *what* spirit? Some think the spirit of man is intended. Thus, these are the men who walk after their bodies but who have no spirit of a man. Although this is a possible meaning, the point seems somewhat

strained.

“More proper, it would seem, these are the men who walk after their physical desires, but who have not the Spirit of Christ. They do certainly have *some* spirit, as does every man (I John 4:6); but the Spirit of Christ is not to have sensuousness as a goal. The meaning could also be that these men walk after sensuality but have not the Holy Spirit. The implied fact is the same: they are not Christians!

“Added information about them is here given. They ‘separate themselves.’ It is a unity of spirit; His Spirit. Without the loyal life and submission to Christ, there can be no real unity, and fellowship is not much more than a convenience for opportunists.

“Apostasy is a growing canker. One of its immediate results is division among the brethren. This division will jell, if the apostasy continues, into a schism. A fault will then exist across the brotherhood of saints, and will deepen and widen until finally no bridge is possible. Then heresy follows, and a new body loyal to an apostate doctrine is the result. Thus apostasy has again and again split the church of the living God until the final result has been a tangled web of feuding denominations. The only way out is to go back to the author and finisher of our salvation, Jesus Christ. With a new heart surrendered to Him each man can search the holy word of God afresh and allow his brother the same privilege. Allowing that God is the judge, man could through submission to Him find unity in Him, if he would.” (Fream, p. 284, 285.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We have found the words of George Lawrence Lawlor in his Translation and Exposition of the Epistle of Jude (a book in An International Library of Philosophy and Theology) of tremendous help.

“The Apostates Do Not Have The Spirit”

“This is definite and decisive. ‘Spirit, not having,’ *pneuma ma ekontes*. *Pneuma*, ‘Spirit,’ is placed first in the sentence for emphasis. It is the Holy Spirit Himself these apostates do not have.¹⁹ They have spirit as all human beings have as tripartite beings, but Holy Spirit they do not have. There is no doubt here.²⁰ Without the Holy Spirit no man can be a Christian, much as he might indulge in the use of religious terms and familiar Christian expressions. The Scripture states clearly: ‘Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his’ (Rom. 8:9b) and ‘No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit’ (I Cor. 12:3b).

“*Ma ekontes* marks apostates as being devoid of the very thing that makes men regenerate beings. The present tense of the participle shows the continuing nature of their state. They have never received the Holy Spirit as the regenerating agent and temple-dweller, and they go right on without Him, destitute of His presence, in their own ungodly way. Without Him they are lost, unsaved, dead in trespasses and sins. Their clerical garb makes no difference in their spiritual state. It does not matter how moral they may be, how intellectual they are, what attractive and personable gentlemen they show themselves to be, how fine and wise they appear, how beautifully and eloquently they speak. They do not have the Holy Spirit residing in them. They are still enslaved by sin; they are without regeneration. They are simply unsaved men.

¹⁹ There is no article in the Greek. Opinion is divided between those who hold this to refer to the Holy Spirit and others who think that contrast between two characteristics, the sensual and spiritual, is intended” they have abandoned themselves so thoroughly to their lower nature that they can scarcely be said to have any spirit at all. But men who are devoid of ‘spirit,’ who have no spiritual nature, are so because the Holy Spirit does not dwell in them, has not regenerated them. Their spirit is enslaved by sin, not controlled by the Spirit of God, so they are without the presence of the Holy Spirit. Both the Authorized Version and Revised Version of 1901, and the Greek text of Nestle, have the capitalized word ‘Spirit,’ showing preference for the Holy Spirit.

²⁰ Huther says, “To explain *pneuma ma Montes* in the sense that they have no spirit at all is arbitrary. It is rather to be understood of the Holy Spirit. The want of... is no objection against this interpretation, since the simple word *pneuma* is often used in the New Testament sea designation for the objective Holy Spirit. it is erroneous to affirm that by this interpretation the conclusion of the description is too flat, for nothing worse can be said of a man than that he lacks the Holy Spirit. Moreover, only so understood does *pneuma ma ekontes* correspond to the preceding *psukokoi*, to which it is added as an explanation; *psukokoi* they are, in as much as their natural spiritual life left to itself under the unbroken power of the *sarx*; see I Corinthians 2:14. 15; James 3:15.”

“This is the true state of these apostates in whatever age and generation they appear. They do not have the Spirit of God, and are thus dead in their sins. These are the men whom multitudes have elected to follow, whom the masses are following today. They are the heads of denominations, councils, and conventions; the spokesmen of apostate Protestantism and the Roman Catholic Church; as ecclesiastical politicians, and pastors of churches; the leaders of the cults. They make merchandise of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. But their damnation slumbereth not. God is not mocked. This is Jude’s final word in his characterization of the apostates. How could he have stated the fact of the matter more clearly? If it could be possible that there might still be some remaining question concerning the real nature and state of these apostate religionists, this final and conclusive declaration should settle the issue once and for all. Here is the truth about these apostate religious leaders of our day. They do not have the Holy Spirit, so they have no real spirituality, no true faith at all. They twist religion into a justification for their aims and actions, and draw multitudes with them in their pernicious ways. They have received a knowledge of the truth, but, unable to endure sound doctrine, they have willfully turned away from it, and have thus departed from the living God. So, the words of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ are confirmed by the words of Jude.” (George Lawrence Lawlor. *Translation and Exposition of the Epistle of Jude*. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1972, p. 121, 122, 124.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

What a searing, searching comment. “Dear Lord, is it I?” It will be most helpful to remember of whom we speak. “Mockers” or “scoffers” are those who (1) follow their own ungodly desires, (2) divide you, (3) follow their mere natural instincts, and (4) have not the Spirit. We might add (5) that they appear “in the last times.” We like the words of Richard Wolff in his *A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude*. “The first coming of Christ is the center of world-history. All previous ages strove toward that goal, and all succeeding ages and their events are nothing but an unfolding of the work of redemption accomplished at the cross. The first appearing of Christ was the beginning of the end, the second coming of Christ will be the end of the end. The last days do not denote a point of time, but a period of development. The powers of the future eschatological kingdom have actually entered into the scene of human history in the Person of Christ.” (as quoted by Lawlor) (Richard Wolff. *A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1960, p. 121, 122.) We are in these days, and there *are* those among us who have not the Holy Spirit.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

We have been sharing in the comments made above. We only ask that we do not project these concepts on to someone else. Let each of us guard our hearts with all diligence. Because we are not now the persons here described does not mean we cannot and do not harbor the seeds of such destruction. Let us give such seeds no soil!

2. “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and *pray in the Holy Spirit*.” Jude 20 N.I.V.

A. *What Does It Say?*

We quote again from George Lawrence Lawlor.

“Exercising prayer in the Holy Spirit”

“Praying in the Holy Spirit.”

“The emphatic position of *en pneumati agio* in the sentence will impress upon the minds of believers the fact that their praying is necessarily in *the Holy Spirit*, in vital connection *with Him*. Such is the character of our praying. *En* denotes sphere, or living relationship. It is in that sphere designated by *en pneumati agio*, in this living relationship with the Holy Spirit, that we carry on the ministry of prayer. It

is as Mombert says, ‘we pray in His communion and power, not in reliance on our own wisdom and strength.’ (Mombert, *op. cit.*, p. 29.) Wolff comments: ‘we are to pray in the element of the Holy Spirit, under His influence, in the power and wisdom of the spirit of the Lord. He must move our hearts and direct our petitions.’ (Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 127.) Huther, says, ‘It means so to pray that the Holy Spirit is the moving and guiding power.’ (Huther, *op. cit.*, p. 697.) Praying in the spirit is praying out of hearts and souls that are indwelt, illuminated, and filled by the Holy Spirit. It is praying with desires and aims that have been so cleansed and purified by the Holy Spirit that our prayers are right. (Cf. Rom. 8:26, 27 with James 4:8)

“Right praying is a form of worship, is based upon devotion, and will evidence that devotion. The word *proseukomenoi* is from *proseukomenai*, a verb restricted to sacred usage, and composed of *pros*, ‘to, toward’; i.e., ‘facing, ‘and *eukomai*, ‘to pray.’ The verb *eukomai* is formed from *euka*, ‘a prayer’ (James 5:15), or ‘a vow’ (Acts 18:18; 21:23), in the sense of consecration. Thus, in this word there is the suggestion that praying in the spirit involves a consecrated worship on the part of believers, accompanied by a vow of continued devotion to the God of all grace. The present middle participle, *proseukomenoi*, shows the continued, habitual and responsible course that is to be always followed by the people of God. In consideration of the perils at hand due to the presence of apostates and the prevalence of their deceptive arts, the saints of God must constantly engage in the ministry of praying always in the Holy Spirit as the divine safeguard established for us by God. This participle together with the participle preceding, *epoikodomountes* (vs. 20), and the participle following, *prosdekomenoi* (vs. 21), form a perfect parallelism; the three participles being coordinated: building, praying, waiting, all necessary to the keeping ourselves in the love of God (vs. 21). (Cf. Mombert, *op. cit.*, p. 30)” (Lawlor, p. 127, 128.)

B. What Does It Mean?

Read once again Donald Fream.

“With a final appeal, Jude turns to the sincere brethren; Out of a deep love he has written to them, and now with a burning heart he urges them to build up their faith. Some may read this, as other scriptures they so read, that there is virtue in faith itself. Not so. Most all men believe something, yet most men are the broad road that leads to destruction. The most holy faith certainly places the faith in the proper scriptural object: Jesus Christ. The heart of the gospel and the object of our faith is many places set forth as Christ. There is no need that a reminder be made of this at every mention of the word *faith*. We do not build our lives on confidence; but on Christ, in whom we have confidence.

“‘Praying in the Holy Spirit’ is an unusual expression. To determine the meaning we should let other scriptures do the interpreting. Nowhere are we instructed, or do we have the example to pray *to* the Holy Spirit. This, then, is not the meaning. Nor do we have any teaching nor example that would indicate that the Holy Spirit completely submerges us and overwhelms our will to enable us to pray. Likewise the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not linked with our ability to pray.

“What can the expression mean? Romans 8:26,27 says ‘And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.’ And so we do have specific instruction as to the part the Holy Spirit has in our prayers. Because we are saved, and have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, then the Spirit intercedes on our behalf, interpreting our very will, before God. This is especially beneficial when we are unable to frame our heart’s desires with the proper words.

“It may be said that we are to pray to God as Spirit filled Christians; and not as these libertines who follow sensuousness and have not the Spirit. ‘Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which He gave us.’ (I John 3:24) We know the Spirit of God because of the confession made with the lips and with the life. (I John 4:2-6). John also adds that ‘this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask,

we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.’ (5:14-15).

“We might also note a linking of the God, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit in this section. We pray in the ‘Holy Spirit,’ we keep ourselves in the love of ‘God,’ and we look for mercy of our Lord ‘Jesus Christ.’ All have a part in our being kept for heaven, and all fulfill their parts with unexcelled flawlessness.

“There is a fourth party to our being kept, however, This party is ourselves. Our decision to stay with Him and to remain in His fold is not so flawless. And we have the careful admonition to ‘build up yourselves,’ to ‘keep yourselves,’ and to ‘look for the mercy.’ These are all admonitions that demand our active participation. We can by default or by choice neglect the object of our faith and so drift away from Him. (Hebrews 2:1). We can choose to go out from among the brethren. We can choose the way of apostasy, as Jude has so carefully warned. Even here he urges, with a burning heart, that we work with these apostates with fear; for a danger is involved!” (Fream, p. 287-289.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Alfred Plummer has often spoken to my needs. He has helped much in a consideration of these verses.

“‘Not having the Spirit.’ The Revisers maintain this rendering, which does not appear in English versions until the influence of Beza and the Genevan Version made itself felt. Calvin seems to adopt it; but Luther certainly does not... It must be supposed that the arguments in favour of it are very strong, seeing that the alternative translation is not allowed a place in the margin of either Authorized or Revised Version, nor is recommended by the American Committee. Nevertheless, the points in its favour are well worth considering. This alternative translation is, ‘Having no spirit’ (Tyndale, Cranmer), *i.e.*, no spiritual nature. ‘Not having spirit’ is Wiclif’s rendering. This agrees very well with the context. Jude has just stigmatized the libertines as ‘sensuous,’ or ‘psychical.’ Of the three elements in man’s nature, body, soul, and spirit, they are ruled by the two lower, while the third, which ought to be supreme, is persistently ignored. They had allowed the spiritual part of their being to become so bemired with self-indulgence and self-sufficiency, to be so much under the dominion of human emotion and reason, that it was utterly inoperative and practically non-existent. Their power of spiritual insight into things heavenly, of laying hold of the invisible world, and of entering into communion with God, was gone. The Holy Spirit was not only absent, but His seat was over-turned and destroyed. The facts that ‘spirit’ has neither article nor epithet in the Greek, and that the negative is subjective, and not objective..., are in favour of man’s spirit being meant, and of this clause being an explanation of what precedes. These men are sensuous *because* they have lost all spiritual power. It must not, however, be understood that the absence of article and epithet is any barrier to the rendering, ‘Having not the Spirit.’ Phil 2:1 is proof of that (comp. Eph 2:22; 6:18; Col. 1:8). Nevertheless, such cases are comparatively rare. The usual expression for the Third Person of the Holy Trinity is either ‘the Spirit,’ or ‘Holy Spirit,’ or ‘the Holy Spirit,’ or ‘the Spirit of God,’ or ‘of the Lord,’ or ‘of Jesus Christ,’ or ‘of truth,’ or ‘of life,’ etc. Therefore, when we find ‘spirit’ without either article, epithet, or distinguishing genitive, the probabilities are that the spirit of man, and not the Spirit of God, is intended.

“It will be observed that the three independent descriptions of the libertines, beginning with the words, ‘These are,’ become shorter as they go on. The first is two long verses (12, 13); the second is one long verse (16); the third is one very short verse. It is as if the writer were disgusted with the unpalatable subject which necessity had compelled him to take in hand (ver. 3), and were hurrying through it to the more pleasing duty of exhorting those faithful Christians for whose sake he has undertaken this painful task.

“‘But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.’ As in ver. 17, the ‘But ye, beloved’ ... makes an emphatic contrast between those whom St. Jude addresses and the sensuous and unspiritual men of whom he has been speaking. He exhorts his readers to endeavour to keep themselves in favour with God by cultivating faith, prayer, and hope; and in this exhortation the main purpose of the letter, as set forth in ver. 3, is fulfilled. The triplet of participles ... must not be lost sight of, although the fact that the main verb..., comes in the middle of them, instead of at the end, somewhat obscures the triple construction.

“The expression ‘building up’ ... is in the New Testament never used of actual building, but always in the metaphorical sense of believers being united together so as to form a temple. In this temple Christ is sometimes regarded as the foundation (I Cor. 3:11), sometimes as that which binds the structure together (Eph. 2:20; Col. 2:7). The notion of building *up* comes from the preposition..., one stone being placed upon another, so that upward progress is made. ‘The faith’ here is probably the foundation on which the structure is to rest; but it would be possible to translate ‘with your most holy faith,’ instead of ‘on your most holy faith;’ and in that case the dative would, as in Col. 2:7, express the cement rather than the foundation. In any case ‘the faith,’ is not the internal grace or virtue of faith, but, as both the participle and the adjective show, ‘the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints’ (ver. 3). It is ‘*your* faith,’ because it has been thus delivered to you; and it is ‘most holy,’ in marked contrast to the vile and shifty doctrines which the libertines profess and uphold.

“‘Praying in the Holy Ghost.’ This is the best arrangement of the words, although the Greek allows us to take ‘in the Holy Ghost’ with the previous clause, a rather clumsy division of the words, which is sanctioned by Luther, Beza, and the Rhemish Version: ‘building yourselves upon our (*sic*) most holy faith, in the Holy Ghost, praying.’ The expression ‘praying in the Holy Ghost’ occurs nowhere else; but that is no reason why St. Jude should not have used it here. It means that we are to pray in the power and wisdom of the Spirit. In order that we may pray, and pray aright, He must move our hearts and direct our petitions.

“‘Keep yourselves in the love of God.’ Not our love of God is meant, but His love of us. This is rendered probable both by what immediately follows – for ‘the love of God’ should have a meaning similar to that of ‘the mercy of Jesus Christ’ – and also by the opening address, ‘beloved in God’ (ver. 1), which St. Jude perhaps has in his mind; for the whole of the verse before us is closely connected with the first verse of the Epistle. God’s love is the region in which all Christians should strive to abide, and it is by faith and prayer that this abode is secured. To be conscious of being beloved by God is one of the greatest protections that the believer can possess.

“ ‘Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.’ That mercy which He will show to all faithful Christians when He returns as Judge at the last day. We may compare ‘looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God’ (2 Peter 3:12). Both in this life and in eternity it is mercy that we need and crave. The Psalms are full of this thought, as a reference to the numerous passages in which the word mercy occurs will reveal: see especially Ps. 130. And in connection with this the concise statement respecting the relations of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity to believers must not be overlooked. By prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit we are kept in the love of the Father through the mercy of the Son. ‘Unto eternal life.’ It is not a matter of much moment whether we take these words with ‘keep yourselves,’ or with ‘looking,’ or with ‘mercy.’ The first seems to be the best arrangement, ‘keep yourselves. . . unto eternal life;’ but in any case the eternal life is reached through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. With a similar thought the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (9:28) writes of Christ’s Second Advent as an advent ‘unto salvation’ ... The Divine purpose of both Advents is mercy, and not judgment; but seeing that both Advents are met by some who refuse to believe and repent, judgment is inevitable.” (Alfred Plummer. *The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude in The Expositor’s Bible*,

ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll. New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903, p. 454-458.)

D. *How Can I Share It?*

The Cambridge Bible series has also been of good help in our study. We quote from E. H. Plumptre. "*sensual, having not the Spirit* The adjective is the same as that which describes the 'natural man' of I Cor. 2:14, and implies that the man lives in the full activity of his emotional and perceptive nature, without rising into the region of the reason and conscience which belong to his spiritual being. 'Sensual,' or better perhaps, sensuous, is the nearest English equivalent, but strictly speaking, it expresses the lower aspect of the character represented by the Greek term. The 'sensuous' or psychical man is not necessarily 'carnal' in the sense usually attached to that term, but the two words are closely connected with, and indeed overlap each other. The words seem specially directed against the boast of many of the Gnostic teachers, who, looking to St. Paul's words in I Cor. 2:14, boasted that they alone were 'spiritual' in that Apostle's sense of the term, and that the members of the Church were, as the 'natural' or 'sensuous,' incapable of knowing the higher mysteries of God. (Iren. 1.6.2-4). St. Jude retorts the charge, and says that they, who boast of their illumination, are in very deed destitute of every higher element of the religious life. The word for 'Spirit' stands without the article in the Greek, and though this does not necessarily exclude the thought that the Spirit of God is spoken of, it is, perhaps, better to rest in the meaning that the false teachers were so absorbed in their lower, sensuous nature that they no longer possessed, in any real sense of the word, that element in man's compound being which is itself spiritual, and capable therefore of communion with the Divine Spirit.

"20. *building up yourselves on your most holy faith...* Both the adjective, which is nowhere used of faith in its subjective sense, and St. Jude's use of the substantive in verse 3, lead us to take 'faith' in the objective sense, as nearly identical with 'creed,' which attached to it in the later Epistles of the New Testament (I Tim. 5:8 and perhaps II Tim. 4:7). The readers of the Epistle are exhorted to take that faith as a foundation, and to erect on it the superstructure of a pure and holy life.

"*praying in the Holy Ghost* The precise combination is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, but the fact which it expresses corresponds with St. Paul's language in Rom. 8:26, and the almost identical phraseology of I Cor. 14:15. What is meant is the ecstatic outpouring of prayer in which the words of the worshipper seem to come as from the Spirit who 'helpeth our infirmities' and 'maketh intercession for us,' it may be in articulate speech, it may be also as with 'groanings that cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8:26). Here again we may recognize a side-glance at the false teachers. Not those who deserted the Church's faith for a life of impurity, but those who 'built' on it a life of holiness, were capable of that height of devotion which is described as 'praying in the Spirit.' "(E. H. Plumptre. *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, with Notes and Introduction*. Cambridge: University Press, 1897, p. 212-213.)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REVELATION

THERE ARE FIFTEEN REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

1 thru 4. “John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was is to come: *and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne*; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” Revelation 1:4,5; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6

A. *What Does It Say?*

We need to read all the other references in Revelation that contain this expression: (1) 3:1, “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith *he that hath the seven Spirits of God*, and the seven stars: I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead.” (2) 4:5, “And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. *And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;*” (3) 5:6, “And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, *and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God*, sent forth into all the earth.”

Mark carefully the most obvious qualities of the “seven Spirits.” (1) In Rev. 1:4 grace and peace are to be given by the “seven Spirits” as well as by God and Christ. In this salutation the “seven Spirits” are put on a level with God and our Lord. We could not then consider this a reference to the seven principal angels (Cf. 8:2), but rather to the Holy Spirit Himself. We must understand the number seven to be a symbol of the unity, complexity, and diversity found in the personality of the Holy Spirit.

(2) In 3:1 the “seven Spirits” are attributed to our Lord. We shall comment further upon this verse when we study it separately. Suffice it to say here that the expression seems to say that Jesus has all the presence and power of the Holy Spirit “without measure” (Cf. John 3:34). The Holy Spirit in all His completeness and unlimited power indwelt and worked with our Lord throughout His ministry and most especially in His exalted position following His resurrection as described here in Revelation.

(3) In 4:5 the “seven Spirits” are identified with the seven lamps burning before the throne. This seems an altogether appropriate symbol since lamps were used for light, and the Holy Spirit is our total or complete source of spiritual light.

In 5:6 once again the “seven Spirits” are associated with our Lord. His seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God; omniscience and omnipresence are here plainly suggested. This symbol tells us that the Holy Spirit is possessed of these divine qualities.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We are tempted to ask, “Are we to look for seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit and in them find His completeness?” Or, “Should we discover seven qualities or attributes of the Holy Spirit and in them find the unity and diversity of this blessed Third Person?” We have no warrant to do either one. It should be enough to know that the number seven stands as a symbol for completeness and thus used with the Holy Spirit it tells us that He is total or full deity. Carl Ketcherside has some interesting comments on this expression. He says (as heard on a tape from LaCrosse, Wisconsin): the total work of the Holy Spirit can be summarized under the seven headings of:

(1) Creation – Genesis 1:2

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- (2) Revelation –I Corinthians 2:6-10
- (3) Incarnation –Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:29-35
- (4) Regeneration –John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5
- (5) Incorporation i.e., organizing the body of Christ –I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:11, 12
- (6) Transformation –I Corinthians 3:18
- (7) Glorification –Romans 8:11

We happily agree that these are indeed the sevenfold works of the Holy Spirit. We do not know, however, that such sevenfold work was the reason for the use of this expression “seven Spirits.” As we shall see in our next section, such an expression could refer to His nature as well as to His works.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

I like the translation of the New International Version; it reads: “John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia; Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and *from the seven spirits (or the sevenfold Spirit) before his throne*, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” (Revelation 1:4,5) Such a translation clearly spells out that it is the nature of the Holy Spirit involved in the phrase “the seven Spirits.” It is of no small import to note that the sevenfold Spirit is associated with imparting to us grace and peace. A full realization of our unearned favor with God and the peace which is to guard our hearts in our Lord is obtained not only from the eternal God, but also from the wonderful sevenfold Holy Spirit. Coming from the throne of God via the Son, the Spirit reveals all we know and feel concerning God’s love for us. Such love came out of grace, and our response is a deep peace beyond our understanding! Cf. Acts 2:33. We cannot resist a most obvious use of seven qualities of this One as they relate to grace and peace. (1) The “*Spirit of truth*, whom the world can not receive” (John 14:17). This is how we heard of grace and peace. (2) “*Another Comforter*” (John 14:16). Such a One like our Lord has personally, patiently explained God’s love, which is “shed abroad in our hearts” (Rom. 5:5), i.e., through His word, the New Testament. (3) The “*Spirit of adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,” (Rom. 8:15). We can hardly believe that such a position of acceptance could be ours; out of joy in acceptance and peace or relief we cry, “Papa! Father!” (4) The “*Spirit who bears witness* with our Spirits that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16). Our unearned standing and peace with God is confirmed by two witnesses. He, the sevenfold One has told us how God loved us and gave His Son for our Sins. We agree gladly with it and have peace. (5) “*The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 8:1, 2). The new life I have from my Lord is the life from being dead in trespasses and sins. Eternal life in Christ Jesus –what a gift! How comforting! What peace! (6) “*The Spirit who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead*” (Rom. 8:11), and who will give life to my mortal body. I know I could never do anything to earn the right to the resurrection unto life, but it gives me great grand encouragement, and I with confident patience and peace wait for it! (7) “*The Spirit of grace*” (Hebrews 10:29). Instead of insulting the Holy Spirit who Himself came to tell us all we know of how God loves us, we should eagerly embrace Him and rest confidently and peacefully in the confidence He brings to our hearts. In the above brief comments we have tried to point out what variety and complexity there are in the nature of the Holy Spirit as He came to glorify not Himself, but Christ.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

Surely our readers will see this reference not only as a study of the Holy Spirit in Revelation but also

as somewhat of a compendium of all we have said of this Holy One. We can tell of His total nature and see Him in all His fullness. We are sharing One who is altogether lovely One like our Lord.

5 thru 10. “He that bath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.” Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 20; 3:6, 22.

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?*

Since this expression is used six times in Revelation it should merit our careful consideration. We might add in passing, that of the many commentaries we have read, it does not receive the thoughtful comment it merits. Our Lord often used an expression much like this. “Then Jesus said, ‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’” (Mark 4:9) There are several observations we can make. (1) Up to this verse (i.e., 2:7) our Lord has been speaking to John (Cf. 1:10ff) and John to the churches, but we now find out that it is actually the Holy Spirit speaking through our Lord. The Holy Spirit gives life and light to the word spoken by Jesus. We remember the words of our Lord, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” (John 16:13, 14) This surely confirms the similarity of the Gospel of John and Revelation. It does more; it says to us that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us in the words we read from our Lord. (2) Not everyone, even in the visible assembly, has ears. Some do not, or cannot hear. It is with the ears that we make contact with the Holy Spirit –or rather, that the Holy Spirit makes contact with us. There is much we can learn about the hearing process. We can become “dull in our hearing.” (Heb. 5:11) We *are* responsible as to *how* we hear. The meaning might be clear, but our willingness to receive it is not. Dullness is associated with indifference; children fail to heed the words of their parents not because they do not hear them but because they do not want to obey them. We are dull of hearing because of unnecessary repetition; that God should need to repeat any truth directed to us is of itself sad. We are dull of hearing because of sickness. When one is physically ill, interest in anything is at a very low ebb. Hearing while sick is indeed dull. Such a condition is paralleled many times in the spiritually sick folk in our churches. Cf. I Cor. 11:30.

(3) The whole message contained in each of the seven letters to the seven churches (and to us) was a message from the Holy Spirit. We have often said that the immediacy of the Holy Spirit is best felt and seen by identifying the New Testament as His personal word to each of us. It is quite possible, however, to assent to this as a fact but not to respond to it. *Stop –look –realize* –before you is the word of the One within you. In our day there is a frenzied effort on the part of many to obtain some personal, inward, subjective, direct message from the Lord via the Holy Spirit. Look no further! Wait no longer! *Behold He speaks!* Hear *now* what the Spirit saith *to us*. It is a commentary on our dullness and heaviness that we are willing to believe almost any message but the one we know is the word of the Spirit.

B. *What Does It Mean To Me?* D. *How Can I Share It?*

I must be reminded again and again that what we handle so often and read so readily is indeed and in truth the word of the Spirit.

11 thru 14. “Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne.” Revelation 4:2; 1:10; 17:3; 21:10

Please consider with me three other references on this same work.

a. “On the Lord’s Day *I was in the Spirit*, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet... “Revelation 1:10

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- b. “Then *the angel carried me away in the Spirit* into a desert.” Revelation 17:3
- c. “And *he carried me away in the Spirit* to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.” Revelation 21:10

A. *What Does It Say?* B. *What Does It Mean?*

Let’s consider all these references together because they all discuss the same work of the Holy Spirit. These references refer to the state of being overwhelmed or possessed by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of revealing what could not otherwise have been known. We would like to discuss the meaning of the verses in which these expressions occur, but our purpose is to understand the work of the Holy Spirit, not the details of the book of Revelation. The phrases used here are also used in the Old Testament for the same purpose. Notice:

“*The Spirit* took me up.” Ezekiel 3:12

“So *the Spirit* lifted me up and took me away.” Ezekiel 3:14

“And He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head; and *the Spirit* lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem,...” Ezekiel 8:3

There are other references in the New Testament in which the same phrases are used for the same purpose. Notice:

“He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking *by the Spirit*, calls him “Lord”?’ “Matthew 22:43

“When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away,....” Acts 8:39

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?* D. *How Can I Share It?*

Do any of these expressions have an application to my life? Is it ever possible that I could experience this state of being “in the Spirit” or “carried away in the Spirit”? We are asking if we are to expect visions and revelation today? Suppose we answer in the affirmative; what will be the results? Here are some of them:

(1) The age of revelation or inspiration has not passed, and God is yet speaking to us today. The only pattern we have for His purposes in such speaking is His word. Please consider carefully the circumstances for such revelations. *It was to communicate His word or will, not to the visionary but through him to God’s people.* Are we prepared to say God has thus spoken to us? Are we ready to put our revelations on a par with the Bible? REMEMBER, *there was no other reason for such visions.* Mrs. Ellen G. White, the prophetess of the Seventh Day Adventists, has accepted such a reason for her revelations, as has Joseph Smith of the Mormons. Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian Scientists has also produced a *Key to the Scriptures*. We have a long list in the history of the church of persons who saw this inevitable result of making this claim. *Please, please* do not assume or suggest another more private reason for such visions and revelations. They were *not* given for private or personal reasons, not if we are going to use the Biblical record for our guide in understanding their purpose.

(2) Who shall believe? If I am “carried away by the Spirit” and you are “in the Spirit” and someone else is “caught away by the Spirit,” whose message shall we accept? If such an experience were true, the answer would be easy; we would believe all three. BUT the facts of the case complicate the principle. The visions and revelations contradict themselves. There is no sure word in this maze of confusing and contradictory claims. Wouldn’t it be far better to accept the profound depth of meaning already given to us in the Bible? If we want to exercise our powers of wisdom and revelation, let’s do it on the sure word

of prophecy – His revealed word, the Bible! Please read these words which we believe refer not only to the last book of the New Testament, but in principle to all God has given us in His word, the Bible.

“I warn everyone who hears the word of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” (Revelation 22:18, 19) We could say of all modern day revelations, if it is more than the Bible, it is too much. If it is less than the Bible, it is not enough. If it is just the Bible, it is superfluous.

15. “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” Revelation 22:17

A. *What Does It Say?*

We like very much the comment given by G. R. Beaseley—Murray in the *New Century Bible*.

“To whom is the repeated ‘Come’ addressed? To the exalted Christ, in entreaty that he may manifest himself to the world? Or to men and women in the world, that they may come to him and receive the life he bestows now and in the hereafter? It is undoubtedly simpler to interpret it in the latter sense, and so give to the verb the same reference in each sentence of this verse. But while this interpretation yields an acceptable sense, it is more likely that John intends us to view the call in the first two sentences as directed to the Lord. The preceding Epilogue is made up of a succession of declarations and responses. This is especially clear in verse 7, but the same pattern is also to be seen in verses 10f., 12f., 14f. It seems plausible to read the same pattern in verses 16f., as it certainly is present in verse 20. The reiteration of verse 16 of Christ as the Messiah of the Jews and Lord of the world embodies once more the promise of final redemption. Verse 17, therefore, commences with the responsive cry of the Spirit and the Bride to Christ, that he may come and complete his beneficent work for the world. The hearers of the book, as it is read to the assembled congregations, are bidden individually to take up the cry. And since the end of the book has now been reached, an appeal is made by the prophet to men and women who have not yet responded to the gospel to ‘come’ and taste the salvation of God, which is available now in this world, and is to flow in its fullness in the age to come.

“How are we to interpret the Spirit in this context of prayer to Christ? Despite the hesitancy of the commentators in this regard there seems no adequate reason why John should not have meant quite unambiguously the Holy Spirit. In considering the letters to the churches we saw that the concept of the Spirit assumed in the closing statements of the letters is closely related to the doctrine of the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel. One passage relating to the Paraclete’s ministry is especially relevant here, viz. John 15:26f.: ‘When the Counsellor comes... even the Spirit of truth... he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses... ‘The Spirit and the Church bear a joint witness to Christ in the world. If it be so that the Spirit inspires the Church’s witness to Jesus, it is also true that the Spirit himself bears witness within men’s consciences and exposes them to the reality of sin, righteousness, and judgment revealed in the preached gospel (Jn 16:8ff.). The idea of the Spirit engaging in intercessory prayer is not strange to the New Testament. It occurs in Romans 8:26f., significantly in an eschatological context. The motive for such a conception in our passage is not difficult to perceive. The Spirit inspires prophecy, the burden of which is the testimony borne by Jesus (19:10). The end of that testimony is the unveiling of the day of God, which Christ as the morning star leads on (v. 16). In that day the goal of all Spirit-inspired prophecy will be attained, hence the Spirit impels the bride to appeal to the Son of God to come, and joins the bride in the entreaty.

“The Bride is the Church viewed in the light of her destiny to share life with her divine Bridegroom in the city of God (19:7ff., 21:9ff.) The term does not necessarily connote the consummation of the future

age, as 21:9ff. could be held to imply, but it does at least denote the Church destined for the bliss of relation to Christ in the world to come, as 19:7 suggests. In the present context the Church, anticipating her glorious future with her Redeemer, may be viewed in a manner comparable to the way in which the congregations ‘in Jesus’ are addressed as ‘angels’, i.e., from the viewpoint of their heavenly existence in Christ, which determines their empirical life on earth ... The Church in Christ is already essentially that which she is destined to be in the day of Christ. The revelation of his glory will be the revelation of hers also.

“Not only the Church as a whole but the individual member of the congregations assembled to hear the Revelation read should take up the prayer to Christ: let him who hears say, ‘Come’, for in the answer to that prayer lies the Christian’s hope of participation in the salvation of the world to come. It represents the concentration into a word of the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples, the heart of which is *Thy kingdom come*. Its inclusion at this point suggests that the Spirit is more desirous that we should set our hearts on Christ than that we should fill our heads with apocalyptic lore, more concerned that we should be prepared for the day of Christ than that we should be capable of passing an examination about it.

“The last word of this oracle is directed not to the Church member but to the stranger to grace:

Let him who is thirsty come,
let him who desires take the water of life without price.

It is unlikely that two classes of people are in mind, the parallelism is synonymous. The invitation is extended to any who have not yet responded to the appeal of Christ in the gospel:

If any one thirst, let him come to me,
and let him who believes in me drink (Jn 7:37f.).

The river of living water, which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb in the eternal city (22:1f.), flows from the heart of Christ even now to all who will come

... take ...without price (cf. Isa 55:1). He who drinks this water slakes his thirst for ever (Jn. 4:14), but it will require the day of the unveiling to reveal the wealth of that grace by which God and the Lamb will satisfy the soul of man for ever and to the utmost (Heb. 7:25).” (G. R. Beasley-Murray. *New Century Bible: The Book of Revelation*. Greenwood, S. C., Attic Press, Inc., 1974, p. 343 – 346.)

B. *What Does It Mean?*

Please read carefully the good words of Herman Hoeksema in his book *Behold, He Cometh!*

“Finally, we find in this passage a beautiful response to the prophecy of this book, and especially to the truth that Jesus is coming. This is expressed as a fact, let us notice. The text says, in the first place, that the effect of this revelation of the coming of the Lord upon the church as a whole is that she responds and eagerly says, ‘Come, Lord.’ We find this, in the first place, in verse 17: ‘And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’ And again, in verse 20 we read: ‘He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’

“In verse 17, therefore, we read that the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And we understand, of course, that they are not to be taken separately, as if the Spirit of Christ and the bride separately express this longing for the coming of the Lord. This is impossible. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Bridegroom. That Spirit of the Bridegroom dwells in the bride, that is, is in the church. Hence, it is through the Spirit that the bride says, ‘Come.’ Under the influence of this revelation the bride says, through the Spirit, ‘Come, Lord Jesus.’ Naturally! This must needs be the spontaneous response of the bride. For the bride receives a picture of the glory of the Bridegroom and of the time when she shall always be with Him. She is conscious all the more, through the prophecy of this book, of her present misery, of her tribulation which she must and does suffer in the midst of the world. She is conscious of her present separation. She

is conscious of her sinfulness. And when, through the words of the book of this prophecy, she looks at the glory which shall be revealed to her, she calls out, under the influence of the Spirit of the Bridegroom, ‘Come; yea, come, Lord Jesus!’

“This response comes from the bride as a whole. The church organically in principle always longs for the coming of the Bridegroom even though she may not always be equally conscious of this longing for the coming of the Lord. But also individual believers do not always partake in this sigh of longing. But the church responds to this promise of the coming of the Lord not only directly and in earnest prayer, but also in the preaching. Hence, through that preaching of the bride comes the admonition, or exhortation, ‘And let him that heareth say, Come.’ And again: ‘And let him that is athirst come.’ And once more: ‘And whosoever will (that is: whosoever longs for righteousness and life, and who therefore will), let him take of the water of life freely.’ (Herman Hoeksema. *Behold, He Cometh! An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1969, p. 724, 725.)

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Because we want our readers to be acquainted with at least three good books on this important section of scripture, we refer you to J. W. Roberts’ comment on verse seventeen of Revelation twenty-two.

“1(17) The church has a response of those who ‘love’ (2 Tim. 4:8) and who ‘look for’ (Titus 2:13) and even ‘hasten the coming of the day of the Lord’ (2 Peter 3:15). It was the answer given around the Lord’s table in the assemblies of Christians as they uttered the early prayer ‘Maranatha,’ or ‘Our Lord, come’ (I Cor. 16:22). There is evidence from early sources (*Didache* 10:6-7) that this was a liturgical prayer used in the ritual of the Lord’s supper. Jesus had promised to break bread anew with his disciples, at his table, in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:16). At that table they saw his presence with the eye of faith and took it as a pledge of his ultimate manifestation at the parousia. In the spirit of humble submission the seer knows that the church will join the Holy Spirit in saying as the bride of Christ ‘Come.’ In whatever manner of visitation the Lord chooses – in the tribulations of earthly turmoil, in the affliction of the great ordeal, or in the final manifestation of his glory, John knows that the church will say, ‘Come, Lord Jesus.’ (vs. 20).

“Indeed, everyone who hears the promise and the responding answer is invited to say ‘Come.’ But there is more; here is an invitation to all to join with the saints in order to anticipate the reward promised to the Christians. Obviously the church restricted the participation in the worship around the Lord’s table to those of their own number (*Didache, ibid.*). Those who could not join in the prayer ‘Come, O Lord’ are invited to come themselves – that is, to cast their lot with the churches – to quench their thirst with the water of life without price (cf. 21:6; John 4:14). This invitation to the saving message of the gospel echoes beyond the pages of the Revelation through the centuries.” (J. W. Roberts, *The Revelation of John (The Apocalypse)*. Austin, Texas, Sweet Publishing Co., 1974, p. 201, 202.)

I want to say as a part of the bride “even so, come Lord Jesus.” But like many brides today, we hesitate this side of the marriage. Do we know Him well enough to feel perfectly comfortable with Him throughout the endless years of eternity? This, of course, is but an earthly, temporal application of a spiritual relationship, but the principle yet carries. If we have not established a very close relationship of love here during our courtship, we can hardly be prepared for the cry of the midnight hour, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh, come ye forth to meet Him.” (Matthew 25:6) We love Him, but do we *know* Him? It would seem to the writer that the whole purpose of this fourth volume has been to cause each of us as a part of His bride to establish a very intimate relationship with our Lord through the Holy Spirit.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

If I have found the “water of life” –that thirst-quenching drink from the eternal fountain, I shall be like the woman who first drank of this water. I will want to share it with everyone in the village where I live. We recall the words of our Lord: “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to everlasting life.” (John 4:13, 14) Please, please read our Lord’s own commentary on the above words. “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.” (John 7:37-39) We would so like to elaborate on these words, but we have already been too elaborate on our earlier comments. If we were to treat this text fully, we would approach it under the following questions: (1) Why is it that drinking from the fountain of this world always makes me thirst again? *Answer:* It is the nature of the water. It creates an appetite; it does not appease or satisfy. Man is thirsty. Man *will* drink from somebody’s well. When we *know* such a drink will only leave us thirsty, why do we insist on drinking? (2) Even when I know the nature of the water (drink), why do I insist on drinking? *Answer:* I have not yet cultivated an appreciation for the water of life. My understanding of the temporary satisfaction of the pleasures of this world is very well developed, but my experience in the joys of the Lord is so limited and under-developed. If I knew from experience after experience that I would find real joy and delight in “the Spirit,” I would turn first to Him and not to the broken cisterns of the world. (3) How is it that whereas I have drunk of the fountain of the Lord, I do indeed thirst again? It simply is NOT TRUE that drinking at His fountain or well of salvation insures me against thirst. *I am still thirsty!* *Answer:* You were not thirsty immediately; you were filled with joy for a while. You have missed the meaning of the verb *drink*. This is a continuing action verb; you must keep on drinking to keep on being satisfied. Do you have daily devotions? How do you expect daily joy without daily drinking? (4) How does the Holy Spirit relate to the “streams of living water” (7:38), or to the “spring of water welling up to eternal life” (4:14). *Answer:* To receive the Holy Spirit is to also receive all He brings. His greatest gift to us apart from Himself in His word. Through His word we learn of the forgiveness of sins, the purpose of life, the life to come, and a hundred other good things. These become the source of the streams of living water or the spring of water welling up to eternal life. But having said the somewhat obvious, we need to also say that the Holy Spirit Himself is the source of such satisfaction. To acknowledge His presence within us should and will fill us with wonder and joy.

Amid my artesian well rejoicing I yet cry “Maranatha,” for I know His personal presence with me will be even greater than His joy through the Other Comforter who lives in me.

THE EVIL SPIRIT AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT
THE HUMAN SPIRIT, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE EVIL SPIRIT

A study of the 28 references to demons in the gospels.

No study of the spiritual man would be complete without a careful consideration of every reference to Satan and demons.

Here are all the reference; to evil spirits in the New Testament: (with observations)

1. Satan is called “the tempter” and has the power of thought and speech. Matthew 4:3
2. Mark 1:13 says our Lord was “tempted of Satan”.
3. Luke 4:2 states He was “tempted of the devil”, as does Matthew 4:1.

The devil is a very real being. Although spirit, he speaks, wills, evaluates and has contact with our spirits. He understands the demands and desires of our bodies. The needs of man expressed in the desires of man are the doors on which the tempter knocks. Eventually the devil offers the option. Man knows his need and the way God could answer the need. Anything else is from the evil one.

Satan’s task is to get us to doubt our real identity. “If thou art the (in our case “a”) son of God”. So many times we have mistaken temptation for sin. We wonder “how could I be a son or daughter of God and yet have such a thought”? Our Lord turned over (and out) the thought of making bread out of stones. He made bread Out of nothing, but it was to feed not Himself but others. The purpose made a vast difference. Jesus knew who He was and so did Satan. To yield to Satan’s offer was essentially to doubt His identity. The tempter is constantly asking us to prove our identity by his methods. When we do we have denied our divine id already given us by God at our new birth.

The answer of our Lord was most revealing because He said man’s real life is not in identifying his body and its demands, but “the hidden man of the heart,” i.e. to satisfy the man inside. Feed the inward man on the Word of God and the man outside will be taken care of. Jesus did eat, but by God’s directions, not Satan’s and not for identification.

Satan’s efforts were all predicated on doubting identity. “If thou art”—he really said, “do you know who you are?”

4. “Then the devil taketh Him into the holy city; and he set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,”—Matthew 4:5.
5. Luke says the devil “*led* him” to Jerusalem. Luke 4:9.
6. Satan quotes scripture as support and authority for his offer. He seems to say, “do it and fulfill the scriptures.” Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10,11.

It will be very helpful for us to remember that nothing is holy or sacred to Satan. He uses, if he can, holy places and people and holy scripture for his own purposes. The holy city, the holy temple, the holy scriptures are all possible tools of Satan.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our identity is not in the acceptance or approval of men. Jesus was the Son of God *before* the offer came to jump off the pinnacle. He did not become the Son of God by a “grandstand act”. He needed not to prove to Himself or anyone else (least of all Satan) that He was God’s Son. He did not doubt what God had already said about His deity and therefore needed no assurance of what was already established in His heart.

How many times have we sought the approbation of men? How often have we sought acceptance of our son-ship from men? *God* has begotten us; We are *born of God*. *He* has anointed us with His Holy Spirit. *His* voice in *His* Word has told us we are sons of God. Is this not enough? Must our ego, our pride be satisfied from some other source? Is it not enough to by faith accept the astounding, beautiful fact that out of His grace we have been born of the water and the Spirit? Such acceptance honors Him, not us. But in honoring Him we are honored.

Why did Jesus let Satan “take Him”, “set Him”, “lead Him”? Didn’t our Lord know where He was going? We should say here that there would have been no temptation if the conditions described had not prevailed. It was the clear offer of the evil one our Lord rejected, not the environment. So often we are prone to blame our sin on the environment. It does indeed set the trap, but acceptance of the bait is what springs it.

7. “..... and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him—’ All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Matthew 4:8,9.
8. “And he led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the (inhabited) world *in a moment of time*. And the devil said unto him—’To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them; for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall be thine.’ “ Luke 4:6,7.

Satan offers three ways to “find yourself:

- (1) Find yourself through your body—seek identity in food or sex.
- (2) Find yourself in the estimate of others, i.e. let men tell you who you are.
- (3) Find yourself in the possession of “things It will give you authority and position.

Please, please look behind the lying charade of Satan. The worship of self is the worship of Satan.

Was the devil lying when he made his offer of the kingdoms of this world? Luke does not indicate he was. In the absence of any word to the contrary we would believe Satan is making a viable offer.

In each offer of the evil one there is the loss of self, the destruction of the real you, a loss of your identity in the slavery to: (1) flesh— (2) pride— (3) possessions.

9. ‘Then the devil leaveth him; and behold angels came and ministered unto him”. Matthew 4:11.
10. “And when the devil had completed every temptation he departed from him for a season”. Luke 4:13 (or “until” a season)

We should have observed earlier that the gospel writers do not say “a devil” or demons came to tempt our Lord, but Satan himself. He evidently didn’t want to trust this task to a lesser person than himself.

We are also reminded that angels did come to hold Him up. Angels did not minister to Him until after He resisted Satan. Whether this is an invariable rule for their service as related to temptation we cannot say, but their sweet comfort can be a part of our victory.

The devil did leave, but we should be reminded that he is not far away nor has he lost his power. But he *did* leave! Does Satan ever really leave us? We believe that since he is the world's best salesman, if we indicate any interest at all in his wares he is always there to give us more details. He sells "flesh", "pride", and "things". Since we all have desires and needs in all three areas, his options are often bought. However, when we find solid satisfaction in what God offers, i.e. flesh as our servant, glory (pride) In the Lord, "things" as the created and the creator of nothing, Satan has a hard time selling those who are already sold on God.

11. "And the report of him went forth into all Syria; and they brought to him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons (demoniacs), and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them." Matthew 4:24.
12. "And in the synagogue there was a man, that had a spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, Ah! what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him and when the demon had thrown him down in the midst he came out of him, having done him no hurt. And amazement came upon all, and they spoke together one with another, saying, what is this word? For with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." Luke 4:33-37.

Please read this text more carefully than usual. Interrogate your understanding. (1) What is meant by saying this man had "a spirit of an unclean demon"? I thought demons were spirits. How could he have a *spirit* of a demon? Or is this the same as saying he had a demon spirit? (2) In what sense was the demon unclean? This must refer to moral uncleanness. Such filth would necessarily be communicated to the spirit or mind of the man in whom he lived. Can we assume that unclean or impure thoughts today originate from the influence of unclean spirits upon our minds? (3) This particular man had or was in possession of such an unclean spirit. Does this equal demon possession or is this just the welcome entertainment of such an evil spirit? Or are they the same condition? (4) Is there one who speaks or is speaking for many? Or is there only one unclean spirit? (5) In what sense are we to understand the expression, "did him no hurt!?" (6) Was demon attack or possession such a common occurrence that those standing by recognized it before Jesus spoke to this man?

Each of us should attempt an honest candid answer to these queries. Remember: "Greater is He (the Holy Spirit) who is in you than he (Satan) who is in the world" (I John 4:4.) The antithesis of sin and Satan is found in the Holy Spirit. The opposite of unclean is pure, of bondage is glorious freedom, of turmoil is peace. He offers all this to us and much more. We do believe Satan is responsible for all unclean thoughts, but we also believe we can "bring every thought into captivity" unto King Jesus. The power and authority of our Lord is still available to us today.

13. "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be yea, yea or nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one!" Matthew 5:36-37.

Deception, lying, exaggeration are all tools in the trade of the evil one. When we wish to impress some one other than our Lord (who already knows our heart) we have a strange tendency to bolster up our own insecurity with' this affirmation or that one. We say, "as God is my witness", "by heaven" or "as

sure as there is a God in heaven” etc. Why all such words? It will not make our “yea” anymore “yes”. Nor will it make our “nay any stronger. The real meaning in this text is for us to recognize the work of the “evil one”. Who suggests such phrases? He is alive! Satan is responsible. Our Saviour is saying to you and me: “Speak out of the depth of your heart; speak from your spirit what you really mean; affirm or deny with your wholeness. When you do not know, do not guess; do not fantasize; do not dream what could be; tell it like it is, not like you would want it to be.” Make no mistake about it, there is no guessing; we know Satan is responsible here. This is a definite identity of Satanic activity. Mark it and avoid it!

14. “...deliver us from the evil one”. Matthew 6:13.

There is much encouragement, so much of the positive promise of victory in the words of our Saviour concerning the efforts of Satan to defeat us. There are two obvious, but beautiful lessons in this prayer: (1) We should ask. We should pray for deliverance from Satan? This makes God our ally in our battle. We team up with all the power of God when we pray about temptation—both when we are being tempted and before we are tempted. This leads me to observe the rules of the process of temptation and sin or temptation and deliverance: These rules are invariable so it will be very important that we learn them and remember them. They are:

- A. Visualize by reading God’s word the vivid specifics of losing to temptation. Imagine the penalty long before you are tempted. What will you lose by yielding to temptation? Make this just as terrible, personal, and dramatic as you can. Keep it clearly before you.
- B. Pray daily—(hourly) but confidently. Not out of fear, but out of faith to be delivered from the evil one.
- C. When you are tempted, start immediately to look for the “way to escape”. There is *always* a way out. God promised it and He cannot lie. (I Corinthians 10:13)
- D. Call to mind and emotion the consequences of yielding to Satan’s offer. Make it vivid and personal.
- E. Remember God promised victory through endurance, not through an immediate reversal of feeling concerning Satan’s offer. God said concerning His faithfulness in your temptation: “That you may be able to endure it”.
- F. Reward yourself with praise and thanksgiving or some other form of recompense for God’s victory through you. Permanent triumph over temptation must include reward for choosing right instead of wrong.

It would help much if you would rewrite these six steps in your own words so they will become your own. (2) Whereas we pray for deliverance, and God hears and answers our prayer, yet we are very much responsible both for defeat and victory. Comments above already demonstrate this truth.

15. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon”. Matthew 6:24-b. What is mammon? Is this a synonym for Satan? Mammon is what Satan offers us, not himself because he is a spirit and we cannot see, touch nor feel a spirit. But we can see and feel: (1) sex, (2) food, or (3) money. Mammon can take these three very tangible forms. Man worships at these three shrines of Satan. The objects of worship and service are placed there by the evil one. Please notice that our Lord equated service or action with worship. Serving is worshipping and worshipping is serving. We will serve God with or through or by sex, food, and money, but God must be the reason or the cause for our use of sex, food, or money. Otherwise what should be our servants have become our

masters.

16. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:22,23

This is a fearful thought! Are these persons telling the truth Did they indeed prophesy in the name of our Lord? Did they call on His power and authority to cast out demons? If they were not lying how can this be? Is the power of God available to all who learn the laws of its operation? So it would seem. Here is inexplicable activity in the supernatural realm. Even that done in the name of Christ is not necessarily a proof of God’s acceptance. What protective measure do we have? Here it is: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21). A knowledge of and obedience to God’s word is essential to “knowing Him” and being known by Him.

When did such activity take place? When and by whom were these many mighty works done? To relegate this to the Apostolic period would be a bit presumptuous. Our Lord is referring to the final day of judgment and His acceptance or rejection of *all* who have done in the interim “many mighty works”.

There are several interesting possibilities in these verses: (1) Demons are obedient to the authority and power of Christ, even when such authority is used by those who themselves are self-deceived. (2) It is far more important to be *personally* obedient to His word than to be a miracle worker. (3) There is evidently much we do not know about God’s laws in the supernatural world. (4) Demons are very real beings. They exert some influence in the world of men, whether we know it, believe it, or not.

17. “And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases,” (Matthew 8:16,17).

The word “possession” needs clarification and enlargement. We have often thought of it as the antithesis of the “baptism in the holy Spirit” i.e. as the minds or spirits of some persons were overwhelmed in or by the Holy Spirit, and in this sense were “possessed” by the Holy Spirit, so others were “baptized” in or by the evil spirits and in this sense they were “possessed”. There were many who were thus totally influenced by demons in the days of our Lord. There were just as many who were delivered by a word from Him.

Just how several spirits could occupy one person is not at all clear, but then our understanding of the abilities of spirit beings is very limited. If the divine text does not explain the method or means we are satisfied to affirm that it is so, even if our grasp of the total reality is limited. We say that the presence of several spirits in one person would pre-supposed close cooperation between such spirits or there would indeed be chaos within such a possessed person.

The prophecy of Isaiah 53:4 as fulfilled in Matthew 8:16,17 surely deserves more thought than we usually give it. Are we to understand from this text that the healing of our bodies as well as our souls was accomplished in the crucifixion of our Lord, or are we to see a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4 in the healing ministry of our Lord i.e. by Him and in Him and in His ministry of healing and casting out demons is this promise fulfilled but it is not necessarily related to us in our ministry? Which position will we or should we take? When Jesus healed and cast out demons Matthew says he saw in His actions a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4. We cannot avoid the obvious reference to His death by crucifixion in the whole 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Neither can we overlook the fact that He had not died at the time of the narration. Matthew made reference to Isaiah 53:4. Was Matthew anticipating Calvary in retrospect since he wrote his gospel

in 57 A.D.? We ask these questions to stir up your sincere mind. If Jesus provided for our healing in His death on the cross we have no real reason for being sick!

18. “And when he was come to the other side of the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two possessed with demons, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce so that no man could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out saying, what have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Now there was afar off from them a herd of many swine feeding. And the demons besought him, saying, if thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go and they came out, and went into the herd of swine. And behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea and perished in the waters.” Matthew 8:28-32. Mark gives a few details not mentioned by Matthew. See Mark 5:1-20.

Demons have varying effects on people. Is this because certain demons have certain effects or because the persons they inhabit react in a different manner? We cannot offer a conclusive answer but we must be careful to indicate all the effects such possession had. In this case the men (or man) were given super human strength, a sour disposition and a sense or desire for aloneness. Once again we mark the number of demons united in their habitation of men. Demons are either fallen angels or the spirits of departed evil men. Perhaps each retains his individual identity in the unseen world and at the same time is wholly obedient to Satan. They must also be well organized because they are described as “the spiritual hosts of wickedness” (Eph. 6:12) Demons anticipate torment. What a tragic condition it is to here find conscious beings capable of this intelligent expression, thus bound and held by the evil one. It would seem they welcomed any escape from ‘their inevitable fate. Earth and men and even swine are an intermediate and temporary half way house somewhere this side of eternal destruction or torment. We wish we knew how such persons became the houses of such unwelcome guests, and the interactions of the human spirit with the evil spirits. We need to be reminded that no mention is ever made of the presence of the Holy Spirit co-inhabiting the same person with a demon or demons. There is no record of demon possession and Holy Spirit possession in the same person. We do not wish to minimize the power of the evil one nor ignore the attack of Christians by demons, but we emphasize once again: demons and the Holy Spirit *do not* live in the same person. If you have the Holy Spirit (and you do if you are a Christian. Romans 8:9), then you *cannot be possessed* by demons. You can be sorely vexed and tempted but *not possessed*.

In passing we should mention that the bodies of swine were an unacceptable place for demons. Swine could not and would not contain them. The request of these evil spirits must have been out of desperation. They soon were forced to leave the very place in which they wanted to go.

19. “While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out the man who had been dumb, spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, ‘Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel’. But the Pharisees said, ‘It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons’.” Matthew 9:32-34. A variation is marked here in demon possession. It is a single demon. The inability to speak is associated, if not caused by the evil spirit. We should observe that some physical infirmities are caused by demons, but many cases of physical infirmities can be cited in which there is no mention made of demon possession. We could at least conclude that some physical illness is sympathetic or empathetic to demon presence. Once again, we caution the reader that such conditions are associated with persons in the personal ministry of our Lord and not in the Christian age. The Holy Spirit was not present in the bodies of these people. This man seems to be somewhat passive, a poor victim of Satan’s power, but not violent. How shall we account for this? The answer lies in either the nature or disposition of the demon or the limited control of the man over the demon. Could we assume that some fallen angels or some spirits of evil men are less violent than others? Or we do not fully understand the inter-relations of the human spirit with evil spirits and visa-verse.

The crowd is amazed. This incident makes a deep lasting impression on them. Why? Perhaps the man and his condition was so well known to them that his healing plainly spoke to them of the divine power and person behind the action. In the years of national history to which they had access they could not recall an instance like it. This could have been an exaggeration—a spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm, but somehow we do not believe so. The Pharisees took the crowd’s evaluation too seriously for it to be such.

The response of the Pharisees is of great interest. Let’s look at it closely: (1) They accepted the presence of demons in men. The spirit world was real to them. (2) The healing was also a reality. The man was delivered and made well. (3) The power and authority of our Lord was also obvious to them. (4) There was a hierarchy in the spirit world, i.e. a prince with subjects. There was someone who controlled demons. Whatever expression and choice demons had it was always subject to the control of their “prince”. In other references such a prince is named “Beelzebul”. (5) The Pharisees made the tragic mistake of concluding that Jesus was somehow in league with Satan therefore His work was the work of Satan. Since they felt they were of God and could not accept Jesus as from God what other conclusion was open to them? There are only two super human powers: God and Satan. “We are of God you are not” therefore any of your supernatural acts *must* be of Satan. This must have been their line of logic. This approximates the unpardonable sin. (See Matthew 12:22-32.)

20. “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to cure every kind of disease and sickness.” ...“As you go, preach this message: The Kingdom of heaven is near! Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, *drive out demons*. Freely you have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:1,7,8. Notice a few thoughts from these verses: Evil spirits are demons and demons are evil spirits. God created nothing evil of itself. Such spirits became evil by their own choice—either in heaven as angels or on this earth as wicked men. Demons resist change. They must be driven or commanded. They are intelligent beings and understand our thoughts, and all languages. Languages must be no barrier in the spirit world. Perhaps thought transference is the method of communication, i.e. what is presently called mental telepathy. Are we to understand the Apostles would immediately know who was or was not demon possessed? If so the ability to “discern or identify spirits must have also been theirs.

21. “A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!” Matthew 10:24,25. Had our Lord been called Beelzebul? _or had the Pharisees said He was in such close cooperation with Satan that He could act on Satan’s behalf? Evidently this was tantamount to calling Jesus Beelzebul. We should learn something from this. To cooperate with Satan is to have his presence and authority operating through us. Jesus called Peter “Satan” under these very conditions, i.e. because Peter entertained Satan’s thoughts he could be addressed as “Satan”. Cf. Matthew 16:23. This contains a double edged warning: (1) Others can and will attribute our work to the evil one. (2) To entertain the evil one is to earn the name “Satan or Devil”. We should not be surprised if both circumstances develop. If this sharp distinction does not occur we should wonder if the authority of our Lord is truly understood. Please read the preceding verses of the tenth chapter of Matthew (21-23).

22. “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘*he has a demon*’ ...but wisdom is proved right by her actions.” Matthew 11:18,19. According to some today anyone different from the accepted social standards (not biblical) is wrong. Those who refuse to indulge their belly or their genitals must be “crack-pots”. John’s refusal of food was *not* as serious as his rejection of drink. His rejection of strong drink was from his vow as a Nazirite. Demons caused people to act and react in a different manner but these childish people were so very superficial in their judgment. Their wisdom was foolishness. How much we could all learn from John. We should learn that outward actions and habits of

life must be read carefully to tell us anything about the person. Some diagnosis of demon possession today is as immature as those whom our Lord called spoiled children.

23. “Then they brought him a demon possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but any-word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” Matthew 12:22-32.

This text introduces what is usually called “the unpardonable sin”. How careful we need to be. Indeed we *must* be careful in our evaluation of this thought. It would be so much easier to be “even as the scribes” and repeat what others have said and thus retreat into the safe confines of “generally accepted” conclusions. This would offer no personal spiritual growth.

To begin our meditation: (1) The accusation made by the Pharisees that our Lord was in league with Satan, had been made at least twice before (Jn. 7:20; Luke 11:15). Hence it was not on their part a hasty, impetuous conclusion. (2) Our Lord would read their hearts and knew the true motives of such persons. We want to say: persons today who out of ignorance or the heat of the moment say or do something they call “the unpardonable sin” do not match these Pharisees for two reason: (a) The people of today who are worried about committing the unpardonable sin are usually church members who have a tender conscience and therefore a sense of guilt. Sometimes they have not forgiven themselves and therefore are unwilling to accept God’s forgiveness. Their sin is unpardonable with themselves, not with God. (b) The Pharisees were not at all concerned about their condition. They “could not have cared less” about His claims of deity. Concern on your part about committing the unpardonable sin is the best evidence you have not sinned. (3) Our Lord laid down a very plain principle: He said you cannot oppose Satan (in any way) and at the same time co-operate with him. He used three illustrations to establish this point. Satan has a kingdom. You cannot accept his rule and at the same time enlist his help in a revolt to overthrow his rule. Satan has a city. No one can live in his city, accept its benefits and solicit Satan’s assistance in overthrowing his rule. The same principle holds for a household. In the midst of the point we should pause to consider how our Saviour looked at Beelzebul; he is a king with a kingdom. He is a mayor with a city. He is a father with a household or a family. (4) When our Lord asked about the authority used by “their people” in driving out Satan He was saying—I am succeeding in my efforts. The strong inference is: you are not doing as well as I am. You are using the power of God and failing. I am using (according to you) the power of Satan and succeeding. Are you going to admit that Satan is more powerful than God? Your own claims and feeble efforts will be your judges. (5) Jesus openly states the power present in His ability to drive out demons: “It is by the Spirit of God”. The Holy Spirit has always been, and is today, subservient to our Lord, i.e. in the sense that the Holy Spirit did not come to be glorified or made prominent or honored among men. He came to glorify and honor Jesus. When we suddenly discover the presence and power of the Holy Spirit we are strongly tempted to give honor and praise or even to adore

and worship Him. He came not for this purpose and we miss His ministry when we do this. He came to make our Saviour more real and precious to us. He gave great aid and comfort to our Saviour in His ministry and will do the same for us. But the result *must be* that Jesus is honored and worshipped.

In the act of releasing this poor unfortunate man from the power of the evil one the rule of God can be observed. “The Kingdom of God” simply means an acceptance of His authority and power in our lives. God, through the Holy Spirit took over the rule in the heart of the demon possessed man. Those who would recognize it would see the kingdom of God in operation. Sad to say some did not have eyes to see, but many others did. (6) One more analogy: The strong man and his house. Once again it is Satan as the protagonist, the same one who was earlier: the king, the mayor, the father, is now the ruler in a great house (or household). This great one is to be robbed. How shall it be done? The meaning is obvious. Satan must have control of the body of the possessed in order for him to rule. He rules in the body of the possessed by and through demons. If the demons are driven out so is the rule of Satan. Before this happens someone stronger than Satan and demons must enter that house. That someone is our Lord through the Holy Spirit.

(7) Jesus has pushed these Pharisees into a corner. There is no neutral ground. The action taken here is too obvious to be ignored. All present that day could admit a blind man had his sight, a mute man was speaking, and Satan’s power had been broken. All that you see and hear is evidence crying for a verdict. Will you make it? To reject the evidence would be dishonest. Satan is not a person with whom you can be neutral. If you hesitate he has you. Our Lord is saying there are only two sides. To reject one is to accept the other. There are only two directions—up and down. If you are not up you are inevitably down. He is saying “After a consideration of the overwhelming reasons for accepting my deity you have not yet decided.” This is in itself a decision. You have decided against me. If you will not share with me in the harvest of people for God’s great garner then you are actually hindering my efforts just as if you were breaking up the sheaves of wheat before the harvesters can get to them.

(8) Our Lord knew these Pharisees had already decided what they would do. They had weighed the evidence for the deity of Jesus and the consequences to them for accepting Him as their Lord. It would mean the loss of all they were and had. The price was *too high!* They *did do* just what our Lord said they *must do*. If you are not for me then *speak out against me*. They did. In doing it they spoke against God, but there was something desperately distinctive about their blasphemy, i.e. (speaking against): they spoke against the Holy Spirit—but in a particular manner. They were speaking against the a priori assumptions of our Saviour’s life and work. They were in essence saying: “You are from Satan and empowered by him”. The exact opposite was true. Our Lord was from God and empowered by the Spirit of God. But there was, there is no middle ground. To thus decide and to verbalize that decision is to commit the ultimate sin. We leave shut all the doors to return or change. If after a balanced (?) estimate of the evidence we reach this conclusion we have no recourse. The signs and wonders of our Lord were his credentials. If we willfully misread and misconstrue the credentials there is no way to reach the recipients with the right information. We emphasize again that this was a willful unwarranted, illogical, Satan-sided decision.

There are a few words to say of applications of this text to our lives: (apart from the applications already made). (a) We have reason to believe Jesus is “Emmanual” i.e. God with us. We need to read them again and again. We need to constantly re-affirm our total acceptance of them. We would strongly recommend several study texts of evidences of our Lord’s Deity. (b) Accept in your subconsciousness, in your deepest being the no-middle ground position to which we are committed. Speak up, stand up, speak out, share. To do less is to be against Him. Read this through again. The implications are too vastly important to pass over lightly.

24. “When an evil (or unclean) spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and

does not find it. Then it says: I will return to the home I left! When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.” Matthew 12:43-45. Please, please read the context in which these words occur. Our Lord is in conflict once again with the religious leaders of His day. Indeed, it would seem that all or at least most of His opposition came from those who should have known better. Jesus is not at all complimentary in his description of these religious leaders. They were possessed of an evil spirit! But they had been delivered. Who had driven out their evil spirit? Here is a veiled reference to Himself. The cleansing of the uncleanness of the generation in which our Lord and the Pharisees lived was accomplished by Himself. The hundreds (even thousands) who had been healed and taught were all of one generation. The word *generation* has a wider use in its reference to the nation of Israel. We believe the term is used in both senses here. In 12:39 He calls them “A *wicked and adulterous generation,*” and in vs. 45 “*this wicked generation.*” A generation is the group of people who live in a period of about 40 years. Jesus affected persons who lived in the generation of which He was a part. His cleansing of the lives of these people should have taught all generations for all time that He alone was the answer to their oppression and possession by Satan. The religious leaders of “this generation” should lead out in teaching and preaching that the Great Deliverer had come. But what happened? The intention of the signs and wonders was never fulfilled. The house was clean—but empty!

There are some tremendous lessons in this text for each of us. We are particularly concerned about the influence of the evil spirit on the human spirit. Let’s observe a few applications: (1) Demons move in the spirit world (“through arid places”) as conscious intelligent beings (“seeking rest”). (2) They are restless and unsatisfied. This seems to be one of the dominant static characteristics of demons. We should ask in passing if the restless generation in which we live has been re-inhabited by this evil spirit and his seven friends? (3) Demons need not use the brain and tongue of someone else to think and speak. Valued judgments are made by demons. (“I will return to the house I left”). (4) We wonder why he couldn’t find a different house? Two possibilities present themselves: (a) he was refused and shut out. By whom and in what manner? (b) Other demons had already taken up residence. (5) What did the evil spirit see when he looked into the heart or body of this one? i.e., what is meant by ‘unoccupied, swept clean, put in order’? Surely this must refer in some manner to moral cleanness and balance. There is undoubtedly some irony in the description. The persons involved are the Pharisees—or are they? We would rather think Jesus describes the “clean sweep” He made in the lives of many in the “generation” before Him. Because the religious leaders would not accept Him and His teaching the “house” of their generation was left empty. This is a powerful word for us! Unless our lives are filled with the teachings and works of Jesus—unless He is given the throne of our will, intellect, conscience and emotions we are in deadly danger of becoming worse than we were as a lost sinner. We really do not have a choice in this. If we do not fill out lives with Him, we shall be filled by Satan. Beware! Be vigilant!

25. “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.” Matthews 13:18,19.

We would do well to read again the whole parable as recorded in 13:3-23 particularly verse 3 and 4. “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up”. There is so much good material in these verses. *G. Campbell Morgan, The Biblical Illustrator, H. Lenski*, to name only three, all have good comments on these verses. We want to emphasize only *one* thought. How does Satan relate to the human spirit? We ask some questions about the circumstances described here! (1) Why didn’t certain persons understand the message about the kingdom? The description of their heart as being as hard as the path upon which the seed fell would give us a hint or two. For reasons best known to our Lord and the evil one these people turn a deaf ear and lift unseeing eyes to the word of deliverance or to the message of the gospel. Please notice here that we are

not discussing the “choking out of the word” already planted in the heart of man. The message found no place or root in the heart of these people. Environment produced the path, and a particular kind of environment did it. The heart of this man had been continually stepped on. Man’s heart was not created to be walked on. It is best represented by a plowed field. When we place ourselves in an environment where adverse forces, better known as evil thoughts, constantly bombard our minds or our hearts, they become callous and hard and when at last we do hear the message it only drops on a hard surface. Even then Satan is very anxious to eat it up least it have any effect upon us. (2) Why was Satan represented as “birds of the heaven”? There are some very clear reasons. Both the evil one and the birds live in the air, or the invisible atmosphere. Both birds and Satan appear “as if by magic” at the opportune time and place. Both the evil one and the birds have very keen senses of sight. It amounts to more than sight. We could best compare it to our radar. We are not ignorant of his devices. We are vigilant and prepared. We will not, we *must* not put our minds and hearts in a position where Satan can step on us!

26. “Jesus told them another parable: The Kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while every one was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The sower’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters. First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into the barn . . . He answered, ‘The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the Kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.’” Matthew 13:-24-29; 37-43.

The good seed produces “Sons of the kingdom”. How indispensable to spiritual life is the knowledge—the heart knowledge, yea, the personal intuitive knowledge of the word of God. Without it we have no sons of the kingdom. We believe the Son of Man is waiting for us to spread His seed in the hearts of men. Somehow we like to imagine as we teach the word we see the seed falling from the nail-scarred hand of our Saviour into the hearts of those who hear us. (3) A point not made here is that weeds can be transformed into wheat, i.e. just because we begin as a weed we need not forever and eternally be so classified. This also teaches us a principle of biblical interpretation: A parable has only the comparisons made by the inspired writer, and *no* more. So many divisions among the sons of the kingdom have been but the results of going beyond the things that are written in comparisons that were never intended by the Holy Spirit. (4) This is a use of the term “kingdom” not usually encountered in the gospels. “They will weed out of *his kingdom* every thing that causes sin and all who do evil.” This is a wider use than ordinarily found. In so many references it is easy to see a pre-figuring of the church in references to the kingdom. Here, “the field us the world” and therefore includes *more* than Christians. There *will be* a separation of weeds from wheat. There will be a judgment. We *are* being attacked by the evil one with his fertile seed! Our hearts are the seed bed for Satan or the Saviour! This sowing, growing and in a sense, harvesting has been going on ever since our Lord first cast his seed in the field of man’s heart. One day God will decide it is the eternal harvest time and He will then send out the angels to do their work. Do we really believe in the fiery furnace? Do we actually believe the burning will be of the eternal spirits of men and women? If there is to be an eternal conscious enjoyment for the “sons of the kingdom” then there will also be a conscious eternal suffering for the sons of the evil one. Nowhere from Genesis to Revelation have we ever found a reference to the unconscious existence of man or a reference to his annihilation. It is a fearful thought. We can rationalize it out of existence, but in doing this we

could be giving root to Satan's seeds! Let's give the Lord at least as much consideration as we do the evil one. He who has ears to hear or eyes to see or a heart to believe, let him do so!

27. "And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders and cried saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she said, yea, Lord; for even dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour." Matthew 15 :21-28.

We are strongly drawn to comment upon the wonderful faith of this unusual woman, but we have set ourselves a task of noticing the influence of the evil spirits upon the human spirit and we shall stay in that area. There is a single demon involved here. The influence is described as "grievously vexed". Irritation of one kind or another seems to be the major work of demons. We have often wondered if the name "Beelzebul" or "god of flies" has anything to do with the nature of demons work? i.e. an irritation like that caused by a swarm of flies.

The physical harm caused by flies is incidental to the emotional vexation. "A bad case of nerves" well describes the major problem of the average American. Every sin in God's book is blamed on "a bad case of nerves". We do not minimize the seriousness of this problem. What we are asking here is: do demons have any part in our present pre-occupation with such vexation? Of course we cannot be dogmatic about this subject, but we do wonder at the rather obvious possibilities. There are four questions we must ask and answer in the present day possible demon possession: (1) How do we identify the presence of demons in people? Are we to define their presence by mere physical observation? If so we could go to the mental institution and find many who would closely fit the descriptions in the gospels. Are we then to conclude all mental sickness is in reality demon possession? This would be a dangerous assumption. Without the ability to "discern spirits" we have no sure way to pin-point the presence of demons. "Discerning of spirits" is tantamount to mind reading. Can you claim such an ability? It is easy enough to demonstrate such ability. Our blessed Lord did it. "He needed not that any man should bear witness concerning man for *he himself knew what was in man.*" (John 2:25).

American culture is in a desperate condition. It does indeed have a spiritual problem. Consider the present day plague of alcoholism as one example with ten million plus people involved. But are demons responsible? i.e. are demons in men the cause of this problem? Answer this next question. (2) *Who gave you the authority to cast out demons?* Our Lord gave such authority to the twelve and to the seventy. Did He give you such power? Please indicate in the New Testament where such prerogatives are available for me. I would *indeed* like power first to *know* (not to guess) demons were present and then the authority to cast them out. When I press for an answer I seem to be thrust back on nothing but human guesses for an answer to both questions. The third question has to do with present-day identification or naming of demons as personified sins. (3) *Where in the New Testament (or Old Testament) do we have demons referred to us as "the demon of lying" or "the demon of lust"* This identification runs *down the whole catalog of human failures?* Sickness, not sin is associated with demons. In the New Testament, man himself is consistently blamed for his sin—not demons. We agree with those who teach that Satan is not omnipresent and therefore must work through evil spirits, or demons. But, demon attack is vastly different from demon possession. The fourth question is an out-growth of the previous three. (4) *Can you please show me an example (a clear cut— unequivocal example) of one Christian possessed by one demon?* Most exorcism today is done by unauthorized persons (At least I do not know who gave them such authority) upon suppositional evil spirits. These evil spirits(?) are identified with sins, such never

appears in the New Testament. These suppositional demons inhabit persons who already have the Holy Spirit living in them of whom John plainly says—”greater is He (the Holy Spirit) who is in you than he (Satan) who is in the world. (I John 4:4). I do sincerely hope this is not an over-statement of the situation as we now have it. It would be much easier to blame our present-day spiritual sickness on demons instead of sin. Man is sick—but to call sin sickness only describes the effects of his disobedience. If demons affect man it is because he permits them—yea, invites them. He is under attack, but not possessed. We speak especially of present day Christians.

28. “When they came to the crowd a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. “Lord, have mercy on my son,” he said. “He is an epileptic and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him”. “O unbelieving and perverse generation”, Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me”. Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can say to this mountain, “move from here to there” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” Matthew 17:14-21. Some MSS add verse 21 as: “But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”. Once again we are introduced to a single demon with unusual characteristics. (1) The neuter pronoun is used throughout because sex is unknown in the spirit world. These demons (this one included) are intelligent beings but they are neither male nor female and are like angels (indeed we could believe that at one time they were angels but rebelled and were removed from their former state). (2)Epilepsy is associated with this demon. It would be presumptuous to state categorically that the demon was the *cause* of the sickness. At least the evil spirit took advantage of this psycho-physical illness of this poor unfortunate son. There were many who were possessed of demons who were not sick. All we can say for a certainty is: Here is one who was epileptic and possessed by a demon. The demon *did* aggravate his sickness. (3) The disciples (the 12 and the 70) were given the authority by our Lord to cast out demons (Matt. 10:8), but such power only became operative when it was joined with faith on the part of the disciples. Evidently there was something observed in the physical appearance of the son that intimidated the disciples.

Did he have one of his violent epileptic seizures in the presence of the disciples? We do not know, but it serves as a reasonable possibility. When their faith was linked with God’s supernatural power nothing became impossible. We believe such faith only became thus usable when first of all it related to the authority given by our Lord to cast out demons or do some other mighty work. (4) Neither the son nor the father exercised faith in their power. The father at least believed Jesus could do what His disciples could not. At the word of command in the form of a rebuke the demon obeyed and left the boy. The sickness was healed at the same time as the release of the evil spirit. (5) The possible references to prayer and fasting as related to exorcising demons is interesting. The thought seems to be that some demons are more stubborn or resistant than others. Also implied is the relationship of personal purity as associated with power.