

THE HOLY SPIRIT

by V.E. Howard

V.E. Howard's series of sermons on the Holy Spirit, presenting scriptural truths about the Spirit's work, gifts, and role in the life of the believer and the church.

18 Chapters

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

V. E. Howard, Evangelist of the church of Christ from Texarkana, Texas, is the featured speaker on World Radio U.S.A. weekly broadcasts. He has the distinction of being a regular speaker on radio broadcasts longer than any man in the brotherhood of churches of Christ. Brother Howard a native of Farmerville, Louisiana, began preaching the gos-pel of Christ in 1931. In 1934, 33 years ago, he began his radio ministry over station KTHS in Hot Springs, Arkan-sas and has continued as a regular speaker on weekly broad-casts since that time. For some 25 years, he conducted the weekly Gospel Hour broadcasts which were heard in most parts of North and Central America.

Through the years his sermons have been heard by mil-lions. During his radio ministry hundreds of thousands of letters, coming from every state in the Union and several foreign countries, have been received. More than a million free copies of his sermons, books, tracts, and papers have been mailed throughout a major part of North America and other areas of the world. His sermons on "What Is the Church of Christ?" brought what is believed to be the largest response ever given a religious broadcast in radio history. More than 75, 000 free copies of these sermons were mailed.,These sermons on "What Is the Church of Christ?" are now in book form and the third revised edition has just been released.

In November of 1963, V. E. Howard became the first speaker for a World Radio broadcast. His years of experi-ence have made this a very effective radio ministry over the past three years. Through his ministry of preaching the Word in gospel meetings and in local work, he has baptized more than 6, 000 people. Some are preaching the gospel to-day as a result of his radio ministry, and there is no way to know just how many have become Christians as a result of his radio sermons.

This series of lessons by Brother Howard on the subject of the Holy Spirit comes at a time when there is much dis-cussion in religious circles concerning the operation and gifts of the Holy Spirit. These lessons represent long hours of study, research and prayer. We commend these lessons to you for your careful and prayerful consideration.

Hal Frazier Producer and Announcer

World Radio West Monroe, Louisiana

Foreword

FOREWORD

This series of sermons on the subject of "The Holy Spirit," originally broadcast on World Radio, is presented for study and meditation with the hope for edification and inspiration. Being fully aware that some of the subjects are controversial, I humbly solicit an honest and sincere appraisal of every scriptural truth presented. Surely, we must never close our hearts to truth. Indeed, Jesus declared, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Most sincerely,

V. E. Howard

The Person of the Holy Spirit

THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present this series of addresses on the Holy Spirit; The Work and Operation of The Holy Spirit, Baptism of The Holy Spirit, The Gift of The Holy Spirit, The Sin Against The Holy Spirit, Miracles and Healings By The Power of the Holy Spirit, and The Indwelling of The Spirit.

Perhaps there is no subject in the Bible so grossly misunderstood as that of the Holy Spirit. Ignorance of the Bible teaching on this most important theme has caused true Christianity to be exchanged for "saw-dust trail," "get religion," and "get the Holy Ghost" feeling religion. My friends, I can tell you that not one time in the Bible was anyone ever told to "get" religion, or "get" the Holy Ghost! Yes, we are told to practice religion, but not "get it." Many honest and sincere people have been misinformed.

Holy Spirit, A Person The Holy Spirit is a person, a comforter, who guided the apostles in God's revelation, through Christ, to men of earth. The term, "Holy," very fitly expresses the character of that Spirit which is the source of all holiness and purity. The Holy Spirit is a Divine being, an intelligent speaking personality, one of the Godhead three. He is not a ghost, clouded in mysticism, making mysterious descents from

Heaven, striking the souls of men, causing them to fall out prostrate on the ground, or at an altar, losing their physical and mental balance. Such superstition might be asso-

ciated with ghost tales, but not rightfully with the Holy Spirit and His work. Many honest souls, under the spell of emotionalism, have even lost consciousness and have been made to believe that they were saved by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

Personality, Not Materiality The Holy Spirit is not recognized in a bodily sense. Al-though He is a person, He is unheard, unfelt, unseen, un-tasted, and unsmelled! "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39), declared the Master. We are not to become confused about personal identity of the Spirit.

There is a difference in personality and materiality. Actually personality does not pertain to materiality. Bodies which are purely material have no personality. They are dead bodies! "The body without the spirit is dead." Only the spirit gives evidence of personality. That which is spiritual is not material. Personality becomes distinct and pure to the degree it is uncontrolled and unhampered by that which is material. Personality is the revelation and function of spirituality.

The Holy Spirit has no material manifestations or demonstrations. The Holy Spirit, however, is a distinct personality; a distinct personal being. When men claim to be witnesses of material manifestations and revelations of the Holy Spirit, they are false witnesses. The Holy Spirit cannot be identified as materiality. When men claim that they saw the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit appeared to them in identity form, they are mistaken. The Holy Spirit does not and has not

appeared unto man in such material manifestations.

The Holy Spirit is divine and as much a person as God himself. The Spirit was with the Father and Son in the chambers of the high court of Heaven, even before the worlds began. In fact, Jesus declared that "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." This is an affirmation that the reign of the Godhead is through the Spirit, by the truth of God.

Person of The Holy Spirit The personality of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is said to do things only a person can do:

The Holy Spirit teaches. Jesus said, "And He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit reproveth. When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles He said, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteous-ness, and of judgment" (John 16:8).

The Holy Spirit is a guide. In giving this promise Jesus told the apostles, "he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit, characteristic of a person, speaks. Continuing His promise of sending the Holy Spirit, Christ declared, "For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak" (John 16:13). Paul declared, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly . . ." (1 Timothy 4:1). The Holy Spirit, therefore, is a person who hears and speaks!

The Holy Spirit is one who is affected as a person. He may be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). He may be vexed (Isaiah 63:10). The Holy Spirit may be lied to (Acts 5:3). The Holy Spirit may be resisted or rejected (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Holy Spirit, as a person, appointed and directed God's chosen men. In Acts 13:2 it is revealed, "the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

The Holy Spirit makes intercessions for the saints of God. Hear the apostle, Romans 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Holy Spirit In Creation The Holy Spirit is a person, one of the three of the God-head. When God, the Father, and the Son had performed their first works in creation and the "earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" the Holy Spirit came to fill his mission in creation. His first organizational work was to create light, with its separation from darkness, calling the light "day" and the darkness "night." The six days of creation were six days of organizational work under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as an accomplishment of the Godhead.

Holy Spirit, Organizer From the beginning, the Old Testament presents the Godhead as three: God, the originator and supreme ruler of all beings Christ, the Son, later called the Word, who was the co-creator of all things; and the Holy Spirit, the life-giver and organizer, who gave all matter the law through which he would guide all things in its course for which it was created. God, the Father, and His Son, in the beginning created all things. In Genesis 1:1, it is declared: "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth." In John 1:1-3 it is revealed: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . All things were made (created) by

him; and without him was not anything made that was made." After the work of creation was finished by the Father and Son, the work was given over to the ministry of the Holy Spirit for organization and operation of the created. The six days of creation were actually six days of organization by the Holy Spirit. There is no way to determine the time element between the time of "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1), and that of the advent of the Holy Spirit with the beginning of his ministry revealed in Genesis 1:2.

During the six days of his ministry, the Holy Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, organized matter, gave it form, order and procreative power, setting forth creation upon its mission in the universe. In Genesis 2:1 it is recorded, "the heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them." Again, it was said: "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent." Job 26:13. The Holy Spirit placed the bodies and planets in their proper position in space with laws to guide and govern them in ever revolving cycles of space and never ending cycles of eternity.

David, the sweet singer of Israel, declared, concerning the spirit, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalms 139:7-10).

There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit is every-where, guiding and directing all processes and operations in God's universe.

Holy Spirit And Law of Life The Holy Spirit miraculously put into order the first creatures of Almighty God. The original man and woman were formed by this miraculous power without the means and laws of procreation and development. No man exists except through law made and arranged by the Holy Spirit. It is the same Spirit, but different manifestations. Law, itself, has no power or force, but is that through which power operates. It requires just as much power, or manifestation of God's Spirit, to form a man by the law of procreation as it did for the same Spirit to form Adam and Eve from the dust of the earth by direct power without the law of procreation. This life, or germ, that God, through his Spirit, gives to a grain of corn which produces "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear," is as much the manifestation of divine power as the creation of the first plant with its full grown matured grain in the ear.

Not only did the Holy Spirit give the law which guides matter in its workings, but he took up his abode in that law, and is ever present, guiding in the path of life and light. Many times when man looks upon things accomplished through the medium of law, he loses sight of the power which makes that law work. In other words, we often times attribute the power behind law to the power of law itself. It must be remembered, however, there is no power in law itself. Law alone has no power. Law is only a rule of action. It is the medium through which power operates.

Holy Spirit Is Revelator

Both Old and New Testament scriptures were revealed by the Holy Spirit. This affirmation is made in 2 Peter 1:21 : "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The New Testament reveals the God-head as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;

the Son gave his life and his blood to redeem man from his sins; the Holy Spirit was sent as a comforter to abide with God's children and lead them and guide them, by truth, in paths that lead to God. They are divine, distinct persons; yet one in design, one in purpose and one in manifestations.

Holy Spirit and Apostles The Holy Spirit, as a divine agency, has spoken from Al-mighty God through the prophets, through Christ and His apostles. The apostles were the last ones on earth to receive such divine revelations. Christ declared to them: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

The Holy Spirit was first given to the Apostles in a limited measure before Christ left them. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). The apostles received the fullness of the Spirit to guide them into all truth after Jesus was glorified. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:37-39). The full baptismal measure came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost after the Lord's death, burial, resurrection and glorification.

Our Lord admonished the apostles, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17). The full baptismal measure came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, after the Lord's resurrection and glorification.

Guide Into All Truth In John 16:12-15, Jesus further assured the apostles of their divine guidance by the Holy Spirit. Hear him! "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Christ declared to the apostles that the Holy Spirit "shall guide you into all truth"! Then, there is no divine truth today not revealed in the New Testament. If the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into ALL truth, then the claims of divine revelations by men and women today are the claims of fakes and imposters. The Holy Spirit did guide the apostles into "ALL truth"! If "all truth," then there is none from that day hence to be revealed to any man.

Heaven itself authenticated the calling of the apostles and their inspired proclamation of truth by confirming the gospel proclaimed by them with signs, wonders and great miracles (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3). No man, since the apostles, has received such divine revelations, there being no promise nor necessity for such revelations. Miracles and wonders have not been performed since those of New Testament times because when the word of God was confirmed it was eternally confirmed. There is no such thing as re-confirmation of God's word!

Christ Sends Holy Spirit With Message The office and person of Christ and the office and person of the Holy Spirit are so distinct that Christ and the Holy Spirit were not on earth at the same time in their distinct personalities. It is recorded in John 7:39 : "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." According to John 16:7, Jesus declared to his disciples, ". . . It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Just before Jesus went back to the Father in Heaven, He commanded the apostles, in Luke 24:49, ". . . but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

The mission and advent of the Holy Spirit into this world, after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, was to guide the apostles, the chosen Ambassadors of Christ, into all the truth and to bring to their remembrance the things he had taught them.

The Holy Spirit began his work revealing the message of the Son to lost humanity after the Son returned to the Father in Heaven.

The Spirit was subject to the Son and the Son was subject to the Father. The message of the Spirit was the message of Christ. The message of Christ was the message of the Father. It -was the Son who declared, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34). Furthermore, He admonished, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you , and shall be in you" (John 14:15-17).

Caused To Remember The Holy Spirit came to bear testimony of the Son and to bring to the remembrance of the apostles the teachings of the Christ. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27).

Although the apostles had been with Christ from the beginning, God would not trust so sacred a thing as his word to their memory without a guide, the Holy Spirit. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Apostles, Christ's Ambassadors Before Christ finished his mission on earth he chose the apostles to be his ambassadors. Hear the apostle!

"To wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

Holy Spirit Revealed All Things

Just as the Father and Son were perfect, the Holy Spirit did his work perfectly. He was perfect in setting in order the operations and development of the material world. The sun, the moon, and the stars have not yet had an accident, nor shall they ever do so. Not one beat of a split second of

time was miscalculated. The Holy Spirit organized and gave law and order to the material creation, taking up his abode in those laws to guide their operations for all time to come. In like-manner, the Holy Spirit, as the Lord's agent, took up his abode in the law of Christ in the spiritual realm, guiding its operations, through the chosen ambassa-dors of the Son, the apostles, revealing all truth completely and perfectly.

Ladies and gentlemen, hear me! Are you listening? When men today claim to receive revelations from the Holy Spirit they deny the God of Heaven, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. One may as well claim that he can change the orbit of the sun and bring the moon and the stars to this earth and use them for street lights, as to claim direct revelations from the Holy Spirit. These are false claims. Many are honestly mistaken and some are imposters.

Yes, the Son promised to his apostles, who had been with him from the beginning, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Did you hear it, my friends? "He shall guide you into All truth," the Son declared! "ALL TRUTH" is not part of the truth. The Holy Spirit guided them into all truth! These men and women who claim to receive revelations of the Holy Spirit, who claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit, even to the extent of performing great miracles, are not guided by the Holy Spirit. They have no more received di-rect messages from the Holy Spirit than they have received messages from a Russian spy on the moon! Many honest people have been deceived by their false claims. Such false claims are mockery of God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! But, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." They will have their reward!

The Holy Spirit did his work perfectly and completely when he guided the apostles into "ALL TRUTH" (John 16:13-16).

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

Is the Holy Spirit a person

What characteristics of person ascribed to Holy Spirit?

What was work of Holy Spirit in creation?

What was the mission of the Holy Spirit in revelation?

Was revelation by Holy Spirit complete?

The Holy Spirit and the Word

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD

No theory of the work of the Holy Spirit in revelation which modifies or alters the written word can be true. Paul, to Timothy, wrote: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

It will first be observed that Timothy "learned;" he "learned" what he was taught. We must learn of God and the way of salvation. Jesus, himself, declared: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

Timothy was taught the sacred scriptures from child-hood by his mother in order that he might become "wise unto salvation." The Holy Spirit did not intervene directly from heaven and guide him in his knowledge of God and salvation.

Holy Scriptures The Holy Scriptures are of Divine origin. They are: Profitable for teaching, Profitable for reproof, Profitable for correction, Profitable for instruction in righteousness that the Man of God is thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The power of God unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:14-17; Romans 1:16).

Divine Origin The word of God is of Divine origin. Peter, the inspired apostle, declared of the Old Testament, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Of the New Testament scriptures it is said: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written, in this book: But these 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" (John 20:30-31).

The inspired men of God, chosen by Him, revealed God's word to man, as it was revealed unto them, not always understanding the full meaning of the word themselves. Peter declared, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls 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. 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 desired to look into" (1 Peter 1:9-12 RSV).

No Other Gospel The Holy Spirit revealed one message of salvation through God's chosen ambassadors and there is no other message of the Holy Spirit to be received, notwithstanding the false claims of uninspired, modern men of today!

Of the Old Testament scriptures, Moses warned, "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I commanded you" (Deuteronomy 4:1-2). Further-more, he declared, "What thing soever I command you , observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32).

Curse Upon Any Perverter The inspired apostle Paul affirmed the gospel he preached to be of divine origin and he declared that the curse of God rests upon any man or angel who would pervert the re-vealed gospel of Christ, that of the New Testament scrip-tures. Hear the apostle: "For I make known unto you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12 RSV).

Cursed is the man who seeks to pervert the gospel, or claims revelation of another gospel from the Holy Spirit. "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:6-9 RSV).

The inspired word of God closes with a final warning to those who might claim to receive new relations from God. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city , and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

The scriptures constitute the means of instruction, by the Holy Spirit, profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. By the scriptures, the word of God, man is furnished completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Jesus, the Son of God, endorsed Moses and applied ap-propriate parts of his teaching unto himself. ". . . Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that pro-ceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4). To teach men of the Son of God is to preach the scriptures through which the Holy Spirit instructs the soul. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture , and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

Man must believe, but he can not know what to believe until he has been taught what to believe. To the Romans , Paul wrote: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). The apostle con-cluded in verse 17 of Romans 10, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Word Permanent and Enduring When the Lord commissioned the disciples to preach the word, he declared that their work would be permanent and enduring. ". . . lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). No other human beings since the apostles have been honored with the responsibility of revealing the mind of God to man, his creation upon the earth.

The inspired "apostles, whom he had chosen," were commissioned to set upon thrones of judgment and authority, to accomplish the work for which they were set apart, this great mission of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit to be accomplished "through thy truth." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20-21). In verse 18 of John 17, Jesus declared, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

The apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, affirmed that they, the apostles, were ambassadors of Christ, who "gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Jude declared, "that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once" once and for all time, by the apostles, "delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).

Holy Spirit Certified Gospel The gospel proclaimed by the apostles was a Holy Spirit revealed and certified gospel. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;" (1 Corinthians 15:1-3).

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12). Claims of direct revelations from God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit today are absolute denials of the credibility and inspiration of the Bible. We repeat, the curse of God Almighty rests upon anyone who is so foolish to make such false claims! The apostles were the divinely chosen agents of God, with a divine message from the Holy Spirit to instruct man in the way of salvation (Galatians 1:7-9).

Foolishness of Preaching The Almighty, our Creator, must of necessity be greater in wisdom than the created. Therefore, man, the creature of God, can not comprehend God without divine aid, through the divine instruction of the gospel of Christ. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Holy Spirit, Seed, Kingdom The Holy Spirit is the life regenerating power of the word of God. In 1 John 5:6, we are informed, ". . . And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Our Lord, in prayer to the Father, said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

To His disciples, He explained, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). From these divine declarations we learn that the "Spirit" operates through the "truth," the "word" of God, which is the "seed" of the kingdom.

The Spirit gives life to the word, the truth, by which man is regenerated, begotten as a child of God. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:14-15)

Peter declared, to the born-again elect of God, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth. . . Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of in-corruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

The "seed" is the "word," the "word" is the "truth," and the "truth" is the "spirit"; therefore, those who were begotten by the seed, the word, were begotten by the Spirit through the seed, God's word. The regenerating power of the Spirit of God is to be found only in the word of God, the seed of the kingdom of God. Any theory concerning direct operation of the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the word of God, is false.

Born of Spirit--Life Seed Word The farmer plants the seed of corn with expectation of reproduction, because there is the regenerating life that God put in the seed. Corn can not be produced without the seed because the reproductive life is in the seed. The reproductive life in the God-made grain of corn is the same thing to the seed of corn that the Holy Spirit is to the word of God, the seed of God's Kingdom! The Holy Spirit gives life, regenerating and reproductive power to the word of God. No wonder Jesus declared, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The Holy Spirit does not operate independent, separate and apart from the word of God!

The fantastic claims of direct revelations from the Holy Spirit by men, since the close of the apostolic age, are false claims. No such revelations have been received, regardless of all the claims of men combined. We would say with Paul: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14).

Let us observe these characteristics of the word of God, through which the Holy Spirit operates, and ask ourselves can the Holy Spirit do more separate and apart from the word?

1. The word is that which furnishes the man of God completely (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. The word is that which enlightens man's soul, Psalms 19:8.
3. The word makes one wise unto salvation, Psalms 19:7; 2 Timothy 3:15. Does the Holy Spirit, apart from the word, do more than that?
4. The word is perfect converting the soul, Psalms 19:7. If the word is perfect converting the soul, then why the theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit?
5. The soul is begotten by the seed, the word, the truth. The spirit is the truth (1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 John 5:6). If born of the Spirit through the seed, the word, then what part could the Holy Spirit, in a direct way, have to do with the new birth?

6. The word produces faith in the heart (Romans 10:17). "Faith," the apostle declared, "comes by hearing and hear-ing by the word of God." Does the Holy Spirit instill faith, apart from the word? The heart is purified by the word, 1 Peter 1:22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." If the soul is purified by obedience to the word, the truth, then what would be the work of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word of God in conversion?

Ladies and gentlemen, hear me! Are you listening? There is not one thing man can name that the Holy Spirit is said to do in conversion, separate and independent of the word of God, but what it may be definitely known that the same thing is accomplished by the Spirit, through the word of God!

Direct Operation of Holy Spirit Voids the Gospel

If God should today convert a soul by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, through miraculous intervention, He would set aside the whole scheme of redemption, revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in the New Testament. This false theory would mean that God made a tragic mistake. After four thousand years of planning, and requisitioning prophets, angels, His own Son, the apostles, and thousands of disciples, in providing the scheme of redemption, God decided to set it all aside and dispatch the Holy Spirit, directly from heaven, and operate directly upon the sinners heart. Truly, a false conception of almighty God. Who would accuse God of such blunders!

The false theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion would dispense with the gospel. Yet, Jesus said the word is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:10-11), and Paul declared that the gospel is the power of God to save the believer. Hear him! "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

The direct operation theory would dispense with the preacher of the gospel. Yet, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, emphasised: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" . . . (Romans 10:14). To the Corinthians he concluded:

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit commanded: "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead" (Acts 10:42).

The theory of direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conviction and conversion would nullify the cross and all it means to salvation. The apostle Paul declared that the way of salvation is the way of the cross revealed in the gospel. Hear the apostle:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have be-lieved in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). It is very evident that the Corinthians learned of Christ, the glory of the cross, and the power of His resurrection through the gospel preached by Paul and not by some di-rect operation of the Holy

Spirit.

My friends, no theory of direct operation of the Holy Spirit's work in conversion that eliminates the parties of the new covenant, with their respective responsibilities to the contract, can be accepted. This new covenant includes the divine mind of God, in written contract, between God and man, with Christ Jesus, the mediator or surety. The apostle wrote: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Hebrews 7:22). Also read Hebrews 8:1-13.

The Holy Spirit does not operate independent of the word of God, but reveals the word, giving power and life to it. When God, through the Holy Spirit, spoke to Moses and the prophets, He directed the mind of Israel. When God spoke through Christ, his Son, and by the Holy Spirit, He moved and directed the minds of the apostles, giving to the world one message of salvation; the heaven-born, spirit-filled message of the cross, offering conditions of pardon and promises of salvation. The Holy Spirit moves the mind and convicts the soul today, but not independent of the word. When man hears the gospel, he hears the word of the spirit; when he obeys the gospel, he obeys the word of the Spirit.

The word of God has always been the revelation of the Spirit to which man is obligated to hear and obey. Hear the word of the Lord to Joshua: "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written here-in: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:7-8).

Word Perfect In Conversion

Hear David: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlighten-ing the eyes" (Psalms 19:7-8).

To affirm the necessity of direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion is to deny the divine statement, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"! If the "law of the Lord" is perfect, converting the sinner, then there is no need for the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in converting the sinner. The apostle Paul, Romans 1:16, declared the gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth . . ." The spirit directed gospel is God's power to save the believer. There is no other power that can do more. If the Holy Spirit operates directly from Heaven, separate and apart from the word of God, then why the necessity of sending missionaries to foreign countries to preach the gospel to those who know not God? Why does not the Holy Spirit convert the heathens, without the preaching of the gospel, if the Spirit operates independently of the word? The gospel is God's power to save the believer!

Jesus, our Lord, said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and

immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:46-49).

Cleansing from sin is the result of obedience to the word of God, not a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Hear Christ: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the word of God?

2. Did the Holy Spirit guide the apostles unto all truth?

3. What are the consequences of perverting Holy Spirit revealed gospel?

4. Does the Holy Spirit give life to the seed of the kingdom , the word of God?

5. Does the Holy Spirit reveal word of God directly from heaven to men today?

6. If the Holy Spirit operates separate and apart from the word of God, then is the "law of the Lord perfect, con-verting the soul"?

7. If the gospel of Christ is the power of God to save the believer, what power could the Holy Spirit exercise that the gospel does not have?

The Holy Spirit in Conversion No. 1

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION NO. 1

Ladies and gentlemen, there is much misunderstanding concerning the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversions. Many honest souls have been led to believe that the Holy Spirit operates directly from heaven upon the heart of the sinner to bring about his conversion. Some have gone to their graves, lost for eternity, waiting for the intervention of the Holy Spirit to bring to them salvation. Others claim conversion by the direct power of the Holy Spirit and re-late their experiences as evidences of their salvation. Their experiences, usually very emotional, varied, and unusual, are relied on as evidence of salvation more so than the positive teaching of God's word. A false conception of the Holy Spirit as a mysterious, unknown power likely to descend from heaven anywhere, any time, and take possession of the soul of man is, no doubt, responsible for much of the misunderstanding of operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

When we speak of conversion, we speak of a person being born again, regenerated, redeemed by the blood of Christ; one who has been reconciled unto God. A meaning of the term convert is, "To change into another state, form or substance; transform."

The Holy Spirit and Knowledge The knowledge of God revealed to man in the Scriptures is sufficient to meet our needs. When man does not have knowledge of God he becomes alienated from God. In the beginning, man was alienated from God through ignorance. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:17-19).

When man gives up his knowledge of God, God gives up man. Hear the apostle: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28). Ignorance and alienation are close companions. Knowledge is the first step toward reconciliation. God has revealed by the Holy Spirit, through the written and confirmed word, all things that pertain to life and godliness.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:2-4). Revelation, in all ages from Moses, the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, until the end of time, is executed on the bases of man's ability and accountability; ability to obtain knowledge of God and accountability for believing and obeying God, or disbelieving God.

The Holy Spirit is an essential agent in conversion because he speaks, through the word of God, in an understandable language to every responsible person on earth. No theory of the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion that eliminates language, as a means of communication from God to man, can be true. Likewise, any theory that eliminates human beings, as a medium of communication from God to man, is false! By direction of the Holy Spirit the apostles, as Christ's ambassadors, were to perform two great responsibilities; something never done before or since by any human being.

One: To bind upon all men certain conditions of salvation, to be ratified in heaven, and to last until the end of time.

Two: To cause the release of man's sins from his soul, dictated by the authority of Christ, upon the irrefutable terms of pardon expressed in His will (Matthew 16:19). The Holy Spirit had a three-fold responsibility in conversions, namely: to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. (John 16:8-11). The great task of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the word by the apostles, is expressed in the great commission, when He commanded: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Also, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16). The Holy Spirit at no time, under any circumstance, directly or indirectly, modified, supplemented, or eliminated any part of the Great Commission given by our Lord. The Holy Spirit directed the execution of the Great Commission through the apostles.

A popular theory of the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion is the affirmation that the Spirit operates on the sinner's conscience, heart, and life independent of the gospel and any human cooperating agency. By miraculous power the Holy Spirit is said to direct the mind of God to the sinner's heart, over-ruling and ignoring all the laws of the human mind. This is a false theory. Jesus himself declared that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14:17). There is no direct visible, or invisible, over-whelming power of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

Direct Operation Dispense With Church The false theory of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion would dispense with the church, for which Christ shed his blood, whose mission in the world is to preach the gospel and make known the manifold wisdom of God.

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 4:9-10).

Christ died for the church, purchased it with His own blood (Ephesians 5:25-27; Acts 20:28). Who would accuse God of being guilty of a tragedy of all tragedies, that is, allowing his Son to be crucified, to die for the church, all in vain? Such would be the inevitable conclusion, if the Holy Spirit operated directly upon the sinner's heart independent of the gospel, which was divinely ordained to be proclaimed by the Lord's Church.

The work of the Holy Spirit in conversion does not in any way modify, abridge, or abolish the fact that all responsible human beings have the ability and responsibility to choose, to use, or abuse, their faculties and privileges, as a free moral agent, created by Jehovah, God.

These responsibilities and capabilities of the human heart include: "Hearing," "thinking," "willing," "believing," "choosing," "reasoning," "judging," "remembering," "con-sidering," "knowing," "obeying," "refusing," "yielding," "resisting," "disobeying," "hardening the heart," and "re-belling" all expressed in the Bible.

The direct intervention of the Holy Spirit in conversion would completely ignore the individuality and integrity of man, as God's creation, and make him a mere puppet or machine.

The Natural Man

Many people have misunderstood the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment because they have not been able to distinguish between the "natural man" and the "inward man." The Holy Spirit, through Paul declared: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). There is a "natural body" and the "inward man," the apostle affirmed.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Romans 7:22). Also, in Romans 7:25 the apostle said: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin."

There can be no doubt about it, the soul, the mind, the heart, the person himself, is the "inward man," who lives in the house of the "natural man," and has charge and responsibility of that house. It is the "inward man" who "hears," "believes," "obeys," or disobeys. The Holy Spirit, therefore, appeals, through the teaching of the gospel, to the "inner man" and not the "natural man."

The Holy Spirit And Remission of Sins The direct operation of the Holy Spirit theory has caused many honest and sincere souls to reject the Holy Spirit in the offering of remission of sins. By this theory it is concluded that remission of sins is an inward experience and man should look within himself for evidence of salvation. Because of this misconception of the operation of the Holy Spirit, resulting in the misconception of remission of sins, the conditions of pardon, or remission of sins, offered by the Holy Spirit, through the gospel of Christ, is often rejected, causing souls to be lost. Such misguided souls, therefore, consider our Lord's command of baptism, as a condition of salvation (remission of sins), as absurd and un-necessary. Remission of sins is not the change of heart in conversion, rather, it is a state of pardon as a result of a changed, obedient, heart.

The change of heart, or inward experience, is repentance which is the result of the conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. At no time did God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit ever even imply that repentance is re-mission of sins. Repentance is the condition of the heart of the sinner and belongs to man. Remission of sins is a state of forgiveness, subsequent to repentance, and belongs to God. It is God, through Christ, His Son, and the Holy Spirit who offers remission of sins upon certain conditions of pardon. The "inward experience," which may be repentance, must not be confused with remission of sins, for remission of sins is consequent upon repentance, not a part of it.

Such expressions as, "repentance and remission of sins" (Luke 24:47), "baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4), and "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38), can leave no doubt as to the distinction between repentance, the inward experience, which belongs to man, and remission of sins, the state of pardon, which belongs to God.

The Holy Spirit does not operate upon the heart of the sinner, independent of the word of God, causing him to re-pent; neither does He offer remission of sins without obedience to the gospel.

Word of God In Conversion

All responsible men on earth are sinners by reason of transgression. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Man has become alienated from God by reason of his own sins. To be saved from his lost state he must become converted, changed to another state, become reconciled unto God. He must be trans-formed. He must become a new creature.

The apostle Paul stated most conclusively, that one is to become a new creature in Christ in order to become reconciled unto God. But the power of this transformation, conversion, or reconciliation is within the word of God (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). He affirmed that God gave to the apostles the ministry of reconciliation, having committed unto them "the word of reconciliation." The same apostle declared that the gospel of Christ is the "power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). If the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, then the Holy Spirit does not have some separate or additional power to save.

Ladies and gentlemen, hear me! Are you listening? If the gospel of Christ is not the power of God unto salvation and the Holy Spirit has additional or separate power, then who is responsible for the heathens in lands where the word of God has not gone? In lands where the Bible, the word of God, has not gone, there are thousands and millions who have never heard of Christ, or the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart, directly from heaven, independent of the gospel of Christ, then why does he not go to the millions in lands where the Bible has not gone and convert them to Christ? Don't you know that it is necessary that we take the gospel to all men on earth, in order for them to be converted, to be saved! Re-member, Jesus commanded, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark:15, 16). It should also be remembered that the apostle declared that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

We have pointed out in these addresses that the Holy Spirit is the person who revealed the gospel of salvation to the apostles, whom our Lord chose as His ambassadors. So inseparable is this operation that the Spirit is said to be the "truth." The truth is the word of God, the seed of the kingdom, which receives life from the Spirit by which one is born again, or converted unto Christ. (Read carefully 1 John 5:7; John 17:17; Luke 8:11; John 6:63; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

When Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles to do his work in conversion, He said, ". . . I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. . ." (John 16:7-8). Without question, this work is to be accomplished through the word, the gospel, revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. There is positively no case of direct intervention of the Holy Spirit in any conversion recorded in the New

Testament. To ascertain how the Holy Spirit operates in conversion, we give brief attention to some conversions recorded in the New Testament.

CONVERSION OF LYDIA AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

If any recorded case of conversion in New Testament times, during the days of miraculous works of the Holy Spirit, should bear evidence of direct intervention of the Holy Spirit in conversion the case of Lydia surely would be that one. There was not a gospel preacher on the continent of Europe where she lived. From Sabbath to Sabbath, she was attending a prayer meeting on the river bank, although she was some three hundred miles away from her home. She was a Jewess business woman of Thyatira , or she was a most devout woman who had been converted to the Jewish faith. She worshipped God, according to the dictates of her conscience, but, obviously, was not a Christian.

Since there was not a minister of the gospel within hundreds of miles, why could not the Holy Spirit have converted her, directly from heaven, independent of the gospel of Christ? The simple answer is, the Holy Spirit does not and never has operated upon the heart, independent of the gospel of Christ which is the power of God to save the believer. It was necessary for a preacher of the gospel, in this case, Paul, to present the word of the Lord, by which this God-fearing woman and her associates might be begotten unto a new and living hope.

To accomplish this purpose God overruled the course of travel of Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke who might have gone to Ephesus in Asia, or Bithynia. God directed Paul to go to Macedonia, through the voice which beckoned: "come over into Macedonia and help us." Paul concluded , "the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:10).

All of these circumstances were incidental to the opening of Lydia's heart; the most essential circumstances being the necessity of a gospel preacher, using the instrument of God's power, the gospel of Christ, to convert the soul of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION OF THREE THOUSAND The Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, opened Lydia's heart and she became a Christian (Acts 16:14-15). The important question is, however, how did the Lord open Lydia's heart? "Lydia . . . heard us: whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul and she was baptized . . ."

The gospel, which is the power of God to save the believer (Romans 1:16), was the instrument which the Lord used to open Lydia's heart. She heard the things which were spoken by Paul. She understood she believed; she was baptized into Christ. She became a Christian only. The Holy Spirit did not in any way affect her heart, independent of the gospel preached by Paul, before her conversion, nor in the process of her conversion.

HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION OF THREE THOUSAND The Holy Spirit has a very distinct part in the conversion of every soul to Christ. No man is born into the kingdom of Christ without having been begotten by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. From the divine truth already quoted, we have learned that the "Spirit" is the "truth," the "truth" is "word ," and the "word" is the "seed" of the kingdom. Christ proclaimed, "Ye must be born again." The inspired apostle Peter declared of the elect children of God that they purified their souls in their "obedience to the truth . . . having

been begotten again, not of corrupt-ible seed, but of incorruptible through the word of God." There can be but one conclusion: they were begotten by the Spirit, through the word, the incorruptible seed. Man is, therefore, begotten by the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, when he is converted to the Lord, or born into the kingdom of Christ.

Circumstances Not Conditions The record of the conversion of the 3, 000 souls on Pentecost is found in Acts 2nd chapter. We must not mistake the circumstances attending the conversion of these people for the conditions of conversion dictated by the Holy Spirit to the apostles. The apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as had been promised by the Lord (Acts 1:4-5; Acts 1:26; Acts 2:1-4).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was no part of the conditions for remission of sins obtained by the 3, 000 converts. They received the "gift of the Holy Spirit," or the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The miraculous gift of the Spirit enabled the apostles to speak with "other tongues," which astonished the multitude, for "every man heard them speak in his own language" wherein he was born. Speaking in tongues was no part of the conditions of their salvation, but it was a miraculous demonstration that caused the people to give attention and to hear the gospel proclaimed in their own language, although spoken by men who did not speak their language. Incidentally, there are people today who claim to speak in "tongues," by the power of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles, but it is very obvious that they do not speak in "tongues" so that people of different nationalities can understand them in their own native tongue. There is not a man on earth today who can speak in "tongues," as did the apostles!

The conditions of conversion, or remission of sins, revealed by the inspired men of God on Pentecost, were in no way related to the peculiar circumstances which attended their conversion. Having heard the gospel proclaimed by the special chosen apostles, this gospel being directed by the Holy Spirit, they were "pricked in their heart" and, as believers, they were told what to do to obtain remission of sins.

We must not mistake attendant circumstances of the conversions, recorded in the New Testament, with the con-ditions of salvation. According to Acts 16:22-34, the jailor and they that were in his house were converted by the gospel proclaimed by Paul, directed by the Holy Spirit. They believed and were baptized into Christ. Those were conditions of salvation. The circumstances were different. Paul and Silas were beaten and placed in prison and at mid-night a "great earthquake" occurred. If one could make the attendant circumstances conditions of salvation, then every time there would be a conversion there would be an earth-quake! Paul preached the gospel, God's power to save, to the jailor (Acts 16:32) but Christ, by the Holy Spirit, re-vealed the message of salvation to the apostle (Galatians 1:12).

Begotten By Spirit, Born of Water

Peter identified those who were "begotten again" (be-gotten by the "seed," the "word," the "truth," the "Spirit") in 1 Peter 1:1, as the same people referred to in the second chapter of Acts, who heard the first gospel sermon, offering remission of sins in the name of Christ, which was preached in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost, after the Lord's resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:5-11).

Peter proclaimed unto them the truth, the word. He planted the seed of the kingdom in their hearts. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls . . . And the Lord added to the church daily those that were saved" (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 2:41; Acts 2:47).

To Peter, Christ had declared: "I will build my church . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . ." (Matthew 16:18-19). By the Holy Spirit, Peter used the keys of the kingdom by preaching the word, commanding faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:4; Acts 2:14; Acts 2:36-38). The divine record reveals that "they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41), and the Lord "added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Later, the apostle wrote the epistle of First Peter to them declaring that they had been begotten again by the incorruptible seed, the word of God. They were begotten by the Holy Spirit through the "truth," the "word," the "seed," and were baptized unto the remission of sins, born of water, into the kingdom of Christ.

Christ had declared to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The three thousand were born of water and the Spirit, born into the kingdom of Christ. "They that gladly received his word were baptized," it was affirmed (Acts 2:41). Peter declared that they were "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). John proclaimed that the "Spirit is the truth" and Christ declared that the "truth" is the "word" and the "word" is the "seed," therefore, it must be concluded, beyond question, that the three thousand were, begotten by the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, and born of water (baptized for the remission of sins) into the kingdom of Christ!

It must, furthermore, be concluded that at no time did the Holy Spirit act independently of the word, proclaimed by the apostles, in the conversion of the Pentecostians. The apostles were divinely guided by the Holy Spirit in proclaiming the gospel. The Holy Spirit brought conviction to the hearts of the sinners, who were converted only through the preaching of the gospel.

The mission of the Holy Spirit, through the apostles, was to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). The medium of that God-given mission of the Holy Spirit, through the word, has not changed and will never change

HOLY SPIRIT AND CONVERSION OF SAMARITANS The divine record of the conversion of the people of Samaria is found in Acts 8:5-25. As in every case of conversion, the Holy Spirit performed his God-arranged part: "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ . . . and the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip . . . But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized into Christ."

Philip, the evangelist, preached the word, "proclaimed unto them the Christ." They that heard and believed "Philip's preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ, were baptized, both men and women." The Samaritans were begotten by the Spirit, through the

word, and born of water when they were baptized into the kingdom, as were the three thousand on Pentecost of Acts Chapter 2. The Holy Spirit did not reveal one word unto them about Christ and His kingdom, except by mouth of the man of God with the inspired message. Philip "proclaimed unto them Christ. The multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip . . . when they believed Philip . . . they were baptized . . ."

Beloved, hear me! Are you listening? The Holy Spirit, at no time, revealed himself directly from Heaven with a message to the sinner. Sinners who were begotten by the Holy Spirit and 'saved from their sins were they who heard the gospel, believed the gospel, and obeyed the gospel by repenting and being baptized into Christ.

Laying On of Hands No Part of Conversion

Someone may inquire, "did not the Samaritans receive the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit?" Yes, beloved, but this was a special administration of the Holy Spirit which could be performed only by the apostles. Although Philip was a minister of Christ and could perform miracles, as was done in the apostolic age of the church, to confirm the word when preached, he could not confer this miraculous work of the Spirit to others. The apostles at Jerusalem came to Samaria and "laid their hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:14-17). It was necessary for the apostles to come and confer the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Only the apostles had this power.

Simon was informed, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter" when he sinned by offering to obtain this gift of God with money (Acts 8:18-21). The Samaritans, like all Christians, received the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, when they obeyed the gospel, when they believed and were baptized. God gives the Holy Spirit to them that "obey him" (Acts 5:32). The miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, however, was through the imposition of the hands of the apostles and could not be accomplished except through the apostles. When the last apostle died, therefore, the laying on of hands, imparting the miraculous works of the Spirit, ceased!

When the people of Samaria were converted, they were begotten by the Spirit, through the word of God, and born of water into the kingdom of Christ!

Regenerating life is within the seed. The regenerating power of the Holy Spirit is inseparable with the gospel of Christ, the truth, the word, the seed of the kingdom!

The Holy Spirit does not operate on the soul of man, independently of the word of God, in converting the soul. When men talk about conversion by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, they are presuming that conversion may be experienced without the Spirit, without life, and without the word of God. Such "conversion," therefore, of necessity would be Christless, Godless, Spiritless, and lifeless.

In the last day, men of earth will be judged, not by some peculiar experience presumed to have been caused by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but by the word of God, revealed by the Spirit. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. Does the Holy Spirit operate directly from heaven in converting the sinner?

2. What is the power of God to save the believer?
3. Did the Holy Spirit come directly upon the 3, 000 con-verts, or the apostles, on Pentecost?
4. Did the Holy Spirit operate upon Lydia's heart inde-pendent of the gospel?
5. Were the miraculous circumstances attending the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit the same as conditions of salvation?
6. Were the Samaritans saved before they received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit?
7. Were the apostles the only persons who could impart miraculous power of the Holy Spirit?
8. How is one begotten or born of the Spirit?

The Holy Spirit in Conversion--No. 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION NO. 2

CONVERSION OF SAUL In Acts 9:1-8 and Acts 22:3-16 we have the record of the conversion of Saul, who became Paul the great apostle. A man, who later declared, as an apostle, that he was guided by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 1:11-12), did not have the Holy Spirit before his conversion. It was necessary for Saul to change his religion and reverse his conscience concerning the Christ and His church before he was converted to Christ. The Holy Spirit, about which this great man of God wrote so much after his conversion, had a part in his conversion, but did not appear to Saul directly from heaven and convert him.

According to Paul himself, as recorded in Acts 22:3; Acts 23:1, he was a man who lived before God always in all good conscience toward God. He was a very religious man, deeply devoted to God, but he was not a Christian at that time. After he did become a Christian, he referred to himself as being the "chief of sinners" before he became a Christian (1 Timothy 1:15). No, friends, just because a person is honest, sincere, lives before God in all good conscience, is deeply religious, and is devoted to a religious cause does not mean that he is a Christian. Saul was a very honest man and "zealous toward God," but he was unsaved. Then you ask, "What did he do to be saved?"

Not Saved Directly By Holy Spirit

While on his way to Damascus to persecute the church of our Lord, Jesus appeared unto Saul and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Then, trembling and astonished, Paul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" Christ replied, "Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6).

I ask, my friends, would this not have been the most opportune time for the Lord to save Saul, directly from heaven, if ever a person was to be saved by the power of the Holy Spirit directly from heaven? But, Saul was no exception. He had to obey the gospel, too.

Saul waited in the city of Damascus to hear what he must do to be saved. For three days and night he was deeply penitent and he prayed. Still he was unsaved. Finally the gospel, which he must hear to know what to do to be saved, was brought to him by Ananias. According to Acts 22:16, Saul was commanded, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." He was told what he must do, as previously informed by Jesus Christ. He was told, "be baptized and wash away thy sins." Almost all denominations teach that your sins are to be "washed away" and then you may be baptized. But, Saul commanded, "be baptized and wash away thy sins." Sins forgiven after he was baptized! Baptism was essential to his salvation. Although other conditions are just as essential, baptism is no less essential.

Received Sight Saved?

But, someone asks, "Was not Saul saved when he received his sight?" My friends, how long will men be deceived by those who continue to pervert God's eternal truth? In this record of the Acts we have the account of Paul's call to his apostleship and the record of his conversion. Paul was made blind by the brightness of the light. Later his physical eye-sight was restored. Imagine some preacher deceiving honest people by saying Saul was saved when he received his sight, just in order to try to get Saul saved before he was bap-tized. A deliberate perversion of truth, it is! Remember, Saul was told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name."

Friends, don't you know that if Saul were saved before he was baptized, the Lord didn't know it, because Christ said, "You will be told what you must do." Don't you know that if he were saved before he was baptized, Saul himself didn't know it! I tell you, beloved, if Saul were saved before he was baptized, he was the most miserable saved person I have ever read about. Don't you know, my friends, if Saul was saved before he was baptized, he was saved with his sins still unforgiven! Don't forget, he was told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." His sins were not forgiven until he was baptized. He was saved by the power of the gospel preached by Ananias. He was converted to the Lord. It was Paul who later wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Paul received the Holy Spirit, as a gift, when he obeyed the gospel.

Referring to his own conversion, Paul declared that he was buried with Christ by baptism into His death where the new, Spirit regenerated life began: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were bap-tized into his death. Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

The Holy Spirit set Paul free from sin and death by the law of the Spirit, but not directly from heaven, independent of the gospel. Hear the apostle: "For the law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

The venerable apostle concluded, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:14; Romans 8:16).

The record of the conversion of the Ethiopian officer, re-corded in Acts 8:26-39, is another example of the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion. Here is a man, evidently a devoutly religious man, who had to change his religion to be converted to the Lord. He had been to Jerusalem to worship and was "returning, and was sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet. Isaiah." The Spirit directed Philip, the preacher of the gospel, saying, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Philip obeyed the Holy Spirit. He approached the Ethiopian in his chariot and inquired, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The Ethiopian eunuch replied, "How can I except some one guide me?" Philip accepted his invitation to join him in his chariot and "beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.

Saved Directly From Heaven? My friends, could it be possible that anyone could so stretch his imagination to think that the Holy Spirit appeared directly from heaven and converted this officer of Ethiopia? Surely it is unthinkable! The Holy Spirit was present, but at no time did the Holy Spirit

directly intervene, affecting the man's conversion. The Spirit directed a gospel preacher, Philip, to preach the gospel to this man. If there was ever a time when the Holy Spirit might have intervened in conversion, he could well have appeared to the Ethiopian and revealed the meaning of the word of God which he was reading. The officer stated that he did not understand the prophecy, which related to Christ, the savior of man's soul, and could not understand it "except someone shall guide me." If the Holy Spirit would ever convert a soul by direct operation of his power from heaven, why did he not convert the Ethiopian by direct intervention? The answer is obvious! The Holy Spirit does not operate directly from heaven in the conversion of any soul, regardless of all the claims of men to the contrary. Just like every other case of conversion, he heard the gospel of Christ, the Spirit filled and Spirit directed gospel the sinner believed and obeyed the gospel.

Preached Christ

Philip preached unto the Ethiopian Jesus Christ. In preaching Christ, he preached the commands of Christ. This is evident in verses 35 through 39. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Beloved, may I ask, where did the Ethiopian get the idea that he should be baptized? There can be but one answer. When Philip "preached Jesus" he preached the gospel of Jesus. He could not preach Jesus without preaching the gospel of Jesus. No man today can "preach Jesus" without preaching the gospel of Christ. What did Jesus command, as conditions of conversion, in his gospel? Hear it, my friends! You must not misunderstand it! Are you listening?

. . . Jesus commanded, ". . . preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). Believe and be baptized to be saved, the Lord commanded! The eunuch declared that he believed that Christ was the Son of God. He did not make some confession of some human creed or discipline. He confessed his faith in the Son of God and upon that confession he was baptized into Christ where he became a new creature in Christ. He was buried with his Lord in baptism, as pictured in Romans 6:3-4. Both Philip, the preacher, and the eunuch, the man being converted to the Lord, "went down in the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." The Holy Spirit had a part in the conversion of this officer from Ethiopia, but only through the gospel of Christ, as in every case of conversion. The Holy Spirit directed the preacher to the man who was to be converted and inspired the gospel message that brought about his conversion. Such direct operation of the Holy Spirit was necessary during those days of miracles, because they did not have the written and confirmed gospel of Christ. But even during the miraculous days, no soul was ever converted by the Holy Spirit, directly from heaven!

Conclusions The Spirit intervened in the conversion of the man of Ethiopia but not independent of the gospel of Christ (Acts 8:26-39).

I submit the following conclusions concerning the Holy Spirit and the conversion of the Ethiopian.

It must be observed:

The Spirit was present but did not speak directly to the man to be converted; rather, the Spirit directed the evangelist, Philip, to go and preach the gospel of Christ to the Ethiopian officer.

The sinner invited the preacher to guide him in an understanding of the truth. "How can I understand except some man should guide me?" he said. The Holy Spirit was to appeal to his intelligence, his understanding, through the teaching of the scriptures by Philip, the preacher.

Philip, from the Scriptures, "preached unto him Je-sus." He preached the gospel of Jesus. He proclaimed the Spirit filled truth, by which the officer was begotten.

Philip preached Jesus by preaching the gospel of the great commission of Jesus, which included, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). No man can preach "Jesus" without preaching the commands of Jesus. After confessing that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, in obedience to the command of the Lord, the man of Ethiopia was baptized into Christ.

The Spirit was there. Philip was directed by the Spirit of the Lord to preach the gospel to this honest soul. The Spirit directed the evangelist on his way, after the conversion of the eunuch, but at no time did the Holy Spirit speak directly to the convert, or influence the decision or experience of the man's heart, independent of the teaching of the word by the evangelist. The Holy Spirit operates upon the soul in conversion, but not independently of the gospel of Christ which is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND HOLY SPIRIT

Cornelius, another devotedly religious man, was converted unto the Lord by the gospel of Christ, proclaimed by the apostle Peter, inspired by Holy Spirit.

"But," someone inquires, "did not the Holy Spirit fall upon Cornelius and his household and convert them?" No, beloved, the Holy Spirit never at any time came directly upon anyone for the purpose of conversion. It is true the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his Gentile household, and, for a very specific purpose; namely, to prove to Peter and the other Jews that the Gentiles were subjects of the gospel as well as the Jews. The miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit was administered by the Lord to the Gentiles, in the case of Cornelius, to establish the fact that the Jews on Pentecost, of Acts, the 2nd chapter, had no special privileges over the Gentiles in the Lord's kingdom (Acts 10:44-47; Acts 11:15-18). A more detailed discussion of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" will be presented in another part of this series of addresses.

Cornelius was begotten by the Spirit through the word of God which was proclaimed by Peter. Although he was a devotedly religious man, Cornelius was an unsaved man. He was informed by the angel: "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14).

When Peter was convinced that Cornelius was a subject of the gospel of Christ, he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47-48).

Cornelius was told to get Peter "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Now, being convinced that both Jew and Gentile are subjects of the gospel of Christ, and seeing that they were believers in Christ, he concluded, "what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:16-17). He, therefore, "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47).

The heavenly messenger did not tell Cornelius, the sinner, what to do to be saved but directed him to get a gospel preacher, Peter, a man inspired by the Holy Spirit, to tell him "words whereby" he should be saved!

Obedience To Gospel This is the conversion of a man whose prayer was heard, but the Holy Spirit did not descend upon him and save his soul in direct answer to prayer. Neither did the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit have any relationship to his salvation from sin. This miracle of the gift of the Holy Spirit, although wrought upon Cornelius, was not for the purpose of changing Cornelius, but was for the benefit of Peter and the Jews. We usually determine what a thing is for by the use made of it, especially is this true with divine approbation.

Here is a man, Cornelius, a very good man and a devotedly religious man, but a lost man, who must hear words whereby he should be saved (Acts 11:14). The only command he was given to obey was, "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

The only requirement, therefore, made of Cornelius and his house, in order to be saved, was to be baptized into Jesus Christ. This does not mean that man is saved by baptism alone. It is very evident that they were penitent believers and as believers were baptized into Christ. No doubt, there are many honest, sincere, and even devotedly religious people today who need to obey the Lord by being baptized into Christ in order to be saved, as was the case of Cornelius.

One does not need to feel a consciousness of being the greatest sinner in the world to be conscious of his need of salvation. Every man should look into the mirror of God's word and try to see himself as he is, good or bad, religious, or irreligious, and resolve to obey the commands of the Lord, as they apply to him, even if he need only to be baptized into Christ.

Disobedience to this command of the Lord, even though one might be devotedly religious, may cause his soul to be lost. Cornelius was lost until he was told by the apostle "words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved," which were, "be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 11:14; Acts 10:47-48). The Holy Spirit had a part in the conversion of Cornelius, but it was through the Spirit filled "words" spoken by the apostle. He was not converted by the direct power of the Holy Spirit, independent of the word of God.

HOLY SPIRIT AND CONVERSION OF CORINTHIANS The brief record of the conversion of the Corinthians is recorded in Acts 18:8-11. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Paul continued to preach the gospel in the city two years.

Crispus and other Corinthians, who were converted, heard the gospel, believed and were baptized. Crispus was baptized by Paul, 1 Corinthians 1:14, as Christ commanded in the great commission (Mark 16:15-16).

They were begotten by the Spirit through the gospel preached by Paul. "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15). This is in harmony with the inspired declaration of the apostle Peter when he declared that one is begotten again of incorruptible seed, the word of God (1 Peter 1:22-23).

The Holy Spirit gives the regenerating and life reproductive power to the seed, the word, the gospel, the truth. Paul emphasized that the gospel he proclaimed was in-spired and directed by the Holy Spirit. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

The Holy Spirit operated on the hearts of the Corinthians as they heard the gospel, believed the gospel, and obeyed the gospel; as in every case of conversion in the New Testament. There is no divine record indicating that the Holy Spirit ever converted any soul by some direct manifestations of power upon the sinner!

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Did the Holy Spirit bring message of salvation directly to Saul, or instruct preacher to tell him what to do to be saved?
2. Was Saul saved on the Damascus road?
3. What was Saul told to do to be saved?
4. How did the Holy Spirit convert Saul?
5. Was the Ethiopian officer converted by the Holy Spirit? Directly from Heaven? How?
6. Why didn't Holy Spirit tell the Ethiopian what to do to be saved instead of instructing Philip?
7. Did the Holy Spirit save Cornelius directly from heaven?
8. Why was Peter sent to Cornelius?
9. What did Cornelius do to be saved?
10. Were the Corinthians saved by direct powers of the Holy Spirit?

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

My friends, many honest and sincere people are confused about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So confused are many people that when the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit, they think only of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; or, when the Bible speaks of baptism some think only of the Holy Spirit baptism. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? A few important questions will enable us to better understand this subject.

1. Who was the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism?
2. To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised?
3. Who were baptized with the Holy Spirit?
4. Why were they baptized with the Holy Spirit?
5. May we expect the baptism of the Holy Spirit today?

Christ, Administrator of Holy Spirit Baptism The Holy Spirit was never given as a command to be administered by man, neither to be obeyed by man. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise to be received by certain men chosen for a certain purpose. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was immediate and direct from God, bearing directly upon the spirit of man, resulting in the human mind being completely subject to the dictates of the Divine Mind in revealing all truth. In the beginning, the Holy Spirit was an agent of the Father and Son, depending upon them for right of action.

In regards to the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, the Bible most emphatically declares that Christ, the Son, was the administrator. John, the immerser, said: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

Christ, not man, therefore, was the administrator of baptism of the Holy Spirit. John, the Baptist, could and did baptize in water; but Christ, and only Christ, could baptize with the Holy Spirit. It was Christ, the Son, in his farewell message to his apostles, who commanded them to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Luke reveals that Christ commanded the apostles to tarry in the city until they were clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

From John's prophecy we observe his specific prediction as to the identity of the administrator of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; that being Christ himself. John spoke to a mixed audience, including disciples and sinners, the wheat and chaff, therefore, he not only spoke of the baptism of the Holy Spirit but he spoke of the baptism of fire, which I shall discuss later. One fundamental thing should be understood now, however John did not mean to include all disciples, with reference to being

baptized in the Holy Spirit; neither did he mean that all of the multitude, which heard him, would receive the baptism of fire. He simply made a prophetic declaration, regarding these matters, to the multitude that heard him.

1. Who?--The Apostles! The logical question now in order is, who was baptized with the Holy Spirit? There can be no doubt about the identity of those who were promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This promise was made to the apostles. The very nature of the baptism of the Holy Spirit will bear evidence of this fact.

The apostles were chosen ambassadors of Christ, to be guided by the Holy Spirit, revealing to them all truth (2 Corinthians 5:18-20; John 16:13). In order for them to reveal all truth, and nothing but the truth, there was the necessity of complete possession of their speech and their writings, being completely endued by the Holy Spirit, or baptized with the Holy Spirit. God entrusted these men, the apostles, with the mysteries of the gospel and kingdom of God, baptizing them with the Holy Spirit, having ordained them unto this great mission. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16).

Promise Limited

Jesus himself did not promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit to all the world; neither did he promise it to all his disciples, but only to his apostles. In giving His commission to them He said, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

Just before Christ ascended to the Father, He referred to the very prophecy of John and applied it to His apostles. Hear him: "And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5).

To be more specific, as to the identity of those who should receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we need only to read Acts 1:2, where the identity is definitely narrowed to the apostles: "...he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." Notice: He "gave commandment unto the apostles," the record reveals.

Not Many Days Hence

Another fact, indicating that all disciples for all time to come would not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, was the setting of the time when the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be received: "Not many days hence," Jesus said. "Not many days hence," my friends, does not mean 1900 years hence. The days of the fulfillment are fully stated in the Bible. We need only to read the remaining part of the first chapter and the second chapter of Acts to learn that "not many days hence" was the first Pentecost, as already pointed out from the scriptures, after the Lord's resurrection from the dead.

Not 120 Disciples

It is believed by many religious leaders that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon the one hundred and twenty disciples gathered in Jerusalem, but a careful and honest analysis of the scriptures will refute this false conclusion.

In the first place, the promise of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit was never made to anyone, except to the apostles. It is true that John, the Baptist, did not specify all who were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He did say that some, whom he had baptized in water, would be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but He made it known that he could not administer Holy Spirit baptism. Christ only could baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). We need only to consult the scripture further to identify those who were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This promise was only to the apostles. They did receive the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit.

Before Christ left the earth, He told the apostles He would send them the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance the things He had taught them and to guide them into all truth (John 14:26; John 16:26; John 16:7-15). To know the identity of those who did receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we need only to read the account of its administration. The record is found in Acts, beginning with verse 1, chapter 1. Hear it! Are you listening?

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, " (Now notice: with whom? "With them," the apostles) "commanded them" (charged whom? He charged "them," the apostles) "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye . . ." (but, "ye" . . . whom? we ask. The apostles, unquestionably!) "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they," ("they," whom? The apostles!) "They therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye" ("ye," whom? we ask. The apostles, of course) "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:1-8).

After this specific promise of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, Christ ascended to the Father in heaven.

Now, as absolute evidence that the Lord fulfilled this promise of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, we read the account of the administration of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Beginning with the last verse of Acts, 1st chapter, and continuing through Acts 2:4, we read:

"And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they" (May we pause and emphasize the question, who were "they"? Who is the antecedent of "they" in this verse? There is but one answer; the apostles!) "They" (the apostles) were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as fire, and it sat upon

each of them. And they" (Again we pause and in-quire, who were "they"? The antecedent of they can only be the apostles) "they," (the apostles), "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 1:26; Acts 2:1-4). Surely, the identity of the apostles in this text can not be mistaken!

Ladies and gentlemen, there can be no doubt about it! The apostles only were they who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on this day, the first Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection from the dead. They waited in Jerusalem, as they were commanded, until Jesus fulfilled his promise to them, by baptizing them in the Holy Spirit.

Multitude, 120 Not Present The multitude, including the 120 disciples, was not even present when the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. In verse 6 of Acts 2, it is revealed: "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them" (and again I emphasize "them," the apostles) "speak in his own language." As evidence that the multitude did include the 120 disciples, we need only to read Acts 1:15. The revised version definitely states, "the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty." Of the multitude it was said, "and they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in his own language wherein we were born?"

My friends, don't you know that such questions as those of Acts 1:15 would not have been asked of the 120? Were the 120 all Galileans? Why was the multitude amazed? Obviously, because they were listening to twelve men, who were baptized with the Holy Spirit, speak God's word which was heard and understood in at least sixteen languages of different nations. The multitude "came together" and were amazed as they listened!

Carrying out this divine purpose, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the record reveals: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven," (May I pause and ask, standing up with whom? Does the Bible say, "But Peter standing up with the 120"? No, my friends, the 120 did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the apostles, for it was not God's purpose that they should receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit! This is what the word of God says: Hear it! Are you listening? "But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth unto them" (Acts 2:14). Peter stood up with the other apostles who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You do understand that, don't you!

Fulfillment of Prophecy

Having been accused of being drunk, because the multitude did not understand the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the apostle answered the critics by quoting the prophecy of Joel to confirm the fact that they were endued with the Holy Spirit.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-21).

The apostle said: "This is that which hath been spoken through the Prophet Joel." He plainly says, "this is that. . ." "These are not drunken . . . but this is that which hath been spoken through the

Prophet Joel." Some men claim the same baptism of the Holy Spirit is being administered on men and women today. They have misunderstood the prophecy of Joel and do not get the full import of Peter's application of the prophecy.

There is no baptism of the Holy Spirit administered to-day. Peter concluded that the "last days" are here; the last dispensation, that of Christ and divine revelation. The gospel is now to be proclaimed to all men of all nations, by those whom God hath ordained as His ambassadors.

Objection: "All Flesh" But an objection is raised, declaring, "Did not Joel say, 'I will pour forth of my Spirit on all flesh' meaning all men and women of the earth?" The prophet did say, "I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh," but surely we must understand the meaning of "all flesh."

In the first place, "all flesh" could not literally mean all flesh. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says, "All flesh is not the same flesh but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes" (1 Corinthians 15:39). Surely, we would agree the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not promised to the animals. But, someone suggests, "all flesh" means all "human flesh." That, my friend, is no better; for "all human flesh" would include the drunkard, the fornicator, the reprobate and all sinners. Surely, no responsible person would advocate the theory, that all human beings are to receive the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. Then the statement, "all flesh," must have a definite application, its meaning being that all races, both Jew and Gentile.

When Joel made the prophecy, the Jew and Gentile were separate peoples. The Gentiles were separate from the covenant of promise. Paul wrote, "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Even the Old Law, which was to be abolished, was a barrier between Jew and Gentile. Hear the apostle! Are you listening? "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:14-18).

Also, the inspired apostle wrote, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:13-15).

All Flesh Not All Jews And Gentiles

We are not to conclude, however, that "all flesh" means all Jews and Gentiles. As already pointed out, that would include all sinners. There can be but one answer; that is, the promise was given to representatives of both Jews and Gentiles.

The prophecy of Joel was the promise of the miraculous out-pouring, or gift, of the Holy Spirit upon "all flesh," representatives of both Jews and Gentiles.

The baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit was administered to the Jews, as we have discussed from the second chapter of Acts, on the day of Pentecost, while the special miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit was administered to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-47). "All flesh" therefore has received the miraculous administration of the Holy Spirit.

One Baptism Water Baptism The Holy Spirit, having been sent to this world the gos-pel of Christ, which was confirmed by the mighty works of the Spirit, will abide perpetually in that same gospel, which was proclaimed on Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius, to save the world.

Today, there is only one baptism. Hear the Spirit, through the apostle! "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Language could not be plainer. One baptism! The same Spirit, in the same book, chapter and verse, who said there is one Lord, declared there is one baptism! That one baptism is water baptism. Jesus said, "Go ye, there-fore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). According to Mark, He said, ". . . Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). Peter commanded, ". . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Saul was commanded, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Later, Paul wrote, by the Spirit, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

Peter, by the Spirit, wrote, ". . . Wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure where-unto even baptism doth also now save us . . ." (1 Peter 3:20-21). Jesus declared, ". . . Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Philip preached the gospel to the man of Ethiopia, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).

"One baptism;" WATER BAPTISM! Surely, there can be no doubt of it. There is "one baptism" today (Ephesians 4:5), and that is water baptism.

Holy Spirit baptism is one, water baptism is one, and the baptism of fire is one. One plus one, plus one, equals three. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is in the past, Christ having fulfilled his promise to the apostles. The baptism of fire is yet future, baptism of fire in hell for the unsaved (Matthew 3:11-12). Three minus two equals one, therefore, "one baptism," water baptism. There were two,

the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of water (Acts 2:2-8; Acts 2:38; Acts 2:41), but today there is "one"!

There can be no denial of the fact that the inspired apostle declared that there is "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Ob-serve the key word, "is," in the text. It is present tense. Today, now and until Christ comes, since the day of Pentecost, including the day Paul wrote those words to the church at Ephesus, there is "one baptism;" baptism in water, "for remission of sins," to "wash away thy sins ," which puts a believer into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4).

Baptism of Fire The baptism of fire was promised in Matthew 3:11-12, with Christ as the administrator; with hell fire the element and future punishment as its purpose. Verse 1.2 of this text leaves us no doubt that the baptism with fire will occur when the righteous are separated from the unrighteous. In Palestine the Jews often used a fan in separating the chaff from the wheat. But when Christ comes again "he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

I have heard honest people pray for the baptism of fire, but, my friends, you don't want the baptism of fire! It is yet future and will be punishment of the wicked in hell. When our Lord comes he will thoroughly purge by separating the wheat from the chaff and he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire!

The baptism of fire will be administered by the Lord when he comes again. The wicked, ungodly, and disobedient will be banished from the presence of the Lord, baptized in fire, to be punished throughout eternity.

Jesus, himself, declared: "So shall it be at the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:49-50).

We plead with all eternity bound souls to so live and die that you may avoid the baptism of fire! Obey the gospel revealed in the New Testament, proclaimed by men who were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Be baptized into Christ; be born again, and live a faithful consecrated, Christian life that it may be well with your soul!

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised?

2. Who was administrator of Holy Spirit baptism?
3. For what purpose was the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
4. When was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered?
5. Who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
6. What was the meaning of "speaking in tongues"?
7. What is the meaning of "all flesh"?
8. Have both Jews and Gentiles received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit?

Gifts of The Holy Spirit

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ladies and gentlemen, what are the gifts of the Spirit and for what purpose did the gifts of the Spirit serve? Were all Christians in New Testament times endued with special gifts? These are important questions.

We have already learned that the kingdom of Christ was inaugurated with distinctive gifts of the Holy Spirit, in a baptismal measure, which enabled the Apostles, under complete, divine domination, through revelation, to proclaim the gospel of Christ, offering remission of sins in the name of Christ. The beginning of the kingdom was a great and notable miracle with physical manifestation, signs and tongues, enabling the apostles to attract the attention of the multitudes and speak, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God's word of salvation without fault. This power, the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, with miraculous gifts, came directly from heaven without human aid as a fulfillment of Christ's promise to His apostles.

For purpose of distinction, we may refer to these gifts as primary gifts to the apostles. As already pointed out, the apostles were the only ones who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, for enduement, enlightenment, and inspiration. The Gentiles received a miraculous "gift of the Holy Spirit," at the house of Cornelius, to prove to the Jews that the "middle wall of partition" had been removed between Jews and Gentiles and the gospel was to be preached to all the world, to both Jews and Gentiles!

In addition to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, which were performed only by the apostles, there were miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit conferred upon other Christians through the laying on of the hands of the apostles. The apostles only possessed the rare gift of transferring miraculous gifts to others, but they could not confer the power to pass these gifts from the first person to second persons. These special gifts were not imposed beyond the first receiver. We shall discuss these matters in more detail later.

Why Gifts of The Spirit The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit has already been discussed, but some added remarks are in order. Christ, God's Son, had already been rejected. "He came unto his own and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

He was obscure and so poor that he had "not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). Even his birthday was forgotten, if it was ever remembered. Yet, he came to establish a world-empire, the kingdom of love. He had no wealth, no position of power, and His teaching was so deep and spiritual that few understood its meaning. Therefore, the great miracles, gifts of the Spirit, were to attract attention to the fact that He was the Son of God, to the words of His Father's will, and to confirm the word as God's will.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God . . ."

(John 20:30, 31).

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

". . . Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Hebrews 2:2-4).

The apostles, His chosen ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), like the Lord, from the world's viewpoint, were unlearned, humble, obscure and without influence to be heard. There was, therefore, the need for visible signs and miraculous acts to demand the attention of the people, to prepare the soil for the planting of the seed of the kingdom. These facts, of course, were secondary to the primary purpose of sending the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, which was to divinely guide them in the proclamation and declaration of the gospel.

Jesus came from God with the message of salvation. He passed it down to the apostles, revealing to them, by revelation of the Holy Spirit, the eternal truth of God which was to be to every creature in all the world. This message from God, His Son, and the Spirit, once planted in the hearts of men, with mature fruits, would ever be an abiding power for the salvation of man's soul. That word has been confirmed by the mighty wonders and gifts of the spirit, written and preserved in the New Testament, the word of God.

When men erect a great building they put up the scaffolding. But when the building is finished and it can stand alone, the scaffolding is removed. The great signs, miracles, and gifts of the spirit, revealed in the New Testament, constitute the scaffolding for the truth and the church in its infancy. Now that it is finished, there is no longer need for the scaffolding.

Gifts of The Spirit By Imposition of Apostles' Hands The gifts of the Spirit, by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, were indirect, miraculous gifts peculiar to the apostolic age. No one could impart miraculous gifts of the Spirit to others, except the apostles. As evidence of this fact let us first consider the ministry of Stephen and Philip.

According to Acts 6:2-6, "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom , whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

Had Holy Spirit Before Laying on Hands

We have no further reference to the works of all these men, but we do know something about the works of Stephen and Philip. It should be observed that these men had the Holy Spirit before the laying on of hands of the apostles. One of their qualifications was to be "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." These men had obeyed the gospel and thus had received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 5:32 it is affirmed that God gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey him: "And we are witnesses of these

things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." The Holy Spirit dwells in all God's children (1 Corinthians 3:16), but all of God's children do not have miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Peter commanded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The "gift of the Holy Spirit" does not mean miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

For one, other than the apostles, to perform miraculous gifts of the spirit, it was necessary for the apostles to lay hands on him. The apostles laid their hands on Stephen and Philip, along with the other chosen five. Of Stephen it was said, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). He eloquently preached the word and did great works for the Lord. "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10), therefore, they stoned him to death.

Philip, on whom the apostles had laid their hands, be-came the first evangelist and a great preacher who worked for the Lord. He "went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5-8).

Not Part of Conversion

There were signs that "followed" the preaching of the word by those men with gifts of the Spirit. Jesus said it would be so (Mark 16:17; Mark 16:20). However, it was the preaching of the gospel, and not the signs, or miraculous works of the Spirit, that converted the people. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). That is what Jesus commanded when he gave the great commission saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16). Philip preached that gospel. The people heard, believed and obeyed the gospel. They were baptized into Christ as a result of the preaching of the gospel by Philip. The miracles and wonders he performed caused the people to give "heed to the things which Philip spake," but they were converted by the power of the gospel and not by the power of the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit only commanded attention to the gospel which he preached.

Philip Could Not Transfer Power The apostolic hand had been laid on Philip, which enabled him to do the "signs and great miracles," but he could not transfer that power to another person. Only the apostles had this particular power. A person, on whom the apostles had laid hands and conferred the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, could perform the mighty works of the Spirit, but that person could not in turn lay his hand on another person and confer the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Only the apostles could impart spiritual gifts.

Laying on Apostles' Hands When Peter and John, apostles of Christ in Jerusalem, heard that the Samaritans had received the word of the Lord they went to Samaria and conferred on the baptized believers the miraculous gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. This is the divine record: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down prayed for them, that

they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17).

Simon evidently recognized that it was through the lay-ing on of the hands of the apostles that miraculous powers were imposed upon the Samaritans (Acts 8:18). He "saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given" and he offered the apostles money to purchase that power. Peter informed him that this "gift of God" could not be purchased. Furthermore, he declared, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter" (verses 20, 21).

From this text we are forced to the conclusion that the "gift of God," obviously, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit , were received only by the early Christians through laying on of the apostles' hands.

Another example of the laying on of the apostles' hands is found in Acts 19:1-6. At Ephesus Paul "laid his hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied." The Ephesians spoke in tongues and prophesied only after they had received the Holy Spirit through the laying of the apostle Paul's hands. There can be no doubt about the necessity of the imposition

of the apostles' hands before the Christians of New Testament times could speak in tongues, prophesy, and do miraculous works. It is, therefore, false to presume that men to-day can speak in tongues, prophesy, and perform miracles since there are no apostles on earth with power to confer such miraculous gifts through the laying on of hands. When the last apostle died, therefore, the laying on of hands, imparting miraculous works of the Spirit, ceased!

Miraculous Gifts Corinthian Church The church at Corinth was characterized by a diversity of apostolic gifts. These gifts are referred to in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of 1 Corinthians. Verses 1 through 11 of the 12th chapter specifically reveal the character of these gifts.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Where-fore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

From the study of Paul's dissertation on spiritual gifts we learn much about the nature, the distribution, and object of the miraculous gifts in the early church. It seems that the gifts were so numerous in the Corinthian church that it was necessary for the inspired apostle to regulate the use of them (1 Corinthians 12 th and 14th chapters).

The objectives of the spiritual gifts are obviously stated. The different types of gifts, the distribution and value of them are unquestionably stated. The duration of the spiritual gifts is not left without attention.

It will be observed that all the gifts were not given to all the believers (verses 18-30). All believers did not receive the same gifts. Some of the gifts, evidently were more important than others. Included in the catalogue of gifts were the "gifts of healing," gifts of "miracles," gifts of "tongues," and gift of "knowledge." All these gifts were important in their time, but the apostle concludes, in verse 31, there is "a more excellent way."

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What was the purpose of gifts of the Holy Spirit?

2. What was source of power for miraculous gifts of the Spirit?

3. Who was able to impart power of miraculous gifts?

4. Did all believers receive gifts of the Holy Spirit?

5. Were miraculous gifts a part of conversion?

6. Did those who received miraculous gifts of the Spirit already possess the Holy Spirit?

Gifts of The Holy Spirit and Cornelius

GIFTS OF HOLY SPIRIT AND CORNELIUS

Several years after the apostles had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2), Cornelius, a Gen-tile, received a miraculous "gift of the Holy Spirit." The divine record is found in Acts, Chapters 10 and 11. Cornelius, a good, devoutly religious man, but not a Christian, was told to send to Joppa and get Peter, who was an apostle and a Jew, who would tell him, "words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thy and thy house."

In the process of time, God performed a miracle before Peter's eyes, convincing him that he should call no man "common or unclean," preparing him (a Jew) to preach the gospel to a Gentile. Peter knew that Gentiles were looked upon with disfavor by the Jews, and, no doubt, realizing he would have to give an account of his actions, he carried along with him six Jewish brethren. This fact, itself, is important to an understanding of the reason for the special administration of the gift of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius.

Gentiles Receive Holy Spirit

Peter, the apostle, proclaimed the gospel of Christ to Cornelius, having introduced his sermon by stating, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

What a glorious thought! The gospel is for all. He is Lord of all! The Gentiles are now to become Christians, beginning with Cornelius. But, my friends, be not misled by any theory of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes it applicable to Cornelius and all other people of the world, so much that it is essential to salvation. Cornelius, a Gen-tile, like the Jews on Pentecost, had to hear, believe, and obey the gospel in order to be saved. Remember, he was told to send and get Peter, "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). This special gift of the Holy Spirit had nothing directly to do with his salvation. Yes, it was a miracle, like the miracle on Pentecost, when the 3, 000 were saved, but this special administration of the Holy Spirit had nothing directly to do with the conversion of the converts.

On Pentecost the purpose of the miraculous administration of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles in the revelation of the gospel, as already pointed out. At the house of Cornelius, the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit was evident in two ways. First, the Holy Spirit directed Peter, without prejudice, to preach the gos-pel to the people of another nation, to "make known among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," to prove to the Jews that the Gentiles were a part of "every creature," a part of "all flesh," who should obey the gospel of Christ and be saved. Secondly, the miraculous "gift of the Holy Spirit" was poured out on Cornelius, a Gentile, to convince the Jews that salvation in Christ was also granted unto the Gentiles.

When Peter related these facts to his Jewish brethren, they were accepted as God-given and all criticisms were silenced. "When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God,

saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Poured Out Gift of Holy Spirit In Acts 10:44-48 it is recorded that, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which be-lieved were astonished, as many as came with Peter, be-cause that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In this text it should be observed that the divine record reveals "that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." Later, when the apostle Peter reported the matter, Acts 11:15, he said, "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning."

Not Baptism of Holy Spirit For Cornelius As we study this text, with reference to the miraculous appearance of the Holy Spirit, we must observe the statement of Peter when he said, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11:16).

Our first thought might be that Peter was concluding that Cornelius had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles. But, let us look at his statement more carefully and in view of other related references to the matter.

Peter reported that he remembered the miraculous out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit "fell on them," that is, Cornelius and his household. This miraculous incident carried Peter back to that eventful day when they, the apostles, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as had been promised by Christ, and 3,000 believers were baptized in water for the remission of sins and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This "like gift" came upon the Gentiles that believed in a miraculous way, but it was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, like the apostles received, neither was it for the same purpose. This was a miraculous administration of the Holy Spirit, not merely the Holy Spirit as a gift, which all believers receive when they obey the gospel.

Cornelius received this special "gift of the Holy Spirit" before Peter had finished speaking the word of the Lord; before he was commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. This was a miraculous incident which reminded the apostle of the miraculous incident they experienced on Pentecost at the beginning.

Like Gift The "like gift" the apostle refers to, no doubt, was the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues. In Acts 10:44-46 it is revealed that the Jews who came with Peter were astonished "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." There seems to have been different members of the early church with the gift of speaking in tongues, but it also seems evident that all speaking in tongues was not by the same measure of the spirit and not for the same purpose.

Purpose

Surely there can be no doubt about the purpose of this miraculous administration of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was to convince the Jews that God had "also to the Gen-tiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). The convincing evidence, resulting from the "gift of the Holy Spirit" upon the Gentiles, that brought this conviction to Peter and his Jewish brethren, even so much as to

astonish them, was the fact that "they heard them speak with tongues" (Acts 10:45-46).

Baptism of Spirit, Not "Tongues" Only The object of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which the apostles received, was more than the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues. It was to guide the apostles in revealing all truth (John 14:25-26; John 16:13). The baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was promised to the apostles (Acts 1:2; Acts 1:4-5), enabled them to be divine "witnesses" for Christ "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to speak with "tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" and "every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:4; Acts 2:6). There can be no doubt that this was divine revelation!

Furthermore, the apostles who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, could impart the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit to other Christians by the laying on of hands. It was necessary for the apostles, Peter and John, to go to Samaria and lay hands on the disciples to confer the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17). No one else had the power to confer this miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. There certainly is no evidence that Cornelius had the power to confer the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Neither is there evidence that he could pro-claim the gospel in its fullness, divinely guided by the Holy Spirit, by speaking in tongues so that men could hear and understand in different languages, as did the apostles. The reason: he did not receive the same baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles.

Cornelius Not Promised Baptism of Holy Spirit In the first place Cornelius was not among those who had been promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the next place he was at the wrong place, Caesarea, and not the right place, Jerusalem, which the Lord designated as the place where His promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit would be administered. Furthermore, Cornelius was not included among those who were told to wait for this power by which they would be clothed (Holy Spirit baptism), to be received "not many days hence," all of which would enable them to witness for the Lord and confirm the word by miraculous works by the power of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. Surely, there can be no doubt that there were miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit in New Testament times, in addition to the gift of the Holy Spirit received by all who obeyed the gospel. According to Acts 6:2-8, Stephen and Philip received the miraculous gift of the Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands, which enabled them to perform miracles. But, it must be observed that they had already received the Holy Spirit as a gift. One qualification for service, before the laying on of the apostles' hands, was "...brethren . of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom ."

Later we find Philip, a man "full of the Holy Spirit ," who had also received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of hands of the apostles, preaching at Samaria and performing miraculous works. Multitudes, attracted by "the signs which he did," heard the word and obeyed the gospel. Although he had the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to perform miracles, he was not an apostle and could not confer that special gift to others. It was necessary for the apostles, Peter and John, to come to Samaria and confer the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit upon the Samaritans through the laying on of their hands (Acts 8:4-17).

My friends, there can be no doubt about it. There was a definite distinction in the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit received by the apostles, in a baptismal measure, and the power of the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit received through the imposition of the apostles' hands. Both Cornelius of Caesarea and the Samaritans received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. The difference was: the "gift of the Holy Spirit" came miraculously and directly from heaven upon Cornelius and his house; whereas, the miraculous power of the Spirit was received by the Samaritans through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

Cornelius did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit neither did, the Samaritans. They received a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. In the case of Cornelius, this miraculous power included the gift of speaking in tongues which served the purpose God intended, which was to convince the Jews that: no man is "common and unclean;" that God is no respecter of persons; that the Gentiles were to become citizens of the Lord's kingdom.

If Cornelius should have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles, then he should have been able to speak by divine revelation, and he should have been able to impart the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying of hands. According to the Bible, only the apostles had such power of the Holy Spirit! We must conclude that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" upon the Gentiles, of Acts 10 th and 11th chapters, was a miraculous demonstration directly from heaven, which, in particular, enabled them to speak in tongues and it fulfilled its purpose in that it convinced the Jews that the Gentiles were subjects of the gospel. The "gift of the Holy Spirit" to the Samaritans of Acts 8 th chapter was also miraculous, but through the imposition of hands of the apostles. Neither Cornelius, nor the Samaritans received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles. Furthermore, it must be concluded that basically the purpose of the miraculous administration of the Holy Spirit in each case was not the same, but each purpose was divinely performed and fulfilled. Later, we shall consider in more detail the purposes of "speaking in tongues."

From all the evidence we have considered we would therefore, conclude that Peter's statement, that he remembered the word of the Lord, referred to the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles. The "ye" in the Lord's promise referred to the apostles and not Cornelius.

Ladies and gentlemen, it had been some ten or fifteen years since Peter and the other apostles had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost; yet, he goes back to that time of the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit when he makes reference to any other occasion of such miraculous administration of the Holy Spirit. If anyone else had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit previously, why did not Peter say, "Can any man forbid water that they should not be baptized, which have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as those two weeks ago , a year ago, or 5 years ago, at different places?"

My friends, Peter went back some ten or fifteen years in the past to the occasion of the apostles' Holy Spirit baptism, because there had been none other since that time. Ladies and gentlemen, hear it! Are you listening? There is no record of any Holy Spirit baptism since the record of Acts, chapter 2. Today there is only "one baptism". One thing is most peculiar! All religious groups who make claim to baptism of Holy Spirit today also practice some form of water baptism. One thing is certain: that is, Holy Spirit baptism is one and water baptism is one. One plus one equals two; therefore, two baptisms! But Paul says there is "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Don't you know

that Paul is right?

The overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit, the mighty miracle, had come to the Gentiles, as on the Jews, the apostles, "at the beginning"; not for the same purpose, but a miraculous measure of the same Spirit. The Jewish brethren with Peter were witnesses. The Gentiles are now to be recipients of the glorious, new-born gospel of salvation. The Jews are convinced. Peter would not be disgraced by preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, or by eating with them. The dawn of a new day had come, breaking the long night of heathen darkness! Gentiles are now a part of the body of Christ. "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6).

Spirit Directed Gospel

Peter, beginning with John's ministry, and reviewing the ministry of Christ, boldly proclaimed the doctrine of the resurrection and the hope of salvation. He preached the gospel of Christ, including the Lord's conditions of the gospel of salvation, given in the great commission. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16). We know Peter preached the gospel for he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be bap-tized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?. ...And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:47-48). Now, all men are sub-jects of the gospel. Being convinced that the Gentiles were subjects of the gospel of Christ, Peter commanded water baptism in the name of, by the authority of, Christ. How like the 3,000 on Pentecost. They were told, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). One Lord, one Savior, one gospel, one way of salvation for all men!

Miraculous Measure of Holy Spirit No More The day of Pentecost, the beginning of the gospel dispensation, the inauguration of the kingdom among the Jews, with the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, has never been and never will be duplicated again. The miraculous administration of the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius and the inauguration of the Kingdom among the Gentiles has never been and will never be duplicated! The baptism of the Holy Spirit, having endued the apostles with all truth and having borne public testimony that the gospel is for "all nations," "every creature," "all flesh," there is no longer need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom of God and its mission in the world. The miraculous administrations of the Holy Spirit has never occurred since those of New Testament times, and will never happen again.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. Did Cornelius receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit , or the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit?

2. What was the purpose of the gift of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius?

3. What was the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on Pentecost?

4. To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised?

5. What was the difference in the baptism of the Holy Spirit of Acts 2 nd chapter and the gift of the Holy Spirit of Acts 10 th chapter?

6. Was the gift of the Holy Spirit a condition of the salvation of Cornelius?

7. What did Peter command Cornelius do to be saved?

8. If Cornelius received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," as did the apostles, should he not have been able to speak by inspiration as did the apostles?

Miracles and Healing by Power of Holy Spirit - No. 1

MIRACLES AND HEALING BY POWER OF HOLY SPIRIT NO. 1

Friends, our subject for discussion is: "Miracles and Healings by Power of the Holy Spirit." What is a miracle? Are miracles and divine healings possible today? These are questions worthy of consideration.

Someone has defined a miracle as "something contrary to the laws of nature," but this definition is incorrect. Rather, a miracle is something above the laws of nature; something that laws of nature could not do in its ordinary course and operations. To illustrate: no law of nature ever brought Adam and Eve forth in this world at maturity and without parents. In other words, nature never produced life without parents.

It is not a miracle for an oak tree to produce an acorn, nor for the acorn to produce the oak, but it is a miracle to produce an oak tree without an acorn, or an acorn without the oak tree. The first tree, or the first acorn, was a miracle. The first man and woman were a miracle. In fact ladies and gentlemen, everything; every specie of life, animal, insect, and vegetable began by miracle. The beginning was a miracle!

What is a miracle? It is that which is above the laws of nature! Something beyond the finite mind and ability of man. No law of nature ever raised a person from the dead. A miracle has done so! No law of nature ever gave immediate hearing to the totally deaf, sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, nor legs to the lame! Miracles have done so! My friends, no law of nature can multiply "five loaves and two small fishes" sufficiently to feed five thousand persons and have "twelve baskets full of fragments" left over! No law nor circumstance, without divine interposition, could enable men to speak in some fifteen or seventeen languages which they had never studied or learned. A miracle evidently is above all human concept, law, and regulation. It is divine!

Pretentious Miracles

There may be pretenders to perform miracles who may sometimes seem to succeed in their deceptive pretensions. Pretenders fail, but miracles never fail! An example of ancient pretenders of miracles may be found in Daniel, the second chapter. Old Nebuchadnezzar demanded of his "would-be" miracle performers, or magicians, to tell his dream that he had forgotten and give the interpretation of it. Realizing that this was beyond their power they cunningly replied, "Let the king tell his dream, and we will show the interpretation of it." But the king insisted, saying, "Tell me the dream and I shall know that you can show me the interpretation." Then, acknowledging complete failure, these deceitful workers replied, "there is not a man in the earth that can show the king's matter." King Nebuchadnezzar was wroth and displeased with their lying pretenses, and declared, "There is but one decree for you, make known to me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, or ye shall be cut to pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill!"

To expose the deceitful work of these "would be" miracle performers, God sent Daniel, the prophet of God, to the king and made known to him his dream and the interpretation of it. I tell you, my friends, God has a way to expose the false claims of pretenders.

Is it possible for man to perform miracles and divine healings today, as in Bible times? By miracles, and divine healings, we mean those as revealed and manifested in the word of God, such as taking up serpents and not being harmed, drinking deadly poison without injury, raising the dead, and healing the sick. These are miracles indeed; a power above the laws of nature.

According to Mark 16:17-18 these acts accompanied the works of the early disciples in the church. Christ sent the twelve to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, and cast out demons," as revealed in Matthew 10:8. Now, the question is, are these miracles, or any other miracles, performed today? Do men today have the power to perform such miracles?

Purpose of Miracles

First, let us observe the purpose or design of miracles and healings. That will help much to answer the question at hand.

The design and purpose of miracles was two-fold: namely, to confirm the word of God, and make men believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Hear the apostle in Hebrews 2:2-4 : "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

The great purpose of miracles was to establish the foundation truth of Christianity and salvation, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. In John 20:30-31 Jesus declared, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these 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."

Miracles and divine healings, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and performed by the apostles and disciples of Christ, were to convince the world that their message of salvation was from Christ, and that they were divinely chosen and sent by God. Miracles were their credentials! In Mark 2:2-12 we have the record of the paralytic. There were infidels present then, as there are infidels today. Some of them accused Him of blasphemy, but Jesus said, recorded in verse 10, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority (or power) on earth to forgive "sins.

Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was the Christ because of the miracles he did. In John 3:2 he said, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

The purpose of miracles performed in New Testament times was so different from the purpose of "pretenders" today. The main theme and plea of these modern miracle performers is healing of the sick and diseased bodies. The matter of physical healing is so important to them that they have little to say about Christ's gospel, which is the power of God to save the sin sick soul. I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, Jesus, nor His disciples, ever healed anyone of physical disease merely

for purpose of healing the body. As stated already, the purpose of miraculous healings was to make men believe that Jesus was the Son of God and to confirm the word spoken as His word. The sick were not healed just because they were sick. The sick who were miraculously healed, were not immune from sickness or disease again. The dead who were raised from the dead would die again!

Word Confirmed When the word was spoken by men of God, who were guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21, John 16:13), it was confirmed by the miracles and wonders that accompanied the preaching of the word. Once the word was confirmed as the word of God, it was forever and eternally confirmed as His word. There is no such thing as reconfirming the word of God. When the high court of our land confirms the decision of a lower court it is for all time confirmed. When the word of God was confirmed by signs, miracles and wonders it was confirmed, confirmed for eternity. It is absurd for poor, weak, and foolish men to presume to aid the infinite wisdom of God by presuming to perform miracles, assuming to re-confirm God's word, which has already been confirmed by God's chosen men who were guided by the Holy Spirit.

No Power For Miracles

Miracles and healings have ceased because the means of securing miraculous power to perform miracles have ceased. The New Testament reveals two means of bestowing miraculous power upon men chosen by God. One: the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Acts 2:43). Two: the laying on hands of the apostles. (Acts 8:14-40; Acts 19:1-7).

The Bible reveals only one recorded example of Holy Spirit baptism in New Testament times. According to Acts 2:4, the twelve apostles received it. In Acts 10:44 and Acts 11:18 it revealed that a special miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon Cornelius and his household. Of course the Apostle Paul, as a special chosen apostle, was endowed with the Holy Spirit and was divinely guided by the Spirit. (Galatians 1:11-12). This last occurrence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which we have a record of, was about the year of A. D. 33. Some twenty-three years later the apostle Peter wrote about water baptism which saves (1 Peter 3:20-21). The Holy Spirit, through Paul, declared there is "one baptism" now. Obviously, that is water baptism. We must, therefore, scripturally conclude that there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit now, as a source for miraculous works.

Oh, yes, I am quite aware that many today claim to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but you may be sure, my friends, no man or woman on earth today has ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If any man today ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he could do the miraculous works the apostles did and he could speak by inspiration as did the apostles. But that, no man can do! The very fact that men cannot perform the miraculous works done by the apostles is evidence of the fact that no man has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles. The very fact that no man today has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles, is evidence of that fact that man cannot perform miracles as did the apostles.

The Bible does teach that God's people receive the Holy Spirit, as a gift, when they obey the gospel, (Acts 5:32. and Acts 2:38), but not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some people, it seems, become confused every time they read anything in the Bible about the Holy Spirit. Every time the Holy Spirit is mentioned they think it means the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is a gross mistake!

There is only ONE baptism today (Ephesians 4:5). That is water baptism. Read Acts 8:35-39 1 Peter 3:20-21; Mark 16:15-16).

Power Through Laying On Of Hands The apostles were the only ones in the Jerusalem church who could work miracles until they imparted this power to others (Acts 2:43 and Acts 5:12). The seven deacons could perform miracles only after the apostles laid their hands upon them (Acts 6:6). Stephen could perform miracles (Acts 6:8). Philip could perform miracles (Acts 8:6), but not until after the laying on of the apostles' hands.

Although Philip could do miraculous work, he could not impart this power to others. He went to Samaria, preached the gospel and confirmed the word with miracles. Many believed and were baptized into Christ (Acts 8:12). It was necessary for Peter and John, apostles of Christ, to go from Jerusalem to Samaria and lay hands on the new converts and impart to them miraculous power of the Spirit to confirm the word by miracles (Acts 8:14-21).

Simon evidently recognized that it was through the laying on of hands of the apostles that miraculous powers were imposed upon others (Acts 8:18). He "saw that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Spirit was given" and he offered them money to purchase that power. Peter informed him that this "gift of God" could not be purchased. Furthermore, he declared, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter" (verses 20, 21). From this text we are forced to the conclusion that the "gift of God," obviously, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, was received only by the early Christians "through laying on of the apostles' hands."

Another example of the laying on of the apostles' hands is found in Acts 19:1-6. At Ephesus Paul "laid his hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied." The Ephesians spoke in tongues and prophesied only after they had received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostle Paul's hands. Also, there can be no doubt that Paul conferred this miraculous gift upon Timothy through the laying on of his hands (2 Timothy 1:6).

Ladies and gentlemen, hear it! Are you listening? . . . It is evident that only apostles could lay their hands on men and confer on them the power to do miraculous works. Like Philip, who was not an apostle, those who had the power to perform miracles, who were not apostles, could not bestow that power to someone else. The apostles have been dead more than nineteen hundred years now. The last persons upon whom the apostles laid their hands and conferred miraculous power have been dead now about nineteen hundred years. When the last apostle died and the last person upon whom the apostles laid their hands died, miracles ceased. Regardless of all the fantastic and ridiculous claims made by men and churches, there have been none since!

Use Limited

According to Acts 28:3; Acts 28:5; Acts 28:8-9 the apostle Paul had power to heal the sick and render harmless the bite of a poisonous serpent. Yet, he left his traveling companion, Trophimus, at Miletum sick (2 Timothy 4:20). The apostle had the power to heal, but he did not heal even his traveling companion, just because he was sick! He also had another traveling companion who was sick, Epaphroditus (Php 2:25-26). Timothy, Paul's son in the gospel, and a preacher of the gospel himself, was told by Paul to take some wine for his stomach's sake (1 Timothy 5:23). Miracles were not always performed by those who had the miraculous power to heal, as the practice of miraculous works were being terminated.

My friends, miracles and healings were never for the physical benefit of man, neither were they to show the faith of the person through whom the Spirit of God performed the miracle. Yes, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, and the poisonous bites from snakes were rendered harmless, but such were miracles and performed only by those whom God especially chose and appointed for that special purpose. There is not a man on earth today that has ever performed a miracle. There are quite a number, however, who are in their graves because they attempted to perform miracles by handling snakes and allowing them to bite them. Others have gone to their graves because they refused medical aid to help sustain health, according to the laws of nature! A number of times people, including some parents, have been carried into the civil courts of our land because they contributed to the death of innocent children by refusing them medical attention to help sustain health of body, according to the laws of nature. Surely, there can be no doubt about the honesty and sincerity of those mistaken parents. Some of them lost their children, whom they loved dearly, in death because of their misunderstanding of God's word!

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What is a miracle?

2. What was the purpose of miracles?
3. What was the source of power to perform miracles?
4. Were miracles performed for mere physical benefit of man?
5. Why should miracles not be performed today?
6. Who was able to impart miraculous power by laying on of hands?
7. Why could not all Christians impart miraculous power of the Holy Spirit?

Miracles and Healing by Power of Holy Spirit - No. 2

MIRACLES AND HEALING BY POWER OF HOLY SPIRIT NO. 2

Ladies and gentlemen, are miracles and healings by di-vine power, through the instrument of men, possible today? Surely there can be no doubt about the fact that great miracles were performed by men, who were endued with special miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit, in Bible times. Do men have this same power of the Holy Spirit today? I submit to you that if men have the same miraculous power of the Holy Spirit that the apostles and the early Christians had in New Testament times, then the same miracles may be performed today. If men today do not have the same miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, as those of Bible times, then miracles cannot be performed today. If the same miracles, through the instrument of men, are not being performed today then men do not possess the same miraculous power of the Holy Spirit as men of New Testament times!

Beloved, our Lord authorized his disciples to perform miracles during the period of infancy of New Testament Christianity, but, as I have pointed out in a former address , there was a two-fold purpose for such miraculous works; namely: to confirm the word of God and make men believe that Jesus was the Son of God (Hebrews 2:2-4; John 20:30-31).

I submit to you that today the scriptural need for miracles no longer exists, therefore, miracles are not performed by men today.

Christ Commanded Raise The Dead

Let us consider the command of our Lord when He authorized his disciples to perform the great and mighty works of God. Hear him in Matthew, chapter ten and verse eight. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

Ladies and gentlemen, if a person could perform one miracle he could perform any miracle, and there would be no special conditions, and there would be no failures! May I suggest this proposal. I will go with any person, who claims the power to perform miracles, to any grave yard and when he raises a person from the dead I will also raise one from the dead! Now is that unreasonable? You know why I made that suggestion? Because, ladies and gentle-men, we all know that no man on God's earth today has the miraculous power to raise the dead! But if any person had the power of the Holy Spirit to perform any miracle , such as healing one of an incurable disease, he could also raise the dead. In the same verse where Christ said "heal the sick," He also said "raise the dead." Read Matthew 10:8 very carefully.

O, my friends, do not be deceived! You may hear much talk about miracles and healings, but there are none today, and have been none since the apostolic age of miracles and healings revealed in the New Testament. Yes, you may hear about someone who was supposed to have been cured of some kind of ailment; or, some person may claim to have had some kind of revelation from the Spirit, but you can remember this; you won't see any glass eyes on display because the totally

blind received sight; you won't see any mechanical or wooden legs which have been replaced by the miraculous work of a healer; neither will you be able to find a coffin now empty because someone has been raised from the dead! If there were even one person who could heal the sick, or perform a miracle, he could do any of these miraculous works and he wouldn't fail. Never, never, does the divinity of God fail!

The Corpse Escaped

Incidentally, a group of fake healers were exposed in Washington several years ago. They executed a trick to raise the dead, but their trick backfired on them. An AP news report from Washington, date of August 4, 1951, stated: "The Corpse Escaped. It all happened in suburban Fairmount Heights, Md. A coffin was lowered into a grave after a tent meeting revivalist told how the 'doomed' man would be raised from the dead. As the earth was shoveled onto the coffin, somebody saw the 'corpse' crawl out of a tunnel just outside the tent. The 'corpse' escaped during the ensuing riot." Can you imagine such mockery and hypocrisy of men! One of the modern "healers" was caught in his trickery. He was bold enough to claim that he could raise one from the dead. Let me tell you, if this man, or any other person, could even heal a sore thumb, he could, by the same power, raise one from the dead! This man was bold enough to try to pull a "fake" resurrection of the dead. But his tricks failed him. He got caught up with when someone happened to see the man, whom he was going to raise from the dead, crawling out of a tunnel they had dug for the purpose of deceiving the public. You may be sure, ladies and gentlemen, this miracle was just as genuine as others you hear about today.

"Healer" Sends Injured To Hospital A few years ago a modern healer was conducting his "Healing Waters Revival" in Amarillo, Texas. The large tent seated hundreds of people who came to marvel at his miracles. Then a west Texas wind storm came along and dried up his "Healing Waters" campaign quickly. The tent was blown down and many people were hurt and treated at hospitals. An AP news release in the Fort Worth Star Telegram, Fort Worth, Texas, gave the following report of the incident.

Headline: "50 Hurt When Storm Fells Revival Tent."

Text: "A revival tent collapsed in a hail and rain storm here Sunday night, injuring at least 50 persons. At a late hour there were no reports of any dead or seriously injured among the nearly 7, 000 people in the audience of the Oral Roberts faith-healing service. "Witnesses said a gust of wind got under the tent during a heavy rain and hail storm, lifted the \$22, 000.00 tent and aluminum poles and then dropped them on the crowd. More than half of the congregation was buried in the shattered canvas.

"Most of those treated at local hospitals suffered cuts, bruises, and a few of the injured had broken bones. All available ambulances, doctors, and nurses were rushed to the scene."

The man who claimed the power from God to "heal" thousands, was not able to work even little miracles. The wind didn't obey his voice! He didn't heal the broken arms and cracked ribs! He couldn't even heal a little broken finger. He couldn't perform even just a "little miracle."

Why were the injured rushed to the hospitals? Why were the injured "treated" in local hospitals? Why were "all available ambulances, doctors, and nurses" rushed to the "Healing Waters" folded

tent? This "miracle healer" was performing before his audience of some 7, 000 people , claiming that great "miracles" and "healings" were being witnessed. This would have been a most opportune time to really prove the ability to perform miracles. The "healer" could have made many "believers" by just performing even a "little" miracle. But, my friends, this was the real thing; no fake about the broken limbs and crushed ribs. That medium sized Texas "norther" put him out of the "healing" business right on the spot. He pulled out of Amarillo, Texas, and left the doctors and nurses to "heal the injured" in the hospitals.

"Healer" Dies of Polio

Ladies and gentlemen, the falacy of the claims of miracles, by the Holy Spirit was revealed a few years ago by the death of a man who claimed to have the power of miracles. The irony of it was the fact that this man claimed to have healed a little boy of polio and then, a few months later, died of polio himself. It was in 1956 when Mr. Jack Coe of Dallas, Texas, was conducting a "Miracle Healing Campaign" in Miami, Florida. A child with polio came to be healed. The "Miracle Performer" claimed the boy was healed after his shouts of, "Jesus heal this body." He then ordered, "remove his braces!" When the braces were removed the boy fell to the floor. The "healer" then ordered the parents of the boy to leave his braces off and make him walk. Later, a doctor ordered the braces replaced or the child would suffer permanent injury. As a result of it all, the parents of the child sued the "divine healer" for \$225, 000.00 damages allegedly suffered by the boy after the braces were removed. The preacher landed in jail. But the most revealing thing of all, the "miracle" performer died of polio himself before he was brought to trial. Some of his associates, who also claimed to have the power of the Holy Spirit, tried to raise him from the dead. That was in 1956, but he is still dead!

Rabbits, Dogs, And Cats "Healed"

Some claims of healing are beyond human imagination. According to a Reuters news release, date line, London, England: one "fake healer" turned his church "healing" service into a Barnyard-Dog-and-Cat-Healing-Clinic.

"ANIMALS BLESSED IN LONDON CHURCH."

London, Sept. 6 (Reuters) --A greyhaired man rose from among the kneeling congregation of a church in the Chelsea area here and cried: 'It's an outrage, a travesty on religion. It's more like a movie than a church.' A self-styled divine healer, Harold P. Nicholson, 45, was conducting a service for animals in the church he built himself. Rabbits, cats, dogs and other pets, in the arms of their owners, waited to be led up the aisle to be blessed.

The verger escorted the protester to the door. Then tortoises, mongrels and shaved French poodles were led to the altar to receive a blessing. One puppy barked, but the rest were well behaved."

Can you imagine anything more sacrilegious than such. pretensions of "healings"? Yet, my friends, this preacher in London could just as easily "heal" the rabbits, cats, and dogs as any other "healer" could heal a person of an in-curable disease!

Signs To Follow

Furthermore, when the question of miracles is discussed someone may remind you that Christ told the apostles "These signs shall follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17-18). So often this passage of Scripture is misunderstood and those who pervert it to their own use do not often pretend to do these signs spoken of by the Lord.

Let us read the passage. "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall re-cover."

Ladies and gentlemen, don't you think it is peculiar that you hear much talk about "laying hands on the sick, and they shall recover," but you don't hear anything about:

"THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS, AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM." Don't you know that those are the signs the Lord said shall follow them that believe? Don't you know that the Lord said, in the same chapter and verse, "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them" and "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover"!

My friends, are you listening? Why is it that we hear much talk about "healing the sick," and all are afraid of the snakes and deadly poison? How many of you ever drank deadly poison and it didn't hurt you? Would you kindly give me the name and address of your doctor? Or perhaps, I should ask for the name of the funeral director! How many of you have taken up serpents and they didn't hurt you?

Ladies and gentlemen, hear me! Are you listening? These modern "healers" must know that they do not possess any miraculous power. I will assure you of one thing; you will never get one of them to drink any deadly poison, if he knows anything about it. And you may be sure that if one does drink deadly poison, knowing or not knowing anything about it, he will die . . . dead as dead can be . . .and no miracle performer will be able to raise him from the dead either!

I tell you, my friends, if men and women can heal the sick, or lay hands on the sick and they shall recover, they can also drink deadly poison and take up serpents and not even be hurt.

Yes, beloved, the Lord did say, "These signs shall follow them that believe." But Jesus said, "these signs," are not similar signs performed over and over again. Those signs, first performed by the apostles, and others that believed, on whom the apostles laid their hands, remain and have followed on down through the past nineteen hundred years. They shall continue to follow until the end of time. Those signs of New Testament times were genuine. They were not counterfeits!

Healing Cloth Racket

Many honest souls have been led to believe that healing may be experienced through "healing cloths." One person affirmed that "Paul carried the ministry of healing beyond personal contact of using the blessed cloth." My friends, this is a mistake! In Acts 19:12 the divine record reveals, "So that from his body were brought unto the sick hand-kerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them , and the evil spirits went out of them."

One thing you may be sure of, Paul didn't go down to a dime store and buy several hundred yards of cloth, or satin ribbon, then pay a printer several dollars to print several hundred copies of

instructions on how to use the healing cloth, then send them out to the people who wanted to be healed. The apostle didn't get financial remuneration from those who desired to be healed to help him pay the expense of getting the healing cloth to work!

My friends, don't you know that if "miracle" performers today can send out a "healing cloth" that will heal the sick, they are obligated to send out a "raise the dead cloth," which would have the power to raise the dead! The same verse in which Our Lord said, "heal the sick," he also commanded, "raise the dead." Again, I suggest a careful reading of Matthew, chapter 10 and verse 8.

I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, there is no record, after the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that they ever tried to heal anybody or raise anybody from the dead and failed. Furthermore, their healing was instant and with complete recovery. They had no failures! They actually performed miracles because they did so by the power of the Holy Spirit which was given to them for a God given purpose.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. Did Christ command "raise the dead" as well as "heal the sick?"

2. If men could heal the sick today could they not also, by the same power, raise the dead?
3. What signs were to follow them that believe in New Testament times?
4. If some of these signs (miracles) were performed today should not all of them be performed?
5. What effect could a "healing cloth" have today?

Miracles and Healing by Power of Holy Spirit--No. 3

MIRACLES AND HEALING BY POWER OF HOLY SPIRIT NO. 3

My friends, again I propose the question, are miracles performed by the power of the Holy Spirit through men today? In previous addresses I have discussed some of the great miracles performed by men under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. I have also exposed some of the false claims of miracles today. Let us continue our consideration of these matters.

Please be assured that your speaker is well aware of the fact that many honest and sincere people believe that miracles are being performed today, as in Bible times. Many sincere and devoutly religious people honestly believe that they have been healed of some incurable disease by the special miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, through the hands of some human being. Many honest souls have heard some preacher say, "just lay your hand on the radio and be healed," and they believe they were healed of some physical disability by the strange and unique power of laying their hands on the radio. We do not doubt the sincerity of those who honestly believe in the miraculous healing power claimed by some men today. But we are sure that such people are honestly mistaken. We are deeply concerned about the truth of God's word in the matter and we are anxious that no one shall be deceived by false and unscriptural claims of men. In former addresses, I have discussed reasons why miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit are not performed by men today.

Healed of Cancer, Died of Cancer

We certainly are aware of the fact that many claims for miracles are made today, but unimpeachable proofs are not in evidence. Many of the claims are obviously false. To illustrate: a few years ago the fallacy of such claims was revealed on a national TV program. The recorded TV film was quite revealing.

A lady who had cancer believed that she could be healed by Oral Roberts, a TV modern "Miracle" performer. She was flown from her home in Burbank, California, to Cincinnati to attend a "healing" service which was televised on film to be broadcast later. After the "healing" service while on her return home, the lady told relatives in Evansville, Indiana, that she was healed by the "miracle" performer by the laying on of his hands and prayer. However, the irony and sadness of the episode was the fact that the woman died of cancer the very day the TV filmed program presented her as being healed of cancer. This honest soul was deceived. Her physician at the Pasadena Tumor Institute listed the cause of death as cancer.

Many honest and sincere people have been deceived by the "would-be" miracle performers. Obviously such people believed that men have the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit today. Not a few, however, have died of the disease of which they were supposed to have been healed.

Why Not Raise The Dead?

Ladies and gentlemen, hear me! Are you listening? Men on earth today do not have the miraculous power to heal. If one could heal the sick, he could also raise the dead, as I pointed out in my previous address. Since many people have died after having been "healed" of "incurable" diseases, the miracle performers might have redeemed themselves by raising their believing followers from the dead, thereby really proving their ability to perform miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. I repeat, if a person has the miraculous power to heal the sick, he could also raise the dead. In fact, our Lord commanded that the dead be raised. Hear him! "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (Matthew 10:7-8).

Did you hear it, ladies and gentlemen? I say, are you listening? The same verse in which our Lord said "heal the sick" He commanded, "raise the dead." Where are the dead that the miracle performers have raised? The answer is obvious. Man today can no more raise one from the dead than he can heal the sick. He can no more heal the sick than he can raise the dead! When you hear men today claim the power of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles, just remember Jesus commanded, "heal the sick.. ..raise the dead"! If one can heal the sick he can raise the dead! I questioned a minister one time, who claimed he had the power of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles. I inquired if he could raise the dead, or if he had ever raised the dead? He replied, "I have raised, some near-about dead!"

I assure you, beloved, that the very fact that no bonafide case of miraculous healing, certified by a recognized medi-cal doctor, can be found in the world today, is evidence of the fact that miracles have ceased.

Incidentally, ladies and gentlemen, Christ and the apos-tles never received any money for their working of mir-acles. They had no books to sell and appointments were not necessary.

Ladies and gentlemen, the inspired Apostle Paul warned us about "lying wonders" and counterfeits. He warned that the true signs and miraculous wonders would be counterfeited and used to deceive! Read very carefully 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10!

Objections

Often times when the false claims of divine healings are questioned we hear the exclamation, "Don't tempt God!" My friends, we are not questioning the power of God, but we do have a Biblical right to question men about these matters. It must be remembered that God did tell us to try , or question these witnesses. In 1 John 4:1, the apostle declared, "....Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Now, let us consider some objections to the affirmation that miracles, as done by men in Bible times, have ceased.

Must Have Faith Your speaker, ladies and gentlemen, is aware of the fact that someone may object by saying, "but you must have faith to perform miracles or heal the sick," or, as an excuse for failures, "you must have faith to be healed." May I ask, my friends, how much faith did the dead son of the widow have? Read Luke 7:11. Did the dead daughter of Janus have faith? Read Mark 5:41; Mark 5:32. How much faith did the loaves and fishes have? Read Mark 6:35; Mark 6:44.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we should ask the modern "healers" of today, "Why do you not heal all the sick?" Do you know what the reply would be? They usually say, "It is the lack of faith." But I inquire, how much faith did the dead have? You know the dead were actually raised during the days of miracles. Read Matthew 9:18-25; Luke 7:11-15. Lazarus had been dead four days. How much faith did the dead man, Lazarus, have?

God Same Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

I tell you, furthermore, often times when you question the ability and power of men to perform miracles today, they may remind you that God is the same yesterday, to-day, tomorrow and forever; therefore, God is working through them today as He did through inspired men of New Testament times.

My friends, the Bible does teach that God is the same for all time and eternity (Hebrews 13:8). But that does not mean that He does the same thing today that He did yesterday; neither does He necessarily do the same thing in the same way that He did yesterday. Will God feed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes today? He did yesterday. Will God cause the walls of a city to fall down, after people march around it seven days? He did yesterday. Will Jesus be crucified upon a Roman cross again today? He was yesterday!

It is obvious, beloved, that the omnipotence of God and the omnipresence of God have always been and always will be the same. God never intended, however, that miracles should continue through all ages any more than He intended for Christ to be crucified again.

Call For The Elders

But, someone inquires, does the Bible say: ". . . call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"? (James 5:14-15).

Oh, yes, beloved! There were miraculous healings during the infancy period of the church. But notice: why ELDERS of the church? Modern "healers" today claim that any Christian, and especially a minister, or preacher, may perform miraculous healings; not just elders. If miraculous healings belong to all Christians, then this text is of no value to the modern "healers." The sick could call any Christian to heal him, they say. This text, however, specifies, "elders of the church." Why? Obviously, the elders, leaders in the church, were the logical ones upon whom the apostles should lay their hands and confer the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to perform miracles.

We must keep in mind the elders were the pastors, overseers, and teachers in the New Testament church. In the absence of the written law of Christ, at that time, there was need for leaders to have supernatural gifts. Yes, the sick might call for the elders of the church!

The Prayer of Faith But this text still is of no comfort to the modern "healers" of today. When the modern "healers" fail to heal the sick of an incurable disease, they declare it is because of the lack of faith on the part of the sick! But James declares, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." He didn't say, "The prayer of faithful," or "prayer of the sick!" The faith, in this text, is on the part of one who was to pray for the sick.

Furthermore, it should be observed that the "prayer" was to be offered by the "elders," and not by the person to be healed. Also, it should be observed that the modern "healers" today are identified as preachers or ministers, both men and women, and not elders. Incidentally, it would be most interesting to know how a woman might qualify to be an "elder" when one qualification of elders is to be "the husband of one wife" (Titus 1:6). The modern "healers" today usually insist that those to be healed should be in the prayer line, come to the prayer altar, or spend some time in a "prayer" room in order to be healed. Those desiring to be healed often times spend hours in prayer, seeking healing of their bodies.

Another thing that should be observed is the fact that when the modern "healer" fails to effect the healing of a diseased body he usually declares that it is God who heals the sick and disclaims any responsibility for the failure. This avenue of escape, therefore, places the responsibility for failures upon God, or the person to be healed. But it must be remembered that, according to this divine record of James 5:14-15, the responsibility is not upon God, nor the person to be healed. God declares that it is the faith of those who are to pray for the sick that resolves the matter. It is true that some who were healed in Bible times did not have faith, but it is false to conclude that healing always depended on the faith of the person to be healed.

Healing Not Installment Plan

Miraculous healings in Bible times were instantaneous and not accomplished through long drawn out exercises, effecting cure of disease on a weekly, monthly, or yearly installment plan! How different from the modern "fake healers" of today. Let us consider some Bible cases.

A centurion came to the Lord one time on behalf of his servant who was sick of palsy, who was being "grievously tormented." He requested Jesus "to speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." The Bible records, "and his servant was healed in the self-same hour" (Matthew 8:13).

There was no period of waiting. He didn't have to make a trip to see Jesus, stand in a waiting, "healing" line, or lie on a cot in a "healing room," nor wait for the Lord to "shout" or "beat" the disease out of him neither did he have to come back for a "second touch"!

Peter's mother-in-law didn't have to "sweat-out" her fever. The Lord healed her instantly, "and she arose and ministered unto them" (Matthew 8:14-15). No prolonged prayer service! No report like, "The Lord is healing her, she is much better today, and by tomorrow, or next week, or next month, she will be healed completely!"

The cripple in Solomon's temple didn't have to wait for some "adjustments," or the pulling and massaging of his legs, or experience some great excitement from the shout-ing of a crowd! The apostles said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

It didn't take a month, a week, or hours to get results; "and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:7-8).

Can you imagine Peter and John praying for this cripple for weeks, then hearing the cripple man report, "I know I'm getting better, for I feel it in my ankle bones." No, beloved! He was healed completely; healed instantly. No man living can perform such a miracle today!

When the blind were healed, it was complete and in-stant healing; a miracle. No blind man, who was healed ever reported, "I can see a little better!" Miraculous heal-ing was never half done. The afflicted woman was "made whole from the hour" (Matthew 9:22). She didn't get a little better from day to day! The lame man didn't just get better and his ankle bones get stronger and stronger. He was given "perfect soundness," the Bible declares. It was a complete job, "perfect soundness," "made whole" in presence of all. (Acts 3:16; Acts 4:9). It was a miracle! Not a fake!

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. Does one "tempt God" when he questions men about their faith and practice?

2. Are failures of healings due to the lack of faith on the part of the one to be healed?

3. Why should not God perform miracles through men to-day as in Bible times?

4. Why were elders of the church able to perform miracles in New Testament times?

5. Were healings in Bible times instant and complete?

Miracles and Healing by Power of Holy Spirit--No. 4

MIRACLES AND HEALING BY POWER OF HOLY SPIRIT NO. 4

Miracles Physical and Spiritual Are miracles being performed today? Yes, every day but in accord with God's divine law. From the viewpoint of human wisdom, every child that is conceived and born of his mother's womb is a miracle. The origin of man was a miracle, but after his miraculous creation God gave the law of procreation. Every person who has been born into this world, from the first son of Adam and Eve to the last infant born this very minute, except the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, was miraculously conceived and born according to God's divine law of pro-creation. There is positively no exception to his law today. The birth of Christ was an exception to the law of pro-creation. It was above the law of nature, as much a miracle as the creation of Adam in the beginning.

In the spiritual realm every time a child of God is born into the kingdom of Christ, according to human wisdom, it is a miracle. The Bible speaks of all those who have been "born again" as being "new creatures" in Christ. But every child of God was born of the incorruptible seed, the word of God (1 Peter 1:22-23). That's God's law and there is no exception to that divine law of spirit-procreation. Yes, it is a miracle, but in accord with God's divine, established, and irrevocable law. No man, no law of man, nor doctrines and commandments of men, can produce, or create a child of God! Even during the days of miracles, during New Testament times, when wondrous and miraculous works were being performed by the power of the Holy Spirit through men, God's divine law of regeneration was not set aside.

Divine Healing By Constituted Law

You may ask, "Does the Bible teach divine healing?" The answer is, yes, my friends." But not miraculous healings as were done during the days of the early church. The apostle Paul referred to Luke as the beloved physician (Colossians 4:14). Jesus himself declared that they who are sick need a physician (Matthew 9:12).

God created the body by divine law. Man is of divine origin. The whole and entire body of man is constituted by law. Our God set in order definite laws for the function of all His creation. When these laws are violated, the consequences are inevitable. Because of certain violations and complications, it becomes necessary to operate on the body of man in order to heal the body. All the organs of the body operate in their regulated sphere. When the laws of nature regulating their function are violated, reconciliation, in harmony with those laws, must be accomplished to heal and restore proper functions. Man's advancement in science and development of useful instruments are avenues, placed at his disposal by Jehovah, through which man may learn more about God's laws regulating the human body, thus accomplishing healing in harmony with God's laws of nature. God is not going to send down a special instrument with which to perform a certain operation on the human body, but through the proper function of the mind of man, he has discovered and put together the useful instruments, which were created by God in the beginning,

for the healing and benefit of man's body. God placed the minerals in the earth and created every substance, known and unknown to man; we make the scientific discoveries and apply the benefits to mankind, using all types of medicines and applications to the human body. That is divine healing.

A few years ago, after a major surgery, I was considered to be dead for a few minutes. The doctors could not detect a heartbeat nor a breath during those moments. I was thought to be dead, but I was healed. Not miraculous healing through the instrument of modern healer, but healed, through the providence of God, according to his laws regulating the body which he created. Without the assistance of the doctors and the medical application of those things which reconcile the organs of the body with the laws which God gave to regulate them, I am sure I would not be here to deliver this address.

God created man and every law of nature and every scientific fact of medical science, for man's benefit, should be recognized as from God. When we use the means which God has given, including medicine, surgery, and other benefits, for the healing and repairing of the body, that is di-vine healing. Remember, Jesus said, that they who are sick need a physician (Matthew 9:12).

A More Excellent Way

These miraculous works of the Spirit were never in-tended to be permanent in the church. They were given in the infancy of the church to last until "that which is perfect is come." Having admonished the Corinthians to covet the "best gifts," Paul added, ". . . yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31). Of all the gifts in the Corinthian church, some were to "pass away" and some were to abide. The apostle makes comparisons in these words: "Though I speak with tongues of men and angels ," no doubt, referring to the "divers kinds of tongues," of chapter 12:10, "and have not love, I am become as sound-ing brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy," no doubt, the "prophecy" of chapter 12:10, "and understand all mysteries," no doubt, "the word of wisdom" of chapter 12:8, "and all knowledge; and though I have all faith," no doubt, miraculous "faith" of chapter 12:9, "so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

In these verses the apostle gives appraisal of the value of love over the miraculous gifts. There must be a reason. The gifts of the Spirit were transitory; they would "pass away." Love was superior, in contrast to the impermanent miraculous gifts, because it "abideth" forever.

Miracles Limited Time Ceased

It is an incontrovertible fact, revealed in the scriptures, that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were to cease. Paul declared, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Hear it, my friends! Are you listening? The apostle emphatically declared, they "SHALL CEASE," "SHALL FAIL," "SHALL VANISH AWAY," and "SHALL BE DONE AWAY." Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge (super-natural knowledge, of course) were all to cease at the same time. They have ceased!

The Perfect Has Come The inspired apostle even suggests the time when the miracles were to cease, "when that which is perfect is come." To understand the true meaning of this statement it is well to understand the meaning of the word, "perfect." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 618, defines this word, as used in the original Greek, as meaning, "brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness perfect." There can be no doubt about it. Paul would have all men to know that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit would end with the completeness of the revelation of the gospel of Christ. James refers to this completeness of the revelation of the gospel as "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25).

Gospel Once For All The inspired language of Jude is proof of the cessation of miracles. He declared, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).

Surely there can be no doubt about the affirmation, in this text, of the complete revelation of God's will. The theory of progressive, additional revelations is condemned, beyond doubt, and Paul adds that the curse of Almighty God rests upon anyone who would pervert, add to, or take from, the word of God (Galatians 1:7-9). There was a period of revelations to the saints and those revelations were confirmed by the signs and miracles performed by the saints, but miracles are neither needed nor performed today. Jude exhorts that we should "earnestly contend for the faith" of the gospel once and for all delivered unto the Saints.

Mr. Thayer, an authority on New Testament Greek, defines the original Greek, as meaning: "Once, one time, used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition, once for all" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 54). This same word, "once," is used in Hebrews 9:28 with reference to the atonement of Christ: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many . . ." The death of our Lord was "once for all," a "perpetual validity," which "never need repetition." The atonement of Christ was "once for all," complete and never to be repeated. The faith of the gospel, the word of God, "the faith," was "once" and for all time delivered unto the saints, which "never need repetition." There would be just as much need for the Son of God to die on the cross again as need for miracles and healings today. They were terminated with the fulfillment of their purpose when the gospel was "once for all" delivered unto the saints. Miracles "never need repetition" today no more than the atonement of Christ "never need repetition."

The purpose of miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit was to witness and confirm the revelation of God's word, "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," therefore, when the revelations were terminated the spiritual gifts were likewise terminated.

Full Grown Miracles Not Needed With the completeness of the revelation of the gospel, the church had grown from infancy to maturity. Paul illustrated this fact by comparing childhood with maturity (1 Corinthians 13:11). From childhood to maturity prophecy and supernatural knowledge were fragmentary and imperfect, therefore, infant accompaniments of the gifts of miracles, tongues, and the word of knowledge. They were only given in "part." Now that the attainment of "that which is perfect is come," that which "is in part" is "done away."

The apostle Paul furthermore described the duration of the miraculous period of the church and the purpose of the spiritual gifts in his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4. The purpose and duration

of them are revealed in verse 11 through 14.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

Cessation Foretold

I submit to you, friends, that miracles were intended for a limited time only. The prophet of God, Micah, told how long they were to last. Hear him in Micah 7:15, "According to the coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things."

From the first miracle of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, it was 40 years the same period of time foretold by Micah: "according to the coming out of the land of Egypt." Christ was 30 years of age when he began his ministry and Jerusalem was destroyed in A. D. 70, thus, the forty years of miraculous works as foretold by the prophet!

At the writing of James 5:14-15, healing was practiced, the year of 60 A. D. In A. D. 64 Paul referred to Luke as the beloved physician (Colossians 4:14-15). In A. D. 65 Paul recommended medicine for Timothy. In A. D. 65 Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletum. These scriptural facts bear evidence of the diminishing use of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles. We have no record of any miracles and healing following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The books of the New Testament, written after the destruction of Jerusalem, include 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, written in the year of A. D. 90, and Revelation, written in the year of A. D. 96. There is no record of miracles and spiritual gifts being practiced or performed in the church in these epistles. There can be no doubt about it. Miracles, which had been given to confirm the word of God, ceased. It seems evident that miracles had become limited during the lifetime of those who did perform miracles, as was pointed out in the case of Paul's recommendation of medicine for Timothy, and the fact that he left Trophimus, his traveling companion, sick at Miletum. Without fear of successful contradiction, we may conclude that after the death of the last apostle and the death of the last person upon whom an apostle had laid his hands, there has never been another miracle performed, through the instrument of man upon this earth.

With the gospel revelation completed, established, and confirmed its perpetual validity must be accepted without additions or subtractions.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9).

When men claim to perform miracles today such is a denial of the power and validity of the gospel! There is not another gospel! To pervert the gospel, or preach another gospel, though claimed to be revealed from heaven, is to be accursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9).

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What is the difference in the miracle of creation in the beginning and the miracle of pro-creation?

2. What is divine healing by constituted law?

3. Were miracles intended to be permanent?

4. When were miracles to cease? Why?

5. If the revelation of the gospel was completed in New Testament times, could there be new revelations today?

6. What is the more excellent way?

7. If miracles are performed today, has the church reached maturity yet?

8. If that which is "perfect is come," then are miracles still needed?

Miracle of Speaking in Tongues

MIRACLES OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The miraculous power of the Holy Spirit enabled the early Christians to perform great and mighty works. One of the most marvelous works of the Spirit was that of speaking in "tongues" by the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2:1-11. A part of that text reads as follows: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

This was a great miracle! If men could speak in tongues today it would be as much a miracle as it was on Pentecost, because speaking in tongues would be as impossible today as it was nineteen hundred years ago, without direct intervention of the Holy Spirit.

What Was Speaking In Tongues?

It seems quite obvious that many people today do not understand what is meant by speaking "with other tongues." A careful study of the text should leave no doubt, however "other", as to the Bible meaning and purpose of speaking in tongues.

In this case, of Acts, 2nd Chapter, the speaking in tongues was the result of the miraculous baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, which enabled the apostles to speak in "other tongues." Notice carefully that it is said, "OTHER TONGUES." Furthermore, it should be observed that these men, uttered a special message, dictated by the Holy Spirit; "as the spirit gave them utterance."

The text, Acts 2:4-11, clearly states that the multitude was "confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language" and they concluded: "and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" They concluded: "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Although there are records of other early Christians speaking in tongues, there is no other record in the Bible of speaking in different languages. As in this case: "other tongues," "our own tongue," "our tongue wherein we were born." The reason: these men, the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit which enabled them to speak by divine revelation, to proclaim the gospel of Christ "as the Spirit gave them utterance." There is no other record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. It is inconceivable that one could conclude from this text that these men, "speaking in tongues," were speaking to God and not to man!

Unknown Tongues? In this text speaking in tongues was not a matter of speaking a language unknown to anyone, but it was the ability, by guidance of the Holy Spirit, to speak a language

which was known and understood by the hearer, but unknown to the speaker, a language he had never known or spoken before.

The text reveals that there were at least fifteen different countries or provinces represented in the audience which heard the apostles in "tongues," therefore, some fifteen different languages or dialects. The people from each country heard them speak in their own native tongue, or language. Benson's Commentary, Vol. 4, page 687, states "These disciples had not only never learned any of these languages, but had not learned any foreign tongue . . ."

Most of them had never so much as heard any of these languages spoken, or had any idea of them . . . They did not speak now and then a word of another tongue, or stammer out some broken sentences, but spoke each language which they spoke as readily, properly, and elegantly, as if it had been their own mother tongue: for whatever was produced by miracle was the best of the kind."

The fact that the great miracle of speaking in tongues by the apostles, enabling every man to hear them "speak in his own language," caused the multitude to marvel and be amazed.

Not Unintelligent Sounds The apostles preached the gospel to more than 3, 000 people, representing at least fifteen different nations, and "every man heard them speak in his own language" where-in he was "born." When they spoke in tongues, it was not a jabber, jargon, conglomeration of unintelligent sounds. They spoke words that brought conviction to the hearts of the people. Yes, it was a miracle! The gospel was directed in languages, never studied or spoken by the speakers, to the people of at least fifteen different nationalities. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, received by the apostles, made it possible for them to preach the gospel to the three thousand people who heard and understood in their own different languages.

Men Speak In Tongues Today?

Many people, and not a few religious leaders, have become confused about the possibility of speaking in "tongues" today. Some claim to speak in "unknown tongues."

It is quite evident that men today do not and cannot speak in "tongues," as was done in New Testament times. Where is the man or woman who can speak fifteen different languages that he has never heard and has never learned? Would it not be amazing today, as on Pentecost, for a man to preach the gospel to an audience of fifteen different nationalities and every man hear and understand in his own tongue, or language, wherein he was born; yet the speaker had never known the different languages? That would be as much a miracle as it was on Pentecost!

If there are people today who can speak in "tongues," as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, like those of New Testament times, may I suggest a most opportune place to do so. Why not go before the Assembly of the United Nations in New York and preach the gospel to the representatives of the nations of the world? If one could speak in "tongues," by the power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he could speak so that every man of every nation could hear and understand in his own native language! The arrangement for such a meeting is not unrealistic. If a person can be found who could really speak in "tongues," I am sure the arrangements could be made because this accomplishment in communications would be so amazing that the United Nations and the world would welcome it. No doubt, every radio and TV station in the world would

want to broadcast such "speaking in tongues" without charge because it would be as "unheard of," amazing, and an astonishing performance as on Pentecost. If a person who claims to speak in "tongues" will give assurance of his power and ability to speak in "tongues," and will volunteer his services, your speaker will take the responsibility of providing a worldwide audience to hear the message in their own native languages.

My friends, be not deceived! Men do not speak in "tongues" today, as in New Testament times, because they do not have that miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to speak in "tongues." The baptism of the Holy Spirit was the source of miraculous power which enabled the apostles to speak "with other tongues" (Acts 2:2-4).

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Apostles Received Power The antecedent of the pronouns, "they" and "them," is the apostles, as stated in the last verse of the first chapter of Acts. The apostles, therefore, were they who received this baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit: "And they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," the text declares in verse 4.

The Holy Spirit made sure that identity would not be mistaken: "And there appeared unto them" remember, "them," the apostles "cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them" (verse 3).

From this text we would conclude that each apostle, who was speaking "with other tongues," was identified by the tongue, "like as of fire," which sat upon his head, all of which caused the multitude that gathered to be amazed. There can be no doubt that the apostles were they who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and did the speaking in "tongues" because in verse seven it is said: "Are not all these which speak Galileans?" The apostles were all Galileans. The one hundred and twenty disciples, also present, were not all Galileans. Furthermore, there can be no doubt that the apostles were identified as those who were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Read very carefully Acts 1:2-8. It must be observed that the apostles are identified in Verse 2, and they were commanded to "wait for the promise of the Father," Verse 4; that promise was: "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Verses 5 and 8).

Spoke As Spirit Gave Utterance From this text under consideration (Acts 2:4), we must conclude that the apostles were "filled with the Holy Spirit" before they could speak "with other tongues." Further-more, they spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Again I quote from Benson's Commentary, Vol. 4, page 687, "They spoke not from any previous thought, but as the 'Spirit gave them utterance' He furnished them with the matter, as well as the language."

My friends, I say, are you listening? . . . Where is the person today, whom the Holy Spirit has identified as one to "speak with other tongues," by miraculously pointing him out with a "cloven tongue like as of fire" upon his head? I say, where are the persons today who can "speak with other tongues," languages they have never known, a message they had never known, "as the

Spirit gave them utterance"?

It must be concluded that men do not speak in "tongues" today, as in New Testament times, because men do not receive the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles and other early Christians in Bible times; neither are men divinely guided in delivering a message, as were the apostles who spoke "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

The Gift of Tongues But someone may claim to speak in "tongues" because he claims to possess the gift of tongues, although he did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles. It seems evident from the scriptures that there were some early Christians, during the days of miracles, in the church, who could speak in tongues, but did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

As pointed out in a former address, miracles were performed not only by the power received from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but miraculous gifts of the Spirit were conferred by the laying on of the apostles' hands. (Acts 8:14-21; Acts 19:1-6). In verse 6 of Acts 19, it is recorded:

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied."

As the church of our Lord grew in New Testament times, some congregations were made up of men and women of different nationalities, different tongues, therefore, God, in His divine arrangement, continued the miraculous gift of "divers kinds of tongues" for a time (1 Corinthians 12:10), as well as other "spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians , 14 th Chapter). Paul's estimation of the value of speaking in "tongues," as the church grew more to maturity, was revealed when he said, "Now brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" (1 Corinthians 14:16). The apostle concluded, "I thank God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Corinthians 14:18-19).

Speaking Tongues, Raising The Dead, Healing Sick From the study of the scriptures it is evident that those who were to perform miraculous works of the Spirit were promised, "In my name shall they cast out devils they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

In view of this declaration of our Lord and other references considered, may I propose the following questions for consideration by those who might claim to speak in tongues.

1. If one can speak in tongues, can he "drink any deadly thing" and not be hurt?
2. If one may speak in tongues today, may he not "lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" from an incurable disease?
3. If one can speak in tonguest by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, could he not by the same power "raise the dead"? (Matthew 10:8).

4. If one is able to speak "with other tongues," as some did in the Corinthian church, would there not also be some who could prophesy, or speak by divine revelation, "as the Spirit gave them utterance"?

Ladies and gentlemen, I submit to you that "speaking in tongues" was done so by supernatural power, by those with miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. Such miraculous power enabled the apostles and some Christians, during the infancy period of the church, to perform such miracles as raising the dead, healing the sick, and speaking in languages never known, by direct revelation of the Holy Spirit. For one to affirm that "speaking in tongues" may be done today will also necessitate the affirmation of performance of other miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. The absence of any one of the miraculous works of the Spirit, performed today, is proof of the absence of all.

The apostle Paul, referring to the miraculous works in the early church, declared that they would cease or vanish away (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). He specifically included speaking in tongues: "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease."

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What was the purpose of speaking in "tongues?"

2. What was "speaking in tongues"?
3. Were the "tongues" spoken unknown tongues?
4. Were those who spoke in "tongues" able to perform other miraculous works?
5. Was speaking in "tongues" a miracle?
6. Was there a difference in "speaking in tongues," as a result of the Holy Spirit, received by the apostles, and "speaking in tongues" by other Christians?

Tongues: Spoken to God or Man?

TONGUES SPOKEN TO GOD OR MAN?

My friends, were the messages of those who spoke in "tongues" in New Testament times directed to God or to man? Some people who claim to speak in tongues affirm that speaking in tongues in New Testament times was a matter of speaking to God and not to man. This argument is offered as proof that men speak in "tongues" today. It is obvious that no one understands those who claim to speak in "tongues," and according to their argument, no one is supposed to understand because they are speaking to God and not to man. Let us consider the matter.

Speaking in tongues, whether to God or man, was a miraculous gift, whether by the power of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, as in Acts 2nd Chapter, or by the laying on of the apostles' hands, as in Acts the 8th chapter, the 10th chapter, or the 19th chapter. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, Paul definitely declared that these miraculous administrations of the Spirit included the word of knowledge, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues. If tongues continue today, then miracles definitely have not ceased and these other miraculous administrations of the Spirit must be in evidence just as much so as speaking in tongues. May I ask, where is the person who definitely has supernatural knowledge, who receives divine revelations from God in heaven? If such a person could be found, then the inspired men of God falsified when they declared that the gospel of Christ, the word of God, is the complete and final revelation from God to man.

Hear the apostle: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-8).

Where is the person with the gifts of healing, who can heal an incurable disease, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead? My friends, I can tell you that wherever you find people who can heal incurable diseases, raise the dead, and speak by divine revelation, as in New Testament times, you may also find those who can speak in tongues. If you find one, you will find the other. The claim that tongues are directed to God, rather than man, and you can't understand them, will make no difference. If you couldn't understand their tongues, you could certainly understand if they really healed a body diseased with leprosy, or raised a person from the dead! But, ladies and gentlemen, you will find neither because miracles have ceased.

Tongues For A Sign

Let us give more consideration to the texts referring to the gift of speaking in tongues. According to Acts 10:44-46, the Gentiles, who received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, did "speak with tongues and magnify God." While in Acts 19:6, "when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." In 1 Corinthians 14:22 the apostle said that "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." While in 1 Corinthians 14:2 Paul wrote, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not

unto men but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

In Acts 2:4; Acts 2:6 it is recorded that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Then, when "the multitude came together, they were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." In verses 7, 8, and 11, of Acts 2nd chapter, it is written that "they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" They concluded, "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Now, all these references to speaking in tongues are relevant and are certainly worthy of our serious consideration. What are the conclusions

First: There can be no doubt that, in each case, regardless of the purpose or circumstances, the speaking in tongues was a miraculous gift, or administration, of the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues, whether to God or to man, was a miracle! In Acts, the 2nd Chapter there can be no doubt that the speaking in tongues, by power of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit was definitely to man and not to God. It was divine revelation! In the other cases of "speaking in tongues" it is evident that all did not speak by divine revelation, since they did not receive the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. It seems evident that speaking in tongues was not always for the same purpose. But one thing is certain; those who did speak in tongues did so by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44-46 : ". . . on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Has the miraculous "gift of the Holy Spirit" been "poured out," directly from heaven, upon those who claim to speak with tongues today?

Acts 19:6 : "And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

Question: Has the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, which would enable one to "speak with tongues" and prophesy, been imparted to anybody today through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, especially now that the apostles have been dead almost 2,000 years? If not, then no one has the miraculous gift of the Spirit to speak in tongues!

Divers Kinds of Tongues The apostle declared, in 1 Corinthians 12:10, that there were "divers kinds of tongues." The matter of speaking in tongues by miraculous power of the Spirit evidently included different gifts, possessed by different people, for different purposes. According to the examples in the New Testament at least two primary purposes are revealed which were divine revelation and edification. It seems that in some cases the gift of "tongues" enabled one to interpret "tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:26; 1 Corinthians 14:28). Yet, it seems that others were to be their own interpreters (1 Corinthians 14:5; 1 Corinthians 14:13).

Unknown Tongues

1 Corinthians 14:2; 1 Corinthians 14:22 : "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God." Again the apostle said, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." The question is, should there ever be an

"unknown" tongue? The inference is that if one speaks in a tongue that is not understood by man, then it would be an unknown tongue. Even though God understood, it would be of no value to man. The very fact that Paul says that "tongues are a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not," is evidence that "tongues" were for the benefit of man. If for the benefit of man, for "them that believe not," then speaking in tongues would not be an "unknown" tongue spoken to God without man's understanding.

Not Unto Men But Unto God The apostle's statement, "Speaketh not unto men" (V.2), indicates not that the speaking was understood by men; not, that it was not intended to be understood by men. The context completely refutes the idea that "speaking in tongues" was addressed to God and not to man. Paul actually states that the primary purpose of "tongues" was for the benefit of "them that believe not" (V.22).

The apostles statement that the speaking was "unto God" simply indicated that such "speaking in tongues," under those circumstances, would be understood only by God and not by man. According to Paul, this would refute the purpose of speaking in "tongues."

The apostle concluded, "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air" (1 Corinthians 14:9). Furthermore, why should there be the necessity of an interpreter if the speaking in "tongues" were not to men who were to profit from what they heard? We may not fully understand the full significance of speaking in tongues in New Testament times, whether to convert the sinner, or edify the church, but two things are certain! One: speaking in tongues was done by direct and miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. Two: the speaking in tongues was definitely for man's benefit who was to intelligently understand what was said, which necessitated, in some cases, an interpreter.

In Acts 2:3-11 it is positively stated that those of every nation, some fifteen languages, heard and understood in their "language," or "tongue," wherein they were "born." The speaking in tongues in this case was a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To claim that those who spoke in tongues were talking to God and not to man in this text is to deny the full import of this miraculous incident of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. There can be no doubt that the apostles were they who did receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it was they who did the speaking in tongues on this occasion, as already pointed out. Furthermore, to affirm the argument that "tongues" were always spoken to God and not to man is to positively deny the plain authoritative statement, recorded at least three times in this text, that "every man heard them speak in his own language"; "how hear we every man in our tongue, wherein we were born?" and "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." In this case there can be no doubt that the purpose of the speaking in tongues was to enable the apostles to preach the gospel to the Jews gathered in Jerusalem, representing some fifteen nations, and convert them to Christ. As a result, they that obeyed the gospel "were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:38-41).

Tongues To Cease

If the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues continues today, then the inspired apostle Paul was in error when he said, "whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it

shall vanish away" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Paul said that tongues would cease. In the same verse he said that knowledge, supernatural knowledge, of course would also cease. They both were to cease at the same time, and that was to occur "when that which is perfect is come," when the church had grown to maturity and was no longer in its infancy, or childhood (1 Corinthians 13:10-11). Furthermore, the apostle suggested that time was at hand then. In verse 8 of this text the apostle referred to love, prophecies, tongues, and knowledge. He said that the supernatural gifts of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge were to cease. In verse 13 of the text he declared, "And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three but the greatest of these is love." Evidently they vanished away even then. There are not miraculous gifts of the Spirit today!

Paul's explanation of the "unity of the Spirit", Ephesians 4:3-7, surely includes the complete uniformity of the Spirit's revelation, teaching, and practice for Christians for all time to come. In this treatise on the "unity of the Spirit" there is absolutely no reference to the miraculous works of the Spirit, such as miracles of healing the sick, raising the dead, speaking in tongues, and other miraculous works which accompanied the preaching of the gospel during the infancy of the church. The platform for Christian unity is set forth in the seven doctrinal principles: one body; one Spirit; one hope; one Lord; one faith; one baptism; and one God. The church was to attain unto the "unity of the faith," and having grown to maturity there would no longer be the need for miraculous works of the Spirit to support and confirm the word of God.

May we all endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This may be accomplished only through faith and practice as authorized by New Testament authority. Emotionalism and personal experiences can never circumvent God's word.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What source of power enabled people to speak in "tongues"?

2. Were "tongues" spoken to God or man?

3. How long were miracles to last

4. Were "tongues" to cease?

5. Were men to speak in "unknown tongues"?

Sin Against the Holy Spirit

SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Unpardonable Sin

Much misunderstanding prevails concerning the "sin against the Holy Spirit." Many have concluded that this "unpardonable sin" may be committed today. Consequently the guilty persons have no hope of salvation whatsoever.

What is the "sin against the Holy Spirit"? Is it an "un-pardonable sin"? May people today, in this Christian age, commit this most grievous sin? These are questions for our consideration.

What Is The Sin Against Holy Spirit? The question, "What is the sin against the Holy Spirit?" has provoked much thought and no little speculation through the years. There must be an answer in the Holy Scriptures.

There is only one specific incident, recorded in the Bible, which can truly be said to be the "sin against the Holy Spirit." The divine record of this incident is found in Matthew 12:22-32.

"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought into desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strongman's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy- Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Blasphemy Against Holy Spirit

There can be no doubt about it, Jesus declared these people sinned against the Holy Spirit by blasphemy (speak-ing against or speaking evil of) the Holy Spirit. Jesus had performed a great miracle and the people were amazed and exclaimed, "Is not this the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of devils." Jesus replied that he cast out devils, not by Beelzebub, but "by the Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit performed the deed through Christ. The Pharisees accused the Lord of using the prince of the devils to perform the miracle, therefore , they blasphemed, spoke against, sinned against, the

Holy Spirit, who performed the miracle through Christ.

Cannot Be Forgiven As a result of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, Jesus announced that they had committed an unpardonable sin. Hear the Lord! Are you listening? "And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:32).

It will be observed that Christ declared: "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

First: It is concluded: "It shall not be forgiven him."

Secondly: "Neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Now, what is meant by "neither in the world to come"? Does not this expression suggest there will be sins forgiven in "the world to come"? Surely one must know there will be no sins forgiven in eternity, the world to come. Christ was not referring to the hades world to come, or eternity. Actually, the word, "world," in this text may be translated "age," rather than the word, "world." This is more enlightening. Actually, Jesus declared to those blaspheming Pharisees, you have sinned, or blasphemed, against the Holy Spirit, who performed this miracle through me, and you shall not be forgiven in this "age," Jewish age, neither in the "age," Christian age, "to come." Therefore, it was those Pharisees, on that occasion, who committed the sin against the Holy Spirit! There was no forgiveness for them then, neither would there be forgiveness for them in the Christian "age" to come.

Do Men Sin Against Holy Spirit Today?

Many sincere people have been led to believe that one may sin against the Holy Spirit today, thereby, committing an unpardonable sin, just as the Pharisees blasphemed against the Holy Spirit on the occasion of Matthew 12:22-32. But, it must be remembered that Christ declared that there is a difference in the consequences of sinning, or blaspheming, against the Holy Spirit and sinning against Christ. He said, "Whosoever speaketh against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him . . ." (Matthew 12:32). There was to be no forgiveness for the sin against the Holy Spirit, but all sins against Christ might be forgiven. If a person could commit the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit today, there would be no forgiveness for him. His doom would be sealed and nothing he could do about it. Actually, the question is, do men today sin against the Holy Spirit; or, sin against Christ? Or, we might say, are man's sins today charged against Christ or against the Holy Spirit? Further information on these questions will be presented in the course of these addresses.

Impossible To Be Saved?

Some religious teachers have referred to Hebrews 6:4-6 as evidence that man may sin against the Holy Spirit today and find it impossible to be forgiven.

The text does state it is "impossible . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance . . ."

This Scripture says nothing about "impossible to be forgiven." The difficulty in this case of apostasy is the fact that such a person would not repent; or, because of his circumstances and his conscience, it is "impossible" for him to repent, not that it would be impossible to obtain forgiveness if he repented; .it specifically declares the sin is against Christ, and not against the Holy Spirit: " ... seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:6).

Jesus declared, at the time these Pharisees committed the "unpardonable" sin of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, that "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world , neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:21; Matthew 12:32). Sin, or blasphemy, against Christ may be forgiven. The sin of Hebrews 6:6 is against Christ, therefore, it is not an unpardonable sin!

It must be concluded that Hebrews 6 th chapter does not refer to the sin against the Holy Spirit, or the unpardonable sin. This sin, whatever it might be, is against Christ, not the Holy Spirit.

No More Sacrifice For Sins

Again, it has been said that Hebrews 10:26 refers to the "sin against the Holy Spirit"; or, an "unpardonable sin." The inspired writer declared: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." This text does not even imply the "sin against," or blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The apostle is revealing the contrast between the sin offerings under the Old Law and the one sacrifice for sin under the New Testament law, the one and only true sacrifice for sins. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." There is none other and there will be no other. God's Son only is the one perfect offering!

Sin Unto Death Is the sin against the Holy Spirit the sin referred to in 1 John 5:16-17, sometimes referred to as "the unpardonable sin"?

"If any man sees his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John 5:16-17).

From this divine statement it is evident that one may be guilty of sin in so much that there is no need to pray for him. There is no evidence, however, that this is the sin against the Holy Spirit, about which our Lord spoke in Matthew 12:27-32.

To understand this statement by the apostle it is necessary to consider the context from which the passage is quoted. Let us observe verse 7 through 9 of 1 John , 1 st chapter.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The apostle, by inspiration, declares that Christ is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

All unrighteousness may be forgiven! If all unrighteous-ness may be forgiven, then there is no "unpardonable sin." Of course, pardon of sins is conditional. Obviously, there-fore, if man does not meet the required conditions of pardon , then his sins are "unpardoned."

The conditions of pardon for the Christian's sins includes confession of sins, surely evidence of repentance, and prayer. In addition to the statement of John, which promises forgiveness of the Lord, if we confess our sins, James added, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16).

From these Scriptures we are forced to the inevitable conclusions that the Lord will forgive all sins a brother confesses. But there is a sin unto death which the Lord will not forgive, therefore, the "sin unto death," or the "un-pardonable sin," of 1 John 5:16-17, must be the sin, or sins which a brother will not confess. If a brother is guilty of certain sins and will not repent and confess his sins, there is no need for Christians to pray for such a brother. The Lord will not answer a prayer on behalf of a child of God who is living in sin and refuses to confess his sins.

Holy Spirit Through Christ

Every sin and blasphemy committed today is accounted against Christ, the one perfect sin offering, and not against the Holy Spirit. While Jesus was on earth, performing the marvelous miracles, it was the Holy Spirit, through Him, accomplishing such great wonders. He declared that "I cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28).

The Pharisees sinned against the Holy Spirit by blaspheming, or speaking against the Holy Spirit, in that they declared that Jesus performed the miracle by Beelzebub , the prince of the devils. There was no forgiveness for them!

Christ Through Holy Spirit

Before Christ returned to the Father He chose the apos-tles, as His ambassadors, and committed unto them the word of reconciliation by which man might become recon-ciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). The apostles were informed by Christ that the Holy Spirit would be sent by Him from the Father with the message of Christ for man's salvation. The Holy Spirit was to receive the message from Christ and reveal it unto the apostles. Hear Him! I say, are you listening?

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father bath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:12-15).

Order Now Reversed The order has now been reversed. When Jesus was on earth the Holy. Spirit operated through Him, but after the Lord returned to the Father, He sent the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, to the apostles and operated through the agency of the Holy Spirit in guiding them into all truth. While Jesus was on earth and the Holy Spirit performed miracles through Him, the Pharisees blasphemed the Holy Spirit by declaring the work to be that of the devil. That is when Christ declared they would not be forgiven, in that age (Jewish age), neither in the age (Chris-tian age) to come. Today the Holy Spirit no longer operates through Christ, but on the contrary, Jesus operates through the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-18). The Holy Spirit operates

through the word revealed to the apostles, which was written and was confirmed by the miraculous work of the Spirit , now known as the New Testament (John 14:26; John 16:13; Hebrews 2:3; Mark 16:20).

All sins and transgressions since the death and ascension of Christ, therefore, are committed against Christ and not against the Holy Spirit. When the Lord pronounced the penalty of unforgiveness upon the Pharisees, because of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, He, furthermore, declared that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and "whosoever speaketh a word against (blaspheme) the Son of man it shall be forgiven him" (Matthew 12:31-32).

But someone might suggest, "Is not the Holy Spirit in-volved with Christ when man sins against the Son of God?" Yes! So was Christ very much involved when the Holy Spirit performed the miracle through Him which brought forth the severe pronouncement of unforgiveness upon the Phari-sees. Jesus declared the sin was against the Holy Spirit and not him. An agent for a firm may have a very speci-fic relationship and responsibility to the firm, but it is the firm, or principal, to whom any credit or discredit is due when the performance of that firm is in question.

Man may commit grievous sins against Christ, the principal, and sin indirectly against the Holy Spirit, the agent, but such sins are against the Son of man and may be forgiven upon complying with the conditions certified in the gospel. If sins against Christ and the Holy Spirit were unpardonable, then it would seem the infidel and atheist would have no chance for forgiveness, even though they might desire to repent and obey the gospel.

All sins and transgressions, since the cross, have been against Christ and may be forgiven; therefore, there is no unpardonable sin today. The sin against the Holy Spirit was committed by those Pharisees who accused Jesus of performing a miracle by the power of the devil, when in reality, He had performed the miracle by the power of the Spirit. They blasphemed the Holy Spirit. As a penalty , Christ declared they would not be forgiven therefore, they committed an unpardonable sin, the only reference to such a hopeless condition of life and destiny revealed in the Bible. In the same scripture our Lord gave full assurance that every sin and blasphemy against the "Son of man" shall be forgiven him. Today the gospel of Christ is to be preached to every man on earth and any man on earth may be saved by obeying the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). Are your sins pardoned, or unpardoned?

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. Who was said to have committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

2. What was the nature of the offense?
3. Could the offenders expect forgiveness?
4. What was meant by "neither in the world to come?"
5. May all sins against Christ be forgiven?
6. Was the sin against the Holy Spirit an unpardonable sin?

7. What is the difference between the operation of the Holy Spirit when Christ performed the miracle, and charged that some blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and the operation of the Holy Spirit after His return to the Father?

8. Is it possible for man to sin against the Holy Spirit, or commit an unpardonable sin today?

Witness of the Spirit

WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

My friends, how may a person know that he is saved? Is it possible for one to know that he is a Christian and has the promise of eternal life? These questions concern the destiny of your soul. Are you saved? Are you sure? How do you know?

Listen to these words of inspiration, Romans 8:14-16 : "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, where-by we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

In verse 16 of this text Paul declared, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

From this divine truth we are given a basis for the conclusion, "that we are children of God." The exclusive basis for this conclusion, revealed by the apostle, must be the fact that the "Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit ," confirming the fact that one is a child of God, which is witnessed by his spirit of obedience to God.

Beloved, there are thousands and thousands of sincere people in this world holding to a false hope that they are saved, a false sense of security, as a result of resting their hope on the basis of an improper witness to their spirit. They say, and sincerely so, "I feel like I am saved. I am perfectly satisfied that God has saved me from sin. I know I am saved."

I would not doubt the honesty and sincerity of people making such claims, but don't you know, my friends, honesty and sincerity alone are not evidences of salvation? Don't you know that anyone can be honestly mistaken?

Right or Wrong? Who is there in our great audience of possibly hundreds of thousands of people, who has not had the experience of being 100 % wrong about the matter; yet, all the while, was honestly and sincerely convinced that he was right, beyond question, until he learned that his spirit had borne witness to a false spirit; that his feelings and convictions were based on false information.

Don't you know, my friends, that a person can be just as honestly and sincerely wrong about a matter as one can be honestly and sincerely right about a thing? Honesty and sincerity are true virtues of a disciple. A dishonest and insincere person could not please God, but the honest and sincere spirit of an individual must bear witness with an authoritative spirit of truth, if the assurance of salvation is to be enjoyed.

The apostle Paul gave his own testimony concerning his zeal, honesty and integrity; yet, he declared he was a "chief of sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15). Hear Him!

"I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city as the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are in this day" (Acts 22:3).

"And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1).

Surely we would not deny the honesty and sincerity of the spirit of the heathen mother who feeds her own child to the crocodiles to please her "god." But her honest and sincere spirit is wrong and the God of Heaven is displeased with such inhuman and ungodly acts. An honest and sincere spirit, but based on totally false, ungodlike information!

Hear me, ladies and gentlemen! Are you listening? The honest and sincere belief of a falsehood will produce the same effect upon a man, as the honest and sincere belief of truth. Just because you "feel like" you are saved is no definite and conclusive evidence that you are saved.

Yes, one may know when he is saved, but such knowledge must not depend on feelings and convictions alone. Our knowledge, our feelings and convictions, must be predicated upon unimpeachable evidence. Only the truth can produce convictions with the full assurance of salvation. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The apostle did not say that the Holy Spirit bears witness to our spirit. If this were true, then our spirit would be a judge and not a witness at all. Unfortunately, it seems many people prefer to submit their spirit, or their feelings, as evidence of salvation and expect the Holy Spirit to bear witness to their feelings and experiences. This is a most serious mistake. We must recognize the divine witness, the Holy Spirit, as the authoritative witness. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit; not to our spirit!

Truth, Witness of Spirit The question now for consideration is, what is the witness of the Spirit? Let us appeal to the divine testimony and evidence in God's word. In 1 John 5:6 the apostle declared, ". . . and it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is the truth."

Paul, the inspired apostle, declared that the Holy Spirit, must bear witness that we are children of God (Romans 8:16). John announced that the Spirit, obviously the Holy Spirit, which beareth witness, is the truth (1 John 5:6). The truth is the Spirit; the Spirit is the witness: therefore, the witness, attesting to the salvation of man's soul, from sin, must be the truth, the word of God.

The apostle declared, "the Spirit is the truth." May we inquire, in what sense is the Spirit the truth?

In the prayer of our Lord which He prayed for His disciples, He said, "Sanctify them in truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17). According to John 6:63, Jesus declared, ". . . the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

From these scriptural texts it must be concluded that the Spirit, that beareth witness, is the truth (1 John 5:6); the truth is the word of God (John 17:17) and the word of God is the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11). The word of God spoken by the Lord, therefore, is spirit and life (John 6:63).

When we plant the seed of a beautiful flower in a rose garden, we do so knowing that God gave life to that seed, something that no man on earth shall ever do, and because of the life that God

put in the flower seed we expect it to come forth in its array of beauty, revealing the handiwork of Almighty God.

I say to you, beloved, the Spirit to the word of God is the same thing that life is to flower seed. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The Holy Spirit gives life to the word of God, which is the seed of the kingdom of God.

Condemned Without Witness

Either, the seed, the word of God, through which the Holy Spirit bears witness with man's spirit, has been re-ceived in your heart, or it has not. Regardless of your feelings in the matter, if the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, the truth, the gospel of Christ, does not bear witness with your spirit you are not a child of God, and if not a child of God you are lost! Oh, what a terrible calamity for your soul! You need now to search the truth, the word of God, to see if your faith and practice have been directed by the Spirit of God, through His word; or, if your feelings and convictions have been born of the spirit of error, the traditions of parents, or the doctrines and commandments of men. Only if our faith and practice are in harmony with the teachings of Christ, the gospel of Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit, can it be said that we are children of God, because; "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

If the word of God does not teach what you have been practicing in religion, regardless of how honest and sincere you may have been, you are not a Christian, my friends. What a terrible thought! Spend a lifetime on earth, honestly endeavoring to serve God, but lost for eternity because you have really never obeyed the commandments of the Lord. If the Spirit of God through His word, does not bear witness with your spirit, as evidenced by your faith and practice, your spirit is not one of obedience and devo-tion to the Lord. The Lord of heaven said, while He was upon this earth, "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 which is in heaven."

Oh, my friends, hear the Lord as He continues His warning! Are you listening? "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Again Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Regardless of how sincere you may be; regardless of how devoutly religious you may be; regardless of all the good works you do, you must obey the will of God in a loving spirit of obedience, as a faithful son obeys his father, whom he loves; or, in the judgment day hear the Lord say, "De-part from me . . . I never knew you."

The Spirit of God, through the word of God, must bear witness with our spirit, if indeed we are children of God and expect to be saved. The simple question is, as we search our spirit, can we honestly say that we have obeyed the commandments of the Lord, in the true spirit of an obedient child?

Jesus commanded, John 8:24, "Except that ye believe that I am he ye shall die in your sins." Faith is absolutely essential to salvation! (Hebrews 11:6) Do you believe?

Not only does the Christ require faith in Him, but He commands, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3; Luke 13:5). Repent or perish, is the Lord's solemn declaration! Is your spirit in harmony with God's Spirit at this point? Have you really repented?

We further appeal to the witness of the Spirit through the word of God. Hear the Lord in Mark 16:15-16 when he said, "Go ye into all the world and .preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved , but he that believeth not shall be damned."

My friends, honestly, does this divine witness bear wit-ness with your spirit? Have you been baptized into Christ? For what purpose were you baptized? Remember, the divine witness declared, "He that believeth and is bap-tized shall be saved." Does your spirit testify that you were saved when you believed, then you were baptized after you were saved? If so, the Spirit of God does not bear wit-ness with your spirit and you have no assurance of being a child of God.

Testimony of Spirit The testimony that counts is the divine testimony of the Spirit. The one hope of salvation must be predicated upon the faith of the gospel, the unity of the Spirit, the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:3-7). If our Spirit is not dictated and directed by the Holy Spirit through the word of God, as the divine witness, then there just isn't any evidence that we are children of God.

One may know, by his spirit, that he is a child of God through the word of God, which is by faith. The Holy Spirit speaks, testifies, through the word of God, which produces faith. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:16-17).

Again the apostle said: "This only would I learn of you, Receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:2-3).

Before Jesus left this world to return to the Father and send the Spirit, He made known the conditions whereby He, the Father, and the Spirit would give full assurance of salvation. Hear his testimony! Are you listening?

"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. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, 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 14:21-23).

The secret of the rich experience of having the Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God is disclosed by the following divine testimony: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him; he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:5-6).

The apostle concluded, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father and this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:24-25). The three who bear witness to this testi-mony in heaven are: the Father, the Son (Word), and the Holy Spirit: "And these three are one" (1 John 5:7).

Are you sure that you are a child of God?

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. Does the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit, or does our spirit bear witness to the Holy Spirit?

2. How does the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit?

3. May a person's own spirit be deceived?

4. What is the testimony of divine witness that assures salvation?

5. What are the conditions of eternal life, according to the witness of the Spirit?

Indwelling Holy Spirit as a Gift

INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT

There are different "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. In one instance, during the apostolic age of the church, Paul enumerated nine gifts, which were of miraculous nature. Not all Christians possessed these gifts. Miraculous gifts were given for a particular purpose, to last during the infancy of the church. The Holy Spirit, however, dwells in the heart of every child of God today.

Holy Spirit A Gift On the day of the origin of the church, the first time re-mission of sins was offered in the name of Christ, those desiring remission of sins were assured of the "gift" of the Holy Spirit.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles , Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38).

In this Scripture two gifts are promised: the "remission of sins" and the "gift of the Holy Spirit." Remission of sins was the gift to the penitent, baptized believer. The "gift of the Holy Spirit" was evidence of pardon and received as a gift from God. Although baptism is for the remission of sins, it is not an assurance of eternal salvation. Baptism is for the remission of past and alien sins. The Holy Spirit in our heart, bearing fruit in our lives, is an assurance of salvation.

The Holy Spirit is received as a gift by those who obey the gospel. The apostles declared, "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit , whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

The apostle John wrote, "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3:24). The Christian abides in Christ by keeping his commandments. Christ and the Spirit abide in the Christian as he keeps the Lord's commandments.

Holy Spirit Not Seen To deny that the Holy Spirit, as a person, dwells in a Christian because he has not been seen of mortal man would be equal to a denial of God, whom man has not seen.

The apostle John concluded: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4:12-13).

Although man cannot see the person of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Christian any more than he can see the person of God, we do see the fruits and work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life. In the quotation from John it is affirmed that "if we love one another, God abideth in us; hereby we know that we abideth in Him and He in us , because he hath given us of his Spirit."

Fruit of the Spirit The Holy Spirit may be seen in the child of God by the fruits of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,

temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Brethren who hate, bite and devour each other, holding malice and envy in their hearts, give public testimony to the fact that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in them.

Where love rules in the hearts of God's people, the Holy Spirit, Christ, and God are the persons on the throne of the soul.

Joy is the spice of a Christian's life. God's people should be the happiest people on earth. The miserable, unhappy, ever complaining member of the church does not bear evidence of the indwelling spirit.

Peace is the fruit of the Spirit dwelling in the Christian. Our Lord declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the Sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Some of God's children seem to have been born in the objective case and "kickitive" mood; they object to almost everything and kick about almost anything. They do not seem to be happy unless promoting unrest, disturbance, or trouble of some kind. A constant disgruntled person, who is always in trouble in the church, does not have the Spirit of Christ.

Longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control are winning attributes of the Christian who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in his heart. Not only will the Christian, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, be saved, but other souls are influenced to be saved by the fruits of the Spirit revealed in the Christian's life.

If Not Spirit, None of His A most declarative statement is made by the apostle Paul when he said, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man bath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

The Holy Spirit must reign supremely in the Christian's heart; otherwise, he is none of Christ's. Where Christ and the Spirit reign, the deeds of the body are put to death and the fruits of the Spirit are revealed in righteousness.

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:10-11).

The apostle concludes: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are lead by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God . . . The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:12-16).

Spirit Dwells In Body The Holy Spirit dwells in the child of God as long as the child of God has room for him. He does not share his dwelling with the devil. The Holy Spirit is the royal guest in the body of a Christian and, as the deity of God, has the right to dictate the terms and conditions of his abiding in his human temple.

To the Corinthian church. Paul wrote: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore

glorify God in your body , and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The child of God and the Holy Spirit live in the same house. The temple of God must remain Holy. The body is the only dwelling place of the soul of man. When man moves out, by reason of death, the body is dead; the temple is unoccupied. If the Holy Spirit is forced to vacate the temple because of sin and unrighteousness, spiritual death is the result.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

A Christian cannot afford to forfeit his right to have the Holy Spirit occupy the holy chambers of his soul, but the Spirit does not dwell where sin dwells. Jesus, the Son of God, warned man of those things which defile man. Hear him as he declared:

"But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile man . . ." (Matthew 15:18-19).

From this divine declaration we must conclude that man is responsible for all the deeds of his body. All actions and deeds of the body, good or evil, proceed from the heart. When the Holy Spirit reigns on the throne of the Christian's heart, the deeds of the body, borne in the heart, will be none other than the fruits of the spirit, which are good and not evil.

Indwelling Spirit And The Word A question of much concern to many people is, how does the Holy Spirit dwell in a Christian? Does the Spirit dwell in a child of God independently of the word of God?

Today I am alive. My spirit dwells in me. If you ask me how? I can not fully explain, but there are some conditions for the abode of my spirit in this mortal body. When I die my spirit will no longer dwell in this body. Likewise, there are certain conditions upon which the Holy Spirit dwells in the body of a child of God.

Filled With Spirit Filled With God In Ephesians 5:18 Paul exhorts, "Be filled with the Spirit." Yet, the same apostle admonishes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16). To be filled with the Spirit, therefore, is to have the word of Christ richly dwelling in a Christian. It must be remembered that the spirit is life to the word. Jesus said: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

We are not to confuse the exhortation to be "filled with the Spirit" with the promise of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." One might fill a jug with water, yet not "baptize" the jug in water. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15), yet he was not baptized with the Holy Spirit and worked no miracles (John 10:41). The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise to the apostles which was fulfilled on Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2 nd chapter, as we have discussed previously.

Life In The Seed The Holy Spirit gave the regenerating life to the word of God, which is the "seed of the kingdom," and is the perpetuator of life in the born again child of God (John 6:63; 1 John 5:7; Luke 8:11). The child of God is be-gotten by the Spirit through the word of God (John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

The Holy Spirit, as a person, does dwell in the body of a child of God, having begotten life through the seed. Man's own spirit dwells in the natural body, having been begotten through the seed which produces natural life. It is not within the realm of human wisdom to fully understand how this is possible regarding spiritual life, or natural life. It is a fact! Just how and to what extent God, in His providence, through the Spirit, may overrule and direct the life of His children we are not prepared to say. Surely that is God's part. Our part is to follow the direction of the dictates of the Spirit through the word of God and trust Him. Men may speculate on how the Spirit intervenes on behalf of the child of God, but that does not change the fact that the body of a Christian "is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Word of God Spiritual Food

Man is born into this world through life in the seed by which he was begotten. Unless that life is sustained by proper nourishment and treatment the Spirit will move out of the body. We call it death. The child of God is "born again" by the Spirit giving life to the seed, the word, by which he is begotten. The spiritual life must continually be nourished by the word of God which sustains and perpetuates life and growth of a Christian. Unless the child of God receives proper spiritual nourishment and engages in proper spiritual exercises and activities, he will die spiritually. The Holy Spirit moves out!

The apostle John surely refers to the spiritual life of a child of God declaring that this new begotten life is sustained and maintained "because his seed abideth in him" (1 John 3:9). The apostle positively does not mean in this scripture that a child of God cannot sin for the same apostle in the same epistle, chapter one and verse eight, declares: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our-selves, and the truth is not in us." The child of God, how-ever, who does "walk in the light, as he is the light" has the assurance that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7; 1 John 1:9). This spiritual life is predicated upon the promise that "his seed remaineth in us." If the seed is not nourished to active spiritual growth, the child of God will die spiritually. He will be lost!

Sealed By Holy Spirit The Christian has the seal of promise by the Holy Spirit, which is an earnest of the inheritance.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The apostle made the same declaration to the children of God at Corinth, "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 1:22).

The earnest of the Holy Spirit is the seal of promise, the guarantee deposit, from the highest power there is, an omnipotent God, assuring the child of God of his eternal inheritance and final redemption. The child of God, therefore, must not grieve the Holy Spirit, nor force him out of the dwelling place occupied by both the Christian and the Holy Spirit. Paul admonishes the Ephesian Christians, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God where-by ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

Holy Spirit Intercedes The Holy Spirit in the Christian intercedes and helps to bear his infirmities. Hear the apostle! Are you listening?

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

When the Holy Spirit and Christ reign in the Christian's heart, the power to sustain and strengthen him is beyond human measure.

Indwelling of Spirit A Reality

It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the body of a Christian that will quicken the mortal body on the resurrection day. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Romans 8:10-12). The indwelling Spirit enables the Christian to put to death the deeds of the body. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). Our access to God is affected by the indwelling Spirit. The indwelling Spirit, which generates life to the child of God, has a distinct relationship to the word of God through faith. Hear the apostle! "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). But access by the Spirit is predicated upon faith in God through His word. ". . . by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2). This grace, to which we have access by faith, appears unto man teaching him (Titus 2:11-12).

One of the great difficulties in understanding the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person, who dwells in the child of God, is the fact that so many people do not recognize the Holy Spirit as a person, but consider him as an influence, a power, or an ideology. But the Holy Spirit is a person; one of the Godhead, three; omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal. If it be a matter of rejecting the reign of the Holy Spirit, as a person, in the Christian and his body, as a temple, because it is not "reasonable," then one would be forced to deny his own existence in the body because no man on earth could identify the soul of man the person who lives in the body, by any physical measurements or identities.

Glory of His Personality The glory of the personality of the Spirit is described by David when he said:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasseth my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the

darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalms 139:1-12).

The Christian may not fully comprehend the Spirit and his divine personality, but we can comprehend his message, his methods and the fruits of his power. The "gift of the Holy Spirit" is God's gift to his children that obey him, the gift of the Spirit himself. Lift high your own spirit to the mountain top of God's infinite power; catch a vision of the glory of the divine spirit who will live with you and abide in the same house with you in your body, until the time shall come when He will transform our mortal bodies into the glorious image of Him who died for us that we might live with him in eternity.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as the by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Php 3:20-21).

INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). No human tongue can describe the glory that shall be revealed to the saints of God who have been kept by the power of God unto that day. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus; come into my heart to stay!

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION 1. What are the two gifts promised to one who became a child of God?

2. What is the "gift of the Holy Spirit" of Acts 2:38?

3. May one receive "remission of sins" and the "gift of the Holy Spirit" without obedience to the gospel?

4. Does the Holy Spirit dwell in the child of God?

5. What are evidences of the indwelling Spirit?

6. What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the word of God? Life and seed?

7. Does the Holy Spirit dwell where sin dwells?

8. May a child of God die spiritually?

9. What are the conditions which assure the child of God eternal salvation?

10. What is the relationship of access to God by the Spirit and access into the grace of God by faith?

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