

# “I WILL SEND UNTO YOU THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH”



Cover: Isidro Chavez

-Guy V. Caskey

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

The word **spirit** is used 385 times in the New Testament. In 95 of those passages, the term **Holy Spirit** is employed. In 138 passages, other expressions are found like "the Spirit of God", "the Spirit of the Lord", "the Spirit of Christ", "the Spirit of truth", "the Spirit of life", "the Spirit of the living God", "my Spirit", and frequently just "the Spirit". But 233 times in the New Testament alone the term is used of the Holy Spirit.

One would think that with so many passages telling who the Holy Spirit is and what he does there could be no possibility of misunderstanding. But such is not the case. There is no subject, I am confident, with which the Bible deals where there are more misconceptions, distorted views and inaccurate images than of the Holy Spirit. He is pictured as a *glorified it*. Reams have been written to teach that he is a mere *influence*, or some impersonal *vague force*. "As for the 'Holy Spirit', the so-called third person in the trinity, we have already seen that he is not a person, but God's active force" (*The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life*, page 24).

Millions of people over the world who have been taught that the Holy Spirit is a person have such illogical and unbiblical pictures of what he does in the lives of people. He seems to seize them and send them into some kind of hysterical frenzy. They become contortionists, rolling on the ground, kicking their feet over their heads, assuming all sorts of unnatural positions of the body. Accompanying all of this is an outpouring of gibberish, rapid, incoherent and unintelligible chatter. It is all a meaningless jargon, resembling in no way a language, and understood, of course, by no one. The Holy Spirit is supposed to be responsible for this kind of conduct; but the Holy Spirit never made anyone act like a fool. I have witnessed the primitive religious rites and practices of voodoo services in Haiti and can attest that they are not radically different from some religious services I have attended of prominent denominations of Christendom in cities of the United States and other countries.

It has been inexplicable to me how otherwise good and honest people can understand how God and Christ can come into and dwell in the Christian's life and he is able to maintain a sensible

state of balance and adjustment in his affairs, but if the Holy Spirit enters his heart, he completely loses his equilibrium!

The Holy Spirit is a person, and as a person, he possesses such attributes as self-consciousness. "And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit" (I Corinthians 2:13). You will be aware, as you read this passage, that the Holy Spirit teaches and interprets the word of God. He is, therefore, a person.

He subsists in individuality and identity. "It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). This is a reflexive pronoun, "the Spirit himself" and brings to view the fact that he is an individual who is able to testify, or produce evidence concerning the genuineness of the Christian's conversion.

He is endowed with intuitive reason. By that is meant that he *knows*. He has the power, the capability of knowing. "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 2:11).

The Holy Spirit possesses free will. "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

He possesses a rational nature. "And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world" (Acts 11:28).

## PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit possesses those characteristics and qualities which make him a person. Let me give you a brief list of them: (a) He has a mind. "And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit . . ." (Romans 8:27). (b) He speaks. "Now the Spirit expressly says . . ." (I Timothy 4:1). (c) He teaches. "Because no prophecy ever came by the

impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (II Peter 1:21). (d) He bears witness. "But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me" (John 15:26). (e) He guides and leads. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:14). (f) He gives knowledge and wisdom. "To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge by the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:8).

## A LIST OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES

To help the student of the Bible in the study of this subject, I hereby submit a list of some length about what the Holy Spirit does. It should help in better understanding the topic, motivate to further study and research and also assist in refuting false doctrine with which he will most certainly meet as he goes out to teach his fellowman.

1. He quickens or makes alive. "It is the Spirit that gives life ..." (John 6:63). "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Romans 8:11). (See also: II Corinthians 3:6; I Peter 3:18).
2. He shows, or signifies. "By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing . . ." (Hebrews 9:8; Acts 11:28).
3. He refuses or forbids. "And when they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them" (Acts 16:7).
4. He helps. ""Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness" (Romans 8:26).
5. He makes intercession. "For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us . . ." (ibid.).
6. He reveals. ". . . which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5).

7. He searches (I Corinthians 2:10).
8. He changes men (II Corinthians 3:18).
9. He promises (Galatians 3:8, 14, 18, 29).
10. He strengthens ((Ephesians 3:16).
11. He sanctifies (II Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 15:16).
12. He invites (Revelation 22:17).
13. He seals (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).
14. He writes (II Corinthians 3:3).
15. He makes overseers (Acts 20:28).
16. He moved men (carried them along) (II Peter 1:21).
17. He dwells in the body of Christians (I Corinthians 6:19).

## OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. He has affections (Romans 15:30).
2. He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10).
3. He possesses a will (I Corinthians 12:11).
4. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3).
5. He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).
6. He can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:32).

## THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE GODHEAD

His Work In The Gospel:

1. It is the gospel of the Spirit (I Thessalonians 1:5,6).
2. It is the gospel of God (Romans 1:1; 15:16).
3. It is the gospel of Christ (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:16; 15:19; I Corinthians 9:12; II Corinthians 2:12).

His part In Our Salvation:

1. The Spirit saves (Titus 3:5).
2. God saves (I Timothy 2:3; Titus 3:4).
3. Christ saves (Matthew 1:21; Titus 3:6; Luke 19:10).

His Work In Sanctification: (*Sanctify* and *save* are synonymous terms). *Sanctify* means "to separate, to set apart,

to segregate", and *save* means "to rescue, to release, to deliver, to preserve".

#### His Part In The Building Of The Church:

1. The Holy Spirit built the church (Ephesians 2:22).
2. God built the church (Hebrews 3:4).
3. Christ built the church (Matthew 16:18).

#### What Function He Had In The Revelation Of Christ:

1. The Spirit revealed the Son of God (Luke 2:26; Romans 1:4).
2. God revealed the Son (Matthew 16:18; 3:17; 17:5).
3. Christ revealed the Son of God (Matthew 26:63,64; John 10:36).

#### We Are Said To Be Born Of The Three In The Godhead:

1. We are born of the Spirit (John 3:5).
2. We are born of God (I John 3:9; 4:7).
3. We are born of Christ (I Peter 1:3; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23-25).

You are able to see and conclude from these many passages that the Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force, an external influence, or just the exercise of God's power in the world. Some speak of him as if he were some accessory which God uses in his enterprises, a kind of supplementary energy which he calls upon in the performance of certain tasks. He is a person.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DEITY

The Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of divinity. (1) He is eternal. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God . . ." (Hebrews 9:14).

(2) He is omniscient. That means "having infinite knowledge, knowing all things." "What no eye has seen, nor ear

heard, nor the heart of man conceived . . . God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (I Corinthians 2:9, 10).

- (3) He is omnipotent. And this means "having unlimited power, ability, authority. All-powerful." "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might . . ." (Micah 3:8).
- (4) He is omnipresent. And this means "present in all places at the same time." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (Psalm 139:7-10).

### The Holy Spirit Is God:

1. In lying to the Holy Spirit, Ananias and Sapphira lied to God (Acts 5:3,4).
2. The Holy Spirit begat Jesus, and he is called the Son of God (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:30-35).
3. The Holy Spirit is Lord (II Corinthians 3:17).
4. The Holy Spirit is seen as one in the Godhead:
  - a. We are baptized into a relationship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
  - b. Unity of the three: One Spirit, one Lord, one God (Ephesians 4:4,5).
  - c. Note the three in all these passages: (John 14:26; 16:13-15; 14:16-18).
  - d. Promises of the three (Romans 8:12-17).
  - e. Paul invokes the blessings of the three (II Corinthians 13:14).
  - f. Salvation of man provided by the three (I Peter 1:2).
  - g. Greetings from the three (Revelation 1:4-10).

## WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DID FOR THE APOSTLES

For a full and accurate understanding of the Holy Spirit's work, it is necessary that we examine what he did for the apostles in that first century. There are several questions that are appropriate to ask. How did the Holy Spirit prepare them? With what did he provide them? How did he care for them? Did he give them something beyond what they could supply? The

answers to these questions will be found in this considerable list:

1. He revealed the truth to them. "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has *revealed* to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God" (I Corinthians 2:9,10). A similar statement is made by Paul to the Ephesians: "When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been *revealed* to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5). Here is another passage which discusses the same subject: "It was *revealed* to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look" (I Peter 1:12).

The word *revealed* (*apokalupto*) is defined by New Testament language scholars: "to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up, to disclose, make bare; to make known, make manifest what before was unknown" (Thayer). "To be plainly signified, distinctly declared, to know, set forth, announced, discovered, to make to appear" (Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon).

These passages, using the word *revealed*, are conveying to us one of the works of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit "removed the cover" so that they could see God's will and, in turn, preach it and write it down for all generations to come. Not only did the Holy Spirit uncover God's will to men, but in these passages he tells us that it was done plainly and distinctly so that men could understand. So, the Bible is not a book to be understood by a chosen few. You may know that it is not the business of the church to *interpret* the Bible and give you its meaning, and that, otherwise, the Bible is a *dead letter* and worth nothing. This is false doctrine to mislead and dupe the masses of people over the world.

There are other terms than *revealed* which communicate to us what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles and the benefits which accrue to us. The word *know* (*ginosko*) is one of them:



Jesus said to those Jews that believed on him, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Later John wrote another letter saying, "You have *known* him that was from the beginning" (I John 2:13). And again, "Hereby *know* we the Spirit of truth" (I John 4:6).

This word *know* means "to perceive, to ascertain by examination, to understand, to be assured" (Analytical Greek Lexicon). Among other things Thayer says about the word is this: "to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of, to readily understand, to recognize." The Lord transmitted the *knowledge* of God's will to the apostles and they, afterwards, disseminated this good news of life and salvation to a world that was lost. They passed it on to us, first, orally and then in written document. Now we can *know, understand, recognize, perceive* the gospel of Christ. This is what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles so that they could establish the truth for us.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesian church, he said: "To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known . . ." (Ephesians 3:8-10). He used the term *to see* or *to enlighten* in this statement. It is translated from the Greek word *photisai* and means "to light, give light to, illuminate, to enlighten spiritually, to reveal, to make known" (Analytical Greek Lexicon). It is a term from which we get our English word *photograph*. Paul and his fellow-apostles were given this light of the knowledge of the will of God that they might broadcast it to the world. What a blessing this is to us and to all mankind! We ought not to cease thanking God for what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles, for it is through their instrumentality that we have received the message of truth, designed to set men free.

2. He inspired them. Jesus defined *inspiration* when he said to the apostles: "And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11,12).

Later, Jesus said again to them: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict" (Luke 21:15).

Matthew's record of this promise of Jesus to the apostles is almost identical to Luke's account: "When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:19,20).

Another passage which helps us understand what *inspiration* is: "And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit . . ." The Spirit did the teaching through the apostles. A representative example of this is found in Peter's sermon on Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2: "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all of those who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). Peter did not understand who those people were who "were afar off", and it took him ten years and several miracles later to be convinced that God had "granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles also". But the Spirit spoke through him on Pentecost. That is inspiration!

"And they (the apostles) were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

"All scripture is inspired of God . . ." (II Timothy 3:16). The word *inspiration* is *theopneustos* and literally means *God-spirited, or God-breathed*. The scriptures are the product of the *in-breathing* of God. God breathed into the apostles and enabled them to speak and write his words inerrantly - that is, without error, without making a mistake. That is inspiration!

3. He taught them all things. "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ." (Matthew 20:28). The word for *teach* in this verse is *didaskontes* and means "to give instruction, speak in a public assembly, to direct, admonish, to teach." They were schooled and educated by Jesus for three and a half years, but it was not possible for them to repeat and inculcate all that he had taught them without some assistance. This was the work of the Holy Spirit. This is what he did for

the apostles.

4. He brought to their remembrance all that he had taught them. "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). Your translation may call him the *Comforter*. *Counselor* is likely a better English rendering, but the Greek word is *parakletos* and means "one called or sent for to assist another; an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another; one present to render various beneficial service, and thus a Paraclete, whose influence and operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ himself." It literally meant "one whom Jesus would call to stand by their side." The reason they needed him to "stand by their side" was to enable them to remember all that Jesus had taught them so that they could disclose his message to lost and dying men everywhere.

5. He guided them into all truth and showed them things to come. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth . . ." (John 16:13). "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (II Peter 1:3).

Let us make a simple analysis of some of these things Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles: (1) He would send the Holy Spirit to them to stand by their side and assist them in their task of spreading the gospel (2) He would teach them all things which he had said to them (3) He would bring to their remembrance all that he had taught them (4) He would guide them into all the truth (5) And he has granted through his divine wisdom all things which pertain to life and godliness. Not only are these some of the things which the Holy Spirit did for the apostles but it informs us that he thus provided all that they would need in their mission to the world. If he furnished them with all truth, please tell us what other truth there can be than that which they spoke and recorded?

We hear in our day of *additional revelation, progressional revelation, new revelation, visions and dreams, confrontations with Jesus, a still small voice, miraculous experiences with the*

Lord. How can men contend for such when Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles all the truth, and bring to their remembrance all that he had previously spoken to them? It is my opinion that you would rather accept what Jesus said on the subject than to be deceived and misled by the false claims of modern denominational leaders.

6. He enabled them to speak in *tongues*, or languages they had not studied. On Pentecost, the apostles "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance . . . And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?" (Acts 2:4, 6, 8).

There are two things to which I call your attention in these verses: (1) The Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to speak in these languages. The expression is "as the Spirit gave them utterance". The word in the New Testament is *apophtheggomai*. Young, in his Analytical Concordance to the Bible, defines the word "to speak sententiously", and that has to do with expressing much in words. The Holy Spirit gave them the power to "speak much" in other languages. What they spoke, of course, was the gospel. The Analytical Greek Lexicon defines the word: "to speak out, declare, particularly solemn, weighty" matters.

(2) There are two different words used for *languages*. One is *glossais* and the other is *dialektos*. The first one, *glossa*, is defined, as it was used in the New Testament, "the tongue, speech, talk, language; a language not proper to a speaker, a gift or faculty of such language" (Analytical Greek Lexicon). Kittel says that the word means "language", and offers Acts 2:11 as an example of it: "We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." The context itself makes clear that *tongues* in this passage is used metaphorically for *languages*.

The other word used in Acts chapter 2 is *dialektos*. The scholars define it "dialect, vernacular". As it is used in this setting it is "a spoken language peculiar to a region or country." There were

some fifteen different languages represented on Pentecost and in which the apostles spoke. My point here is that they spoke in languages that the hearers could understand, even the languages in which they were born; and they were not some ecstatic, excited jargon. It is contended that the Christians in the church at Corinth spoke in *tongues* which no one understood but God. That what they were saying was a gobbledgook, mumbo jumbo, gibberish; and the proof of this is I Corinthians 14:2: "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit."

The problem with such a conclusion is that the passage is not considered in its Biblical environment. If you take a passage out of its milieu, or its surroundings, you could likely prove anything upon which you set your heart to believe. A passage must not be taken out of its context. Paul is commenting on the fact that a man who has the miraculous gift of speaking in a *tongue* or a *language* which nobody in the congregation understands cannot be speaking to men but to God. He said to them: "If you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air" (I Corinthians 14:9). That is why he issued the directive: "Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret" (verse 13). The reason for that, he said, was "so that the church may be edified" (verse 5). Further he said: "How can anyone in the position of an outsider say *Amen* to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?" Further elaborating the subject, he said that he spoke in tongues, or languages, more than any of them, "nevertheless, in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (verse 19).

7. He (the Holy Spirit) empowered them (the apostles) to work miracles. "Many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (Acts 2:43). "But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, as recognized him as the

one who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him" (Acts 3:6-10. Read also Acts 33-41). "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works" (II Corinthians 12:12). These miracles, wonders and signs which the apostles were empowered to perform were done by the Holy Spirit. "Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:4). Even Jesus said: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God . . ." (Matthew 12:28).

The Holy Spirit empowered them to work miracles for several reasons: (1) They served as the credentials of the apostles - that is, they were proof that they were men sent from God (2) They were for the purpose of inducing men to hear and believe the message which the apostles proclaimed. Such miracles as tongues were a "sign for unbelievers" (I Corinthians 14:22). Paul performed miracles, confirming the word of God (Mark 16:20), "and the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily" (Acts 19:20). Peter performed a miracle on Aeneas who had been bed-ridden for eight years and was paralyzed. As a result of this miracle, "all the residents of Lydda and Sharon . . . turned to the Lord" (Acts 9:33-35).

It should be remembered that they did not have the gospel in written form in those days. It was in the process of being promulgated to the world. Later, John said, ""These (miracles) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing that you may have life through his name" (John 20:30, 31).

In speaking of imbuing them with power, Jesus said just before his ascension: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses . . ." (Acts 1:8). So, from the passages we have read, we conclude that the Holy Spirit (1) empowered the apostles (2) made them witnesses of Jesus. They saw him, heard him, were present with him and they proved it by the power the Holy Spirit gave them. "They went everywhere preaching the word, the Lord working with them and confirming the message by the signs attending it" (Mark 16:20). Jesus told the apostles: "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city,

until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

8. He enabled them to confirm the word of God. The Greek word for *confirm* is *bebaioo* and it means "to confirm, establish, to strengthen or establish by arguments or proofs, ratify, to verify" (Analytical Greek Lexicon). This word, with its cognates, is used nineteen (19) times in the New Testament. This is a very strong term and I would like to point out some of the implications of it. It means to establish as true what may have been doubtful or uncertain. It carries with it the idea of *substantiating* a thing by producing evidence that proves the validity of what has been said. There is the additional thought of *corroborating*, which suggests the strengthening of a statement or testimony of another. In this case, it would be the Holy Spirit who corroborated the preaching of the apostles with the testimony of miracles, wonders and signs which attended that preaching. Still another thought in the word *confirm* is to *verify*, or prove to be true or correct by investigation or comparison with a standard, or reference to ascertainable facts. For instance, the man at the Gate Beautiful in Jerusalem had been an invalid for more than forty years. Thousands of people had seen him daily. That he now walked, leaped and praised God was beyond any question (Acts 3). The Lord had given him "perfect soundness in the presence of them all". There is one other thought implied in *confirm* and it is to *authenticate*. This infers "proof of genuineness by an authority".

"And they (the apostles) went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it" (Mark 19:20).

"For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested (confirmed) to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will" (Hebrews 2:2-4). It is here clearly stated that (1) the Lord first declared the message (2) it was attested, or confirmed to us by those who heard him (3) God bore witness by miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The truth of the gospel was established then and for all time to

come by miracles, wonders and signs the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform. Once the truth was revealed and confirmed, the need for miracles ceased (I Corinthians 13:10).

9. The Holy Spirit made the apostles witnesses. "But when the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26,27).

Please observe these three things Jesus said in this passage: (1) The Holy Spirit bore witness to Jesus (2) The apostles also were witnesses (3) They could be witnesses because they had been with him from the beginning. This harmonizes with the meaning of the word *witness* as it is used in the New Testament. The verb form of the word is *martureo* and Kittel, the German scholar, says in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*: "It is first used in the New Testament for the declaration or confirmation, on the basis of first-hand knowledge." When he defines *martus*, which is the noun form, he says: "The original sense of witness to facts, i.e., the man who can speak about them from his own direct knowledge." He states that even in non-Biblical Greek, the meaning is the same: "Witness to the Facts in the Legal Sphere. The proper sphere of *martus* is the legal, where it denotes one who can and does speak from personal experience about actions in which he took part and which happened to him, or about persons and relations known to him."

Thayer's definitions of the words coincide with Kittel's exegesis:

"To affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. In the New Testament the apostles are said *marturein* (to witness), as those who had been eye and ear-witnesses of the extraordinary sayings, deeds and sufferings of Jesus, which proved his Messiahship; so too Paul, as one to whom the risen Christ had visibly appeared." In defining *martus* (a witness), Thayer continues: "One who avers, or can aver, what he himself has seen or heard or knows by any other means . . . one who is a spectator of anything."

Bullinger, in his *Critical Lexicon And Concordance To The*



*English And Greek New Testament*, gives this definition: "One who has remembrance or knowledge of anything, and hence, one who can give information, or bring to light, or confirm anything."

These terms, *witness*, *witnessing*, have been so abused and misapplied today, they scarcely resemble the original meanings. In the New Testament sense, no one can be a witness to the things that transpired with the Lord or to what he taught. We can read, study and preach the gospel to others, and we can relate what Christ through the gospel has done in our lives, but we cannot be *witnesses*, for several reasons: (1) We did not see nor hear him personally (2) We were not with him from the beginning as were the twelve (3) We did not see him as Paul saw him (4) The gospel would be true if we had never lived on the earth. We cannot give witness or testimony to the authenticity of the message. That has already been done. It needs no further verification. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles that ability and power and the story is now complete and perfect.

Let us read a number of New Testament passages that not only strengthen what has been said but which establish that truth and settle it for all time to come:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

"For you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard" (Acts 22:15).

"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain" (II Peter 1:16-18).

**"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you. . . "** (I John 1:1-3).

In this passage, John says, "we testify to it". He here used the word *witness* which is from *martureo*. So, we see (1) who a witness was (2) what a witness did (3) that the Holy Spirit enabled them to be witnesses.

**10. The Holy Spirit provided for them divine, miraculous protection:**

**"They will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:19). An example of this actually happening is found in Acts 28:1-5: "After we had escaped, we then learned that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, when a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.' He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm."**

**Another instance of this divine, miraculous protection of these men providentially and specially prepared for the transmission of the gospel to the world:**

**"So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. The very night when Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison; and behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, 'Get up quickly.' And the**

chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, 'Dress yourself and put on you sandals.' And he did so. And he said to him, 'Wrap your mantle around you and follow me.' And he went out and followed him; he did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street; and immediately the angel left him. And Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting'" (Acts 12:5-11). This is the divine, miraculous protection of which I have spoken that was provided for the apostles. The Holy Spirit was the *Paraclete*, the one who stood by their side to assist them in their work and who provided that protection so that they could accomplish what they had been sent to do.

11. The Holy Spirit enables the apostles to impart miraculous gifts to others. Here are some passages that point up this truth:

Seven servants, or deacons, were selected by the congregation in Jerusalem to attend to the needs of the Hellenist widows in the church. "These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them . . . And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:6, 8).

Philip was one of those seven deacons chosen to serve in this special work in the Jerusalem church. He was also an evangelist. The apostles had laid their hands upon him. Here is what is said about the miraculous gifts they imparted to him: "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did. For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed . . ." A bit later it is said: "Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized, he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed" (Acts 8:5-7, 13).

Two of the apostles, Peter and John, came down to Samaria,

following the great success Philip had had in the gospel meetings conducted in that city. They laid their hands on Christians there. But let us read it from the text: "Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power, that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 8:17-19). The context shows that receiving the Holy Spirit here had reference to the impartation of miraculous gifts, for these reasons: (1) Miracles were being performed and this is what attracted at first the attention of the people, and particularly Simon's attention (2) Simon said, 'Give me this power', having reference to the power of imparting miraculous gifts to others (3) These Christians had already received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when they were baptized. On Pentecost, Peter had said: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). So, it is not a question of their receiving the Holy Spirit twice! When they obeyed Christ, they received the Holy Spirit. When the apostles later laid their hands on them, they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Paul found some disciples in Ephesus one time in his travels. They had been baptized unto John's baptism. He taught them further and baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:5, 6). Paul, an apostle, had the power, given to him by the Holy Spirit, to impart certain gifts, such as speaking in a language one had not studied and prophesying.

In writing to the Roman Christians, he said: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift . . ." (Romans 1:11). Notice, Paul said, "I", an apostle, may impart a spiritual gift to you! One reason I know that people do not now possess spiritual, miraculous gifts is that there is no apostle to impart them!

One other passage upon this subject. Paul wrote to his son in the gospel, Timothy, and encouraged him: "Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying

on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6).

12. The Holy Spirit dwelt in the apostles. He not only empowered them in all these different ways we have discussed thus far, but he indwelt them. "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

There are three things I would like you to observe in this passage and promise: (1) Jesus promised that the *Paraclete* would come. I would like to re-emphasize that the word means "one who will stand by your side" (2) The Holy Spirit will *remain* with you forever. He used this same term twice, no doubt, for emphasis of his promise (3) He shall be in you. Literally, he said: ". . . and in you shall he be."

I have pointed out from the scriptures some twelve things the Holy Spirit did for the apostles. It is altogether likely that the list could be lengthened, but, hopefully, this will be sufficient to enable the student of the Bible to have a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the Holy Spirit's work in the scheme of human redemption.

### **WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DID FOR THOSE ON WHOM THE APOSTLES LAID THEIR HANDS**

We discussed at some length the fact that the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to lay their hands upon certain Christians in the first century church and impart to them spiritual, miraculous gifts. Several examples were given like: Stephen in Acts 7, Philip in Acts 8 and the former disciples of John in Acts 19.

There are many other instances in the New Testament which exemplify this truth - that is, the conveying of miraculous power to some Christians by the laying on of the apostle's hands. It should be emphasized and carefully noted that this communicating, this transmitting of such power is attributed to the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the apostles. This is the part the Holy Spirit played in the plan of salvation.

As we read the following passage, there are three things noteworthy for your observation: (1) The variety of gifts (2) The purpose they served (3) The fact that they were conveyed to the Christian by the Spirit.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed . . . Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (I Corinthians 12:1ff). In introducing the subject of spiritual gifts, Paul tells us two things: (1) The source of them. While it is a single source, they are attributed to God, the Lord and the Spirit (2) The purpose of them. They are for service, for working, for the common good. This we will see as we further our study of this topic.

Paul lists nine of these gifts. Two of them have to do with the intellect: wisdom and knowledge. Five of them concern faith: faith itself, then deeds of faith - healing and miracles, speech of faith - prophecy and discerning of spirits. Two of the gifts involve the tongue - languages, and interpretation of languages.

You will notice that Paul wrote "word of wisdom" and "word of knowledge", which indicate discourse and that for the benefit of others. The gospel has to be preached, either orally or written. The line that divides *wisdom* and *knowledge* is not always apparent. However, Paul certainly intended to name two gifts, and I believe the scriptures determine a difference. *Sophia*, the word which is translated *wisdom*, carries with it the idea of "ability, prudence, enlightenment, skilful, artful, as well as knowledge." Lenski says that "it consists of all the gracious, heavenly, and efficacious thoughts of God embodied in Christ Jesus for the enlightenment of our souls." Whereas *knowledge*, *gnosis*, "is the personal apprehension of the details of the gospel. Knowledge deals with the explanation, the unfolding, and the correlation of the gospel facts, or we may call them doctrines."

Both *wisdom* and *knowledge* enabled the Christians who were given these special gifts of the Spirit to understand and teach the

truths of the gospel to others, and to do so inerrantly. You can see why this would be necessary, inasmuch as they did not have the word of the gospel written down. It was still in the process of being revealed. These gifts had to do with the disclosure of the gospel. To be a little more literal, it meant the uncovering of God's will, taking the wraps off, unveiling, so men could see what God required of them. This had to do with preaching, and, therefore, with the intellect. But that preaching had to be "error free", and that was possible only by the miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There was the gift of faith. This was a faith that enabled those possessed of the gift to remove mountains, to exert power. Faith, which is commonly used in the New Testament, and by which we are saved, comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). It is not a miraculous gift bestowed upon Christians today. Faith is not what God gives us, but what we do with the teaching and evidence that he has given us in his word. Then, however, in special cases the Holy Spirit gave a miraculous faith, permitting the Christians who possessed it to exert supernatural powers to prove the word of God to be true.

This also can be said of gifts of *healing* and *the working of miracles*. It was through such gifts as *wisdom* and *knowledge* that the word of God was communicated to the world; whereas it was through these gifts of *faith*, *healing*, *workings of miracles* that confirmed that message which was preached. You will remember that Mark said in closing his record of the gospel, "They went everywhere preaching the word, and the Lord worked with them, confirming the word with signs following" (16:20).

There is a discussion of healing in James 5:14, 15: "Is any among you sick? Let him 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 will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up . . ." It has been shown that there were those in the first century church who were given the *gift of healing* by the Spirit. From this passage, it is evident that some of those Christians with that special gift were elders in the church. The healing James discusses here was not a "maybe", or "perhaps" or it can occur "if the sick man has enough faith."

It says "the Lord will raise him up"; and you can be sure that was 100% of the time. This was a special gift, a miraculous gift, and it was bestowed on some Christians not only to help the afflicted only but to advance the cause of truth!

To some of those Christians was given the gift of *prophecy*. "This was the speaking of the message of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whether with reference to the past, present or future." The purpose of this ministry was to teach, to edify, to comfort, to impart God's will to others and to encourage believers. More than that, it was to convict the sinner and lead the erring back to God (I Corinthians 14:24, 25).

There was also the gift of *tongues*. The Greek text calls them *different kinds of tongues*. This meant different languages (*glosson*). Those who possessed this gift could teach people of different nationalities the gospel in their own home language. If it had to be interpreted, it accomplished the same results. Add to that, however, it had the effect of confirming the word. It was just this simple: "How could a man speak in foreign languages which he had never studied and to which he had never been exposed?" That is not possible; so, the deduction is that he received that ability from God; and that was a confirmation of his genuineness and of the authenticity of the word he spoke!

Some men in the early church had the gift of *interpreting tongues*. This was necessary if anyone were going to be taught, instructed and edified by what was said. In fact, Paul forbade them to speak in a foreign language unless there was someone present to interpret it. "Let all things be done for edification. If any speak in a tongue (language), let there be only two and at the most three, and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in the church. . ." (I Corinthians 14:26-28). Paul further said that he had rather speak five words to his understanding, "in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (I Corinthians 14:19).

There were those who had the gift of *discerning spirits*. In a time when the word of God was not written down, and there was, therefore, no infallible standard by which to measure the truth, this was a necessary gift. God's revelation had not been



fully, or completely established, and certainly not generally understood. There were many false teachers and deceivers in the world then. So, it was necessary, in order to have an accurate revelation of truth, that there be some brethren with this gift of discerning spirits so that they could distinguish between the genuine and false preachers. It was about this that John was speaking: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (John 4:1).

Peter spoke in this same vein: "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in damnable heresies . . ." (II Peter 2:1).

Paul gave considerable time to the discussion of this problem: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons . . ." (I Timothy 4:1). In his second letter to Timothy, he charged: "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth . . ." (II Timothy 4:2-4).

In order to keep from wandering away from the truth, there had to be a standard by which to measure it. The word of God is that standard. It was first spoken by inspired men and later written down for accuracy and permanence so that succeeding generation could have access to it.. In the first stage, it was spoken, and it was necessary, therefore, that the miraculous spiritual gift of *discerning spirits* be given to some as a safeguard against false teaching. Once inspired men wrote the word of God down, the written word became the ultimate standard by which all things are measured. "But even if we or an angel from heaven preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said: ". . . brethren, that you may learn by us to live according to scripture" (I Corinthians 4:6).

## THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

Although passages of scripture have already been read and points made as to the purpose of miracles, I would like to emphasize and underscore the *purpose* which is given in the New Testament. If we can learn the design of miracles - that is, why were they used? what was the reason? we will have an understanding of the part they played in the plan of salvation for mankind. Primarily they served these purposes:

### 1. To reveal the truth:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30, 31). Some of the miracles which were performed served the specific purpose of inducing men to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is a truth that must be believed for one to be saved. Men could not learn that of themselves. Peter acknowledged him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus, in response to that confession, said to him: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

Paul discusses the disclosure of God's will to the Christians in the church at Ephesus: "For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ" (Ephesians 1:9). He continued that thought in the third chapter, ". . . how the mystery was made known to me by revelation . . . which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:3-5). Still later in this same letter: "and also for me, that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel . . ." (Ephesians 6:19). These passages settle the fact that the Holy Spirit revealed God's will to the apostles and prophets and enabled them to transmit that message to the world exactly and inerrantly.

In his letter to the Galatians he pursues this topic to ingrain it in the heart of his hearers: "For I would have you know, brethren,

that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

In chapter 3:23, the apostles tells us that faith was revealed. He here speaks of *faith* as a synonym of Christianity, or of the gospel. *Faith* is used in the New Testament of the (1) personal faith of the believer in Christ. "Unless you believe that I am he" (John 8:24). "When he saw their faith" (Luke 5:20).

(2) *Faith* is used of the object or what one believes. "... that you might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (John 20:30-31). "If it is the adherents of the law who are going to be heirs, faith is null and the promise is void" (Romans 4:14). "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ ..." (Romans 3:21-22). You see, it is important what one believes. That faith must be in God; it must be in the righteousness of God. It is the gospel which one must believe to be saved.

(3) *Faith* is used many times in the New Testament for the whole scheme of human redemption, for God's plan of salvation, for the Christian religion, for his total arrangement of grace. "... the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). When Paul preached on the island of Cyprus, a magician by the name of Elymas endeavored "to turn the proconsul away from the faith" (Acts 13:8). Paul returned to some places where he had previously preached and converted people and "exhorted them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). He spoke of "obedience to the faith" and had in mind the acceptance of the gospel rather than one's personal faith.

You will recall that Paul told the Corinthians that "what eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man, God has revealed these things to us by his Spirit" (I Corinthians 2:9-10). He speaks further of this to the Colossians: "... of which I became a minister according to the divine office which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now made manifest to his saints" (Colossians 1:25-26). All of this was done through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. He inspired

and miraculously revealed the truth to divinely inspired men. The purpose of the miracles he performed was to *reveal the truth*.

## **2. Miracles served the purpose of confirming the truth.**

It has been pointed out before in this treatise that the word *confirm* is from the Greek term *Bebaioo*, and some form of it is used nineteen times in the New Testament. It means "to confirm, establish, render constant and unwavering; to strengthen or establish by arguments or proofs; to verify."

The preaching of the apostles was *confirmed* by signs, or miracles which the Holy Spirit enabled them to perform (Mark 16:20). ". . . that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and knowledge - even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed among you - so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift" (I Corinthians 1:5, 6). He is not speaking here of the testimony which others brought concerning Christ, although they did that, but the testimony which Christ himself made while he was on the earth. He proved that he was the Son of God. He did it by preaching and establishing the authenticity of his message by miracles which he performed throughout his ministry, from turning water into wine at the beginning until darkness enveloped the earth at his crucifixion. It was confirmed and then made solid in the hearts of the Corinthians. In his second letter to these people, he said: "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs, and wonders, and mighty works" (II Corinthians 12:12). This, too, proved the genuineness of the message of the Savior.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that the great salvation "was first declared by the Lord, and was attested (confirmed) to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrews 2:3, 4).

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. . ." (Acts 2:22). In this way the deity of Jesus was established beyond doubt, and his ability to save .

"But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 9:22).

These passages plainly assert that God's revelation to man was attested and authenticated by miracles. In the process of unfolding his will to us, it had to be supported, sustained and documented by this unquestionable divine means. Once it was ratified and undergirded by these works of the Holy Spirit, it became crystalized, formed, settled for all time to come. It does not need bolstering and reinforcing now. It is true; it will always be true! No man, or group of men, can change that. They may meet in councils, conferences, tribunals and men may discuss God's revelation, debate it, question it, deny it or burn it, you may be sure they cannot change it, alter or destroy it. Yes, I understand that they can pervert it and present it to their own people; but the word of God will live on forever. It is called the "incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever" (I Peter 1:23-25).

### **3. Miracles helped in the establishment and promulgation of the gospel until the New Testament was written.**

In discussing the miraculous spiritual gifts, Paul said: ". . . as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect (incomplete, fragmentary) and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away" (I Corinthians 13:8-10).

The 12th, 13th and 14th chapters of I Corinthians are given over to a discussion of God's revelation of truth to man. In his discourse he comments on the gifts, their use and misuse in relation to the development of this revelation of God. They were for the purpose of communicating the gospel to people. At times he dealt with *prophecy* which was telling what God said. This was for teaching and edification. Then he would touch upon *tongues* and they were to convince the unbeliever, primarily. However, Paul forbade them to speak in foreign languages unless they were interpreted so that people could receive the benefit of the teaching. The whole purpose was "in order to instruct others" (I Corinthians 14:19).

So, these gifts were to last until the *perfect* came. Perfect what? The context shows that it was the perfect, complete, will of God to the world. This is the matter that was under discussion. Paul was dissertating upon the temporary nature of these gifts. God's complete disclosure of his will did not come in a total package at once. The apostle said that it came in *fragments*, a little bit at a time. He used the analogy of his childhood. When he was a child, he did not have a mature understanding of things in life. He used another parallel - that of looking into a mirror dimly. The mirrors in that day, made of burnished metal, did not reflect as clearly as they do in our time. So, it was like looking into a mirror darkly; but when *the perfect (to teleon)* came, that which was in part (fragmentary), such as *prophecy, tongues, knowledge* was done away. They had served their purpose of revealing and confirming the truth, of fitting into God's arrangement until the full disclosure of his will was written down in the New Testament - until it became the "perfect will of God," "the perfect law of liberty" (Romans 12:1, 2; James 1:25; 2:12).

"When he (Jesus) ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men . . . and he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors; and some teachers; for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood . . ." (Ephesians 4:8-13). The *completeness* of the faith and the *knowledge* of the Son of God is that final attainment and realization of God's perfect will. This was achieved when John, the apostle, laid down the pen of inspiration at the termination of the New Testament.

This is how Jude words it: "I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). One time for all time *the faith* was delivered.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (II Peter 1:3). You will note that it is through the knowledge of him that these blessings are granted. And that knowledge is aquired only through his word.

## WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES FOR THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

The charge has been made against us that because we do not believe that miracles are performed today, as they were in the first century by Jesus, the apostles and some inspired men, that we do not believe in the Holy Spirit. This is a false indictment. It is further alleged that we do not believe the Holy Spirit is active today in the lives and affairs of Christians. This, too, is an unjust imputation.

We have shown through the years and on many occasions how fictitious, imaginary and erroneous are modern day miracles. In our discussions with *faith healers* and our examination of their professed claims of miracles, never have we found them willing to raise the dead, restore a limb, replace an eye or heal a serious disease that is apparent to the onlooker. To disprove their claims and refute their allegations brings an assault upon what we believe about the Holy Spirit. The countercharge is made that we do not even believe in him or that he operates at all in this 20th century.

To settle this question, let us repair to the word of God which is the only standard for determining the truth of any issue.

### 1. The Holy Spirit is a gift to the Christian.

"And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The scholars of the New Testament language tell us that the expression *gift of the Holy Spirit* is the "genitive of apposition." In his treatment of the passage, Lenski says: "The promise is the Holy Spirit, so here the gift is the Holy Spirit . . . This gift is bestowed upon each and every repentant and baptized soul and cannot, refer only to charismatic gifts of the Spirit, speaking with tongues, healing, etc., but denotes the gift of grace and salvation which is always present in the heart when the Spirit enters. Here again we must not separate repentance, baptism, the Spirit. Not at some later time were these people to receive the Spirit; not in some later sudden, mysterious seizure; not as a later 'second blessing' that would produce a total sanctificat-

ion or sinlessness by a sudden transformation."

Peter is promising all of those who repent and are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins that God will give them the Holy Spirit. "You shall receive the gift, namely, the Holy Spirit"! The apostles, a few days later told the Sanhedrin: "And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

In his letter to the Galatians, speaking on this topic, Paul said: "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father!'" (Galatians 4:6).

## 2. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian.

Paul discusses this subject at length with the Roman Christians: "But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you" (Romans 8:9). Paul used a very strong contrast here between the *flesh* and the *spirit*. In this kind of speech, he denies that the Christian is in the flesh in order to emphasize the spiritual aspects of his life. He punctuates the spiritual things because they are what are truly important. Our tendency is to lay stress on the fleshly things of earth and disavow the significant, the paramount, the things which are imperative and which should be the highlights of our lives.

Paul said if we would give the spiritual the principal place in our lives, then the Spirit of God will dwell in us. It is interesting that he used a word for *dwell* which means *to house*. He said, ". . . since the Spirit of God *houses (oikei)* in you." And he used the term again in verse 11.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (I Corinthians 6:19). He uses a special word for *temple (naos)* which means "the dwelling place of God." He takes the stand that the body of the Christian is the dwelling place of God and then declares that the Spirit of God dwells in that temple. So, there is no doubt about it, the Holy Spirit *indwells* or *houses* in the Christian. But there is a difference in the Holy Spirit *indwelling* the Christian and his *empowering* the Christian to work miracles! If we would not loose sight of the purpose of miracles in the first



century, our problems would be greatly reduced or solved altogether!

### 3. The Holy Spirit dwells in the church.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16). A passage we formerly read states that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian. This passage assures us that he dwells in the church. The above scripture is addressed to the whole church. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth" (I Corinthians 1:2). Then in chapter three, he informs them that "ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." These words - "ye" and "ye" and "you" are all plural. So, Paul avers that the church (*temple, naos*) is God's dwelling place and that the Spirit *houses (oikei)* in you.

If God is on earth today, he is in the church. If he is in our community, he is in the church. And this is where the Holy Spirit is, because the church is his *house*. It is his residence. It is anti-Biblical to speak of being a Christian outside the church. It is completely out of harmony with the scriptures to assert that one can receive the Spirit and the benefits he proffers and not be a member of the Lord's church. There can be no reconciliation in these two diverse ideas.

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). This passage affirms that the church is God's dwelling-place. It is his *katoiketerion*, and that means his house. The definition of the word by the scholars is: "an abode, dwelling, habitation."

### 4. The Holy Spirit helps the Christian in his infirmities and intercedes for him.

"Likewise he helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26,27).

The passage says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Literally, he says, "he takes a share in our weakness." Then he

says that he intercedes for us, or "supplicates on behalf of the saints." We do not always know how to pray. It is difficult for us to express our soul's longings and interpret our needs; so, the Holy Spirit takes our spiritual hunger and thirst and translates them to God. Though the passage does not elaborate how he does it, it sounds as though he takes our cravings and needs and rephrases them, transcribes them, so to speak, into meaningful language.

- ✓ I do not know in what manner the Holy Spirit accomplishes all of these things on our behalf. He does not relate to me the fashion in which he helps, shares in our weaknesses, nor how he communicates our necessities and requirements to the throne of God. Further I do not know just how the Spirit dwells in me as a Christian. But neither do I know how my own spirit dwells in me. There are a great many inexplicable things about it. But I know that the Spirit dwells in me for these reasons: (1) The Bible tells me he does. He was given to me as a gift upon obedience to the gospel. (2) Producing the fruits of the Spirit. The Christian in whom the Spirit dwells will evidence his presence in his life by the fruit he bears (Galatians 5:22-24). So,
- ✓ a man knows that his own spirit dwells in him because (1) The Bible says so. "The body apart from the spirit is dead" (James 2:26). (2) Of the actions of the man in whom his spirit is dwelling. The man can see, hear, feel, speak and act. The Bible says such things as this: "He sighed deeply in his spirit" (Mark 8:12); "My spirit hath rejoiced in God" (Luke 1:47); "And waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 2:40); "Paul purposed in the spirit" (Acts 19:21); "Whom I serve with my spirit" (Romans 1:9). These are just a few instances to show that our spirits dwell in us and evidence that fact by our consciousness and our activities. We understand that very well. In like manner we should understand that the Holy Spirit dwells in us because God says so and because of all the activities of the Spirit through our lives.

### **5. The Holy Spirit works through the instrumentality of the word of God.**

While we do not understand just how the Spirit dwells in us, we do know the bridge, the tool, the instrumentality, the agency by which he effects his work in our lives. The equipment he uses to help us and use us in God's service is the word of God. Paul

asks us to "take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). ". . . through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 2:13,14). "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth . . ." (Romans 1:16).

## DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK POWERFULLY TODAY?

Nothing that has been said in this treatise is meant to reflect upon or limit the power of God. There is nothing impossible with God. He who spoke the worlds into existence in one blinding flash of creative power cannot be restricted or circumscribed. He can do anything he wills to do. God's power is absolutely unconfined. The question is not: "What is God able to do?" but "What does God will to do?"

Does the Holy Spirit work powerfully in the life of the Christian today? I believe, without question or doubt, that he does. In his letter to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul declared: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Ephesians 3:20, 21). I call your attention first to what Paul said about God's power: "He is able." He used the word *to dunameno*, which translates "to the one being able." But he goes on with this strong language, "to do beyond all things superabundantly." So, we are made aware that the power, the ability, of God is limitless. You cannot mark it out, stake it off, or, in any way, demarcate it. There is absolutely no boundary to what God is able to do. It extends, Paul says, beyond anything we can think or ask. Then he said, "according to the power that worketh in us."

Paul discusses this power with Timothy: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). This power is available to the Christian. But what is the nature of this power? what is the degree of it bestowed upon Christians? what is the extent

of God's power working in the life of the Christian today? Is it miraculous power? It could be, if that is what God willed. The question under consideration is not: "What is God able to do?" But "what does he do in the execution of his will?" Once he performed miracles and empowered others to work miracles. Why did he do it? (1) To reveal the truth to mankind (2) To confirm and verify that truth, giving it credibility (3) To help until the New Testament was written. Now it can be made available to people the world over. Even in those early days, it enjoyed a wide distribution. Historians tell us that by the last half of the 2nd century, only fifty years after the close of the period of inspiration, there were more than 60,000 copies of the gospel in circulation.

I think we may not overlook that miracles served a secondary, or subordinate purpose. When Jesus healed someone during his life's ministry, there was also present the ingredient of *compassion*. He had pity upon sick, diseased, crippled, unfortunate people. But this was not his primary purpose in performing miracles; for, if that had been so, he would have healed everyone, for God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). To contend that Jesus did not heal everyone because everyone did not believe does not comport with what the New Testament teaches upon the subject. Jesus did not make faith a condition of healing. In only one case out of thirty-one instances of healing on record did the Lord require faith (Matthew 9:28, 29). There was no personal faith required in fifteen instances. In nine of those cases where he performed miracles, nothing is suggested that faith was even present. In four instances faith was altogether impossible!

I have been present at some of these so-called *healing services* where the Holy Spirit is reputed to work through the agency of the *faith healer*. When there is a failure in healing a blind man, the excuse offered every time is: "He lacked the faith," or "He did not have sufficient faith." I recall, some years ago, attending such a meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, where I lived and worked at the time. An elderly blind man came to those meetings each night, and each night he came forward to be healed. I sat close enough to the front to hear the *healer* ask him: "Do you believe Jesus can heal you?" To which the old man replied: "I believe it with all my heart." I almost wept at

such sincerity, hope and expectancy! But each night, at the close of these services, they led the old gentleman away still blind!

When we lose sight of the *purpose* of these miracles, that the Holy Spirit performed through Jesus, the apostles and other inspired men on whom the apostles laid their hands, the product of our deductions will be confusion and error. Such fruit is seen today in the wild speculations and claims of those who maintain that they can speak in *tongues*, possess *charismatic* powers and the ability to perform *miracles* as the apostles did in the first century.

It has been pointed out that the word of God is the instrument which the Holy Spirit uses in effecting his work today. That should not be surprising to us since the Holy Spirit revealed that word! Someone has said that in the great Scheme of Human Redemption, God is the Architect, Jesus Christ is the Builder and the Holy Spirit is the Revelator. It is he who has made known this plan to us. He exposed it to view. This disclosure was first made to the apostles, which means that it was "laid open to view." They, in turn, both spoke it to their generation and wrote it down for all succeeding generations. In this lesson, I would like for us to examine what this word is capable of doing in the lives of men.

## THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

The apostle Paul, who tells us that the Holy Spirit revealed the gospel to them (I Corinthians 2:9, 10), now tells us:

1. That the Word Of God (Gospel) Will Save the believer.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" Romans 1:16).

"Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

2. We Are Begotten or Born of the Word.

James said: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of

truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). "Brought us forth" is from the word *apokueo*, and means "to generate, produce; to generate by spiritual birth." So the word of truth has the power to regenerate us by a spiritual birth.

"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God" (I Peter 1:22, 23). "Born anew," in this verse, is from the Greek word *anagennao*, and the definition of it is, "to beget or bring forth again; to regenerate." The agency by which one is born again is "the truth", the "imperishable seed," "the living and abiding word of God." In addition to being *born again* by the "word of God which lives and abides forever," Peter tells us that our souls are purified through our obeying the truth. He used the word *hagnizo*, which means "to purify; to purify morally, reform. To live like one under a vow of abstinence" (Harper's, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*). This helps us understand what the word of God will do in our lives.

### 3. The Word of God Will Make Us Free.

"Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free'" (John 8:31, 32). *Freedom* is one of the most precious words in our vocabulary. It is a priceless, invaluable human commodity.

Slavery was common in the Roman Empire during this period. History records that every third man was a slave. I do not know how accurate that is, but we can be sure there were many slaves in the New Testament period. Freedom was dear, beyond price. So, there are many passages which discuss forgiveness and the course of the Christian life under the picture of *freedom*:

"But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17, 18).

The words *freedom* and *liberty* are used forty-one times in the New Testament. They derive from the same root word, *eleutheros*, and it means "Free, in a state of freedom, exempt,

unfettered; free from the dominion of sin; free in the possession of gospel privileges; liberty." "Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not continue in the house forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:35, 36).

"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free, and do not be entangled again in a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). Much of the world has been in slavery at one time or another. It is still practiced in the 20th century in some places over the earth. But men long to be free - free from the slavery of political despots, free from the crushing oppression of poverty, free from the constant threats and dangers of violence in our so-called civilized societies! I also believe men want to be free from the thralldom of sin, from the iron chains of wickedness which destroys peace of mind and hope for a better life.

In the center of the city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is an impressive piece of sculpture. It is the bronze figure of a native slave whose legs have been shackled to a post driven into the ground. Upon gaining their freedom from France in 1804, he is represented as having broken the chain that suppressed his freedom of movement and he holds in his hand a huge conch shell which he is using as a trumpet to notify his fellow-slaves that all restraints have been removed, the fetters are broken from their legs, and they now have their liberty.

In some such way as this, God wants us to know that through his word we have access to perfect freedom in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus made this striking charge and promise in Luke 6:37: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." The word he used for *forgive* is "to loose, or to set free." The word is *apoluo*. It presupposes that one is either tied or enslaved; and the forgiveness of God, offered through his word, sets him free.

#### 4. The Word Of God Makes Men Clean.

Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:3: "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you." Some form of this word is used sixty-six times in the New Testament. Let us examine a few of them:

"Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).

" . . . that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water with the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

"When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . ." (Hebrews 1:3).

"And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed (purified, purged) their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8).

The word which is translated *clean, cleanse, purify* and *purge* is from the Greek word *katharizo* "cleanse, render pure; free from the influence of error and sin." The noun form of the word means "clean, pure, unsoiled, clean from guilt, upright, virtuous, void of evil." We get our English word *cathartic* from this and it is a very drastic action. So, it is indicated that the word of God will thoroughly purge, or cleanse us of all defilement.

#### 5. The Word of God Sanctifies People.

"Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The construction here is: *hagiason autous, which is "sanctify them."* Then he expresses the means by which that is accomplished: *en te aletheia* which is "in or by the truth." *Agaiazo* (sanctify) means "to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify; regard or reverence as holy" (*Analytical Greek Concordance*). So the word of God, the truth, will set men apart from the world and separate them from the evil that is in the world. It is God's powerful instrument to effect man's salvation. But when Christians live very much like the world, when they speak and act like the world, it is a strong indication that they have not been separated from the world - that they have not been *sanctified*.

#### 6. Men Are Called By The Word Of God Into His Service.

"God chose you from the beginning to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he



called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 2:13, 14).

This passage affirms that God *chose* us from the beginning to be saved. He wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). That salvation is brought about by (1) the Spirit setting us apart from the world and (2) our belief of the truth. Then he tells us the instrument by which this is accomplished, *the gospel*. We were *called* by the gospel. The word is translated from *kaleo* which means "to call, to send for, to summon, to invite." Christianity is purely a voluntary matter. God does not force us to be Christians. It is a matter of choice with us, a decision we make. He invites us by the gospel to come to him and believe the truth. Upon accepting his invitation, the Holy Spirit sanctifies, or sets us apart. The instrument he uses to do this is the gospel.

#### 7. The Word Of God Is The Gospel Of Our Salvation.

"In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:1:11-13).

The word of God is the *good news, glad tidings*, which has the capability of rescuing and preserving us to everlasting life. This is in keeping with *the counsel of his will*. Further, it is achieved, this passage tells us, in this way: (1) Hope in Christ (2) Hearing the word of truth (3) Believing in him and then (4) Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. A bit later in this letter, he says that we were sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water with the word (Ephesians 5:26). Let us not underestimate the power of the word of God in our lives.

#### 8. The Word Of God Provides Life.

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life through his name" (John 20:31).

In all of these passages which have to do with the word of God

and what it does, or is capable of doing, you will notice the part the individual plays in it. It always involves his volition - his choice to hear the word, believe it, obey it. Life, that is, spiritual and eternal life, is not offered unconditionally to man. It is not thrust upon us. We are never pressured into receiving it. It involves a willing response on our part. There are external sources which influence us, as well as internal. Internally, I recognize a need, know my own helplessness, am aware of my sins and failings, realize, in my indigence, that I cannot save myself. Externally, I see the love of God, his proffer of freedom from sin in full forgiveness, the innumerable blessings which come to the Christian; and, so, I am induced to accept the gospel.

#### 9. The Word Of God Is Living And Active.

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

The word of God is incomparably powerful. The passage says that it is energetic, *energes*. And, literally, it says that it is "sharper beyond every two-mouthed sword"! It is able to distinguish for us and reveal to us the division between soul and spirit and is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The word of God discerns the whole man. A fearful thing about it, the Hebrew writer remarks, is it *judges* those thoughts and intentions of the heart. The word is *kritikos*, from the verb *krino*. This word has a large meaning and use: "to separate; to make a distinction between; to exercise judgment upon; to bring under question; to judge judicially; to decide, determine, resolve" (*Analytical Greek Concordance*). We should be slow to criticize others and we should refrain from being judgmental; but let us be fully aware that the word of God can and has the right to sit in judgment upon our hearts and lives!

#### 10. The Word Of God Provides All Of Man's Needs.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (II Peter 1:3). "And my God shall supply every need of yours . . ." (Philippians 4:19).

These needs are provided by his divine power. He identifies those needs by saying that they "belong to life and godliness." So, he has given us the source of them - God. He has given us the character of the blessings - life and godliness. He also tells us the means by which they are made available to us - "the knowledge of the one having called us to his own glory and virtue." I am impressed that Peter repeatedly used the term *epiginosko*. This means the "full knowledge" of God. It is through the word of God that we can have a "full knowledge" of God and his will to us. It is true that God has not told us everything about himself, either in the volume of nature, or the volume of the Bible; but it is true that he has told us all that we need to know to become and be his faithful children. He has disclosed to us what he wants us to know, and that should satisfy us completely.

11. The Word Of God Will Bring Man To Full Maturity.  
"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

There are great truths in this passage we need to observe and respect: (1) The word of God is inspired. It is the product of the inbreathing of God upon divinely chosen men to speak and write inerrantly (2) It is profitable. This word *ophelos* means "advantage, profit, benefit, help." Almost everyone is interested in profit! We like to accomplish things that are beneficial. The words of God will do that. (3) It is advantageous to teaching, instruction in righteousness, for reproof and correction. It has a wide range of benefits. (4) It will equip the man of God unto every good work. (5) That the man of God may be perfect - complete. Without the word of God, men would be barren and ineffective in their doings. Whatever good men accomplish today, whether they recognize or acknowledge it or not, has its source in God and his word.

12. The Word Of God Turns Men From Darkness To Light.  
I realize that much that is said about the word of God and what it will do is related, but each passage about the subject seems to postulate a new and fresh truth that is worthy of our consideration.

"But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those things in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and the Gentiles - to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:16-18).

This is a beautiful passage fraught with many lessons for us. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Paul to: (1) To make him a servant. There are about ten different words for *servant* and *serve* in the New Testament and each one has a propriety of its own. This word that Christ used as he appeared to Paul is *hupertes* and it means "an under-rower, one of a ship's crew; a minister, a servant, an attendant; an attendant on a magistrate; a servant of a synagogue; an assistant in any work." He is an underling and respects the authority of his superior and submits to him in dedicated service. (2) To make him a "witness of the things which you saw in me and to which I will appear to you." It is important that we remember that a witness is one who has seen! (3) To make him an apostle. Having seen the Lord, he was qualified to be an apostle, upon the provision, of course, that the Lord used him in this capacity. This verse says: *Ego Apostello se*, and that means "I send you." It is stronger than the English shows it to be, because he uses the personal pronoun "I" twice. If I can indicate the strength of it in writing, it would be: " "I" send you forth." The purpose of sending him forth is multiple: (1) To open the eyes of the nations (2) To turn them from darkness to light (3) To subject them to the authority of God instead of Satan (4) To provide them the forgiveness of sins and (5) Assure them of a lot among those who have been sanctified by faith in him.

13. It Is Through The Word Of God That Men Are Made Partakers Of The Promises Of Christ.

". . . that is how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister . . ."

He uses the terms, "joint-heirs, joint-body, joint-sharers." This is what is beautiful about Christianity - the sharing of everything

with our fellow-human beings. Being together, being one, being united is the crux of the religion of Christ. But all of these things come to us through the gospel. You understand better now what he meant when he said that he would provide all of our needs!

#### 14. The Word Of God Enables All Men To See.

"To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things . . ." (Ephesians 3:8, 9).

There are two very important lessons in this verse to which I direct your attention: (1) The gospel was preached to make all men see. The word for *see* is *photisai*, and it means "to bring to light." The unsearchable riches of Christ were proclaimed by Paul so that all men might have the truth of God brought to light, and for the purpose of seeing it. (2) Men can see. The gospel is understandable. It doesn't take a graduate of a university to understand the Bible. It can be known, perceived, understood by any responsible person. It does not take some divine or special dispensation from God for men to read, learn and see what the will of God is. We have those around us who assert that the Bible is a *dead book* unless it is interpreted by the church; and "by the church" they mean the priests or clerics who assume the authority of "running" or "governing" the church! Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul said to Timothy: ". . . that from a child thou hast known the scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). God has so arranged his word that all men may see!

#### 15. The Word Of God Has These Beautiful Characteristics:

- (1) In it is revealed the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17).
- (2) It is the perfect will of Christ (Romans 12:1, 2).
- (3) It will abide forever (I Peter 1:24, 25).

#### 16. The Word Of God Will Judge Us In The Last Day.

"The word which I have spoken unto you will be his judge in the last day" (John 12:48). God will judge men by Jesus Christ according to the gospel (Romans 2:16). It is the standard.

The norm for judgment in that day will be the righteousness of God; but his righteousness is revealed in the gospel (Romans 1:17). Already Jesus has told us that his word would judge us in the last day (John 12:48). So, we may deduce from these scriptures that the criterion for judgment of all men in the last day will be the gospel. It is important, I believe, that the expression he used, *according to the gospel (kata to euaggelion)* is in the accusative case, and means, therefore, "according to, conformably to, after the fashion or likeness." So, I do not hesitate to affirm that the measure, the rule, the instrument of judgment which God will use when he calls all men before him to answer for their lives will be the word of God!

It seems sad to me that so many people live by the standard of the world, or a *yard-stick* of their own, but will be judged by God's *measuring rod* (Revelation 11:1, 2). If we would live by the *pattern* of his word here in this life, there would be no fear or anxiety about being judged by that same standard when we appear before the judgement seat of Christ (Romans 14:11, 12).

## A BRIEF RESUME

We have spoken of the confusion in the religious world over the work of the Holy Spirit, a confusion growing out of a lack of a careful study of what the Bible says about the subject.

Next, we pointed out what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles. It was such an essential, yea, indispensable, work he did through them to guide them infallibly to the finished, completed, revelation of God's will to man. He sent them to the ends of the earth with the message of life, hope and salvation; and he attended them with signs following to make their message credible and acceptable.

To assist in this greatest task which the world had ever known, he empowered the apostles to lay their hands upon certain, chosen Christians to assist in this promulgation of the gospel. Not all believers had these miraculous spiritual gifts. Listen to the rhetorical questions Paul asked to make a point, no answer

being expected: "Are all apostles?" The answer, obviously, was "no." "Are all prophets?" No answer was needed, because all understood that all Christians in Corinth, or any other congregation, were not prophets. "Are all teachers?" In the first place, all Christians were not qualified to teach - publicly, that is. "Do all work miracles?" The answer is "no." "Do all possess gifts of healing?" They did not! "Do all speak with tongues?" And again, the answer is "no." "Do all interpret?" The apostle commanded some in the church who had the gift of speaking in foreign languages to pray that they may also have the gift of interpretation so that they could teach others and edify them.

We have learned in our study of this Bible topic the purpose of miracles: (1) To reveal the truth without error (2) To establish and confirm the truth beyond any question (3) To help until the New Testament was written (4) As a secondary, subordinate purpose, to express compassion toward those who were being healed (5) To get the New Covenant and Age started. God always performed miracles to begin a work, to get it initiated. An example is the creation of mankind. To get the race started, he performed a miracle. He created Adam and Eve. Thereafter, people have been born, not by the performance of a miracle, but by natural law which God set in place.

When he inaugurated the Covenant with Israel at Sinai, that introduction was by miracles. There were such things, to name a few, as the voice of God, the writing by the finger of God upon the tables of stone, the brightness of the face of Moses so that the children of Israel could not behold it without his placing a veil over it; and many others. To launch that law, which was to last 1500 years, to the cross, God performed miracles.

When he established the New Covenant at Pentecost, recorded in the second chapter of Acts, he opened it with miracles. He had promised the apostles that they should remain in Jerusalem until they were imbued with power from on high, and, then, they were to **begin** preaching repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8). There were such miracles performed as the tongues of lambent flame, the inspiration of the apostles and the speaking in foreign tongues. Jesus had performed many miracles in the three and a

half years of preparation for the Christian dispensation; and, as you must know, in this introductory period of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles performed miracles. In every day parlance, we would say in my country, that miracles were performed to "get the ball rolling."

We have spent some time in this study examining what the New Testament says about the help the Holy Spirit gives the Christian today. He indwells the Christian, strengthens him in his weakness, intercedes for him before the throne of God and guides him, shapes his life, through the instrumentality of the word of God. He uses that word in every facet of our lives. It is the factor involved in conversion: "Except you be born again of water and of the Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). We are born of the incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever (I Peter 1:23ff). This is the Spirit working through his word. There is no evidence that he ever works apart from the word in his dealings with men. I have lived in some very remote areas of the world in the fifty years of my ministry as a gospel preacher, but I have never found a single soul in those distant, out-of-the-way places who had any knowledge of the Holy Spirit until the word of God was preached to them. Even apart from what the Bible has to say about this issue, I believe this to be indisputable proof that the Holy Spirit does not work in the lives of people apart from the word of God! He indwells the Christian and gives him strength and power, but no longer does he enable him to work miracles.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that this exposition on the subject of the Holy Spirit will both challenge and inspire the truth-seeking student of the Bible to examine, research and prayerfully study what the scriptures teach, embrace the truth and share it with his fellowman.



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