

the
SPIRIT



by

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a
general
exposition
on
new testament
usage

National Library of Australia
Card Number and ISBN
0 9596765 0 6

Published by:

The WORD *Typeset*
6 Ingomar Court
Hallett Cove 5158
South Australia

1976

Republished 1990

Internet Edition 2001

<http://www.christadelphia.org/books/spirit.htm>

Orders for the book from above postal address or email
orders@chariot.net.au

PREFACE

This general exposition has as its aim the positive exegesis of the word Spirit (and related subjects) as used in the New Testament¹. This subject has long been neglected, with the result that there is a great deal of misunderstanding evident in the Brotherhood today. It is hoped that this treatise will remove some of the haze so that we can manifest together the fruits of the Spirit rather than the “spirit of man”.

There are basically two² current views on this subject in the Brotherhood, which is sad, because there should only be one - the first:

1. The Holy Spirit power of God has been poured out in the past (and will be in the future) in certain epochs for specific purposes. Those who received this power manifested it in various ways, depending on which miraculous gift they had received. When the purpose was completed the gifts ceased. Thus today, no mortal has the Holy Spirit power as we are between epochs.
God’s power, however, is still active in the ministering Spirits who are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. In addition to this we, of course, have the complete revelation of God revealed by His Spirit. This is the only source of revelation today. If we read and obey this, then it will produce understanding, repentance, faith and the hope of salvation.
2. The Holy Spirit directly causes faith, hope, righteousness and joy to all those who ask for and receive this grace. This was and is the real purpose of the Spirit. The miraculous gifts were only a small part of the first century outpoural and possibly ceased at the end of that period. All true Christians must receive or possess this non-miraculous Spirit to understand the word of God, and to be saved.

The first view has recently been shown to be both the Biblical and traditional³ one in an amazing series by Brethren Whittaker and Carr in the Testimony magazine for 1973-1975.⁴

Every reference and argument that is advanced in an attempt to support the second view has been carefully considered in this treatise. The reader is asked to carefully (and without bias) consider the evidence against that view. In keeping with the positive aim of this book, the source of those theories has not been given, but is available upon request.

This is a difficult and a complex subject, therefore any criticisms or suggestions would be appreciated. May these notes help to develop the Spirit of Christ in us that we may become Spirit beings in that day soon to dawn.

Aleck Crawford

¹ See however Section F - “Word Studies - Spirit”.

² Some other views are held by small minorities. These are explained at the verses used by these groups. (See Wrested Passages Index).

³ The reader is referred to “Faith in the Last Days” by Bro. Thomas.

⁴ Subsequently published as ‘SPIRIT’ in the New Testament, TEST,

“Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the gospel, but is by no means completed thereby; it takes a lifetime for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment. The mind is naturally alien from God and all His ideas (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14), and cannot be brought at once to the Divine likeness. This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means which God has given for this purpose, viz., the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of Truth; Spiritualmindedness, or the state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as displayed in these writings can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded.”

Brother Robert Roberts
Bible Companion

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NOTE - This book is designed to be used as a reference textbook. It is not anticipated that many will read it from cover to cover, but anyone who does so will be well rewarded. It is highly recommended that Sections A & B be read through from start to finish.

Abbreviations used

*	ASV	-	American Standard Version 1901
†	AV	-	The Authorized Version 1611
*	BERK	-	The Berkeley Version of the New Testament
	(B)	-	A Critical Lexicon and Concordance, E.W. Bullinger
	cf.	-	compare faithfully
	CON	-	Concordant Version
	EXPO	-	Expositors Greek New Testament (Eerdmans)
*	GSPD	-	Goodspeed
*	KNOX	-	The New Testament of Our Lord
	LXX	-	The Septuagint
	MARS	-	Marshall's translation of Nestle's The RSV Interlinear Greek English New Testament, (London, EC4: Bagster, 1968) mg - margin
*	MOFF	-	The New Testament: A New Translation, J. Moffat
*	MON	-	The Centenary Translation
	NAB	-	New American Bible
	NASB	-	The New American Standard Bible
	NBCR	-	New Bible Commentary Revised
	NEB	-	The New English Bible
	NEST	-	Nestle's Greek Text
*	NOR	-	The New Testament by Norlie
	N.T.	-	New Testament
*	PHI	-	J. B. Phillips
	ROTH	-	Rotherham's Emphasized Bible
	RSV	-	The Revised Standard Version
	RV	-	Revised Version of 1881
	(S)	-	Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
	TCNT	-	The Twentieth Century New Testament
	(V)	-	Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words - W. E. Vine
	WEY	-	The New Testament in Modern Speech (Weymouth)
	Wms	-	The New Testament A Translation in the Language of the People. (Williams)
	(Y)	-	Young's Analytical Concordance

* These translations are also contained in 'The New Testament from 26 Translations'.

† Both the NASB and the AV are used in the text without reference to the fact. If a quotation is not the AV then assume the NASB and vice versa.

NOTE: BIBLIOGRAPHY abbreviations are explained in the bibliography.

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

This is primarily a New Testament exposition because, generally speaking, the subject is largely self-explanatory in the Old Testament¹ and the current discussion surrounds the New Testament usage of the word. Also the Spirit is not dealt with as a theme until the New Testament.

We believe, however, that the Old² must be the basis of interpretation for the New. It is at this point that some have faltered and been led astray to another gospel. They come to the New Testament with an Evangelical bias, and impose such thinking upon the text where it does not exist.

According to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary the English word "spirit" has eighteen separate meanings. It is one of very few English words which has that many. Naturally this fact contributes to the complexity of this subject and to the difficulty of communication. We may know perfectly well the meaning we intend but the reader or hearer may have assumed we are using another meaning. Add to this the fact that the Biblical meanings of "spirit" may not correspond to the English Dictionary meanings and we begin to realize the need for a careful exposition. There are also additional factors that need to be taken into consideration:

- a) The Bible contains words "which the Holy Spirit teacheth". It is essential to understand that figures of speech such as metonymy and synecdoche are employed. We must understand the real sense (not the literal meaning) of these legitimate departures from the laws of language. Ignorance to the form in which "spirit" is used has led and can lead to the grossest of errors.
- b) Centuries of theological dust have obscured and distorted this subject as well as related ones. As one would expect, the apostasy has its own definitions for words such as sin, grace, enlightenment, guidance, sanctification and faith. If we are to understand and be able to communicate about these subjects then we must know:
 - (i) the meaning the Apostasy gives them.
 - (ii) why this meaning is invalid and
 - (iii) what the correct meaning is.

While keeping to the aim of this book, (as stated in the Preface) we must digress slightly from (iii) by expanding into areas (i) and (ii) if we are to give a comprehensive treatment of the subject of the Spirit. It was one of the pioneer brethren who stated that "we didn't really believe the truth unless we could define it positively and negatively". It is for this reason that some of the general subjects have been included. The "problem-solution" format has been employed occasionally in Section C for the same reason.

¹ See Section F - Word Studies "Spirit".

² "If they speak not according to the law and the testimony it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

³ e.g. "Plato's Influence".

GUIDELINES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRIT PASSAGES

Figures of speech

The Bible is full of figures of speech¹ and idioms². This is as true in the subject of the Holy Spirit as it is in subjects such as sin, wisdom, etc. When, therefore, we read “that the Spirit suffered them not” to go into a place we must not suppose the Spirit to be the intelligent source of the instruction, but that it was the agent (medium) used for the imparting to the understanding of the apostles what they should do. “The source of the instruction, was an intelligent mind and was not in the power by which it was transmitted³.”

The figure of speech used was “metonymy of the adjunct”. This is when something pertaining to the subject (Spirit) is put for the subject itself (God or Angels or Christ.)

Context

A contextual interpretation of a verse is the only *valid* way. There are three considerations when looking at the context:

- a) look at the O.T.⁴ context if the passage contains a quotation from there
- b) consider the *immediate* context. This may be one or two verses or chapters.
- c) consider very carefully the *historical* context.

Consideration b) is illustrated in what follows and c) under the next heading.

Verses such as those below seem on the surface to indicate direct Spirit intervention on the hearts of those who believed. Careful examination, however, reveals alternate means of expression that suggest it was the result of the Gospel plus miracles.

WHAT	HOW
a) “The Lord added to the Church” (Acts 2:47)	“The word of the Lord grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24)
b) “Believers were added to the Lord” (Acts 5:14)	Because the miracles confirmed that Peter’s words were true. (v.12).

This point demonstrates the care that needs to be given to the *context*. Very often those who claim present possession string together seemingly supporting verses, but with total disregard for context⁵ (as do churches to support their false doctrine.)

¹ See Companion Bible appendix 6.

² See Young’s Concordance, Page xi.

³ John Carter, The Holy Spirit in the Church, (TCM, Vol. 92), P. 170

⁴ See for example the notes on 1 Cor. 14:21.

⁵ NTFE, NBBA and others.

New Testament background

In the New Testament times the immature ecclesia was vibrant with the constant knowledge that the exalted Christ moved omnipresently in their midst. The frequent miraculous visitations of the Spirit were visible tokens of that superintendence. For these awe struck congregations, the word “Spirit” would be understood primarily as the medium through which the Lord sent the miracles and revelations. It would *not* have meant an inwardly sanctifying influence⁶.

Idiom

Along with these manifestations, local idioms and verbal clichés would have come into use to describe these phenomena. This variation of expression in localized areas is a common occurrence even today and does not even need to be demonstrated. The Lord would accommodate Himself to this variation⁷ in His revelations and exhortations through the Christian prophets, just as He had done during His earthly ministry when in conversation with the “unlearned” Galileans on one hand, and with the “learned” ecclesiastics of Jerusalem on the other. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the style of so many of Christ’s discourses varies so much in the gospels. In the case of the epistles, the destination of the inspired messages would determine the Spirit’s choice of terminology.

Reasoning along these lines, it may not therefore necessarily be right to expect to find an undeviating uniformity of usage of the different Greek words and phrases relating to “spirit” in the New Testament: *pneuma*, *to pneuma*, *pneuma hagion*, *to pneuma to hagion* and other variants, which themselves are not even clearly and uniformly distinguished in translation. It is not surprising, either, that lexicologists have been unable to discover or invent a simple rule that could be applied right across the whole of the New Testament with regard to the uses of these particular words. Instead, expositors have had to bend, twist and contort New Testament usage in order to arrive at often highly dubious interpretations of important passages. The very large number of attempts that have been made at establishing a blanket rule is itself an indication of the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of arriving at a universally satisfactory solution to the problem. It would, however, seem reasonable to expect uniformity of usage of the different Greek expressions for “spirit” within the space of a single inspired book of the New Testament. The Lord would not confuse His terms or His readers, even though at this distant point in time, we may not immediately appreciate any contextual variations.

⁶ Used in the sense defined by Webster’s - “The supposed flowing of an ethereal fluid or power from ... (above), thought to affect the characters and actions of people.”

⁷ This was clearly evident in the manifestation of tongues at Pentecost in Acts 2. Several dialects were spoken on that occasion.

The word “spirit” is *the* New Testament word par excellence. While this treatise elsewhere attempts to explore the subtle overtones of meaning which this word carries, perhaps it may not be too much of a simplification to summarize thus:

Besides the obvious and very frequent connotation - that of “Holy Spirit”, in the Almighty’s varied operations and manifestations - the other most common usage, and one which has gone largely unappreciated, is as an idiomatic equivalent to “the life in Christ”, “the New Creation”, etc. Once this idiomatic usage has been recognized it clears for us a lot of apparent problem passages.

The use of different words in the various Epistles of Paul such as “grace” in Romans and “spiritual” gifts in Corinthians is therefore to be explained on the basis of local idiom and clichés. We must not try to see doctrinal differences where only cultural ones exist.

Translations

Doctrinal bias is to be found in most translations in areas where the “church” is apostate. This is evident to most Bible students on such subjects as hell, the devil, the supposed pre-existence of Christ, personality of the Holy Spirit, etc. Doctrinal bias in the various translations is particularly evident in most Bibles on the subject of the Spirit⁸. This is to be expected as the translators believe Plato’s teachings. Very imprecise renderings, for example, are made of the genitive case in such passages as 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 3:14.

The difference in result because of this bias may seem small on the surface, but it assumes major proportions when carefully examined. When a study of the Spirit is undertaken using the NEB as the main translation, the result can only end in error.⁹

Spirit and Holy Spirit

It is often¹⁰ argued by those claiming present possession of the Spirit that God’s “spirit” is holy and, therefore, where we see “spirit of Christ”, “spirit of God”, we should read “Holy Spirit” and understand by this a mysterious influence ‘working inner righteousness, peace and joy in the true believers’ heart’.

Solution:

- A. If this is the case then where we see “holy” Spirit the word holy is quite redundant.
- B. What about the “evil spirit” of Saul and the “lying spirit” of Micaiah’s parable to Ahab? Was that holy too?
- C. To clinch this, however, consider the passage -
“If God were to withdraw His Spirit ... all flesh would perish together.”
 If the above idea is pressed, then all mankind and animals have the ‘holy’ Spirit and to give it in the first century was to give something already possessed.

⁸ The reader will recall such insertions as 1 John 5:7 and “through the spirit” in 1 Pet. 1:22 by the AV.

⁹ WWSA is an example.

¹⁰ e.g. SGC, Letter, Para 1, Feb. 21, 1974.

Conclusion

The Bible is not a cheap novel. It is the revelation of God by the Spirit. In a subject as exalted as this it is especially necessary to consider:

- the figures of speech
- the context (both immediate and historical)
- the translator's bias,

when interpreting a verse of this revelation. Salvation is the work of God through the Holy Spirit, both in the power that the word has to change our mind and in providential guidance administered by the angels.

The character formed by these interacting forces is called "spiritual" because it is in harmony with God's mind.

PRELIMINARY POINTS

1. Compliance with the written word of God is all that we are required to do for salvation.

This point is in contrast to the belief that a possession of the Holy Spirit is necessary before we can overcome sin. The Bible continually stresses that the Word itself is sufficient to do this. This is evident from the following verses:

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee... I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them hast Thou quickened me” (Psalms 119:9,11, 93).

“The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not” (John 6:63-64).

“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31, 32).

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3).

Jesus did not say that the eleven were clean by the Spirit because it was the word spoken, understood, believed, and obeyed which was the quickening and cleansing power:

“Sanctify them (Apostles) through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

Here is the fundamental plainly revealed; it is the truth of God that gradually brings about our sanctification. And this Truth has come to us through the Word. The “Word” is the teaching from God through His prophets.

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). (**Note** that at this time the Holy Spirit was possessed by the ecclesial shepherds (v.28)).

“The gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

“Christ gave himself for the ecclesia that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26).

“The holy scriptures... are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”. (2 Tim.3:15-17).

“Being born again... by the word of God” (1 Pet.1:23 cf. 2 Pet. 3:2).

As we can see, no additional “Spirit” is necessary, nor is it apparent anywhere today. The process of sanctification is one of understanding the word, receiving it and acting upon it.

There is no need to see this compliance as “salvation by works”¹. It is no such thing. Salvation is contingent on two things:

- a) God’s mercy
 - forgiveness
 - help in time of need
 - angelic guidance i.e. the ways of providence².
 - the gift of eternal life
- b) man’s obedience to the gospel. This includes
 - understanding
 - repentance
 - producing fruit.

Because these things are revealed in the word and we find them out by reading; can hardly be described as “salvation by works”. (Opening ‘our hearts to let God work in us’ could also be described as salvation by works!! Since *we* had to open our hearts!)

2. “Platonism, in postulating a spirit which has an immaterial influence on the mind alters the meaning of the word, making God’s power a means by which God ‘thinks’ into the mind of man, rather than a power breathed into the nostrils, or forming words heard by ears. It should be remembered that God did not create a living soul by thinking into his (Adam’s) mind the spirit of life, but by breathing into his nostrils.”⁴
3. Paul begins his discussion of the spirit gifts by making reference to the fact that there was so called ‘possessions’ in the heathen world, where priests in excited frenzy claimed to be controlled by the god at whose shrine they officiated. The Corinthians had come to know that idols were dumb and could possess no one. Paul mentions this so that they would bear in mind there was such a thing as pseudo possession, and that there could be a similar fraudulent claim in their own midst. He then gave them a way in which they could test claimants to determine which were false⁵.
4. “The spirit may be exercised on our behalf, but it is not a verifiable fact as in the spirit operations of the early churches. It is not subject to our wills, for it works beyond our conscious knowledge. To speak, therefore, of divine operations (indirectly through the ways of providence) as a possession of the spirit is a misuse of words!”⁶
5. To claim that only the miraculous part of the Spirit ceased, is to disagree with the record.

¹ NTTC side 2.

² See Section B - Providence and Angels.

³ See Section F - Word Studies - ‘Word’.

⁴ TBSM, Vol. 3. P.50. This concept is not narrow and limited to this example. Men are compelled to listen to the voice of God speaking the Word by His breath through angels, prophets and the Lord Jesus (and recorded on paper) and not merely (or only) - like the pagans or apostasy suggest - to open their minds to divine ‘Spirit’, and be led intuitively in right ways, i.e. “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” (John 12:48).

⁵ Does the claimant teach correct doctrine?

⁶ John Carter. (TCM, Vol. 92) p. 246.

Paul said the gifts would cease. Not only would the gift of tongues cease, but also the gift of knowledge (which is sometimes wrongly assumed to be non-miraculous⁸). The pattern of things in the first century was for all gifts to work together for the well being of the ecclesia. We have no instruction of any other pattern. The Spirit is the *power of God*⁹. Power is something manifest¹⁰. If brethren have the Holy Spirit they would reveal its power in some form. But they do not!

6. “Spirit” and “Holy Spirit” are used in various senses¹¹ and this must be kept in mind when interpreting various verses.

A. *God’s Spirit in Every Believer*

This was true in both Old Testament and New Testament times and does not refer to the possession of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual life comes indirectly from God through:

- 1) a daily feeding on the word (“spiritual milk”, NASB) with meditation and prayer (1 Pet. 2:2-5),
- 2) the action of the angels in our lives (Heb. 1:14).

This develops within us a spirit (attitude) in harmony with God’s mind. This result is known as the “spirit of God, God in us, Christ in us, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith”.

B. *The Holy Spirit Gifts*

This was a power¹² conferred directly upon the individual which enabled others to see that he had something they didn’t, whether in

- 1) doing signs (Moses and the plagues; also 1 Cor. 12).
- 2) speaking with boldness and authority (John the Baptist, Luke 3:3-20).
- 3) being guided in wisdom (Bezaleel, Ex. 31:2, 3).
- 4) building up the ecclesia¹³

C. *Holy Spirit in Future Operation*

- 1) 1 Cor. 15:23 resurrection.
- 2) Heb. 6:4, 5 “powers of the world to come”.

D. *The Spirit of Man*

i.e. “The spirit indeed is willing” (Matt. 26:41). By the figure metonymy, (of the effect) spirit (attitude) is put for the cause producing it (mind).

⁷ 1 Cor. 13:8; Eph. 4:13-14 (see notes in Section C).

⁸ Those who had this gift in Corinth manifested it (1 Cor. 1:4-7). Wisdom, knowledge and faith were no less real, no less open, no less capable of demonstration than miracles, healing and tongues. (cf. Matt. 10:20; Luke 21:15; Gal. 1:12; 1 Cor. 13:2).

⁹ Luke 24:49

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 12:7. The whole record of Acts proves this.

¹¹ cf. Section F -Word Studies - Spirit.

¹² “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.” (Acts 1:8 cf. 4:33).

¹³ Ecclesial elders. cf. 1 Cor. 12:28.

7. Faith and Justification.

- “without faith it is impossible to please God”. (Heb. 11:6).
- “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God”. (Rom. 10:17).

If faith was not a response to what God has revealed, it could not provide a basis for justification which is forgiveness of sins. If faith were divinely bestowed, then since justification is predicated upon faith¹⁴; the very condition to which God reacts with pleasure would not be anything in a man but God’s own act! If a man did not have any faith, God could not punish him for this because it would be God’s fault - not man’s - if there was any lack.

8. A More Excellent Way.

Paul clearly points out that even though a person did not possess the Spirit, he could be better than the possessor of even the best gifts. The “more excellent way” of 1 Cor. 13 or “Agape” is something better than the best gifts of the Spirit¹⁵. The absence of this love nullified any benefit the Spirit gifts conferred¹⁶.

- To speak with tongues when “love” was absent, was like the clanging of metal in one of the brass foundries of a city, or the clanging of cymbals of the priestesses of Cybele.
- Even the gift of “prophecy” and the gifts of “faith” and “knowledge”, if love were absent, were of no value.
- Almsgiving and martyrdom alike were empty shows and unprofitable if not springing from Agape.

Paul’s discourse on Agape is part of his argument showing the limitations of the various manifestations of the Spirit. The manifestations were only part of a temporary¹⁷ arrangement and therefore not essential for salvation.

9. The Spirit was *not* for the personal benefit of the possessor but for revealing salvation and for edification of the ecclesia.

- A. For Christ to have yielded to His thoughts and turned stones to bread to satisfy His hunger would have been sin.
- B. Paul desired to have his “thorn in the flesh” removed but was told “the Grace of God is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:9).

¹⁴ By faith a man is justified”. Rom. 3:28.

¹⁵ cf. notes on 1 John 4:4, footnote 2.

¹⁶ A person who “exalts” himself by claiming to possess the Spirit has forgotten this important point.

¹⁷ cf. MJNC, “Collateral Evidence that the gifts were temporary”, P.S-6, col. 2, paragraph 2.

- C. Paul says that he came behind none of the Corinthians in the gifts of the Spirit, (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11) yet he was among the Corinthians “in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3).
- D. “Epaphroditus was sick nigh unto death” to assist Paul (Phi 1. 2:25-30).
- E. Timothy had stomach problems. (1 Tim. 5:23). The cure was not a working of a miracle, but wine.
- F. Paul left “Trophimus... at Miletum sick” (2 Tim. 4:20).

Conclusion

These points clearly demonstrate that the traditional Christadelphian teaching about the Spirit is the Biblical one.

The following statements briefly summarize the facts:

- 1) The early first century believers had the Holy Spirit.
- 2) They did not have the complete New Testament.
- 3) We have the completed revelation.
- 4) We do not have the Holy Spirit.

The first three statements above are simple and generally agreed upon. The fourth is not difficult but it may not be readily apparent. In fact it may take as long to demonstrate as other Scriptural subjects which are wrested (such as ‘hell’, ‘Satan’).

In considering any exposition of scripture, one principle must be kept clearly in mind: Any interpretation that fails to harmonize all the testimonies of the Holy Scripture must be rejected. This may be illustrated on the subject of the spirit in the following example.

- A. “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail;
- B. The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.” (John 6:63 RSV)

Some, upon reading A., will lapse into describing their experience of being saved and of being guided directly by the Spirit. In so doing, they belittle (unconsciously perhaps) any need for doctrine or laws of Christ and the need to study and to assimilate the teaching of the Word of God. As may be seen from reading B. this interpretation rips the sentence from its immediate context and gives it a meaning altogether foreign to the Scripture.

Perhaps the key to most of the misunderstanding is the fact that “providential control of a man’s life is one thing, and the gift of the Holy Spirit is another and quite different thing¹⁸.” Those who argue for present possession fail to see the distinction.

¹⁸ C.C. Walker, TCM, (1922), P. 220. This is demonstrated in the notes. (Providence is defined in Section B - “Providence and Angels”.)

The idea of “present possession of the Holy Spirit” was strenuously repelled, rebutted and formally rejected a hundred years ago by Bro. Thomas, in no uncertain terms: and it has raised its head somewhere in the ecclesias in every generation since. This is not surprising when this false, but self-satisfying, conceit characterizes every shade of the Apostasy around us, notwithstanding their common claim to the Truth. This dangerous doctrine generally leads to the embracing of other¹⁹ apostate doctrines that deny and destroy the truth.

Those who claim present possession of the Spirit declare (as the apostate Roman Church and the Evangelicals declare) “that because the Bible is a spiritual book given by a Spiritual Being, it cannot be understood purely by natural reason. It can, therefore, only be understood with the help of direct guidance from God Himself. This guidance is not, however, given through the Church (as the Romans claim) but to the individual by prayer. Since this is the case, those who have not the Spirit can never understand spiritual things”²⁰.

To declare this is to say that the Bible is an unreasonable book and is useless without a second ingredient - divinely given private “enlightenment”. This, of course, is unacceptable reasoning (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15-17).

It should be realized that passages which seem to demonstrate that “possession of the Holy Spirit is timeless, have a very definite reference, either to the Apostolic days or to the Kingdom - NEVER to the present²¹ .”

However, we should be very grateful that we have through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit-guided men of the past a much greater gift in our hands - the Spirit inspired Word of God.

¹⁹

(I) The following have been noted:

- a. immortal emergence (or something very close to it, with no judgement for the righteous).
- b. “righteous are raised before millennium, wicked after.”
- c. declaring that Christ sinned but obtained forgiveness.
- d. “We obtain eternal life now.”
- e. strange new false doctrine declaring “we obtain salvation by having perfect forgiveness.”

(II) It is only one small step to the “Pentecostal” practices of:

- a. “faith” healing
- b. “speaking in tongues” (simulated)
- c. “laying on of hands”
- d. “prayer meetings”
- e. emotion packed revival meetings.

It should be carefully noted that many individual brethren and sisters have taken and are taking that small step.

²⁰ Ideas such as these are set out in a current Christadelphian periodical.

²¹ J. S. Thomas, TEST, (1954), P 324, (e.g. John 14:16).

THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS

1. The final witness against Judaism.

- Jesus developed this witness on several occasions, one of which is in Matt. 23:

“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites...”

- the apostles through the Holy Spirit were to complete this witness¹.

“I will send him (Comforter) to you. He will convict the (Jewish) world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgement: ... because the ruler of this world (Jewish) has been judged (condemned)” (John 16:7-11).

The Acts of the Apostles records this witness being carried out and the Apostles being persecuted for it.

2. The establishing of the new doctrine about Christ Jesus.

The Mosaic things had now fulfilled their purpose but it needed the convincing power of the Holy Spirit to satisfy devout Jews of this. The Spirit enabled the apostles to be infallible teachers.

“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 said to you.” (John 14:26).

The miracles that the Apostles performed and their ability to out argue their opponents, caused believers to be “added to the Lord” in multitudes.

3. The preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.

The Holy Spirit made it much easier for the truth to spread throughout the pagan Roman world.

“But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles... Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.” (Acts 14:3).

The result had its effect because after this “some sided ... with the apostles”. (v.4)

4. Edification of the Ecclesia.

“For the equipping of the saints, for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ.” (Eph. 4:12).

5. A foretaste of the future.

“The Holy Spirit of promise... is given as a pledge of our inheritance.” (Eph. 1:14).

“Those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come...” (Heb. 6:4,5).

¹ see Heb. 2:4.

The purpose was fulfilled

Once the Jewish “world” was destroyed in AD 70 then need (1) was completed. When the new doctrine was written² and the book of Revelation completed the scriptures, then need (2) ceased. Once ecclesias were established from Jerusalem to Rome, then purpose (3) was completed. (See Col. 1:21-23).

In these last days when there is no open vision and no miracles wrought by Spirit gifted brethren, it would be unreasonable to expect a “foretaste of the future”.

We might, therefore, expect some indication from Scripture that this aspect of the Holy Spirit was nearing completion. We find this in the words of Paul.

1 Cor. 13:10 demonstrates that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 1 Cor. 12 “will be done away”, i.e. when the canon was completed.

John (the last living Apostle) died at the close of the first century. The youngest of those on whom he laid his hands would, by the middle of the second century be getting old, ready to die. When these died, there would be no mortal left who had the Holy Spirit.

The following summarizes the facts:

- (1) The early ecclesia **did** have the Holy Spirit as a vital necessity.
- (2) Paul said it would be withdrawn.
- (3) There is *no* evidence of its possession after the middle of the second century.
- (4) The claim to possess it today is baseless.
- (5) It is no use saying, “we admit we cannot work miracles.” The Holy Spirit was always evidenced by power in some way, either healing, or tongues, or interpretation of tongues, or revelations. *None* of these is in evidence despite claims to the contrary.
- (6) Paul says these were “The powers of the age to come” and will be in abundant evidence when the Lord returns.
- (7) The Truth has survived longer with the Scriptures than it did with the gifts (about 150 years compared to 70).

² “These are written, that ye might believe” (John 20:30, 31; see also 1 John 5:10).

Negative aspects

Most pagan religions taught salvation by some kind of mystical cleansing, rather than by forgiveness of sins through a mediator and belief in a word. Generally the pagan believed he had an immaterial soul or spirit within them which could receive from its divine origins³ a regeneration.

It seems that Moses, Agur (from Northern Arabia) and Paul were counteracting this pagan influence. Note the words of Paul.⁴

“But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

“THE WORD⁵ is NEAR YOU... - that is, the word of faith which we are preaching.” (Rom. 10:6-8 NASB).

Paul also describes the process of righteousness leading to salvation.

“For with the heart man believeth” (i.e. the words of v. 8) “unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (v.10 AV).

Paul is saying in effect that the steps are:

- a) belief in the *words* of the gospel.
- b) confession of sins (so that God may justify us) with our mouths.

Salvation is by faith in the word of God, not by some mystical entrance of a gift of righteousness into our hearts. The two are mutually exclusive. The former is the “power of God unto salvation”; the latter is the philosophy of *pagans*.

³ cf. TBSM, ‘Wisdom of the Children of the East’, Vol. 1, P. 155.

“Before such renewal could take place, the gods had to be pleaded with. Therefore, a messenger had to be sent - and in early Tammuz worship a human sacrifice was burnt in order that his soul might ascend to heaven to beg the god to return to earth as a new-born spirit of... sinlessness in the human heart. If the god was thought to be in the nether world, the sacrifice was drowned in order that the spirit of the man might ‘go over the sea for us’.”

⁴ Capitals are quotations from Deut. 30:11-14. (cf. Prov. 30:1-5).

⁵ Greek *Rema*. cf. Eph. 6:17 “Sword of the Spirit”.

SECTION B

GENERAL SUBJECTS RELATED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

The idea is currently being advanced - as it has long been maintained by Christendom in general - that the gift of the Holy Spirit was, and still is, predominantly an influence of heavenly “grace”¹ that descends into the believer’s heart. It is maintained that the miraculous gifts were relatively rare. This minimizing or eliminating of the miraculous from the Holy Spirit makes it possible for the present believers to claim to “receive” the Holy Spirit in some non-miraculous sense. This minimizing process then opens the way for misapplication of many passages of Scripture to believers of all ages, when, in reality, they relate only to the miraculous first century Spirit gifts. The evidence for this is contained in what follows and in the notes on the verses in question.

Promise and fulfillment

John the Baptist said that Jesus was “*he that baptizeth in Holy Spirit*” (John 1:33 RV m.) Prior to His ascension, Jesus told His disciples that “*ye shall be baptized in Holy Spirit not many days hence*” (Acts 1:5 RVmg). When Acts describes the fulfillment of this, at Pentecost and in similar effusions that followed on a smaller scale, it *never* uses the Lord’s phrase “*baptized in Holy Spirit*”²; instead “*filled with Holy Spirit*”³ is uniformly substituted (2:4 etc.). That Luke’s use of the phrase “*filled with*” is equivalent to the Lord’s “*baptized in*” is a crucial point and one which is corroborated by closer study. New Testament, and particularly Pauline, usage of the same phraseology as in Acts shows that being “filled” belongs to the same family of ideas as “baptized”, and opens up what “Baptism in Holy Spirit” really means in the Scriptures.

Filled with Holy Spirit

The Greek *bapto* and its cognates usually mean “*to immerse, to dip, to plunge*”; but by extension they also carry the sense of “*to submerge, to fill up, to cause to sink*”.

¹ See GRACE, Section B.

² It is worth noting that:

“baptism in Holy Spirit” (Acts 11:16) =
receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47) =
receiving a miraculous gift (Acts 10:46).

³ This was something that onlookers “heard and saw” v.33. This was a miraculous gift not ‘grace’.

To explain and draw together these various meanings, imagine an empty tumbler being depressed into a vessel containing liquid. Gradually it is “baptized”; but at the moment when it can be said to have been totally immersed, when the brim of the tumbler touches the surface of the liquid, the tumbler becomes “baptized” also in the secondary sense of being “filled up”, and is “filled up” in proportion to the depth to which it continues to be depressed. The two stages correspond to water baptism and Spirit-baptism in Christian teaching, and as practised, in that order, in the early Ecclesia (e.g. Acts 8:12,15-17). To apply this distinction between the two verbal definitions, to the subject in hand, may at first seem to be naively artificial, but it does, in fact, shed a flood of light on the use throughout the New Testament of the Greek words *pleroo* and *pletho* (“to fill, to make full”) in connection with Holy Spirit.

Luke states that John the Baptist, Elisabeth and Zacharias were “*filled* with the Holy Spirit”; the first-named from his mother’s womb, and the others specially to prophesy of the coming Messiah. In Acts, the disciples were “*filled* with the Holy Spirit” at Pentecost (2:4), as was Peter for his defence before the Sanhedrin (4:8). When the whole company of the disciples (presumably now a very large number) thanked and praised God for the release of Peter and John, and asked for boldness to speak the Word with the same fearless courage, the Lord responded by causing “the place” to shake, and “they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the Word with boldness” (4:31). So also, Paul was “*filled* with the Holy Spirit” in Damascus after his conversion (9:17), and again later, when he punished Elymas the sorcerer with blindness (13:9).

It would seem, in the terms of the metaphor, (“filled”) that God’s servants needed to be replenished with Holy Spirit on each occasion when their gift was employed. Although Jesus had the Spirit without measure, he perceived that “virtue” (RV: “power”) had gone out of him when the woman with an issue of blood touched the hem of his garment (Mark 5:30). In front of the tomb, in the presence of the crowd, he thanked his Father for answering his prayer before calling Lazarus back to life (John 11:41). At that moment, or shortly before, he may have been conscious of a fresh surge of power for the supreme miracle about to be performed. These thoughts are consonant with the record of individual Apostles and the company of the early disciples being “*filled* with the Holy Spirit” on more than one occasion. The phrase “I will *pour out*”, in Joel’s prophecy concerning the Spirit-gifts, describes the source and means of supply, whilst being “baptized in” or “filled with” Holy Spirit describes the effect of that outpouring on those who were subject to it.⁴

Baptism in Holy Spirit, therefore, refers to the miraculous gifts evident to the eye and ear at Pentecost and thereafter⁵.

⁴ This section is largely quoted from TEST, Vol. 43, P. 226, 227.

⁵ Compare the use of the cognate forms of *pleroo* in Ephesians and Colossians.

BASF VERSUS BELIEF IN A PRESENT POSSESSION OF THE SPIRIT

PROBLEM:

It is maintained by some that since the Statement of Faith (BASF) does not mention the subject, then it is not a matter of fellowship.

SOLUTION:

This statement is a contradiction of “THE FOUNDATION”.

“That the book currently known as the Bible consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth...”

When a person alleges he has access to *another* source of revelation¹ or instruction or inspiration or power apart from the Word through an “experience” or “indwelling of the Spirit”, then he disagrees with the foundation² of our Statement of Faith. He becomes a man “who is right” because he has had an experience.

Under “Doctrines to be Rejected” Statement 25 we have

“That a man cannot believe without possessing the Spirit of God.”

The person who claims present possession³ will and does claim that only those who have had “an experience with the Lord” “are on the track”.

¹ “It is the source of understanding the truth of God’s Word and without the ‘Renewing of the Holy Spirit’ a man or a woman cannot be guided to salvation” (AMAX)
This claim is not unlike the Papal claim of infallibility (i.e. ‘only the Spirit guided church may interpret truth’).

² See Introduction where it is established that they disagree with several other items in the Statement of Faith.

³ In claiming this, a person brings the condemnation of Scripture upon himself.

1. A person falsely claiming the spirit is a “false prophet” (1 John 4:1,6).
2. “Blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.” (Matt. 12:31).
3. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8, 9).

BEING BORN AGAIN

The Prologue of John's Gospel shows that there is a deliberate analogy drawn between *the* Son of God, and those who, through *belief* in him, are themselves subject to divine birth¹. It sometimes is argued, on the basis of this evident relationship (between the begetting of Jesus by the Holy Spirit upon Mary, and that of "the sons of God") that the Holy Spirit must have been the medium of the miracle in their case also. But John's Prologue does not say so. The passage says that *belief* is the spiritual basis of rebirth.

Both the Prologue to John's gospel and the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus² teach that the new birth is a spiritual process which involves "receiving" Christ and "believing on his Name" through the message of "the Voice" of "the Spirit" speaking through God's prophets (both O.T. and N.T.) and preeminently through His Son. The seed of truth thus planted in the heart, is part of a spiritual process which after germination and growth, "brings forth" a new born "son of God", who, as he rises from the baptismal water, can rightly claim to have been born both "from above" and "anew" (RV translation of Gr. *anōthen*).

Several scriptures support the preceding interpretation:

"In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the *word of truth*"

(James 1:18).

"Blessed be God who ... has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead". (1 Pet. 1:3; cf. v. 25).

"For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23).

Biblical figures

By a simple transfer to agricultural figures, conversion is compared in Scripture to seed (the gospel) planted in soil (minds). Two examples demonstrate this:

- (a) The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8): "The seed is the word of God" (v. 11) "And the seed in the good ground, these are the ones who have *heard* the word in an honest and good heart" (v. 15).
- (b) In his teaching about the Divine begetting of the believer, James says: "Receive with meekness the *implanted* word, which is able to save your souls" (1:21).

Those who teach that the Holy Spirit is in some mystical sense the direct medium of the believer's new birth, and that without this direct intervention any conversion is ineffectual and invalid, claim that it is absurd to expect the cold print of Scripture to effect a miracle³ of rebirth. Yet it is in terms of human language, by the spoken or written word, that God has always seen fit to speak to men about sin and salvation. This "word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword and... able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

¹ 1:14 cf. 1:12-13

² see notes at John 3:5.

³ See Providence and Angels in Section B.

CONVERSION: WHEN DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

PROBLEM:

It is maintained by some that their conversion took place months and even years after they were “baptized” and that this conversion was “an experience which gave them the Spirit and put them on the track.”

SOLUTION:

1. Conversion in its primary sense *must* take place before baptism, otherwise the alleged “baptism” is *not* baptism but a mere washing of a dry sinner to get a wet sinner. If there has not been a change in mind and living before, then the “baptism” was not a death to an old life, nor was it a rising to a new one. If it was not these things then there was no forgiveness and no being born again.
2. There is no scriptural evidence that “an experience with the Lord” is a necessary part of conversion. Ask any Pentecostal how he found conversion and he will give you an account psychologically similar to the experiences of many *pagan cult-worshippers*.
3. The case of the Apostle Peter (Luke 22:32) is often cited to prove the above claim. However, it was not an “experience with Jesus” that caused Peter to “turn” and this did not give him the Spirit. Peter, after his denial, remembered the words of Jesus, and he repented and “wept bitterly”.

This example of Peter is a case where a person is originally converted to the Truth, yet through weakness of the flesh, errs and transgresses from the ways of God. The turning back again is a re-conversion. In all instances where the Greek verb *epistrepho* is translated in the AV as convert(ed), the meaning is “to turn again” (NASB). It does not suggest a first conversion but a re-conversion. The position of needing re-conversion is a very dangerous one (cf. James 5:19; Matt. 13:15; Acts 28:27).

4. The true conversion of which the Scriptures¹ speak is connected with repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life. A man by this word comes to know the will of God and His promises, is converted by that knowledge of walking contrary thereto. He repents or changes his mind, and perceiving that God has promised to forgive his sins for Christ’s sake, upon his belief of the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached, and baptism into his name; he obeys from the heart ... and is “Baptized into Christ.” Being then “in Christ” (Gal. 3:28) he is an “heir according to the promises” and if he endure in well doing until the end, he will receive eternal life at the Lord’s hand in the day of his coming.
5. The process of “conversion”, like that of being “saved”, is threefold²-
 - a) opening the eyes.
 - b) turning to God.
 - c) receiving the inheritance of the saints.

In a primary sense a) and b) occur before baptism but in a lesser sense may occur afterwards when the word (or contrition based on action) forces us to turn to God more fully. Final conversion does not occur until the body is immortalized.

¹ “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul...” Psa. 19:7-12.

² cf. Acts 26:18 “to open their eyes”, “forgiveness of sins”, “inheritance”.

THE SPIRIT DID NOT CAUSE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Personal possession of the Spirit DID NOT CAUSE RIGHTEOUSNESS and was no guarantee of Salvation.

PROBLEM:

It is alleged that the Holy Spirit

- a) does and
- b) did

cause righteousness because one of the gifts of the Spirit was “the gift of righteousness”.¹

SOLUTION:

- a) If it is demonstrated that the Spirit *did not* cause righteousness in the past, then the onus is on the claimant to show that it is otherwise today.
- b) Defections to the Apostasy by those who possessed the “Spirit of grace” must have occurred, otherwise the writer to the Hebrews would not have mentioned what he did. *“In the case of those who have once been enlightened... and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit ... and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.”* (Heb. 6:4-6, NASB).
“How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God ... and has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).
- c) The evidence is that the moral life of those through whom the Spirit operated was not affected because they faced trials like others and they felt the temptations common to all men.
 - a) MOSES obviously worked miracles (in the plagues, the drying up of the Sea and in the wilderness) but this did not prevent him from “trespassing against” the LORD. Because he did he was barred from the Promised Land. This sin occurred despite the fact that Moses possessed such an abundance of the spirit that the LORD “took of the spirit that was upon him (Moses) and gave it unto the seventy elders”. (Num. 11:25).
 - b) BEZALEEL was “filled ... with the spirit of God” (Exod. 31:3; 35:31) so that he would have the ability to build the tabernacle, but he was not one of the two who entered the Promised Land.
 - c) All those occupied in the construction of the dwelling place “grieved his Holy Spirit” and perished in the wilderness. (Isa. 63:10 NASB)
 - d) ELIJAH. After his great victory over the prophets of Baal (which he obtained as a supernatural display of fire from heaven) and the breaking of the drought, it might be thought that such a man was invincible. But the very next day, we find him fleeing from a woman (1 Kings 19:2,3) and desiring death (v. 4).
 - e) SAMSON. “The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him” (Jud. 14:6) so that he had great *physical* power yet he took wives of the Canaanites and was brought to death because of this. His progressive downfall caused his gift to cease (Judges 16:20).

¹ See notes on Rom. 5:17.

- f) DAVID, the prophet, had the Holy Spirit (Psa. 51:11,12) but that did not prevent lust, adultery, deceit and murder.
- g) JESUS had the Spirit without measure yet in Gethsemane when he sorely needed comfort, it did not arise from the Spirit he had but came by angelic ministrations. (Luke 22:43).
- h) Judas Iscariot was an apostle who had the power to heal every kind of sickness but this did not prevent him from the wickedness of betraying the Messiah (Matt. 10:1-8; Acts 1:17, 25).
- i) PETER (who received the Spirit at Pentecost) was so far out of line that Paul “withstood him to the face”. (Gal. 2:11).
- j) PAUL had what some would call “an experience” with Christ and was “filled with the Holy Spirit”, (Acts 9:17) but his own words describe his conflict:
“to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Rom. 7:18).
Paul guarded against the possibility of him becoming a castaway (1 Cor. 9: 27) and yet he probably had more of the Spirit than any other apostle did.
- k) The Corinthians abused the very gifts the Spirit bestowed, and were guilty of immorality and of teaching false doctrine. (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9; 15:12).
- l) The Galatians. “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son” (4:6) to them, but it did not prevent them from being bewitched and turning from the gospel. (3:1).
- m) The Ephesians (some of whom were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (1:13) were instructed “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God”. (4:30). The parallel between the Ephesian ecclesia and Israel of the past is evident in this verse. Both had the Holy Spirit in their midst in the form of miraculous powers, yet their conduct too often “grieved” God.
- n) TIMOTHY had to be rebuked for lack of action. (2 Tim. 1:6; 4:5; 1 Tim. 4:14).
- o) cf. also Acts 6:3 - two requirements:
 - 1. of honest report
 - 2. full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

It may, therefore, be seen that **the bestowal of the Spirit neither prevented apostasy nor built up character.**

By the effort put out to know and keep God’s commandments they developed characters of faithfulness and holiness. If it were otherwise then God could be accused of being partial, because it is easy to see the advantage they would have.

THE SUPPOSED “DIFFERENCE” BETWEEN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

PROBLEM:

When it became apparent to the Apostate church that all evidence of Holy Spirit effusion had ceased, they made the suggestion that there is a difference between the gift of the Holy Spirit on one hand and the *gifts* of the Holy Spirit.¹

SOLUTION:

1. The two are inseparable. Holy Spirit is God’s power set apart for very special work on special occasions. The Holy Spirit was “the gift”²; “the gifts” in various manifestations was the Holy Spirit.
2. No one could have the “gift” of the Holy Spirit without having the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the operation of the Holy Spirit in a person was expressed in some particular gift that they could use. This is evident from Paul’s discourse in 1 Cor. 12:
 - “Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit.” (v. 4).
 - “But *one* and the *same Spirit* works all these things.” (v. 11).
3. “With great power gave the apostles witness” (Acts 4:33).
 - “We are his witnesses, and so also is the Holy Spirit, which God hath given to them that obey him.” (Acts 5:32).

They had healed a man lame from birth, had struck Ananias and Sapphira dead and had spoken with spontaneous divine assurance that confounded all their enemies. Thus was fulfilled the promise of the Lord:

“When they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the *Spirit of your Father* which speaketh in you.” (Matt. 10:19, 20).

This special power was proof of the possession.

¹ cf. NTTC and others *.

² See Rom. 5:17 and notes there.

DIVINE ASSISTANCE¹

If we can understand the principles involved in Divine assistance on a natural plane, this will enable us to understand it on a spiritual plane. The proposition before us is that: God does not perform for us, things which we are capable of doing for ourselves. His assistance consists of furnishing us with the means of doing things. This is the basis of Divine assistance except in miraculous cases.

In the natural sphere God does not perform for man the numerous actions upon which his bodily happiness depends. He furnishes only the capacity and the means of performing them. God plows no man's field; He sows no man's seed; He reaps no man's harvest; He grinds no man's grain; He bakes no man's bread; He plants no man's vineyard; collects no man's grapes nor converts them into wine; He manufactures no man's cloth; nor cuts nor sews it into garments. But He provides the bacteria which can work on loose soil; He provides the sunshine and nutrients which cause the seed to grow, mature and ripen; He provides the food value in the grain which makes it worth grinding; He provides the latent heat in the fuel and the process of combustion to bake the bread plus the process which causes bread to rise; He causes the grapes to grow and fermentation. The above points clearly prove the proposition.

Likewise God does not perform any of those mental actions which enable the advancement of human happiness because he has qualified the human mind to perform these when it desires. God has furnished the means for sight, hearing, tasting and smelling but he does not do these actions for man. God thinks, meditates, reasons and judges for no man; nor does he perform for any man the mental actions of imagination, memory, attention or conscience. Also God does not read, comprehend, believe, repent or reform for any man; nor does he love, hate, sorrow, rejoice or feel any emotions on behalf of any member of our race. No, all these actions man must and does perform for himself. But if man must perform all these actions for himself, what does God contribute towards their performance? He furnishes only capacity, means and motives. This answer can easily be proved to be correct by the Socratic method of argumentation that follows:

1. When the human mind acquires the knowledge of God and divine things, does God perform this action for it, or does he merely assist in its performance by furnishing the necessary capacity and the necessary means of information, and by presenting the most powerful motive of its incalculable benefit and advantage to the acquirer to rouse him to action?
2. When the human mind believes or admits the truth of what God has declared, does God perform the act of believing for the believer, or does he only furnish the declarations to be believed, attested by his own infallible veracity, and in order to excite the mind to the performance of the act of believing what God has declared, propose to it in clear language the immeasurable advantage of divine faith, that is, of believing what God has declared? Thus we perceive what man contributes towards the act of faith or believing, and what God contributes. God bestows the capacity necessary to enable man to perform the act.

¹ These notes are extracted from an essay in TBSM, Vol. 5, P. 198.

He also furnishes the means without which the act, notwithstanding man's capacity, could not be performed; and he furnishes and proposes the inducement which excites to its performance, and man thus excited exerts the capacity bestowed upon him or believes.

3. When a person repents does God perform the act of penitence² for the individual, or does He furnish only the capacity necessary to enable man to repent (as well as the clear revelation that all will be destroyed unless they repent)? Here again it is obvious that God furnishes capacity, means and motives. Aided by these the creature performs the act.
4. When one loves God, delights, rejoices, or confides in God, does He perform these actions? Or does He furnish only the capacity (which man exerts in their performance), as well as a declaration of His love to us (which awakens a response, based on gratitude, in His creation)? If then, we are desirous to have the emotions of agape excited in our minds towards our Maker, let us read and meditate upon God's revelation about His lovely perfection's and beneficial actions until these emotions are awakened within us by that effort.

CONCLUSION³

The analysis of these spiritual actions proves to us that man is the performer of these actions since God has furnished only the capacity, means and motives which enable him to do so. To ask for or expect to receive more, is to suggest that God is incapable of deciding what his creation requires. If God performed these actions for us, then we would be robots.

² Acts 11:18 ("Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance") is not an exception. Repentance was not planted directly in the brain of Cornelius, but was the act of Cornelius when he believed the words (11:17) spoken by Peter. It was God who caused Peter to preach the Gospel. God furnished the motive but He did not perform the act.

³ See Providence and Angels, Guidance and Prayer.

ENLIGHTENMENT¹

a) How God calls²

Man has been given free will and God's actions take this into account. By circumstantial pressures exerted through the ministry of angels, God now guides and directs the lives of men and of nations, who are free to respond to or resist the providential activity of God. God "opens" the eyes of people if the light of the Gospel shines where there is potential for belief; He "closes" their eyes when the blaze of the same light meets a refusal to believe. These points are fundamental principles underlying the calling, by God, of individuals to the Truth. This is reinforced by what follows.

b) The method of enlightenment before baptism

Is the church correct in its view that the Holy Spirit is the agency through which the person is morally cleansed and converted? No! The parable of the sower (Luke 8) deals specifically with the method used to bring people to God. It demonstrates that men and women are taught the truth by the preaching of the word.

"The seed is the word of God" sown by Christ and later by the Apostles. The various kinds of ground represent the various kinds of people and their response to the preaching (v. 12-15). It was what was "*heard*" that caused the response; not some mysterious work of the Spirit.

Enlightenment occurs because God has "manifested His word through preaching" (Titus 1:3). Conversion then is the result of preaching, not of some mysterious action of the Holy Spirit. Acts 16 demonstrates how the Philippian jailer came to know the truth - Paul and Silas "spoke unto him the word of the Lord" (v. 32). The record of Acts 13 also shows that the manner in which God brings men and women to Him is through the preaching of the word - "the word of the Lord was published throughout the region" (of Antioch, v. 49).

BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF THE CANON

The means by which Divine enlightenment came to men at this time was generally three-fold:

- 1) By the incomplete written Word (Josh. 1:8; 2 Tim. 3:15).
- 2) By the Holy Spirit speaking directly to or through chosen individuals including angel messengers. (1 Sam. 3:19-21; Acts 2:4).
- 3) By a combination of the above two with the Spirit "opening up³" the written word (Dan. 9:2, 20-27; Heb. 7).

NOW

There is not a particle of Scriptural evidence to suggest that enlightenment (and acceptance) depends on anything else than hearing or reading the written word of God and receiving that message into a good honest heart. The doctrine of prevenient grace, by which a man is brought to understand the gospel by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit on his mind, is an invention of the apostasy.

¹ This subject is related to most others in this section and must be considered in that light.

² See notes at John 6:44.

³ See Section E, Prophets.

If God does not reveal His secrets to us in just the same way today, are we not bound to admit, that though the end result may be the same, there is an important difference between the actual mechanics of Divine enlightenment then and now? Their experiences were unlike ours in some respects as is evident from the record which contains references to phenomena which are not part of the fabric of our lives. Why therefore do some persist in trying to apply to themselves many Scriptural verses that are clearly **not** repeated in identical fashion today? To abandon the first century context of the writings of the New Testament is to set sail on the sea of confusion.⁴

c) Enlightenment after baptism

The Word of God as we have it can be understood by any or all who will make the effort to listen with careful attention to the voice of the Spirit which speaks from its pages. As well as the perfection which the Word displays, there is the providential care of the angels who “minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation”. (Heb. 1:14).

Even the minutest circumstances in our daily lives, all under angelic control, (especially so if we prayerfully request it) can assist us to understand and appreciate God’s word.

The direct action of the Holy Spirit may have been the means by which the inspired Psalmist received the fulfillment of his petition “open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things *out of thy law*” (Psa. 119:18) but who can claim such **revelatory inspiration** now?

Rather our posture should be that of Joshua (1:8), Daniel⁵ or the Bereans (Acts 17:11-12). These examples are the ones we should follow in attempting to know more of God’s *revealed* purpose. It will not be revealed again!

d) Enlightenment - by Spirit or word?

PROBLEM: It is sometimes argued that we must possess the Holy Spirit before we can have real knowledge of Divine truth, i.e. “It is not the sunlight of other centuries which fills the heavens and the earth with its glory today; and it is not by the inspiration of other centuries that men now come to know God⁶.”

SOLUTION:

1. The above is in direct contradiction to Scripture which declares “the holy Scriptures ... are able to make thee wise unto salvation ... All scripture is given by inspiration of God, ... that the man of God may be perfect.” (complete) (2 Tim. 3:15-17).
2. Those who say, “both the Spirit⁷ and the Word can cause enlightenment” generally emphasize the former and minimize the latter. In so doing they surely forget that 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” (Heb. 4:12 RSV).

⁴ TEST, Vol. 44, P.457

⁵ “I Daniel understood by books” (9:2).

⁶ R. W. Dale cited in TCM, Vol. 91, P. 362

⁷ cf. AMAX, P.4, which is in contradistinction to the gospel. “One thing is certain - no man can put God’s laws into his own mind... no matter how much he reads the Word. Only God can do that for him.” If Spirit enlightenment is essential to the understanding of the Gospel, then 2 Tim. 3:15 is a lie.

And they forget:

“Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy.” (Rev. 1:3)

3. At Pentecost, (where perhaps the largest number of converts were made in a single day) what was the cause of enlightenment? Was it “transcendent endowments” operating on those who had “opened their hearts” to receive the Holy Spirit? Or was it *hearing* the *words* of Peter plus the signs that confirmed what he said?

If *hearing the words* of Peter caused enlightenment that led to repentance at Pentecost are we to suppose that there should be a different method used in our case? No! It is obvious if we “hear” the same words of Peter, they can have the same effect as they did at Pentecost.

4. When they of Samaria believed it was because “Philip preached the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ⁸.” The cause of their enlightenment was that they “had received the word of God.” (Acts 8:14).

Philip “could instruct them (Samaritans) in the way of salvation; they believed and were baptized, but they had not the Holy Spirit either before or after through Philip’s ministry, neither presumably would they ever have had it, if Peter and John had not⁹” come.

5. Cornelius and his friends were given the Spirit before being baptized. However, it was not the spirit that enlightened them. It was the words of Simon Peter

“We are all here present before God to *hear* all that you have been commanded by the Lord.” (Acts 10:33 NASB).

“While Peter yet spake these *words*, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the *word*.” (v. 44)

The Holy Spirit¹⁰ was *not* a means of their enlightenment but was to show the circumcised Jews that the Gentiles were now included in God’s plan of salvation.

6. Paul did not receive the Holy Spirit until three days after his conversion. (Acts 9:9, 17.)

⁸ Acts 8:12

⁹ John Carter, TCM, Vol. 91, P. 364.

¹⁰ We do not exclude any “providential” act that could cause men to be brought into contact with the truth. This, however, is not admitting that the persons “possess” the Spirit. An example will illustrate. We read that by the Spirit, instruction was given to Philip to join with the Ethiopian who was travelling from Jerusalem. So Philip “preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35). The record does not say that “the Holy Spirit taught his mind” about Jesus.

We do not find in the examples given, any indication of any supernatural endowment enabling the first believers to know the gospel.¹²

Most examples of enlightenment demonstrate that the person is drawn near to God by hearing¹¹ or reading God's Word, rather than "being taught directly by the Spirit."¹² i.e. "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath *learned* of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:45).¹³

7. If enlightenment is by the Spirit operating directly upon a person's mind, and if this illumination is essential to understanding the Bible, then the Bible alone is ineffective in its witness, being dependant upon a divine act on the reader to complete the revelation. The inspired author would then need an inspired reader to complete the revelation. If the first carries infallibility, we would expect the second to also, since it is only a completion of the process. As a result of this process we would expect an absolute uniformity of interpretation. The claimants to illumination are legion: Roman Catholics, Protestants, etc. Each makes its own claims and denies the claims of others to have Spirit guidance. The history of "Enthusiasm" is a sad story of human aberrations. These claims clearly have their source in *flesh*. The phenomenon had a pagan counterpart and is not exclusively "Christian".

¹¹ "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". (Rom. 10:17). "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:47-50) (cf. Heb. 1:1; John 15:3; John 3:33-34).

¹² The Apostles, Prophets and those who had the gift of wisdom or the gift of knowledge were the exception. The Holy Spirit enlightened them. (Eph. 3:5).

In the O.T. the pattern was the same.

"Thou didst give Thy Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20).

Notice, however, that only the prophets - and not all - were taught directly. This is evident from verse 30:

"And admonished them by Thy Spirit through Thy prophets."

However, to suggest that Divine enlightenment or strength might be given independent of revelation, oral or written (either then or now) is quite unscriptural.

John Thomas' comments on this subject are recorded in his "Clerical Theology Unscriptural".

"HERESIAN: Is this revelation made to every man by or through the spirit?"

BOANERGES: NO. It was conveyed from God to the prophets of Israel, to His Son, and to His apostles, to be by them made known to the world. God's revelation, therefore, is a matter of testimony, and not an afflation, or aura, termed "grace" by those dark bodies called the "schools". God has revealed all He intends to reveal until the revelation of Jesus Christ in his kingdom..."

¹³ cf. notes on John 6:45 in Section C.

FREEWILL AND THE SPIRIT

God, in His infinite wisdom, gave man the freedom of choice that we term freewill. Therefore, He will not overrule that principle. Christ, for example, who was given the Spirit without measure, could have yielded to his temptations. He still had the choice to obey or disobey (Heb. 4:15).

Those who claim that the Spirit directly causes righteousness, joy, happiness, and zeal display a fundamental error in their thinking. God did not and will not give the Spirit for these purposes because it would make man a robot without the choice to obey or disobey God. God could have peopled the earth with robots if He had wished. Because He did not is evidence that He does not compel us to do what He desires. That would not give Him glory. God has no pleasure in a man persuaded against his will. (Matt. 9:13).

A modern example may help us to appreciate these facts. A computer programmer can program a computer so that it obeys all his instructions and performs the desired task. However, a programmer cannot love a computer and a computer cannot love its programmer.

In the voluntary submission of a man to God, there is for Him immeasurable satisfaction and sweetness. This is to be expected as God is a person and His relationship to His people is a personal one. Such a thing as direct interference with the mental processes of an individual seems contrary to all that God is.

The scriptures¹, from Genesis to Revelation, make it clear that man has freedom of choice. God does not seek the programmed response of automatons which are incapable of thought or independent action. Rather he seeks the obedience and love of individuals with personality and character.

Christ “learned obedience by the things that he suffered” and the process for us is essentially the same.

A great deal of evidence exists in the Bible to show that many who had the Spirit misused that power. The ecclesia at Corinth is an example of the misuse of tongues. Those who claim that the possession of the Holy Spirit causes righteousness² need to reread their Bible, because the evidence there is just the opposite.

¹ e.g. “I have set before you life and death ... therefore choose life”. (Deut. 30:15-20).

² see Section B - “Did not cause righteousness”.

GOD IS CORPOREAL¹

PROBLEM:

Most of the people who misunderstand the subject of the Spirit assume or declare that Spiritual beings are immaterial. This misunderstanding gives rise to all sorts of arguments about “mysterious activities” of the Spirit.

SOLUTION:

“We should not assume that anything we cannot see or hear or touch is by nature, by its basic character, silent, immaterial or invisible. We cannot see God who is Spirit. We cannot, today, see angels who are spirits. We hear no voice from heaven. Yet we know that some men heard, saw and touched things which are eternal, things which may be described as eternal.”²

Stephen saw the “heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”,³ while those around saw nothing. So we cannot argue that God, Jesus and the angels are immaterial because we by our limited senses cannot see or touch them.⁴

That conception of God which thinks of Him as mere abstract power, impalpable, universal, without person or locality is not true. We cannot worship abstract universal power and claim we worship God.

The phrase “God is Spirit” is sometimes offered as evidence that He is immaterial but Jesus (whom we know to be a corporeal being⁵) is called the Lord the Spirit in 2 Cor. 3:17,18. “He is now no longer flesh and blood; but Holy Spirit Nature a flesh and bones embodiment of Spirit.”⁶

Dr. Thomas’ comments as follows:

“The spiritual body is constituted of flesh and bones vitalized by the spirit. This appears from the testimony concerning Jesus. On a certain occasion, he unexpectedly stood in the midst of his disciples, at which they were exceedingly alarmed, supposing they beheld a spirit, or phantasm, as at a former time. But, that they might be assured that it was really he himself, he invited them to handle him, and examine his hands and feet: “For”, said he, “a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have”. Incredulous for joy, he gave them further proof by eating a piece of broiled fish and of a honeycomb. Thomas thrust his hand into his side, and was convinced that he was the same who had been crucified. What stronger proof can we need of the substantial and tangible nature of the spiritual body? It is the animal body purified, not evaporated into gas, or vapour. It is a bloodless body; for in the case of Jesus he had poured out his blood on the cross. The life of the animal body is in the blood:

¹ Capable of being touched (as are all spirit beings).

² TBSM, Ray Walker, “The Language of Apostasy”, (SPIRIT) Vol. 3, No. 2, P. 50.

³ Acts 7:56

⁴ Angels appeared as ordinary men to Abraham (“three men stood by Him”, Gen.18:2).

In the future the “inhabitants of Jerusalem ... shall look upon me (Jesus) whom they have pierced”. (Zech. 12:10). They will say unto him, “What are these wounds in thine hands?”

⁵ “Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands... and thrust it into my side” (John 20:27).

“And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb and he (Jesus) took it, and did eat before them” (Luke 24:43).

⁶ LOGOS, J. Thomas, Phanerosis, P. 78. See notes at John 4:24.

but not so that of the spiritual body: the life of this resides in that mighty power which suspends “the earth upon nothing”, and is diffused through the immensity of space.”⁷

Since Jesus has flesh and bones it seems incongruous that his Father would not. The writer to the Hebrews says that Christ was “the express image of His person”⁸

The angels are “ministering spirits”⁹, but they were seen by men many times.

Many passages in scripture show that God is corporeal and shares emotions that we do:

“And God said, Let us make man in our *image*, after our *likeness*.” (Gen. 1:26).

“God created man, in the likeness¹⁰ of God made he him” (Gen. 5:1, 3).

“He that sitteth in the heaven shall *laugh*” (Psa. 2:4).

“Hide not thy *face* . . . *incline* thine *ear* unto me” (Psa. 102:2).

“He hath *looked* down from the height of His sanctuary” (Psa. 102:19).

“... sat on the right *hand* of God” (Mark 16:19).

“Man... is the *image* ... of God” (1 Cor. 11:7).

“Christ, who is the *image* of God”¹¹ (2 Cor. 4:4).

“Men, which are after the similitude of God” (James 3:9).

OBJECTION CONSIDERED

Psalm 34:7 “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” is sometimes advanced as evidence that spirit beings can materialize or dematerialize.

SOLUTION:

1. We are made in the *image* of the Elohim. Gen. 1:26. This means what it says!

⁷ Elpis Israel, P. 43.

⁸ Heb. 1:3. It is a principle of creation that like begets like.

⁹ Heb. 1:14

¹⁰ Notice that “Adam begat a son in his likeness, after his image.” If this language is understood, then surely it can be seen that we are created in the image of God even as Jesus was the express image of Him.

If we are to be one with God even as Jesus is one with the Father (John 17:22) then we must be physically and morally like Jesus was after his glorification.

- see also Gen. 9:6; Psa. 94:9,10; Luke 1:35; John 14:9; Neh. 1:6; Luke 20:35-36.

¹¹ cf. also Col. 1:15.

2. The angels¹ cannot be seen because our eyes are closed and not because angels are invisible 'ghosts'.
 Balaam's "ass saw the angel" but Balaam could not until "the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam." (Num. 22:27, 31).
 Elisha saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire" but his servant could not see this until "the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw" (2 Kings 6:16,17).
3. The fact that angels and Christ appeared or disappeared suddenly does not prove that they materialized or dematerialized. The example of Philip, a mortal physical being proves this. No one would claim he dematerialized when the Bible says "the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more."

GOD IS WORKING THROUGH MEN

PROBLEM: It is often assumed that when God works through men it means that they have the Holy Spirit.

God Working Through:

Ex. 9:16	“For this cause I raised thee up for to shew in thee my power.”	Pharaoh
Dan. 4:17	“The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of man”	Nebuchadnezzar
Jer. 43:10	“I will send my Servant.”	Nebuchadnezzar
Isa. 10:5	“O, Assyrian, the rod of mine anger ...”	Assyrians
Ezra 1:2	“Thus saith Cyrus, king Of Persia, The LORD God of heaven . . . hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem . . .”	Cyrus
Isa. 45:1,4	“Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden... though thou hast not known me.”	Cyrus

SOLUTION:

1. No one would suggest that *these* men possessed the Holy Spirit!
2. God influenced them, but God working through them by His Spirit, and their possessing the Holy Spirit are two totally different things.
3. God today continues His work indirectly through the ways of providence.

¹ Christ could not be “seen” by his disciples for a time for the same reason:
 “But their eyes were holden that they should not know him”. (Luke 24:16)

However afterward “their eyes were opened, and they knew him” v. 31.

“God ... granted that He should become visible ... to the witnesses ... who ate and drank with Him”... (Acts 10:40, 41 (NASB))

GRACE

PROBLEM:

- A. Today some of those who claim to have the Holy Spirit regard it as a means of special grace, a means to holiness of life.
- B. It is maintained by some that they have received a mystical divine inspiration from heavenly sources which purified them and 'made them good'. This they call "Grace".

SOLUTION:

- A. The following facts should be carefully noted:
 3. When the Apostles died, the power of passing on the Holy Spirit died with them. From that angle there can be no possession of the Holy Spirit today. (See Section D -"Spirit Gifts not Available").
 4. Those who claim their experience was that of direct descent must remember that whenever this occurred (as recorded in scripture) it was always visible to others. We have no record of the Spirit descending when only the recipient was aware of it.
 5. The possession of the Holy Spirit did not cause holiness¹ Paul frequently had to rebuke those who did possess it, even describing them as "carnal²" and "babes", fit only to feed on "milk" and not on "meat".
- B. Problem B is related to A so solution A should be noted here. The definition given to "Grace" in problem B above is a counterfeit, deceiving meaning, derived from pagan sources such as Plato and Augustine of Hippo - and not the Scriptures³.
 1. "Grace" is the unmerited favor of God and has been revealed by three main gifts:
 - a. life in the first place (breath of life).
 - b. the revelation of eternal life (eventually eternal life itself).
 - c. forgiveness through Jesus.
 2. "Grace" is sometimes used in Scripture as the means by which God reveals or brings His salvation (cf. 1.b. above). Examples of this usage are to be found in:
 - a. Eph. 3:2, 7 where "grace" not only describes the revelation that eternal life was to be the hope of Gentiles but also the means by which God revealed His salvation to the Gentiles.

"The stewardship of God's grace ... that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs,"

This use of grace describes the revelation that Gentiles were included.

"of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace ... to me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles" (NASB).

This use of grace describes the means by which God revealed his salvation.

¹ cf. "Did Not Cause Righteousness."

² 1 Cor. 3:1 This statement obviously includes the group mentioned in verse 16, "the Spirit of God dwells in you."

³ See TBSM, "Grace", Vol. 3. P. 155 for an excellent treatise on this subject.

- b. Rom. 12:6-8 “Having then gifts⁴ differing according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy... ministry... teaching... exhortation... giving, ruling, showing mercy⁵.”

These gifts were given so that the possessor might help others by:

- (1) “ministering” the gospel.
- (2) “perfecting the saints”.
- (3) “edifying the body of Christ”.

They were **not** given to a person for his personal satisfaction or use.

3. To use these “gifts of grace” to one’s own end was a detrimental misuse of them, as is evident from the following words of Paul:

“to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” (Rom. 12:3)

⁴ That these were “gifts” of the Holy Spirit is evident from the following tabular comparison of the same gifts in Corinth, Ephesus and those to whom Peter wrote.

Rom. 12	1 Cor. 12	Eph. 4	1 Pet. 4:10
Prophecy v.6	Prophecy v.10	Prophets v.11	
Ministry v.7	Apostles v.28	Apostles	Minister
Teacher	Teachers v.28	Teachers (Evangelists)	
Exhort v.8	Wisdom?	Pastors	Speak
Giver	Helps		
Ruler	Governments		
Mercy	Those Who Help Others (Taylor)		
	Wisdom v.8		
	Knowledge	Many Sided Favour (Wms)	
	Faith v.9		
	Healing		
	Miracles v.10		
	Discerning of Spirits	cf. Acts 19:6	
	Tongues		
	Interpretations		

These gifts were therefore both:

- a) gifts of the “Holy Spirit”.
- b) gifts of “grace”.

Rom. 12:6	“gifts” ... “grace”.
1 Cor. 1:4,7; 12:4,9	“grace, gifts, same Spirit”.
Eph. 4:7, 4	“grace, gift, Spirit”.
1 Pet. 4:10	“gift ... grace”.

(Of course it is recognized that such words as “apostles”, for example, are a classification (or office) and do not refer specifically to a particular gift.)

⁵ This example is chosen not because it represents all uses of grace but because it easily demolishes the theories of those who cunningly link “grace”, and the “non-miraculous” outpourings of the “Spirit” to the claim for “present possession of the Spirit” (and inner peace, hope and joy derived from said possession.)

“I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.” (1 Cor. 14:19 RSV).

“God is not a God of confusion.” (v. 33 RSV).

4. Those, therefore, who see this grace₆ as something which benefits them personally, do not understand the subject.

- These gifts of grace did **not** “purify or make good” the recipients!
- They were given for an interim period only and are in no way available today.⁷

⁶ The grace under consideration in this context was that defined in 2.b. above. 1.c. has not been forgotten (cf. Heb. 4:16) but is not considered here as it is not the problem under consideration in this treatise.

⁷ See Section D.

GUIDANCE AND PRAYER

Our attitude to prayer generally fits into one of the following four categories:

1. We realize that we must “worship in spirit (sincerity) and in truth”. This means that our words should accurately reflect our thoughts which are based on Scripture. i.e. “If we ask anything *according to His will* He heareth us” (1 John 5:14).
2. We don’t altogether understand how to pray so we borrow nice sounding generalized clichés. Very often we don’t know the meaning of these phrases but nevertheless we think everyone else does. We feel that words are not important because God understands what we mean not from our words but from our motives, our heart and our need.
3. We convey our ideas by carefully choosing words which are acceptable both to our radical friends and our enemies in the truth. Little thought is given to how the Father views such an activity.
4. We feel prayer is unnecessary most of the time for one of several different reasons:
 - a. We have the Spirit which directly guides us in right ways, or
 - b. We have lost our zeal for God, or
 - c. Today, God is not active in our lives. The only thing that can assist us is endless study of His revelation.

It almost ‘goes without saying’, that all attitudes except the first are wrong. If we do not know what we are saying then we must not say it. This type of prayer indicates a lack of sincerity. Also it is easy for false doctrine to creep into this type of prayer. When prayer is not based on the word of God it becomes “an abomination” (Prov. 28:9). If we deliberately give prayers that have two meanings, then we are not sincere and God will not be pleased with our action. If we do not offer acceptable prayer then we can have no hope of salvation.

It is the second category - that of not fully understanding our words and therefore possibly assisting false doctrine¹ - that we are initially concerned with here. Some Christadelphians argue that believers today possess the Holy Spirit, and say that even those who claimed *not* to accept this idea really demonstrated their belief in it when they prayed for divine help to be given to a speaker, “that God may be mouth, matter and wisdom”²

This deduction is correct, for if we really do expect God to answer this kind of prayer then it can only be through the direct intervention of God by His power, and it follows that if God does answer such prayer then the speaker’s words are God-given, and therefore infallible!

¹ Our hymn books are sometimes misused in a similar way. When Brethren sing hymns which teach false doctrine, this is advanced by those who hold false doctrine as evidence that their theory is true. Their deduction is correct. We must not sing or pray words that support false doctrine. Let us be on our guard.

² see WHSA, P. 44 and TBSM, Vol. 4, P. 145. (Editorial reference).

All who are well grounded in the Truth will see the absolute folly of this position. Those entrusted to exercise the privilege of prayer on behalf of the Ecclesia should take care lest, in making such petitions, they provide the faulty premise on which such reasoning is based.

The request that God may be “mouth, matter and wisdom” conflicts with God’s divine revelation that we are to:

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15).

Most brethren, when questioned about the phrase, have admitted that they had used borrowed words and hadn’t understood their full implication.

A true follower of Christ must “pray without ceasing”. Those who expect to obtain salvation without asking God to intervene and help them will not attain that end. Conversely those who expect God to intervene in the sense of giving them the Spirit or influencing them directly by His Spirit³ will not receive answers to their requests because they are not in accordance with the revealed purpose of God.

In view of the above points how should we pray for “divine guidance” and how should we expect it to operate in our lives? This is a crucial question and certainly not an easy one to answer. There are several facts, however, which are immediately apparent and these will help to steer us to the right answer:

1. In God’s wisdom this is not a time for open communications from God, but a time for studying the communications He has already made and preserved so wondrously in the Bible.

It would, therefore, be wrong to expect God to communicate to each and every man a separate store of divine knowledge of his own to meet his separate needs. Rather, He has spread a common table for all, and invites all to come and partake of that feast. It is there in the completed revelation that He requires each to receive his ‘divine guidance’ and strength from (cf. Prov. 28:9; Psa. 119:97-106). It is no use praying for what we already have within our reach.

2. We do not experience open Angelic visitations. We experience, however, their providential control of our lives. This, therefore, is what we should mean by ‘divine guidance’. It is the wonderful way in which the Father intervenes indirectly *in the circumstances* of the lives of His children for their encouragement, protection and correction, so that their characters might be developed in the days of probation (cf. Psa. 34:7 and Heb. 12:6).

3. We are not witnesses of the Apostolic age of miracles. We should not expect to be either because miracles were an accompaniment of revelation that has been completed.

We are witnesses, however, of miracles in the political sphere, which further demonstrates angelic guidance.

³ See Providence and Angels.

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit had been given to David without requiring that he pray for it. After his sin with Bathsheba he prayed that the Spirit be not taken from him (Psa. 51) but this can not be construed as prayer for the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost but this did not require the disciples to pray for it. It was a promise that the Father gave and fulfilled. Any other example of prayer for the Holy Spirit, as can be seen upon examination, relates only to the first century miraculous gifts.

For us to pray for the Spirit so that it may cleanse us and make us righteous is to speak the words not of Truth but of the Apostasy. It is through the words or truth of Christ that we are sanctified (John 17:19) and this was his prayer. He did *not* pray that the Spirit in some miraculous way should do the sanctifying. There is more of the Holy Spirit available from the written word than was ever given to the early ecclesia. And He has never undertaken to send His Spirit to open unto us for wisdom what He has put in our power to open for ourselves.

What prayer “for the spirit” means today

It means a reversal of the process of salvation. It means that the Scriptures are a sealed book, and that unless we have the Spirit we need not trouble ourselves with opening it. It means substituting prayer for action. It means the petitioner wants to save himself the bother of searching the Scriptures. It means what the Church of Rome and her harlot daughters teach about “grace”⁴. It means that those who ask will find themselves answered by fancies and frenzies of their own imagination which have as much relation to the work of God on their hearts as the rantings of those “led astray to dumb idols”.

Divine guidance

The ways of God are not confined to the ages of miracles. God has done and continues to exercise His will by means of divine regulation of natural circumstances. All who commit their way to God in a scriptural manner are included in the operations of this providence - that is the control of natural circumstances by angelic agency in an unseen manner and without any apparent interference with natural ways. Where angels do not operate, providence is not at work.

This divine guidance does not dispense with the necessity for individual prudence and action. Human action is the basis for divine supervision. In its absence, there is nothing for the angels to work on.

God has conferred upon man independent volition within natural boundaries. This limited independence of will is the basis of God’s dealings with His children. “Providence” manipulates circumstances, and so acts through, without setting aside, the action of the unconstrained human will. Cooperation between God and man in this way is God’s glorious

⁴ See Section B, Grace

arrangement and is expressed in scripture in the following way: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh⁵ in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12-13).

When God works with and by means of man, human agency is far from superfluous. God requires men humbly, faithfully, and diligently to do their part as the condition and means of enabling Him to work out His purpose with and concerning them. There is a time to stand still and see the salvation of God, but it is not when He proposes to work by us. All the promises of God presuppose active, diligent, courageous, and caretaking co-operation on the part of those to whom they are made. Try to imagine God making the promises to Abraham without his response in leaving Ur. Another example is when the angel appeared to Lot and said:

“Haste thee, escape thither, for *I cannot do anything* till thou be come thither.”
(Gen. 19:22).

Conclusion

With these facts before us it is clear that, while we must commit our needs unto God and seek for His help, we should not ask God for “guidance” and expect such to come directly in a miraculous, mystical way.

Rather we should ask God to work in *our lives* (not *in us*) and expect that the answer will come in providential adjustment of events in our lives (not in a ‘Spirit operation’ on our brain). This may seem to some to be splitting hairs but the difference in meaning is **vast**. The first is part of the gospel; the latter is part of another perverted gospel.

There is not a particle of Scriptural evidence to suggest that we must be Divinely guided before we can understand the Word of God.

Open thou mine eyes

That God will help His servants to understand more of His Word in answer to their prayers is a fact to which we agree. However, to claim that this is now done by the direct influence⁶ of the Holy Spirit would be very unwise indeed.

It is perhaps not altogether surprising that the Bible student should instinctively attribute the remarkable experience of a “flash of inspiration” to direct illumination by the Spirit. But let the student reflect, and he will remember how often some *find* or sudden solution that he so gladly “received” in this way had to be modified or abandoned in later years in the light of maturer knowledge of the Word of God! God is not the author of confusion or error, and great care must be exercised in claiming our *own* sometimes imperfect ideas as Spirit guided. It is a known fact that sudden “flashes” occur in the study of subjects other than the Gospel. This author has had many computer programming problems solved in sudden “flashes”. Is this direct guidance?

⁵ See notes on Phil. 2:12-13.

⁶ See Providence and Angels.

HAVE WE THE HOLY SPIRIT NOW?

PROBLEM:

Do the saints at the present day possess the Holy Spirit? If so, in what sense? If not, why not?

SOLUTION:

1. “No! If they did they could give proof of it in the various ways in which the apostles gave proof of it for the conviction of the people and the edification of believers”¹ (Mark 16:17, 18; Eph. 4:12).
2. Evil men and seducers waxed worse and worse, until at last God withdrew the gift of the Spirit and open attestation and approval of the works of professing Christian men, as He had done ages before in the case of Israel, when there was no open vision.
3. When God pours out His Spirit again there will be no mistake about it, any more than there was in times past (Acts 2:7).
4. The present days are barren days, as regards the Spirit’s direct operations. They are the days predicted² by the following language:

“Therefore, night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets; and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer of God” (Micah 3:6-7).
5. We are not required to present new revelation. We are not brought before magistrates and forbidden to teach the truth. The Bible is in our own tongue and we have the enormous advantage of printing.

¹ Editor, *Christadelphian*, 1908, cited in TCM, Vol. 95, P. 448.

² R. Roberts, *Christendom Astray*, P. 100.

METHODS OF IMPARTING THE SPIRIT GIFTS

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT two methods are recorded:

- A. Directly by God (i.e. Elohim bearing the title YAHWEH).

“And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him (Moses) and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders... and they prophesied.” (Num. 11:25).

- B. Indirectly by laying on of hands.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him” (Deut. 34:9).

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT two methods were also employed:

A. Directly by God or Christ.

It appears that whenever it was imparted directly that there was always a visible (or verbal) manifestation to accompany that outpouring.

Jesus

“And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” (Matt. 3:16)

Apostles

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind ... and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire.” (Acts 2:3).

Gentiles

Before the Gentiles received the Spirit Peter saw a *vision* of the great sheet. Immediately after this there was a verbal manifestation.

“For they heard them speak with tongues.” (Acts 10:46).

B. Indirectly by prayer and the laying on of hands¹ of the Apostles².

When it was imparted indirectly there was no question to those who observed that a change³ had occurred in the person.

“And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6).

¹ It is essential that the two uses of this rite in the early ecclesia not be confused. One was simply a benediction (Acts 6:6; Acts 13:3, cf. Heb. 6:2; 1 Tim. 5:22). The other was for the bestowal of a gift (Acts 8:18; 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6). The presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14) probably has reference to the Apostles at Jerusalem. (See notes on this verse.)

² See notes at Acts 9:17; Acts 8:15, 18.

³ The fact that no change is recorded in Acts 2:41 is not evidence that what they received was an inner subjective gift. They probably received the spirit later.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS LIMITED AND SPECIAL¹

PROBLEM: It is often argued that the Holy Spirit was and is given to everyone at baptism, or when they ‘Have an experience with the Lord’.

SOLUTION:

1. The Holy Spirit was never bestowed automatically at baptism, thus indicating that its possession was not necessary for salvation.
 - a) This is abundantly evident in Acts 8 when Philip taught and baptized the people of Samaria, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John came.
 - b) The Apostles did not receive the Holy Spirit at baptism but at Pentecost. (cf. also John 20:22).
 - c) Cornelius received it before baptism but he was still required to be baptized. d) When Paul at Ephesus baptized “certain disciples” in the name of the Lord Jesus they did not automatically receive the Spirit. It was necessary that Paul lay “his hands upon them” before “the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.”

2. Three different figures are used in the New Testament to indicate that the possession of the Holy Spirit was only a temporary arrangement.
 - a) They are described as “powers of the world to come”. (Heb. 6:4-6). If the gifts had a permanent place in the present order they could not fittingly be described as belonging to the future age, because they would then belong to both ages.
 - b) Paul speaks of “firstfruits of the spirit”. There is a long time between the firstfruits and the harvest. Christ was the firstfruits from the dead but it will be about 2,000 years from that to the harvest. It is reasonable to see the “harvest” of the Spirit as the “redemption of our bodies”.
 - c) The third is the Greek “*arrabon*” meaning pledge, down payment, earnest, guarantee. (See notes on Eph. 1:13,14). A pledge is only given once, not repeated many times as the years go by. We must exhibit faith in that first pledge and not doubt God by seeking another in our time.

3. Three illustrations are employed in 1 Cor. 13:9-13 to indicate that the Spirit outpoural in the first century produced limited results:

¹ This follows the pattern in the O.T.:

- a. God could not dwell among His people until a dwelling place had been made; “Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them” (Exod. 25:8).
- b. Spirit gifts were given so that this dwelling place might be constructed. “I have filled him (Bezaleel) with the Spirit of God ... that he may make” (Exod. 31:2-6).
- c. When the tabernacle was finished the need for these gifts ceased. When Bezaleel and his companions died there is no reason to suppose that these gifts carried on.

- a) The Spirit gifts are termed childish in contrast to the completed revelation, which is compared by Paul with manhood.
 - b) The operation of the gifts was compared with seeing in a dim glass obscurely in contrast to the completed revelation which was likened to seeing face to face.
 - c) The gifts only gave partitive knowledge whereas the completed Scriptures would allow the reader to “know fully”.
4. Not all believers in the first century received it. Simon did not have it. “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter”. (Acts 8:21). It was only “given to them who obeyed Him”. (Acts 5:32).
5. Joel 2:23 shows that there was to be:
- a) a former rain (or teacher of righteousness cf. John 14:26 which shows this was the Holy Spirit or Comforter).
 - b) a latter rain.

In effect, he is saying there would be two outpourings of the Spirit, one at the time of the Apostles and the other later on. Between there would be a dry time in which there was no rain of the Spirit (cf. Isa. 44:2-3; Isa. 32:13-15).

6. The “seven men of honest report” chosen to “serve tables” (Acts 6) are specifically mentioned.
- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Stephen | 5. Timon |
| 2. Philip | 6. Parmenas |
| 3. Prochorus | 7. Nicolas |
| 4. Nicanor | |

We know that Stephen was stoned and we have no record of any replacements upon the death of the other 6. Therefore, this aspect of the Holy Spirit assisted work probably ceased when they all died.

7. The ability to pass on the Holy Spirit was only given to the Apostles². In Acts 8 we are told of Philip preaching and baptizing, but he could not pass on the Holy Spirit. It was necessary for Peter and John to come down “that they might receive the Holy Spirit”. (v.15).
8. The Spirit was not received equally and in the same form by all. 1 Cor. 12:29, 30 clearly shows this. “*All are not Apostles; all are not Prophets; all are not Teachers; all do not work miracles*” etc.

² Only those Apostles appointed by Christ, i.e. the 12 plus Paul. (cf. 1 Cor. 15:8-9). This would not include those appointed by the ecclesia such as Titus (2 Cor. 8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25) etc.

PLATO'S INFLUENCE₁

A. Introduction

The purpose of this subject is to demonstrate that the teaching and claims of some in the Brotherhood have their origins in the pagan philosophies of Plato. It is easy to see that some ideas on the Spirit are drawn directly from that source₂. On the other hand certain phrases and words are so colored and tainted by hundreds of years of theological 'dust' that it is difficult to see the fact that they too have their origin in Greek mythology and metaphysics.

Plato (but more especially his theological descendants) believe, in reality, that 'righteous' man is God. True they accept the fact that God exists, but believe that this God gives to each chosen man a mystical emanation of Himself which then is mystically united with Him so that the things this man says and does is under the direction of His will. The logical extension of this belief is the claim that there is no sin in those whose spirit or divine essence is properly united to God. The written word is discounted by these men and self-deluding 'enthusiasm'₃ gains importance. It is then claimed that only those with this mystical spirit can know spiritual things₄.

B. The cycle of history

Plato and Aristotle always accompany Bible Truth₅. The process is a cycle and may be described as follows:

1. The desire to read, study and learn from the scriptures in a reasoned way (Truth).
2. The desire to rebel politically against the state (or official position) to have individual freedom of thought. (Aristotelian Corruption).
3. The desire of the individual to be personally guided by a mystical spirit. (Platonic position).

When the apostate churches became oppressive and outdated, desire 3 lost prominence and desire 1 and 2 began to be the lot of the common people. It is easy to see that, in the main, desire 1 has ceased. Gone are the Bible readers and debaters of the nineteenth century. In a recent rock festival held on July 4, 1973 in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. there was an obvious lack of political rebels. The 'do your own thing' gang has moved in two directions:

- a) to the 'Jesus freaks' ("good" mystical spirits) or
- b) towards the occult, Satanism and demon worship (evil mystical spirits),

¹ Please refer to TBSM, "Plato or Christ", Vol. 2, for a full treatment.

² "The Holy Spirit is the God given spark within a man which turns that Word into a living reality in his life. It is the source of ability to remember God's laws and the source of desire to do God's will." (AMAX)

³ The pagan origin of this word is explained in footnote 1 at 1 John 4:4.

⁴ Only those with the Spirit are on the track; all others are like so many derailed toys in a boys train set. (*).

⁵ This can be seen by studying P. 167 of the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ' published by E. G. Walker, available from TBSM.

and so in the past 150 years society has gone through all three phases of the cycle.

The same phases of the cycle have been (and are) evident in the Brotherhood.

- Phase one was the first step taken by J. Thomas and his early followers.
- Phase two was initiated by the Endeavour magazine and by certain Brethren advancing their theories on prophecy. Then came the Believer magazine.
- Once the bastion of faith of phase one was largely destroyed by phase two freedom of thought, then phase three immediately appeared in the open, by brethren claiming Spirit gifts and the theory that they were personally guided by a mystical spirit.

C. The reformers and Plato

Although the Reformers were originally motivated by the desire to have freedom of religion, this quickly gave way to teachings that had their origin in Plato.

1. **“GRACE”** To gain freedom from the necessity of confessing sins to the priest, the reformers taught that sins were forgiven directly by God through the *individual* possession of the Holy Spirit. This process was termed “grace”.
2. **“FAITH”** In an effort to shake off the Romish law of works and indulgences, the Reformers denied that the action of a man had any relevance to salvation so that *faith* alone mattered. Their definition of “faith” was a quality that was bestowed by God and enabled men to believe in Christ.
3. **“GUIDANCE”** Although the reformers taught individual possession of the “Spirit” brought “grace” and “salvation”, they also stated that those who had been ordained had a special “grace” - the divinely received ability to interpret scripture. This established their authority:
 - a) above that of scripture.
 - b) above the people.
4. **“SIN”** In Plato is the teaching that the physical frame of man was created essentially wicked, and the “good” in man was given by “god” in the form of part of his spirit (sometimes called the soul).

“...he (god) ordered his own children to make the generation of mortals. They took over from him an immortal principle of soul and imitating him, encased it in a mortal physical globe (the head), with the body as a whole for vehicle. And they built onto it another mortal part, containing terrible and necessary feelings. ... To this mixture they added irrational sensation and desire that shrinks from nothing.” (Plato, Timaeus).

The Gnostics, students of Platonic thought, separated the reasoning mind from the physical being. The first was totally good, divine in origin; the other evil and worthless. The Roman church building on these ideas, formulated the doctrine of “*original sin*”. They taught that man could not overcome this inherited sin. His Spirit (or soul) had to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit in the form of ritual.

The reformers substituted experience for ritual. Thus 'grace' (the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit acting on the believer's portion of the Holy Spirit) was thought to descend on the believer after prayer. This emotional experience ("conversion") removed Adam's sin and is the Baptism or Sanctification by the Holy Spirit. So it can be seen that this false doctrine of Adamic sin requires the equally false doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. (cf. ESSA, P. 2, 30.)

In the pamphlet "Clerical Theology Unscriptural", Bro. J. Thomas establishes truth. He denies the error of regeneration by 'grace' and teaches the regeneration of the heart of man by the gospel believed and obeyed.

"The Nicolaitans, of whom were Hymenaeus and Philetus, engrafted the heathen speculation of immortal soulism upon the doctrine of Christ and then taught the regeneration of the pagan 'soul' by a physical operation of the Holy Spirit upon it. In this way was substituted, by men of corrupt minds, a *physical spiritual* agency for an intellectual and moral agency upon the heart in the regeneration of individuals." (P. 17).

D. Greek ideas on the nature of God

Anything immortal was thought to be essentially immaterial and immutable. This was one of the most basic feelings in Greek philosophy. It is at the root of most of the corruption⁶ of the gospel by paganism.

The Gnostics also believed this basic Platonic idea that "good" existed only in immaterial, eternal things such as soul or spirit. The churches today teach something very similar⁷. We would like to stress that the idea of an immaterial⁸ God is not found in Scripture but belongs to Platonism.

E. Summary

Mystical pagan philosophy (largely originated by Plato) characterizes almost every shade of the Apostasy. Anyone with a bit of fortitude can discover that the ideas Evangelicals hold on "spirit" are founded in Plato. These ideas deny the authority of Scripture. A person led by the Spirit in intuitive ways has no need of Scripture.

⁶ Pre-existence, devil, demons, "faith", "grace", "spirit", "guidance", "sin", etc.

⁷ "Through the Neo-Platonists and Augustine he (Plato) provided a philosophy for Christianity." (TBSM, Ancient Greek Literature, Sir Maurice Bowra, P. 209.)

⁸ see Section B - "God is Corporeal".

Let us beware of the apostasy⁹ and its false theories on spiritual beings and 'spirit'. The strength of the Christadelphian position is that it is Biblical¹⁰. It is not necessary to have the help of:

- a) a divine inspired church tradition or individual or
- b) spirit guidance

before one can understand. We hold that the Bible is God's inspired revelation to man. It is complete and needs no other ingredient to make "the man of God" perfect or complete. It is a clear and reasonable book. Our posture needs to be one of prayer and of willingness to read and obey God's Word.

"PROVIDENCE" AND ANGELS¹

Introduction

Evangelicals do not expect "Saints" to answer their prayers - as do Catholics - nor do they expect angels to be involved in the answer. Not understanding God manifestation they expect to deal with God. They (and too many Christadelphians) expect God's influence to descend directly to man, without the agency of angels. Most major errors in doctrine stem from a misunderstanding of the angels. The subject of the Spirit is no exception. Indeed for those who claim to be in direct contact with God there is little need for angels. However, those who know the truth realize that God works through the angels by a process we call providence².

Angels in the lives of the faithful

The angel of the Presence "appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob". The language used by the Angel indicated the very close association he had with the faithful.

ISAAC

"I will be *with* thee, and will bless thee" (Gen. 26:3).

"Fear not, for I am *with* thee (v. 24).

⁹ "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8,9).

¹⁰ "From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is 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" (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

¹ The reader is referred to TEST, Vol. 44, P. 186 for an excellent article on the subject.

² Although not a scriptural word it is a word which conveys the way in which God works in the affairs of His creation to bring about His purpose without interfering with human free will. The reader is referred to RWOP, where providence is described and illustrated by many Biblical examples.

JACOB

"I am *with* thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest" (Gen. 28:13-15).

JOSEPH

"Behold, I die: but God shall be *with* you" (Gen. 50:24).

TO ISRAEL (under Moses)

"Certainly I will be *with* thee" (Ex. 3:12).

The Angel did indeed go *with* Israel, walking among them in the cloud and fire, filling the Most Holy Place, sometimes going before to lead them, sometimes standing behind to protect them, advising them, reproofing them, always leading them in the way YAHWEH had planned.

"My presence shall go *with* thee" (Ex. 33:14-16).

"He (Angel of the presence) it is that doth go *with* thee; he will not fail thee" (Deut. 31:6).

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the *Angel of his presence* saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63:10).

"Fear not, for I am *with* thee" (Isa. 41:10; 43:5).

TO THE APOSTLES

(This theme is traced in the

- a) notes on John 14-16
- b) Additional Notes on John 14-16
- c) word study on Parakletos to which the reader is referred).

TO ALL HIS BRETHREN

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

This verse allows no change in the operation of Divine providence through the angels. The many visions of angels in the Revelation complete the picture of a continuing angelic ministry.

The only difference in the New Testament (to the oft-repeated Old Testament promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee") is that the active participation of the Son is added to God's omniscient presence. The "abiding" presence is therefore no more "mystical" or "spiritual" than in former ages. The only difference today is the withholding of the overtly miraculous.

Providential control or the function of angels

The Psalmist said: "He maketh His angels Spirits (RV: winds); His ministers a flaming fire" (104:4). The angels are evidently able to exercise control over the elemental forces of nature, and by doing so, they exert pressures on men and nations to influence their decisions and actions without interfering with human choice or free-will.

In the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse, God is seen to be using this "pressure of circumstances" which consists of natural phenomena under the control of the angels. The angels are seen holding back or releasing winds (7:1); they produce "voices, and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake" (8:3,5), and many other upheavals which channel the freely disposed inclinations and purposes of men and nations towards the fulfillment of God's will. There can be no doubt that there is actually a much larger literal element in certain parts of the apocalyptic visions than has hitherto been appreciated, and the role of angels, in the outworking of the Divine purpose is one example of it. The Old Testament supplies ample confirmation of this fact. At the exodus, locusts came on an east wind and were withdrawn by a west wind at precisely pre-stated times (Exod. 10:13-19). A strong east wind parted the Red Sea before the enclosed Israelite host (14:21), and a wind from God brought quails exactly as and when Moses foretold (Num. 11:31). A great wind (cyclone?) from the wilderness destroyed the house of Job's eldest son and killed all his children (Job 1:19). In order to bring Jonah back into the path of duty, "the Lord hurled a great wind into the sea", so that the ship in which he was journeying "was like to be broken" (1:4). In all these instances, God "rode upon a cherub (angel) ... he flew swiftly (RV) upon the wings of the wind" (Psa. 18:10). The list of passages could be greatly extended, and more lists could be compiled to show God's angels employing other elements of nature to divert and direct the attentions and plans of men. Even where the Divine record makes no overt mention of the angelic supervision of particular events, their role can be easily deduced. The death of Ahab is a good example of this. 1 Kings 22:34 relates that "a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness". It is not too farfetched to say that from the moment the arrow left the bow it was under Divine control; it was not mere chance that brought about the fulfillment of the prophet Micaiah's pronouncement of doom on Ahab (1 Kings 22:28).

The student seeks humbly to penetrate still deeper into the Divine mystery. Israel's early history provides a thought-provoking illustration. God commanded them: "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord God ... neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before the Lord thy God three times in the year" (Exod. 34:23, 24 RV). On each occasion the land would virtually be left defenceless, and would invite invasion, especially at harvest-time "when kings go forth to war" (2 Sam. 11:1). God demanded faith which He would reward with guaranteed protection. And what was true of a nation, could be true also of individuals, as Proverbs 16:7 shows: "When a man's ways please the Lord He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him". Such providential control would require the cumulative effect of thousands of circumstances large and small, all marvelously correlated to produce each Divinely desired result.

We can take it therefore that the description of "thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" of angels in Daniel 7:10 is a clear indication that the angels are so numerous as to be beyond computation; and yet they all are tirelessly active and ready on the instant (Dan. 9:21) to fulfil God's commandment, at "the Voice of His Word"...

Unseen angels

If the twentieth century is not favored with visible manifestations of angels, it ought not to be assumed that they no longer superintend the affairs of God's creation. There are Scriptural examples enough of unseen angels at work to convince any faithful reader of God's Word that though now invisible, "the angel of the Lord" still "encampeth round about them that fear Him" (Psa. 34:7). To doubt this is to fall into one of the errors of the Sadducees (Acts 23:8).

Jesus was certainly aware that the Psalmist had promised him the providential protection of angels (Psa. 91:11). Hence his confident rebuke to Peter, who wanted to prevent his arrest: "Thinketh thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt. 26:53). Jesus believed, without any doubt, that even at that late hour, angels could have intervened to change the course of events that was leading up to his crucifixion.

It was Christ, also, who gave the reassurance to all those who believe on him (typified by the little child he called and set in the midst of the disciples), that "their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). The continuing ministry of the angels is thus guaranteed by the Master himself.

Conclusion

It ill behoves us therefore to devise our own ideas as to how God works in our lives. The Holy Spirit is not now given to men to use for Divinely appointed ends; the angels of God are not now openly revealed; the Spirit of God is nonetheless still at work among men, through His Word and through his unseen ministers. We must beware not only lest we entertain mistaken ideas about the operations of God with men but also lest we forget that He works at all.³

³ TEST, Vol. 44, P. 189-191.

SANCTIFICATION

PROBLEM:

Some have the mistaken idea that sanctification is an operation of the Spirit directly upon our minds¹. In some mysterious way, it is said, the Spirit enters them and cleanses and sanctifies their minds. This Holy Spirit gift is “grace” and it counsels and guides and leads to sanctification either apart from or together with the word.

SOLUTION:

The ideas above are false for the following reasons:

- a) God today does not deal directly with us. Rather angels arrange circumstances in our lives².
- b) We are cleansed by receiving forgiveness of sins, not by “grace” entering us.
- c) Those who lived before Pentecost (the alleged time of the start of this special sanctification) were fully sanctified³ without this alleged action of the Spirit. They are held out to us in Hebrews 11 as our examples.

A. IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

1. The word “sanctify” takes us back through the LXX to Old Testament usage, where the word is used of the consecration of the prophet⁴ and of sacrifices.

i.e. “Before I formed thee...I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet”. (Jer. 1:5)

“Sanctify unto me all firstborn... both of man and of beast” (Exod. 13:2).

These two illustrations demonstrate that sanctification⁴ can have nothing to do with “possession of the Spirit” as is claimed by some. In fact, sanctify and sacrifice essentially become synonyms in Deut. 15:19, 21.

2. Since the language of the O.T. eliminates the possibility of believers then possessing the Spirit (as a divine effluent which intuitively led them), then it must be conceded that either:
 - a) their sanctification is not as complete as is possible under Christ or
 - b) it is not essential to possess the Holy Spirit to be sanctified⁵.

Those believing the Truth can not discriminate between those living before and those after Christ. Certainly they were fully sanctified and without the possession of the Holy Spirit! They are held out to us as our examples.

God perfected their characters by the power of His Word, and by angelic supervision of their lives. We must reject conclusion 2a) and be left with 2b).

¹ Verses such as 1 Peter 1:2 are advanced as evidence (but see notes there).

² See “PROVIDENCE AND ANGELS”.

³ cf. Job 2:3 “There is none like him ... a perfect and upright man”.

⁴ the verb “hagiazō” is used in Exod. 29:21 LXX of the consecration of Aaron.

⁵ See Section B - “Did NOT Cause Righteousness.”

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:20).

B. IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

Sanctification occurs when we understand and obey the gospel. “Sanctify them through (“in” RV) thy truth: thy word is truth”, said Jesus. (John 17:17). Only through the Word is sanctification achieved; without it there is none.

“Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3).

He did not say they were clean by the indwelling of the Spirit. In writing to the Ephesian ecclesia, Paul says that Christ gave himself for the ecclesia,

“that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ... that it should be holy and without blemish.” (5:26, 27).

The process is as follows:

1. BEGETTAL:

James says that the Father “begat us with the word of truth ... wherefore ... let every man be swift to hear”. (1:19).

Peter says, “Being born again by the word of God”. (1 Pet. 1:23).

2. and GROWTH:

“Receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21) (RSV).

“desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).

We grow if we are “built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets⁶” and Jesus Christ. If our foundation is not based on their words and lives then we are “strangers and foreigners”.

The process of sanctification⁷ in the O.T. and N.T. is the same, and this destroys the theory that we need the “Spirit” to lead us into sanctification.

⁶ Eph. 2:19, 20.

⁷ The word “hagiasmos” is used only by Biblical and ecclesiastical writers, and it has two meanings.

1. The act of sanctification, consecration, separation to God (1 Cor. 1:30). The verb, *hagiazō*, occurs, for example, in 1 Cor. 6:11.

Hagiasmos: “has reference to status rather than to personal conduct; to destination rather than character.”

2. By metonymy (a figure in which the effect is put for the cause producing it), the state of being sanctified with the manner of life appropriate to such a condition (Rom. 6:19 and 22; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4 and 7; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14). (TCM, Vol. 94, P. 6).

SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE ECCLESIA TODAY

No mortal today possesses the Holy Spirit. We can be sure of that fact because it is not promised and no claimant can prove otherwise.

No doubt the Holy Spirit would be a powerful confirmer of our testimony to the truth if God gave the Holy Spirit to believers now. However, this is not promised and we must remember that God condescends to such special displays of power only at great turning points when it is necessary to show His endorsement of events for the confidence of that generation. Faith is the great thing God aims to produce (Heb. 11:6). The constant exhibition of His power would be “sight” - not “faith”. One only has to reflect on the history of the Bible to see that faith is much greater and more enduring than “sight”.

Nevertheless God is bringing about His purpose with the ecclesias through the unseen work of the Angels.

These ministering Spirits are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation¹.

THE “SPIRIT” WE MUST POSSESS

In our period of probation we must attempt to achieve the goal of moral perfection. This way of life is often described by the word “spirit”² - Paul also calls such characteristics “the fruit of the Spirit³”. This humble and contrite spirit is something we must possess if we are to expect to become a habitation of God through the Spirit in that day when the righteous are to become ministering spirits with Spirit bodies. Instead of falsely claiming now:

- a) the power to perform miracles,
- b) an effluence from God which causes actions independent of our efforts,
- c) some mysterious influence which is received by prayer and by opening our hearts,

let us use the sword⁴ of the Spirit so that the law of the spirit (of life in Christ) will make us free from the law of sin and death.

¹ See Section B - “Providence and Angels”.

² Romans 8 is an example.

³ Gal. 5:22-25.

⁴ The Bible clearly reveals that it is the word of God that is the active ingredient in our lives.

CHRIST “The words I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life.” (John 6:63).

PAUL “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph. 6:17).

JOHN “the Spirit is truth.” (1 John 5:6)

The Word of God was written by men who were inspired of God and, therefore, this word can rightly be termed Spirit. By studying God’s revelation we can cause it to work effectually in us and so develop a Christ like spirit within us.

SECTION C

EXPOSITION OF VERSES CONTAINING 'SPIRIT'

Matt. 3:11 *"He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*

PROBLEM:

This is a verse used by some to try to justify their claim of "getting the Spirit." Fire is usually equated with an emotional experience.

SOLUTION:

1. While it is true that "tongues of fire"¹ were evident on the day of Pentecost and that fire was evident at other times when the power of God was manifested, the immediate context shows that this is not the idea meant.

"And his winnowing fork in His hand and He will thoroughly clean His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

2. Those that were "wheat" Jesus gathered by His preaching. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit.
Those that were "chaff" were destroyed in the "fire" of AD 70 by Titus and Vespasian. This is the primary application of the verse.
3. Of course, the ultimate sense is also meant. When Christ returns the saint will be given eternal life and a full measure of the Spirit. The sinner or chaff will be told "Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal *fire* which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41).
4. Mark's record is conclusive, (1:8). He does not mention "and fire" nor does he mention anything about judgement. This proves that "fire" refers to destruction of the chaff and not to the giving of the Holy Spirit.²
5. This verse cannot be used as in the problem because "to be baptized with fire" is to be destroyed. Emotionalism is not evidence of "getting the Spirit".³

¹ The fire in the shape of tongues was to indicate the purpose of the manifestation and it did. Immediately afterward they spake in tongues. This compares with other manifestations. The burning bush that was not consumed indicated Jewry would not be destroyed. The dove at Christ's baptism indicated He would preach a gospel of peace.

² The same proof is evident in Acts 11:16 and Acts 1:5.

³ The stimulation of the brain by an electric current, Voodoo drumming, certain drugs such as mescaline, and orgiastic dancing can produce hysterical excitement but no Christian would claim that result is "getting the Spirit".

Matt. 10:20 “For *it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you*”.

These words of Jesus are very similar to Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11,12; and 21:15 although all were spoken at different times. Verse 23 ties the period of their application to the other gospel passages. The Lord shows the conditions they might expect, not immediately, but after His ascension. Once this is realized, the connection with the Parakletos¹ is evident. Luke 21:15 identifies the gift (Spirit which speaketh in you) as the “word of wisdom” and this is confirmed by Acts 6:10.

These words cannot apply to us as is evident from the context. Rather we must “handle accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

12:31-32² “*Blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven ... whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven*”. (RSV).

This was the sin of not recognizing the obvious miracles that Jesus performed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees asserted that “this fellow casts out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons.” In other words they asserted that the miracles, which they knew must be the work of God, were done with the help of an evil spirit!

12:43; Luke 11:24 “*Now when the unclean spirit goes out of man*”...

The narrative concerning the unclean spirit concludes: “Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (v.45). This statement indicates that the preceding two verses form a parable of comparison and are not to be taken literally. The parable has been explained as follows

‘The nation of Israel had experienced a cleansing by the teaching of John the Baptist. There “went out to him Jerusalem... and were baptized of him” (Matt. 3:5,6). The house was “cleaned” - “swept and garnished” (v. 44), but it was without its real occupant - the Messiah. “He came to his own, (house, RSV) and his own received him not” (John 1:11). The refusal of Israel to respond to the teaching of Christ merited the description: “and the last state of that man (Israel) is worse than the first” (prior to the cleansing of John’s teaching). (Matt. 12:45). Jesus said: “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” (v. 41). The parable was in effect, a prophecy. In AD70 the frenzied (“demonized”) resistance of the Jews to the Roman invasion resulted in their national destruction³.’

From this explanation we gather that “unclean spirit” refers to “sinful practices and beliefs”. “Trespasses and sins” are termed in Eph. 2:2,3 “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

¹ see notes on John 14-16.

² see also Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10.

³ AWSA, P. 174.

Matt. 12:45; Luke 11:26 “*Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself*”.

The unclean spirit of v. 43 returned to the house of Israel, along with seven other more sinful practices and beliefs. It is difficult to know whether seven is to be regarded as a number or as completeness.

LESSON: Having rid ourselves of evil we cannot remain in this state of emptiness. We must replace it with good, otherwise the evil returns manifold. “Overcome evil with good”. cf. Eph. 4:22-32₁.

Matt. 16:4 “*A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.*”

PROBLEM:

This verse is wrested to try to prove (by claimants of present possession of the Holy Spirit) that they do not have to demonstrate their claims.

“It is an old catch-cry, when someone talks about this subject, for someone else to demand a capricious ‘instant miracle’. When it is not forthcoming, then the opponents of the belief loudly proclaim their victory... There is of course no sign for a “wicked and adulterous generation” for the Holy Spirit is not given for capricious miracles and never was. Nevertheless, miracles do happen today amongst the faithful ₂.”

SOLUTION:

1. ‘Miracles’ do happen today, but that is no evidence that anyone today possesses the Holy Spirit in *any* form.
2. It is ridiculous for the claimant to cite this verse to show that he need not perform a miracle to substantiate his claim.
 - A. Christ had just finished feeding over 4,000 men, women, and children from seven loaves and “a few small fish” (15:34-38).
 - B. Before that, Jesus healed the “lame, crippled, blind, dumb and many others” for three days (15:30-32).
 - C. Before that, Jesus had healed a girl who was mentally ill (15:28).

With all these outstanding signs that he was the Messiah the Pharisees and Sadducees still required a sign!

3. Let the modern claimant of the Spirit do these miracles and all Christadelphians would believe that he had the Spirit.

The fact is he has done *nothing* and still expects his brethren to disobey the Biblical instruction:

“test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world₃.”

¹ see J. Carter, “Parables of the Messiah”, TCM, P. 83-86.

² AMAX

³ 1 John 4:1-3.

Matt. 16:17 *“Blessed are you Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven”.*

PROBLEM:

The confession of Peter “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” has been cited as an example of instant Divine illumination by the Spirit.

SOLUTION:

1. The statement does not support the claim at all. It says no more than that Peter had not derived the context of his remarks from a merely human fleshly source.
2. The evidence is, in fact, that Peter had understood what he said for some significant time previously (Matt. 14:33; John 1:41; 6:69). Even men who were mentally ill made the same confession as Peter did; and they learned of the Divine Sonship of Jesus from the same source as Peter did. (Luke 4:41).
3. Clearly the knowledge had come to Peter from God through Christ, for Jesus said:
 “the words that Thou gavest me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from thee, and they believed that Thou didst send me.” (John 17:8).

CONCLUSION:

As with the disciples (on that occasion) so all the knowledge we acquire of Christ comes from God through His Word (spoken and written to them, written to us) †.

Matt. 22:43 *“Then how does David in the Spirit¹ call Him ‘Lord’,”*
(cf. Mark 12:36 “in the Holy Spirit”).

David was a prophet (Acts 2:30) and wrote under the inspiration of God, through the gift of prophecy, many Messianic Psalms. Psalm 110, which Matt. 22:44 quotes from, is one of those which David wrote by the Spirit gift of prophecy.

Matt. 28:19 *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit².”*

“This passage has been proposed as teaching the baptism of a believer into the Holy Spirit, with the idea that he is filled with the Holy Spirit. But the grammatical construction just will not allow such an idea. If the text read baptism into the Father, into the Son, and into the Holy Spirit the idea might be sustained. But this is not so; it is a baptism *into a name*; and it is a baptism into one name not three names... This is doctrinally important; there is only *one name*. We have Peter on the day of Pentecost as the interpreter of these words of the Lord, and we must be guided by him as to what he (Christ) meant... in Matt. 28. Speaking by the Holy Spirit he gave this interpretation of his Master’s words:

‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in (into) the name of Jesus Christ’
 (Acts 2:38).

† TEST, Vol. 44, P. 455.

¹ see 2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 2 Peter 1:21.

² The reader is referred to “A collection of the Evidence for and against the Traditional Wording of the Baptismal Phrase in Matt. 28:19”, cf. TEST, Vol. 32, P. 80-82, 105.

In Acts 4:12, Peter declares emphatically “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” So the name of Jesus Christ must be equivalent to “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”... here is no warrant to read into them the idea that each believer was to receive a baptism of the Holy Spirit, as ‘the means whereby God communicates His blessings in these days of His Son’s sojourn in heaven.’ ”*

This one “name” is the name of Divine Manifestation - YAHWEH†. When a sinner is added to the name, the immersed believer is IN the name (Acts 10:48).

The reader is referred to ‘John 14-16 additional notes’ for a suggestion as to the meaning of ‘the Holy Spirit’ in this verse.

Matt. 28:20 “Lo, I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world.”

John 14:16 “The Father ... shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you *for ever*.”

PROBLEM:

These and similar verses are used to bolster the theory that the Holy Spirit would be with his “disciples” for ever.

SOLUTION:

1. The duration of the Comforter₁ is clearly defined by the first passage which should be properly translated as
 “to the close of the age” (RSV)
 or *“until the completion of the age”* (Mars)
 “day by day, until the close of the age” (Wey).
2. Mars., NASB and the RV Margin have in place of “always”, “all the days₂” which agrees with Weymouth.

Putting these two together we have that: Christ was with the disciples until his ascension; after his ascension he was with them by the Holy Spirit “all the days” until the “consummation of the age”.

3. The age referred to is of course the apostolic age. The pronoun cannot be any clearer:

“teaching *them* (the converts of v. 19) to observe all that I (Christ) commanded you (the disciples of v. 16); and lo, I (Christ) am with you (same disciples) all the days, even to the end of the age”. NASB.

The promise was made specifically to these Apostles. When they died that promise was fulfilled.

* PGHS, P. 61.

† That the disciples did not attach the importance some have done to the specific use of the four letters which form the name (YHWH) is evident from Acts (cf. 3:6; 4:9-12).

¹ cf. footnote 1 at John 14:26 and the notes on the Comforter.

² RV margin at Matt. 28:20.

- 4 “Ever” in John 14:16 is “to the Age”³.
- 5 Christ did not therefore, promise the Holy Spirit for all time but only until the “end” of the Apostolic age⁴. This agrees with the history of what happened. At the end of the Apostolic age Jesus gave John, the last of the apostles, the Book of Revelation. The Scripture was then complete and there was no further need of the Spirit gifts.
- 6 Where is the claimant who can perform the signs of the parallel passage in Mark 16:18?
- 7 The “end of the age” cannot refer to the present age because Christ’s statement clearly infers that there would be a time when he would no longer be with the disciples, (i.e. after “the end of the age”). We know, however, that at the end of this present age Christ will be with the faithful and not separated from them.
- 8 The words of the Lord Jesus in John 9:4-5 are most interesting. “We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”.

The context is one of miracles - the healing of the blind man, and the refusal of the Jews to accept this sign of the Lord Jesus’ anointing. A word by word examination shows these verses to be very much part of the context.

“WE MUST WORK THE WORKS...”

When we compare these words with John 5:36, we see that the above-mentioned clause means that the working of miracles, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was a testimony from God to the authority of the Lord Jesus and later of the apostles (cf. Heb. 2:34; Mark 16:20). The Lord uses the term “we” (RV and RSV) and not “I”, so indicating that the verse relates not only to the Lord himself but also to the apostles.

“NIGHT COMES, WHEN NO ONE CAN WORK”

The Lord is most definitely saying that the time would come when the Holy Spirit works would cease. Micah 3:6 is most interesting in this connection, for the Spirit there prophesies that the sun would go down on the prophets and the day would be black over the Jewish nation, and that it would be night without vision (cf. Joel 2:31). Associated with this prophecy in Micah 3 is the destruction of Jerusalem because of the stubbornness of the Jewish leaders (v. 12).

³ Young’s. While *aion* is an elastic word the meaning here when compared with Matt. 28:20 is quite clear. Liddell and Scott have the primary meanings of *aion* as:

- (1) a man’s lifetime (in which sense it is plainly used in John 13:8 and 1 Cor. 8:13, RV) or
- (2) an era, which has both a beginning and an ending (e.g. Matt. 13:22). Both definitions fit and show that Christ is assuring the disciples that the Holy Spirit would remain with them as long as they lived.

⁴ The words of Mark 16:15-20 and Paul in Col. 1:23 indicate that a witness had been made unto all nations in their time.

“AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”

Whilst the Lord Jesus departed to the Right Hand of the Ancient of Days before Pentecost, he was still in a real sense with the apostles in their ministry. Mark 16:20 reads, “And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it”. Matthew 28:20 “...lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age”. That the “close of the age” refers to the close of the Mosaic⁵ age is evidenced by Hebrews 9:26 and 1 Peter 1:20, an age which closed with the destruction of Jerusalem which commenced in AD 70 and was completed as prophesied in Micah 3:12 in AD 135.

In short, then, in John 9:4-5 the Lord Jesus clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit would be withdrawn at the end of the age, i.e. AD 70, approximately 38-40 years after it was given to the disciples at Pentecost⁶.

Mark 16:15 *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”*

This divine commission (v.15-19) has its parallel in Matt. 28:18-20, Luke 24:47-49 and Acts 1:2-9, and must be understood by harmonizing these three accounts.

Christ indicates his authority:

“All authority has been given to me...” (Matt. 28:18).

“After He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the Apostles” (Acts 1:2).

Preach to all creation:

Mark 16:15 (above), Luke 24:47 “to all nations”.

“Make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19).

“You shall be my witnesses... to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Baptize those who believe:

“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

(cf. Luke 24:47).

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”

(Matt. 28:19).

“You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5)

“Lo I am with you all the days” (Matt. 28:20).

“These signs will accompany those who *have* believed” (Mark 16:17).

“I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you” (Luke 24:49).

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

“Jesus... was received up into heaven” (Mark 16:19).

“He was lifted up while they were looking on” (Acts 1:9).

“He parted from them” (Luke 24:54)

⁵ This author regards the end of the Mosaic age and the end of the Apostolic Age as the same period of time.

⁶ TBSM, Vol. 7, P. 29.

The Apostles fulfilled that command as the following verses show:

“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, while¹ the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed” (Mark 16:20).

“the gospel... was (“has been” RSV) proclaimed in all creation” (Col. 1:23). cf. Heb. 2:3,4 and Acts of the Apostles.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that Mark 16:19 has happened and will not be repeated. Since v. 16-18 are within the context of and directly related to verses 15 and 20, there may be no other valid conclusion than that they were fulfilled by the Apostles, because the commission was to them only, not to general believers.

There are, however, other verses which indicate to us the necessity of baptism, (e.g. Gal. 3:27).

V. 17 “*And these signs will accompany those who have believed*” cf. previous notes on v.15.

These verses prove more than modern claimants desire because where is the person today who can perform the “signs” of v.18?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the Apostles in their fulness (so that they could spread the gospel throughout the whole world) but generally only individual gifts were given to the other believers.

“they will speak with new tongues²”

Christ merely meant tongues that they had not spoken and were different from those with which they were normally familiar. See Acts 2, Acts 19:6.

V.18 “*they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;*” see Acts 28:5, Luke 10:19.

‘It is understandable that in an age dominated by a wonder-working paganism, these vivid and incontestable tokens of true divine power would be necessary as a decisive witness against the vested interests of well-organized cults of magic. Today the same signs would probably be more of a hindrance than a help to the well-balanced preaching of God’s saving grace in Christ. Indeed it is not altogether untrue to say that even the mention of signs here is read by some modern believers with misgivings:

¹ The reader should carefully note the word “while” (MARS, NASB). It indicates a time when the Lord ceased to work in this particular manner even during the lifetime of some of the Apostles. This agrees with 1 Cor. 13:10, and the historical evidence (see Companion Bible, Appendix 168).

² see Section D “the gift of tongues”, “the gift of healings”, and AWSA, P. 51.

casting out devils, speaking with tongues, handling deadly snakes, drinking poison, healing the sick by the laying on of hands. Why should these powers be imparted to the early church and then so soon disappear, leaving later generations to apologize lamely for current ineffective witness and also leaving the door wide open for sensational charlatans with loud-mouthed claims to be the heirs of apostolic powers?

The withdrawal of the gifts of the Spirit is a thing to be profoundly thankful for. For, in the first place, this lapse of open Spirit blessing would never have happened had it not been in the best interests of the believers. The Lord has certainly done what is best for the well-being of his people. But, further, let it not be forgotten that the key virtue in Christian life is *faith*. What very limited scope there would be for faith today if these signs were openly available for the confutation of unbelief! “Blessed are they that have not seen (either empty tomb or Holy Spirit powers), and yet have believed.”³



Some ecstatic holiness churches in Kentucky, U.S.A. have taken up snake handling as evidence of “faith”. Here a poisonous rattlesnake is handled at a meeting. The lay preacher holding the snake subsequently died from snakebite at a later meeting. (Religious Sects: Wilson)

³ HAW, “He is risen indeed”, P. 97.

Luke 1:15 “*and he (John) will be filled with the Holy Spirit*”

John the Baptist was a prophet (Luke 1:76; 7:28) that exercised the Holy Spirit gift of prophecy to such an extent that all Judea and Jerusalem came out to hear him.

V.17 “*And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah*” This was a partial fulfillment of Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6.

V.80 “*And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit*”

If we compare this to the similar words of 2:40 we see that this refers to the gift of wisdom. (cf. 1:15).

2:27 “*And he (Simeon) came in the Spirit into the temple*”.

Verse 25 says the Holy Spirit was upon him and v.26 says that he had received a revelation. Probably Simeon received another revelation, which enabled him to be in the temple at the time Mary entered with the child Jesus. He then utters prophetic words about Christ indicating that the revelations came to him by the gift of prophecy.

V.40 “*And the Child continued to grow and became strong (in spirit[†] AV), increasing in wisdom*”

See notes on 1:80 where similar words are used about John. It seems clear that God imparted an increasing amount of the gift of wisdom (1 Cor. 12) to him. The word translated “filled” (AV, RSV, MARS) is *pleroo* and is a cognate of the word used in 1:15, 41, 67 and especially in Acts to describe baptism of the Holy Spirit.

9:55 “*Ye know not what manner of spirit[†] ye are of*”

These words are not found in the following Greek manuscripts: Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Ephraemi, Regius, Sangallensis. Tichendorf, Tregelles, RV, RSV, NASB and NEST also omit.

If retained, the meaning is the same as in 1 John 4:1-6 i.e. persons who had the Spirit. The disciples did not understand the use to which the Spirit was to be put at that particular phase of the work. It was to be used to offer salvation, not to execute judgement on unbelievers.

10:21 “*At that very time He (Jesus) rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit*”

(cf. Matt. 11:25). Exposition here is difficult because it appears that editors have tinkered with the text. *The Expositors Greek Testament* text does not have “the Holy” in it and agrees with the AV and RV. Several manuscripts appear to have added these words and modern editors accept them.

Jesus was rejoicing that the gospel was revealed to babes (childlike in attitude) rather than the “wise”. “In Spirit” could mean “mind”.

[†] All the Critical Texts agree in omitting 9 occurrences (or substituting another reading): Luke 2:40; 9:55; Acts 18:5; Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 5:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 5:7, and in adding 3: Acts 4:25; Phil. 4:23; Rev. 22:6. This evidence is not necessarily conclusive because most if not all of these are not based on the *Textus Receptus*.

Luke 11:13 “How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit¹ to those who ask Him?”

PROBLEM:

This passage is cited as proof that all we need to do today is ask and we will be given the Holy Spirit.

SOLUTION:

1.
 - A. Christ was talking to his disciples (cf. v.1) who already had utilized the Holy Spirit (cf. ch. 10:17) even if only in a limited way.
 - B. There is no need to see this as a prophecy of a bestowal of the Spirit after Pentecost on all believers. This concept does not fit the context.
 - C. “Giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him” is the briefest way to cover all that God does for His children (cf. James 1:17,18) whether it be:
 - (1) food, shelter, clothing.
 - (2) forgiveness of sins.
 - (3) spiritual growth by providing the written (or spoken) Word.
 - (4) putting on the divine nature in the possession of a Spirit body like to Jesus at the judgement seat.
2. What we ask for must be in accordance with the will of God. “If we ask any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us” (1 John 5:14). To ask for the Holy Spirit is to ask for something that is not available, so God will not give it to us.
3. Simon, a baptized believer, asked for the Holy Spirit² but was refused because “his heart” was not right in the sight of God. This example demonstrates that a quotation of this verse without qualification as to its real meaning is not reasonable!
4. There are many examples of things in the Bible that are not timeless.
 - A. Fasting³. The first century disciples made a habit of fasting but present day ones do not.

1

A That this applies to us must be shown by the one who affirms. If he applies this to us, then he is a hypocrite if he possesses more than one coat and has not sold all that he has and given to the poor.

B Matt. 7:11 (the parallel passage) reads: “...give good things to them that ask Him”, but what better thing is there than to be brought into harmony with the spirit of God, so as to reflect His Mind rather than the mind of the flesh, and have an understanding of His ways and the end He prepares for those who love Him? To receive the Holy Spirit does not necessarily mean to be infused with power which enables men to speak with tongues; nor is it to have an inner guidance or illumination. It is to receive the communication of God’s Mind by whatever means He chooses, and the essential means for us is His Word.

C cf. John 4:10 where the gift refers to eternal life which (it must be admitted) is much more important to ask for than “a good feeling in one’s heart.”

² “Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:19).

³ “The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them and then shall they fast in those days”. (Luke 5:35).

- C. Wine. “New wine must be put into new bottles⁴” but this advice only applied when wine bottles were made of skin.
 - D. Payment of temple tax. Christ instructed Peter to pay the temple tax⁵ but Christ does not pay temple tax now and neither does Peter!
 - E. Slavery was common in the first century and there are Biblical laws that the slave was required to obey⁶. We are not required to keep this law because we are not slaves to an earthy master.
 - F. We are not required to offer animal sacrifices because Christ “offered one sacrifice for sins for ever⁷.”
 - G. Anointing with oil⁸. This practice is not used today because it had application only to that dispensation.
5. In John 6:63, Eph. 6:17 and 1 John 5:6 the Holy Spirit is identified as the words of Jesus, the Word of God and the Truth. In that sense the Holy Spirit is available today.⁹
 6. In the parable immediately preceding these words, Jesus speaks of a friend who asked for bread. God’s greatest gift is the “Bread of Life”.

13:11 *‘And behold, a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years...’*

It seems clear that this woman had been “bound” by sin (Satan) (v.16). In other words this physical infirmity had been the result of the action of the spirit gift of miracles of judgement¹⁰. Because it had been inflicted by the Spirit it is termed “a *spirit* of infirmity”. Christ removed this curse by a reversal of the infirmity through a similar gift. The authority to inflict disease and death or release from this was Christ’s, and he carried out this binding and loosing after his ascension either directly as on Paul (2 Cor. 12:7) or through the Apostles on others.¹¹

John 1:16 *“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace”*.

The Apostles who authenticated John’s gospel in the Epilogue (“we know that his testimony is true” - John 21:24) also identify themselves with John’s opening witness to the Christ. “The Word... dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory... full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). They also say, along with John of course, “and of his fulness have *all we* received and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (v.16-17). The words “fulness” and

⁴ Luke 5:38

⁵ cf. Matt. 17:24-27.

⁶ cf. Titus 2:9

⁷ Heb. 10:12

⁸ James 5:14. See notes on this verse.

⁹ By this statement we are not saying that the Holy Spirit is not exercised on our behalf. It is, but indirectly through the Angels.

¹⁰ See Section D - Miracles.

¹¹ See Acts 5:1-10; 1 Cor. 5:3-5.

“grace” never appear elsewhere in the writings of John except for “grace” in the opening salutation of his second epistle. This fact would suggest that “fulness” and “grace” were, like the prologue itself, specially linked with the experience of the Apostles and of those first century disciples into whose custody John committed his Gospel on its completion. In Ephesians, Spirit gifts are styled “grace” (e.g. 4:7), where the word used is the same as that in John 1:14, 16. This is, in fact, characteristic of the writings of Paul (Eph. 3:7 RV; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 1:4-7, etc.). It seems, therefore, that John’s words (1:14-17) actually cover the same field of thought as Paul’s in Ephesians and Colossians...

During his ministry, Jesus received the Spirit without measure from the Father, but not until he was glorified were believers “filled with Holy Spirit”. It is undoubtedly to this effusion, which began at Pentecost, that John is referring when he says: “Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” - “one grace (or gift) after another” (TCNT and BERK), in rich profusion, with Christ distributing “to man severally as he willed”. From such gifts of grace came “truth” in prophecy, revelation, doctrine and healings (1 Cor. 12 & 14). The omniscience of the Lord would ensure that the gifts were wisely distributed out of the rich diversity of the Spirit, in exact relation to the capacity and disposition of the recipient: “Unto everyone... is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ”. (Eph. 4:7).†

John 3:5 *“unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”*
(RSV)

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes taken to mean that the one born again or born of the Spirit receives the Spirit directly at baptism.

e.g. “As a community we correctly emphasize the need for baptism but how often do we emphasize and explain the birth of the Spirit?”

“It is much more than a mere change of heart and each of us at our baptisms recognized this. We were not giving ourselves coldly and analytically to God we were doing something we could not stop! There was a driving force within us that we could not but heed, together with a warm, glowing awareness of the presence of God. In those few days we had walked with God and we experienced within ourselves the workings of His Spirit.”¹

SOLUTION:

1. The general context is the key to the interpretation of this verse. Baptism here does not refer to the Christian baptism which Christ instituted three years later.² It was John’s baptism that Jesus was practising at this stage in his ministry (cf. 3:22, 23, 26). Once the historical context in relation to baptism is clearly grasped, an understanding of being “born of the Spirit” is much easier to grasp.

† TEST, Vol. 43, P. 231.

¹ ESSA, P. 15.

² It is possible, however, that Christ meant it to have these overtones when written later by John.

2. The words “born of the Spirit” cannot mean “be given the Holy Spirit” in any sense because the Holy Spirit was not given in this manner until Pentecost about three years later. It is an **invalid** argument that refers the words to a possession of the Holy Spirit now or then.
3. Jesus elaborates on the statement of being “born of the Spirit” in verses 6-8. Verse 8 should be correctly translated as:

*“The Spirit breatheth where it pleaseth, and thou art hearing³ the Voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth”.*⁴

“The Spirit breatheth where it pleaseth”

The idea is that God was not working through the channels that the spiritual leaders expected, (i.e. the High Priest) but through humbler persons.

*“Thou art hearing the Voice thereof”*⁵

God *was speaking* through John the Baptist and Jesus. John claimed: “I am the voice” (ch. 1:23). “We” therefore refers to John and Jesus.

“thou knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth.”

Nicodemus could not know when or where, or through whom, God would choose to speak to the nation.

This explanation by Jesus shows that being “born of the Spirit” was in fact believing the Divine teaching that came through the “Voice” of “the Spirit”. Only this combination of hearing the voice and being baptized could cause the birth from above. The Apostle John confirms this by his statement in the prologue:

“As many as received him “ and “believed on his name” were “born of God” and became “sons of God” (1:12,13)

4. “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). We read the Word of God that was given by the Holy Spirit. If it has its proper effect, then “You have been born again... through the living... Word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23 NASB).

³ Present continuous tense.

⁴ This translation is taken from TEST, Vol. 44, P. 70 and is largely from Bro. Thomas and the RV margin. (This is the only occurrence of 379 (cf. Luke 2:40) in the N.T. where *pneuma* is rendered wind by the AV. So we see that centuries of theological dust have covered the proper meaning of these verses.)

⁵ Jesus words do not give support to those who claim the gift of the Spirit is given to every believer at baptism. The Lord calls Nicodemus a “teacher in Israel” and says he ought to have known these things (v. 10). Therefore he cannot be referring to some new method of revelation, but to something that was then operative in Israel.

TODAY'S APPLICATION

John chapter three agrees with other scriptures that the birth of the Spirit comes, like faith, by hearing, and that by the Word of God. In terms of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus, a man must receive and believe "the Voice" of the Spirit heard in the Word given through prophets such as Jesus and John the Baptist. That same Word having been permanently recorded, it demands an identical response today, just as it did before Christ.

John 4:24 *"God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"*
(RSV)

PROBLEM:

This verse is cited to show that unless we have the Spirit we cannot worship God. It is also used to show that God is not tangible.

SOLUTION:

1. Jesus is not saying that God is immaterial¹ nor is he just referring to the nature of God², but is stating that God is acting in a specific manner for the redemption of man, as He once acted in the past³.
2. It is in the framework of this purpose that men must worship the Father⁴. Jesus was teaching the woman that in the redemption he had brought, he had living waters⁵ to offer so that they could worship God "in spirit".
3. The verse does not say that we must have received some divine effluent from God into our hearts before we can worship correctly. The context shows that:
 - a) correct knowledge ("in truth") is one necessity, "salvation is of the Jews". (v. 22).
 - b) attitude of mind ("in spirit" i.e. sincerity, Josh. 24:14) is the other necessity⁶.

"Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." (v. 21).

¹ cf. Section B - "God is Corporeal."

² Jesus is concerned with redemption and worship that is acceptable not with a description of whether God is tangible or not. cf. v.7 - 23.

³ We should continually remember that to Israel God was Spirit, an Angel bearing His Name. This statement can be verified by an analysis of Isaiah 48:16, 17, 20.

"The Lord GOD, and his Spirit hath sent me. Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God ... which leadeth thee the way that thou shouldest go."

Note that the Spirit is "the Holy One of Israel".

In this Spirit activity of redemption, there was to be corresponding spirit in their worship.

"Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this ... The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob". (v.20).

⁴ "To be spiritually minded is life". (Rom. 8:6).

⁵ the teaching of the Spirit (i.e. Word of God) (cf. v.14).

⁶ It was not where the worship occurred (empty tradition or letter) that mattered but the attitude of the worshipper that mattered i.e. a positive response showing love and zeal for the truth. cf. 2 Cor. 3:5, 6.

John 6:44 ‘No one can come to Me, unless the Father... draws him. ‘

PROBLEM: It is claimed that this is evidence of the Holy Spirit “descending in the form of an experience.”

SOLUTION:

- 1 Jesus goes on to say how the Father draws: “And they shall all be taught of God! Every one who has *heard... comes* to me.” (v. 45)
- 2 “Faith”, says Paul, “comes from hearing, and hearing by the *word*.” (Rom. 10:17).
- 3 James says: “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the *word of truth*”. (James 1:18).
- 4 For you have been born again through the... *word* of God... which was *preached* to you. (1 Peter 1:23, 25).
- 5 So it can be seen that the Father draws us by putting us in a place where we can hear (or read) the word of God. He does not draw us in the sense outlined in the problem above.
- 6 The operation can be compared to a magnet. It will only draw materials that are capable of being magnetized. God will only draw us if we have shown some interest in Him.
- 7 Jesus is not giving the impression that God has respect of persons and makes distinctions between men and women in the offer of salvation; rather he is proving that God had already made provision for man’s salvation. The word is the means that God uses to draw attention to Jesus. (cf. Luke 8:15 and Acts 10:34-43).

John 6:45 “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught¹ of God.’ *Every one who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to me.*”

PROBLEM:

This verse, if taken out of context, may appear to teach the idea that no-one can come to Christ unless they are taught directly by God (i.e. have an experience which enables them to “see” Christ). Having thus “learned from the Father”, they can “accept Jesus”.

SOLUTION:

This verse must be seen in its broad context.

Whether we take the meaning of the phrase as:

- a) taught about God
- b) taught by God
- c) God’s taught ones (B) the idea expressed is just different shades of the same thing. Probably all are correct.

However, we must not assume that God himself did (or does) the teaching directly, for “*the Son of man shall give unto you that meat which endureth unto everlasting life (for him hath God the Father sealed)*”. (v. 27). “He that hath seen the Father” did so because they “hath heard *and* hath learned” of the Father by listening to Jesus speaking God’s words. (Heb. 1:2). We see, therefore, that Jesus applied the prophecy of Isa. 54:13 to himself. The contextual interpretation proves the theory expressed in the Problem is wrong.

¹ There are only 2 occurrences of the word taught (*didaktos*). Here (persons taught) and in 1 Cor. 2:13 (things taught).

John 6:63 *‘It is the Spirit that quickeneth’*

Christ was saying in effect ‘Obedience to the words that I speak leads to eternal life’. Christ’s words were spirit because He spoke the words of God. Also the word of God is spirit because it was revealed by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Peter 1:21).

7:39 *“This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes used to show that if we believe on him we will receive the Spirit if we ask for it.

SOLUTION:

1. The Apostle’s explanation applies to first century believers generally, and not to the twelve. This is evident from “If any man thirst, let him come unto me” (v. 37).
2. The above problem arises because the context is forgotten.
3. They were not to receive the Spirit until Pentecost. That meant that the outpouring was limited₁ on one hand until after Pentecost. As has been demonstrated₂ elsewhere in this treatise, it was limited on the other hand by the death of the apostles. Therefore this verse cannot be used to demonstrate a continuous outpouring of the Spirit on all₃ believers.

The gift of the Spirit was only intermittently imparted (Matt. 17:14-20) at that time. While Jesus was with the disciples they needed not that the spirit should dwell in them, but when he sent them to fulfill his will he imparted to them power to perform it, if the object they were to effect, transcended ordinary human ability.

At Pentecost the gifts were imparted and the person possessed the gift given.

4. The Spirit gifts in the first century enabled the possessors to dispense “living water”.

10:41 *“John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is offered as proof that although miracles cannot be worked, present possession of the Holy Spirit is a reality just as it was in John the Baptist.

Claimants reason in this way:

- a) John had the Holy Spirit, but did “no miracle”.
- b) We do no miracles.

Therefore we have the Holy Spirit in the same way as John!

¹ see Section B - “Outpouring Limited and Special”.

² cf. 1 Cor. 13:10; Eph. 4:13.

³ cf. Section B - “Outpouring Limited and Special”, (points 5 and 6).

SOLUTION:

1. Are we Johns? How can claimants in the twentieth century apply this to themselves? Where is their raiment of camel's hair? Do they eat locusts? Do they spend their years in the desert?
2. John the Baptist may not have raised the dead or spoken in tongues, but he did work the "miracle" of rousing *all* Judaea¹ with his message of repentance. This would have been impossible without the Holy Spirit.
3. "Claimants using John's case as a fulcrum to raise unfounded hopes, overlook completely that John was anointed with Holy Spirit² for his office and work of a prophet³. He was a "man sent from God⁴."⁵
4. How dare any, because John (in common with many prophets) worked no *spectacular* wonder, claim for themselves on that basis, a point of parallel as title to "possession" when their only parallel is their inability to work a wonder? That has long been a universal, but not a qualifying, disability.
5. As has been demonstrated⁶, wherever the believer possessed the Spirit contextual evidence demonstrates that it was one or more gifts of the Spirit and it enabled them to work miracles.
6. The absence of visible proof that they have the Spirit is evidence that the claimants have *not* got the Spirit.

¹ Mark 1:4-5.

² "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit... and he shall go in the spirit and power of Elijah" Luke 1:15,17.

³ cf. Isa. 40:3 and Luke 7:28 "There is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist". Prophecy is one of the gifts of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:10)

⁴ John 1:6

⁵ J. S. Thomas, TEST, 1955, P. 20.

⁶ TEST, Vol. 43.

The Promise of the Parakletos (John 14-16)

Jesus spent the last few minutes between the departure of Judas from the last supper and the arrival of himself and his disciples at the brook Cedron, discussing how they would manage in his physical absence. They were to expect two things:

- a) Fellowship with the Father and the Son who would abide with them through the Divine attributes of omniscience and omnipresence.
- b) Another *Parakletos* (one called alongside) termed the “Spirit of truth” (v.17) and “the Holy Spirit” (14:26). Christ says “another” in that he himself was an “advocate” (1 John 2:1). The idea seems to be that he was replacing one advocate (himself) with another (an angel¹).

It is important that we see that the disciples were promised two things and not one as some allege². Two facts demonstrate that the disciples were promised two things:

- a) The consistent usage of two different verbs “come” and “send”.
 - The Abiding - I (we) will *come*.
 - The Advocate - I (we) will *send*.
- b) Unlike the abiding, the mission of the *Parakletos* was wholly miraculous and temporary in character. For ease of reference this evidence is briefly listed here but is expanded upon in the verse by verse notes.
 - 1) 14:16-17 The *Parakletos* “in” them was evidence that the Father had answered Jesus’ request. Acts 2:33 shows us that this request enabled them to do miraculous works.
 - 2) 14:26 “He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance”. This was obviously a miraculous capability. It was temporary in that it applied only to the Apostles.
 - 3) 15:26, 27 “He shall witness³ of me”. The idea was that the *Parakletos* would confirm Christ’s teaching with signs. Is this done today?
 - 4) 16:8 To convince “the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgement”. For the disciples to possess such a capability was obviously miraculous. Who could do so today?
 - 5) 16:12-15 “He will guide you into all truth”. Previously they had not been able to grasp the meaning of the things they would now learn. The *modus operandi* and the result were both miraculous. Once “all truth” was recorded this aspect of the *Parakletos* was not needed any longer.

¹ We suggest without dogmatism that it was the Angel because of the very nature of the transaction and because of the obvious use of the personal pronouns. However it does not matter whether the Holy Spirit gifts came directly or indirectly through an angel. The important thing to note is that every feature of the advocate was miraculous, and temporary.

² “the doctrine of the Holy Spirit cannot be grasped if “the abiding” and “the Comforter” are seen as synonymous terms for only one phenomenon, namely, the spiritual presence or “grace” of the Father and the Son “for ever” in the lives of all believers”. Whittaker and Carr, TEST, Vol. 43, P. 129.

³ RV.

- 6) “He will show you things to come”.
Here was a revelation totally miraculous. After the revelation was recorded what need was there for repetition? We can clearly see that the *Parakletos* was temporary and miraculous in character. This can not be said about the abiding.

John 14 - 16 - DETAILED ANALYSIS

14:10 “*the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*”

These words are not to be taken too literally. The Father was dwelling in Jesus *through* the power that had been given to him. “And Jesus saw the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit, Luke) descending like a dove, and lighting upon him” (Matt. 3:16). This Holy Spirit power which Jesus was given, enabled him to do “the works” (miracles and words). Conversely the works which Jesus did were evidence of the dwelling. We cannot claim that the Father is in us in the sense of this verse because we lack the ability to do the “works” which Jesus did. It is well to remember that Jesus was talking here to only 11 disciples.

v.12 “*He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also*”.

Again we must see these words in their historical context. Within that context, we recall that the Apostles did His works when they were given the Power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and after. It was the plan and purpose of God that His word should be preached unto all the world. To do this, the early Christians were given extra-ordinary powers. These powers could not be transferred from one person to another except by the Apostles (Acts 8:18). When the last of the Apostles died, then the Holy Spirit was no longer transferred to others and eventually the gifts ceased (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-12).

“*greater works than these shall he do*”

i.e. not qualitatively but rather in scope. Jesus limited his preaching to Palestine. The Apostles preached the word with signs following throughout the whole *oikoumene* (world) (cf. Rev. 7:9). We must not confuse the work of Christadelphian “missionaries” with what Christ meant here. What Christ referred to was the ability to perform miracles, as is evident from the phrase that follows

“because I go unto my Father”.

Today only the very foolish would claim to be able to perform the miracles Christ did. The ability to do these works was tied to two things - Jesus going to the Father (v.12) and another advocate being sent (v. 16).

v.14 “*If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it*”

This is a specific statement made within the confines of the context. It cannot apply outside this context. For example it applied only to the Apostles. This is evident from the word “ye”¹. Christ was specifically talking to them. He states that “I chose you and *appointed you*, that you should go and bear fruit” (ch. 15:16, NASB). This personal appointment applied only to the twelve and later to Paul. This statement cannot be generalized to refer to us. Even then, Paul asked that his thorn in the flesh be removed but Christ said, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

¹ Much help to a right understanding of the discourse of Jesus in ch. 14 is obtained by noticing to whom and of whom Jesus is speaking (CGOJ, P. 160).

v.16 “*I will pray*” - *should* read “I will make request...”

“*he shall give you another Comforter*”

This was an hour of need for his disciples for soon Christ would be crucified, resurrected and ascend into heaven thereby leaving them on their own, (or so they thought). Whenever they had become entrapped² Jesus had been there to rescue them. Partly to dispel their fear and sorrow (cf. v. 27; John 16:1, 6) but primarily to instruct them, and witness for them, Jesus told them that they would have *another* advocate (NEB) to take *his*³ place. The meaning of “Comforter” (Grk. *Para-kletos*) is “one called alongside” (Y) and may refer to the Angel of the Presence⁴ who probably was Michael. This *Parakletos* variously termed “the Spirit of truth” or “the Holy Spirit” enabled the disciples to do “greater⁵” than what Christ had done. Christ meant that the disciples would receive gifts by this term *Parakletos*⁶. This is evident from Acts 2:33:

“*Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he (Christ) hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear*”.

and Psa. 68:18:

“*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men*”.

Paul applies these last words in Ephesians 4:8-11 to the various Spirit gifted offices of the first century ecclesia. When we combine these four scriptures we see that one aspect of the *Parakletos* (apart from an Advocate) is that it was an outward sign that Christ had finished his initial earthly ministry - “thou hast led captivity captive” and that this atoning work had been accepted by the Holy One of Israel.

“*that he may abide with you*” - note v. 17 which says that as well as dwelling *with* them, he would be *in* them. This language is understandable if the *Parakletos* was indeed a ministering Spirit. He was dwelling with them and was *in* them in that he ministered to the disciples the various gifts. He put a part of his power within them. While we don’t understand the actual mechanics⁷ of this we can see this threefold cooperation in Rev. 1:1.

“*for ever*” Grk. = “*eis ton aiona*”. *Aion* is a Greek term for an undefined period of time⁸. The context normally provides the boundaries and indeed does in this case. *Aion* “Ever” would not start until after Christ’s ascension and could last in its primary sense no longer than the lifetime of the disciple who lived the longest (Most probably John). Thus *aion* here had a span of about seventy years. As well as being directly definitive the context indirectly defines the period. This first mentioned

² e.g. Mark 9:18, 28.

³ cf. 1 John 2:1

⁴ see John 14-16 - Additional notes.

⁵ (v.12) For example there is no record of Jesus speaking in tongues or striking a person dead. However the real meaning is probably as defined in the notes at v. 12.

⁶ For related words see Word Studies - Section F.

⁷ See table at John 16:13-15.

⁸ see footnote 3 Matt. 28:20.

aspect of the Parakletos was a “personal antidote for their impending bereavement⁹”. Christ had acted as a father¹⁰ to these men after they had left their families to catch men. Indeed for Christ to leave them now would be to make them orphans (v.18) or fatherless¹¹. This intimate relationship with Jesus was something unique to the eleven disciples¹² to whom he now talked.

v.17 *“The Spirit of truth”* (cf. 16:13). The exact phrase is used by John in 1 John 4:6 and 1 John 5:6. In the former it refers by metonymy to a person possessing the Spirit gifts. In the latter it may refer to the same thing as here in this passage. The idea here is that the Parakletos would be a truth imparting Spirit, (cf. 1 John 2: 27) that would enlarge upon what Jesus had taught them. This certainly is implied here and is stated in the next mention of the Parakletos. (v. 26).

“whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.”

The world had rejected the truth even as they rejected him who was the Truth. They rejected those who were the “sons of God¹³.” Also they rejected the operation of the Spirit through the disciples and Christ, claiming that Christ healed through Beelzebub.

“for he dwelleth with you” dwelleth = Grk. meno = abide or remain (Y). Although the verb is in the present tense¹⁴, the meaning is future as is evident from v. 26, *“will send”*.

“and shall be in you”. This was not realized until Pentecost when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). (cf. v. 10).

v.18 *“I will not leave you comfortless”*

In addition to the Parakletos, Jesus and the Father would abide by omnipresence¹⁵, with those who “keep my words”. Notice in verses 21 and 23-24 that Jesus is not referring specifically to the disciples but employs such general words as “he”, “a man”, “him”. “Comfortless” is a very poor choice to translate the Greek word *orphanos*. The margin gives the sense as does the NASB (cf. 13:33).

“I will come to you”

The Father would come also (v. 23) to those who keep his words.

⁹ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 131.

¹⁰ cf. Isa. 9:6. He corrected and instructed them.

¹¹ The only other occurrence of the Greek word “orphanos” in the N.T. (James 1:27) is thus translated.

¹² That the benefits of the Parakletos applied in a secondary sense to all who had the Spirit Gifts is not disputed in any way.

¹³ 1 John 3:1.

¹⁴ CBSC P. 281.

¹⁵ See Rev. 3:20; “I will sup with him, and he with me” refers to fellowship and not to an actual physical presence or meal.

v.19 *“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more”.*

“The world saw him for the last time when he hung upon the cross: but the chosen witnesses saw him again; and we may perhaps give an added meaning to the second occurrence of the word *see* - they saw when he was raised from the dead, and by the eye of faith saw him exalted to the Father’s right hand.

v.20 *“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father”.*

They should have known that already as Christ states in verse 11.

“Ye in me and I in you”. If there was any doubt about their fellowship this was dispelled at Pentecost. John restates this more clearly in 1 John 3:24. Watch the pronouns!

“He (that is anyone) that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

This abiding was not the possession of the Spirit, but on the other hand the Spirit *they* possessed was evidence to *them* that the abiding was real. Our evidence is the fact that it is recorded. It should be emphasized that we do not need or receive the evidence in the same way as in the first century (cf. 1 John 1:3; and 17:21).

v.21 *“He that hath my commandments”.*

The extension of the fellowship beyond the Apostles is indicated by the pronoun “he”. A person must have the gospel before he can keep it.

“and keepeth them”.

Intellectual knowledge will not cause fellowship. We must obey the commands. Those who argue for a mystical indwelling of grace say ‘Christ did not give us any commands, only the Spirit.’ Here we see otherwise! Our obedience is evidence to Christ that our claims are founded on love.

“I... will manifest myself to him”.

Christ’s answer to Judas, the brother of James, shows that only those who love him and keep his words will experience this manifestation. Only those who are his have experienced fellowship with him, have felt the cleansing of forgiven sin and have received answers to their prayers. This manifestation is not physical nor does it refer to having the Spirit in any form.

Such manifestation does not require the actual presence of Jesus to the believer any more than God manifestation requires the appearance of God to the believer. Those who are hazy on this subject of manifestation should read Phanerosis and Theophany instead of dreaming dreams about a mystical indwelling.

v.23 *“We will come unto him and make our abode with him”.* This refers to fellowship which we have through the omnipresence of God and Christ. This statement completes the thought (v.2) of the “many abiding places in the Father’s house.” If the believer finds a place in God’s house, he is also himself the sanctuary of God. Isaiah had indicated this when he said that the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, dwells not only in the high and holy place, but also with him that is of a humble and a contrite spirit (57:15). As these notes so far demonstrate the abiding does not refer to the Comforter (Parakletos).

John 14:23 “*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode¹⁶ with him.*”

PROBLEM:

It is argued on the basis of this verse that ‘every believer was to receive the Holy Spirit’.

SOLUTION:

1. If the person claims this as evidence, let him demonstrate¹⁷ it by “bringing all things to remembrance” (v.26) because the Comforter was given for that purpose.
2. This abiding surely cannot be compared to the “dwelling” in Rev. 7:15; 21:3.
3. Jesus was then “abiding with¹⁸” them, which of course was a personal fellowship. The “abiding with” that is promised of the Father and the Son is the same companionship and fellowship, even though space separates the Lord from his disciples. This is proved by the fact that the abiding is mutual; not only is God in the believer, but also the believer is in God. Our explanation of God in us, must also fit the idea of our being in God.
4. The language is figurative not literal, obviously God does not literally dwell in us. This is evident from the figure of the vine used in chapter 15.
5. This mutual abiding is much more fundamental than receiving the Spirit. It is a matter of life or death. In Christ we have life, out of Him we are dead and fit only to be burned (15:6). The mind of Christ, like the sap of the vine, is the bond of the branches (believers) to the vine (Christ).
6. It is clear from the Lord’s words that the disciples were already abiding in him, and the emphasis of the parable is that he exhorts them to continue in him. So it was not a question of waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit Gift at Pentecost for this mutual abiding to exist. The abiding existed before the giving and was apart from this. And the abiding depended on the word abiding in them, as Jesus says a few verses on: “if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you.” Christ would abide in them by his words abiding in them.
7. The abiding depended on the steadfastness of the disciples. “Abide in me,” “If a man abide not in me”, “If ye abide in me”. So it is not receiving the Holy Spirit that makes the abiding, as something *God* does. The abiding depends on *our* faithfulness: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love” (verse 10). So we see that all the detail of these verses is against the Holy Spirit Gift as the basis of the abiding.
8. The Lord’s words in the previous chapter of John support what we have seen in the parable of the vine. In verse 23 he turns from the apostles to the believers in general: “If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him.”

¹⁶ cf. AV margin at verse 2 where we are promised the closest of fellowship with the Father. This use of abode is not “us receiving the Spirit”.

¹⁷ cf. 1 John 4:1-4 may be used if he excuses himself on the basis of 1 Cor. 2:15.

¹⁸ NASB. v. 25.

It is the action of the believer in “keeping my words” that brings about the abiding. In verse 25, addressing the apostles, he says: “These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you” (RV). “While yet abiding with you” conveys more than just his physical presence: it speaks of companionship, of a close relationship and friendship. Jesus was abiding with them, and this relationship would continue when he physically left. Similarly the souls of David and Jonathon were “knit together” (1 Sam. 18:1) - they dwelt in each other’s heart - though David had to flee into the wilderness.

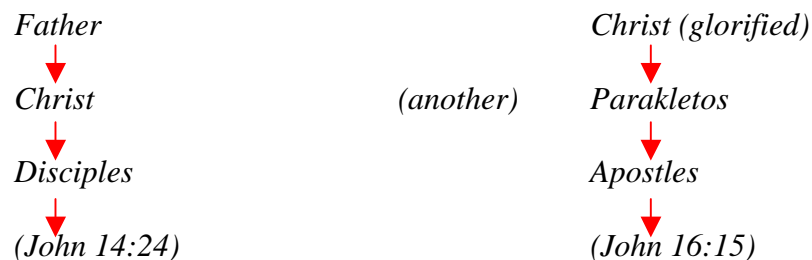
So Jesus’ words further illustrate the nature of the abiding and that it existed before the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.¹⁹

v. 24 *“the word which ye hear is not mine”*

‘I am presently the Advocate who teaches you what I learn from my Father. However I am going away and you will have another Advocate. He shall teach you all things’. The above attempted paraphrase seems to be why Jesus says these words.

v. 25 *“These things have I spoken unto you, being present with you”.*

The contrasting connective (“But” v.25) is used to contrast the then present method of revelation with the method to be ‘operative after his ascension.’



This verse along with v. 26 implies that there was much that Christ could not tell them about the truth because they could not “bear them” (16:12) Possibly this is why he had sometimes called them children (Mark 10:24; John 13:33).

v. 26 *“But the Comforter²⁰ which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes used by those who claim present possession of the Holy Spirit, to demonstrate that we cannot be taught Spiritual language, unless we possess this Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ PGHS, P. 34

²⁰ ‘The AV use of ‘Comforter’ has done much to give unwarranted support for unscriptural interpretations of the meaning and function of the Paraclete. The Greek word translated ‘Comforter’ is *Parakletos* derived from *para*, ‘alongside’ and *kletos*, ‘called to’, hence ‘one who pleads another’s cause before a judge: a pleader, counsel for the defence, legal assistant; an advocate.’ (Grimm-Thayer, Greek English Lexicon)’ (TEST, Vol, 43, P. 130). The NASB has “helper” and in the margin “Gk *Parakletos* = one called alongside to help or Intercessor.”

SOLUTION:

1. This verse cannot possibly be applied to today because Christ has not personally said one word directly to any of us. It obviously applies only to those to whom Christ was addressing his words over 1950 years ago.
2. An analysis of all the textual references to the Comforter will confirm the fact that, unlike the “abiding²¹” (which refers to fellowship and not a literal thing), every feature of the Parakletos was of a miraculous character.
3. What was promised here was not a “spirit of grace in the hearts of all believers down the ages” but miraculous, phenomenal and supernatural help and guidance²²

“The Comforter” this is the second “saying” of Christ about the *Parakletos*.

“the Holy Spirit”

cf. Isa. 63:10. This occurrence is the only one where it is in the masculine gender.

“whom the Father will send”

“I will send unto you”

There is no contradiction here with 15:26 when we compare these two statements to Rev. 1:1; 22:6. The Father gave the Advocate to Jesus (cf. 16:15) who in turn sent him “unto you”.

“in my name” It is interesting to note that the only time that Christ is given the title Parakletos (1 John 2:1) is after his ascension and in his role as a mediator.

“he shall teach you all things”. It was not only necessary that they remember what Jesus had said but also it was necessary to be taught the meaning of all these things. He would teach them the meaning of doctrines that they thus far had not been able to grasp. (cf. 2:22; 12:16; 13:7; Acts 11:16; 20:27).

John records this in his epistle.

“Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things” and “ye need not that any teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things ... abide in him”
1 John 2:20,27.

In this connection those who were called children²³ were now called fathers. (1 John 2:13, 14). In addition to what Christ had taught them, there were many events they had not witnessed: “The birth of Jesus; his temptation; the plottings in the Sanhedrin; the private conversation of Pilate with his wife; and the Lord’s passionate prayers in Gethsemane²⁴.” The Advocate provided these details to the gospel writers probably by the ‘word of knowledge’.

²¹ A careful distinction is drawn between “the abiding” (which refers to fellowship and unfailing providential oversight) and the Parakletos (which included the miraculous gift of prophecy) in TEST, Vol. 43, P. 129.

²² See John 14 - 16 - Additional Notes.

²³ see notes on v. 25.

²⁴ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 132.

“and bring all things to your remembrance”

He would recall infallibly to the disciples’ minds all the instruction Christ had personally given them. We see again the miraculous and temporary character of the Parakletos. The Apostles in turn would impart this knowledge by **word**, spoken or written, to others.

v.27 *“Peace I leave with you.”*

The words that Jesus spoke were to give them this peace (cf. 16:33). Initially this was not so but after they grasped the meaning and felt the reality of the Parakletos they indeed had peace that overcame all obstacles. cf. Rom. 8:18.

15:4 *“Abide in me and I in you.”*

This was a word of exhortation to be obedient. There is *no* thought of some mystical indwelling by the Spirit causing us to be obedient. The meaning of this phrase is clearly defined by John in his Epistle.

“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.” (1 John 2:24).

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth²⁵ in Him, and he in Him.” (1 John 3:24).

This abiding is a fellowship we have with the Father and the Son if we continue to obey his commandments²⁶. John 15:7 shows us that it is obedience rather than just a mere knowledge.

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

Our abiding in Christ has nothing to do with receiving the Spirit. Rather it has to do with how much we give heed to the doctrine of Christ. (cf. v. 7).

v.7 *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask²⁷ whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”* NASB.

“Words” are the “word” of v. 3, which cleansed. As in 14:13 where a similar statement had its qualification and its limitation in the phrase “in my name”, so the “asking” which brings such a complete response is one that is based on knowledge of God’s will, and asked subject to His will²⁸. We clearly see that a necessary condition to this fellowship with Christ is if his “words abide in” us.

The following is an attempted paraphrase:

“Abide in me so that MY WORDS which you will be obeying will guide you. If you ask anything - provided it is in the Divine Plan, it will come to pass.”²⁹

²⁵ Greek = *meno*. The same word is also translated “abideth” in this verse.

²⁶ see also 1 John 2:3-6; John 15:7-14.

²⁷ see Section B - “PRAYER AND GUIDANCE”.

²⁸ largely from CGOJ, P. 172.

²⁹ LJOH, P. 116.

v.16. “*Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you*”.

This promise is connected to several things:

- a) “that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (14:13).
- b) abiding in the fellowship of Christ (15:7).
- c) bring forth fruit (15:16).
- d) keeping his commandments (1 John 3:22).
- e) “if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us” (1 John 5:14) cf. James 4:3.

There are many things which we want but do not need. There are many things we ask for but which would not be good for us. This can be seen in what Jesus prayed for just a few minutes later:

“*take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt*”
(Mark 14:36).

To ask for the Spirit would be to ask for something *not* according to his will. It is worth noting that in all the contexts quoted above, except the first, which is merely an introduction, Jesus associates this asking with love for the brethren. In the last one, a practical example of this type of prayer is given. The asking is for the forgiveness of a brother who has sinned.

John 15:12 “That ye love one another”

John 15:17 “I command that you love one another” “that your fruit should remain”

1 John 3:23 “That we should... love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

In the last two examples above notice how close this thought is to the “asking”. In the next quotation the “asking” is elucidated by a practical example.

“If any man see his brother sin a sin... he shall ask, and he (Christ) shall give him (the sinning brother) life”.

This “asking” then is clearly associated with bearing fruit and the forgiveness of the sins of others. In no case above is the asking for personal₃₀ benefit. We need to be more concerned about bearing fruit to the glory of God.

v.26 “*he shall testify of me*”

The word “testify” is the Greek *martureo* meaning to “bear witness” (Y) and is the same word as witness in v.27. The Holy Spirit was given in the days of the Apostles as a divine witness to their testimony of the resurrection of Christ₃₁. In this and the next saying (which speaks of the effectiveness of this witness) the appropriateness of the title of Advocate is seen by the legal connotations associated with it. (cf. Matt. 10:20).

This witness would be exercised through the various gifts. The ability to work signs and wonders would be an indisputable confirmation of their own witness. “he” is not in the original Greek.

³⁰ The following from Leask (IBID. P.117) corroborates this statement. Ordained is from the “Gk. *tithemi*” meaning to appoint for one’s own purpose. The Middle Voice is used to indicate that the appointment was made for the Lord’s benefit.” Even in Luke 11:9-13 the larger context (v.6) shows that the asking was not for himself but for a friend in his journey.

³¹ Acts 5:32, Heb. 2:4 cf. Acts 2:32; 3:15.

v.27 *“ye have been with me from the beginning”*

The fact that the Advocate was promised in its primary sense only to the Apostles is very evident here and in 16:1. *“These things have I spoken unto you.”*

In the face of this evidence how can anyone today apply the purpose of the Comforter to himself or herself in any way, never mind in continuous non-miraculous sense? To do so surely is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

16:7 *“for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come”* See notes on 14:16.

v.8 *“he will reprove (convince, mg) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement”*

The “world” (cosmos) was the order or system that existed at that time. This in itself indicates the temporary nature of the Parakletos for once that order had passed away this job was completed. reprove = Grk. *“elegcho”* and is variously translated convict (1), convince (4), rebuke (5), reprove (5), (Y). The idea is twofold. It convinced those who recognized their sin (Acts 2:37; Acts 4:4) and condemned those who didn’t. (John 15:24; Acts 4:2).

v.9 *“of sin, because they believe not on me”.*

The exact meaning of this statement is unclear. It could mean that whereas Jesus had been unsuccessful, the Parakletos would be; or it could also mean that the Parakletos would further condemn those who had not believed Jesus. Probably both ideas are correct. The witnessing of the Advocate in tongues together with the witness of Peter were tremendously successful only 7 weeks after the total rejection of Jesus by these same people. Of those who had crucified Christ (Acts 2:36), 3,000 were convinced on one day of their sin! But there were some who were grieved at the witness and Peter reminds them that they “shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23).

v.10 *“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;”*

The righteousness of Christ is linked directly to the outpoural of the Spirit gifts by Peter in the following:

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour... We are his witnesses of these things (Grk. rema = words) and also the Holy Spirit, whom† (“which” NEST) God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:31, 32).

Therefore anyone who accepted the miracles would also have to admit the righteousness of the one who sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. The ascent to the Father was a final vindication of Jesus and of the righteousness of God, as against the world’s attitude of him.

v. 11 *“Of judgement because the prince of this world is judged.”*

Paul says in 1 Cor. 2:8 that “the princes of this world” “crucified the Lord.” In John 12:31 and 32 Christ prophesies that “the prince of this world (would) be cast out” by his crucifixion. By these verses we understand that Christ meant those in authority which arrested him and caused him to be killed. The High Priest was rendered ineffectual by the resurrection of him who was the High Priest indeed.

† Notice the Trinitarian bias. The Greek text is neuter gender NEST, Berry Diaglott etc.

Also Christ was no longer subject to the authorities but triumphed over them by his resurrection (cf. Col. 2:15).

The primary object of this particular phase of the Advocate was to act as a legal counsel for the disciples when they were “brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake”. He would give them “a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Luke 21:12 -15). ‘The book of Acts is full of actual court cases in which the Lord’s inspired controversialists were strengthened to such a degree by the Spirit - Advocate that they often assumed the role of accusers, convicting their opponents by the justice of their Spirit-guided declarations³²’. This aspect of the Parakletos was definitely temporary and miraculous.

v. 13 *“the Spirit of truth”*

In this last saying, the Parakletos is not referred to as such because this part of the promise concerned the disciples’ relationship to their Lord and not their dealings with courts of law. He is, therefore, termed the Spirit of truth.

“he will guide you into all truth”

This “truth” would include the “many things” they could not bear before Christ’s death (v. 12). He would “teach” (14:26) by “speak”ing. It is important to note the words employed to describe the mechanics of revelation for we often hear of “divine illumination” but in the scriptures we *read* of revelation that involved hearing words and speech. There is a fundamental difference. One is *the* gospel but the other is a perverted gospel.³³ The guiding was possibly through the gift of prophecy.

“for he shall not speak of³⁴ himself”

Just as Jesus spoke “those things which I have heard of” the Father, the Spirit of truth would do likewise. The only difference was that he would receive his knowledge from the glorified Christ rather than from the Father. (v. 15).

“he will shew you things to come”

No doubt this would involve the gift of prophecy. He would give them knowledge of the future developments of God’s purpose with the earth. They recorded the parts of these revelations that were necessary for us.

v.14 *“He shall glorify me”*

By showing that the revelation was from Christ, the Spirit would thus give Christ the glory that was due to him because of His exalted position. Also revelations, possibly through the gift of knowledge, would enable the Apostles to know the true significance of the things that Christ had done, was doing, and will do. Also these revelations were recorded for us. We do not require these revelations to be repeated for us.

By examining these verses in detail we have seen that all aspects of the Parakletos³⁵ were miraculous and temporary. Lest we forget, let it be emphasized that the disciples were declared to be “clean through the **word** which I have spoken” (15:3).

³² TEST, Vol. 43, P. 133.

³³ cf. Gal. 1:7-9

³⁴ RV has “from”. NASB has “on His own initiative”.

³⁵ see Word Studies, Section F.

John 16:13 – 15 *“But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...”* (NASB)

PROBLEM:

The verse is taken to mean that unless we have the Spirit we cannot be guided in an understanding of the Truth.

SOLUTION:

1. This is another reference to the *Parakletos* of 14:26; 16:7 - 11 etc. As has been demonstrated this Spirit would progressively guide the disciples by the *gift of prophecy* “into all the truth”.
2. The language employed is that of speaking and revelation.
 - i.e. *“that shall he speak.”*
 - “he will show you things to come.”*

The “many things” which Jesus wanted to “say unto” them (but which they could not “bear” at that time v. 12) was what Jesus through the Spirit would *speak* unto the apostles. It was additional revelation.

No one today can claim that Jesus is showing them things to come, in addition to what has already been revealed in the Bible.

3. The above point and the principles of the actual mechanics of revelation can be illustrated from the Apocalypse¹.

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN	IN THE APOCALYPSE
“by the Spirit of Truth...”	“I was in the Spirit”.
“show you things to come...”	“I will show you things which must be hereafter”
“he shall glorify me...”	Symbolic vision of “one like unto the Son of Man” (ch. 1) and of the “throne of God and of God and the Lamb”.
“he shall take mine and shall show it unto you”.	“which God gave unto him... and he (Jesus) sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John”.

¹ This point and the table are from TEST, Vol. 43, P. 134.

John 14-16 - Additional Notes

There seems to be sufficient evidence in scripture to equate the Angel of the Presence (which was with Israel during Old Testament times) with the Parakletos of John and the angel of Jesus in Revelation.¹

A. ANGEL OF THE PRESENCE

There are several important things to notice about this special “Angel of the Presence”.

- a) He bore the name Yahweh:

“My name is in him” (Exod. 23:21).

“And the LORD₂ said unto Moses” (Exod. 33:1).

- b) He is called the “holy Spirit” in Isa. 63:10. Stephen mentions this in Acts and connects him with events happening at that time.

“You men who are stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.” (Acts 7:51 NASB).

The allusions here go right back to the Angel of the Presence (Isa. 63:9, 10) whom they vexed₃.

“And the LORD (angel) said unto Moses, I have seen this people and behold it is a *stiffnecked* people.” (Exod. 32:9).

They also refer specifically to Acts 7:35, 38 and 39. Notice it was “by the hand of the angel” that Moses did the things he did. Therefore, to resist or not obey Moses was to do the same to the Angel or holy Spirit that gave Moses this special power. This seems to be sufficient evidence to regard this “holy Spirit” in a similar way to the “ministering spirits” of Heb. 1:14 and 2:2.

- c) He was to bring Israel “into the *place* which I have *prepared*”. (Exod. 23: 20). Christ said very similar words “I go to *prepare a place* for you.” (John 14:2).
- d) He was probably Michael the Archangel mentioned in Jude. John Thomas says “They (Israel) have been abandoned by the Eternal’s Archangel Michael, “the Angel of His presence”, who saved them (Isa. 63:9) in the days of antiquity.’⁴ This Angel-Prince is styled Michael in Daniel because the Name, or power of the Eternal was in him⁵.

¹ This is stated in TBSM, Vol. 4, P. 85-89, 117-120 and in “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”, TBSM, P. 25-27, 323-325. It is also suggested in TCM, Oct., 1973.

² This was an angel bearing the divine title. It is not a matter of opinion but of divine testimony that this was an angel (cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Heb. 2:2).

³ See Lev. 26:41 “their uncircumcised hearts”.

⁴ Phanerosis, P. 122, LOGOS.

⁵ IBID., P. 121.

B. COMFORTER

The following comparison shows the close similarities between the two.

ANGEL of the PRESENCE	PARAKLETOS
“For my (Yahweh’s) name is in him” (Exod 23:21)	“The Father will send in my (Jesus) name” (14:26)
“the word spoken by angels” (Heb. 2:2) (the law)	“he shall teach you all things” (14:26)
Judged Egypt, Israel and other nations (Psa. 78; Isa. 63:10)	he acts as judge (16:8)
prophecies (Deut. 23) “I will be <i>with</i> thee” (Ex. 3:12)	He shows things to come (16:13) “For he dwelleth <i>with you</i> and in you”. (14:17)
“his holy Spirit” (Isa. 63:10) cf. Heb. 1:14	he “the Holy Spirit (14:26) cf. Acts 7:51
“are they not all ministering spirits”	

C. JESUS’ ANGEL

In Rev. 1:1 we see that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was signified by “*His* angel to His bond-servant John”. We see from this that Jesus has His own special angel doing His bidding. We read, however, that this angel says “I am a fellowservant of yours and of your brethren the *prophets* and of those who heed the words of this book” (22:6). It would seem from this that *this* angel performed similar functions for the Almighty in the Past. This idea is strengthened by Rev. 22:6

“The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.”

These verses suggest that Jesus’ Angel was in earlier times the Angel of the Presence. Notice that what is said about this angel is also said of the Parakletos.

*“He shall testify of me”. (John 15:26).
“I Jesus have sent my angel to testify...” (Rev. 22:16).*

‘Thus the Holy Spirit, the Angel once representing God, had been given by God to Jesus and so was now sent to the apostles and disciples *by* the Father in the *name* of the Son (John 14:26)⁶’.

⁶ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, available from TBSM, P. 325.

VISUAL COMPARISON

“The LORD came from SINAI... from his right hand went a fiery law for them”. (Deut. 33:2)

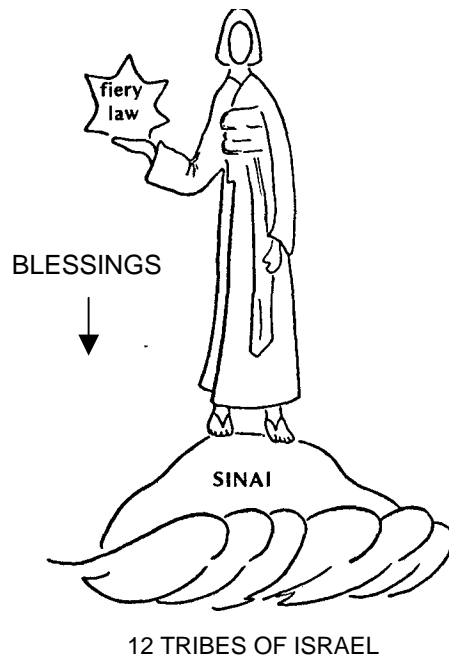
(The RSV has “flaming fire” for “fiery law”)

We know that the LORD who spoke from Sinai, and gave the law to Israel, was the Angel of the Presence (Acts 7:38). We also learn from Stephen’s speech that the angels as a body had to do with the disposition of the law to Israel (Acts 7:53; see also Gal. 3:19).

We can now link ‘fiery law’ or flaming fire to Psa. 104:4.

“Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire”.

ANGEL of the PRESENCE



The angel of Jesus - the one like unto the Son had seven stars in his right hand.

“The seven stars are the angels of the seven ecclesias.” (Rev. 1:20)

Once we understand this, the parallel with the law of Sinai is obvious. Just as the one like the Son of man sends messages to the seven ecclesias, so the Angel at Sinai gave a law for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Adapted from ‘The Revelation of Jesus Christ’ by R. Walker (available from TBSM,

D. CONCLUSION.

If these ideas are true, then the Comforter (one called alongside to help) was Jesus' angel; a mighty Spirit termed the Spirit of truth. It explains the words "he", "him", "whom", etc. No longer must we wriggle when the trinitarian presents us with these verses†. They become straight forward. The Holy Spirit, however, does not always refer to this. It mostly refers to the power of Yahweh revealed to bring salvation to man.

John 15:4 *"Abide in me, and I in you."*
 John 17:23 *"I in them, and thou in me."*
 2 Cor. 13:5 *"Jesus Christ is in you."*
 Gal. 2:20 *"Christ liveth in me."*
 Eph. 3:17 *"Christ may dwell in your hearts."*

PROBLEM:

These verses are connected with 1 John 3:24 and 1 John 4:4, 12, 13, 15, 16 to bolster up the claim that "the Spirit is a present possession."

SOLUTION:

1. Any series of verses may be grouped together and a hasty conclusion drawn which is far from the facts. The false doctrines of the apostasy on:

- a) the devil;
- b) going to heaven or hell;
- c) deity of Christ etc;

are evidence of this evil practice of wresting scripture to their own destruction. They wrest mainly by

- a) not understanding of the real meaning of the words;
- b) disregarding the context;
- c) making the Bible fit their theories.

2. We get into Christ by Christ's words causing an effect on us so that we desire to forsake being "in Adam". By being baptized we become "in Christ₁". By us *continuing* on the path of righteousness, we abide₂ (remain) "in Christ". It is therefore, not only something God does but is also dependent upon the steadfastness of the disciple. This is demonstrated by the following illustration.

† It also explains verses such as Acts 13:2; Matt. 28:19. cf. TBSM, Vol. 4, P. 119.

¹ cf. Gal. 3:27-29.

² These phrases Christ in you (etc.) indicating an "indwelling" are figures of speech and unless we recognize this we will be led into all kinds of mysterious interpretations of this subject. These phrases are used to indicate the believer's moral position relative to God.

FLESH MANIFESTATION		GOD MANIFESTATION			
"in Adam"		"in ₁ Christ" ₂	Christ in us	God in Jesus	Jesus in God
John 15	Does not bear fruit (2) Cannot bear fruit (4) Can do nothing (5) Thrown away, burned (6)	"bears fruit" (2) "He (God) prunes it"(2) "clean because of the word which I have spoken (3) "bears much fruit (5) "by this is My Father glorified" (8) "My words abide in you (7) "ask whatever you wish" (6) "if you keep my commandments" (10)	"my words abide in you" (7) "My disciples" (8) "You will abide in love" (10) "My joy may be in you" (11)	"I abide in his love" (10)	"I have kept my Father's commandments" (10)
John 17	"I pray not for the world" (9)	They have kept thy word (6) "I am glorified in them" (10) "they are not of the world" "through their word" (20)	"I pray for them" (9) I speak in the world that they might have my joy" (13)	"glorify thy son" "glorify thou me" (5)	"Son may glorify thee" (1) "I have glorified thee on the earth (4) "I have finished the work" (4) "I have manifested thy name" (6) "I have kept them in thy name" (12) "I have kept" (12) "I have given them thy word" (14) "I pray for... them also which shall believe on me" (20)
1 Cor. 15	"all die" (22)	"all shall be made alive" (22)			

¹ If all the words "do(es) for" are substituted for "in" the meaning is clearer.

² The following are alternate translations:

"because of their relationship to" GSPD.

"as members of Christ" PHI

"through union with Christ" TCNT

If we are in Jesus, then we are in God through the fellowship that we have with Him through His Son. Jesus shows us that the evidence of the Father in him was the works (John 14:11). Evidence of Jesus in us then will be the works that we do and not what we claim! (cf. 1 John 2:5-6).

3. Paul says, "I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you¹." How was Christ formed in them?
By apostolic preaching and not by 'receiving the Spirit'!
4. The last quote (Eph. 3:17) explains the others.² Faith produces works and develops a Christ-like character. If we have no faith then we cannot manifest Christ.
5. The double relationship of abiding is made clearer by considering 1 John 5:18 19 where: the world is in the evil one and the evil one is in the world.
6. God by His word has always been in the hearts³ of His children. An Old Testament example:

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is contrite and of a humble spirit"⁴

This abiding therefore, is not dependent on the giving of the Holy Spirit in New Testament times.

7. For Christ to abide in us is exactly the same as "my words abide in you". It is a parallel passage (cf. John 15:7, 5).

¹ NASB (Gal. 4:19)

The word "Christ" by the figure of metonymy means the principles and characteristics which are manifested in him.

² cf. Notes on Epistles of John.

When the words or doctrine, of the Eternal Spirit are the subject matter of our faith we dwell in Christ and Christ dwells in us. (LOGOS, J. Thomas, Phanerosis, P. 84).

³ A parallel illustration may be helpful. Two intimate friends dwell in each other's heart by the love they share even though they may be separated. The souls of David and Jonathan were "knit together" (i.e. they dwelt in each other's heart though David had to flee from the presence of Jonathan.)

⁴ Isa. 57:15.

‘He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”.’

The first time in Scripture that we meet with the phrase “He breathed” is when God breathed into the nostrils of man “the breath of life; and man became a living being.” God created and then gave life. In like manner, the body of believers whom God created through His Son Jesus, was now given Spiritual life. The Greek word for “breathed” (*emphusao*) used here is the only occurrence¹ in the N.T. and is the same word used in the LXX² for the word “breathed” in Gen. 2:7! This is obviously a fundamental point. Here we have a word of “action”; not of “thought”. Adam did not live because God thought life into his brain, but rather because of the *action* of the Spirit. This distinction needs to be maintained and remembered. The Holy Spirit then, was not something which merely altered the thought processes *of* the Apostles but rather in the example of Adam it gave them power for action.

The work given them was a limited one and is defined in the next verse:

“If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have³ been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”

This limited power (of knowing whose sins had been forgiven or retained by God) continued until the day of Pentecost when forty days later the nine Spirit Gifts were given to them.

We recall that Peter earlier had been promised this power described as the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19). On previous occasions Christ had given them power to heal and to raise the dead⁴ but this was only a temporary arrangement.

¹ (Y)

² Concordance to the Septuagint. (London: Bagster & Sons), 1970.

³ “have previously” been forgiven. The correct sense is given by most NASB editions i.e. above but not by the AV or RSV.

⁴ Luke 10:9; Matt. 10:8.

THE CONTINUING ACTS OF JESUS BY THE SPIRIT THROUGH THE APOSTLES

Luke introduces his remarks by reference to “the first account I composed”. In that account now known as the gospel of Luke, he recorded “all that Jesus *began* to do and teach.” By implication then, “Acts” is an account of what Jesus *continued* “to do and teach” after his ascension. We would therefore, expect that “Acts” be full of occurrences of miracles of action and teaching (in the form of words rather than thoughts) caused by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, as we examine the book in detail we find that *all occurrences of the Holy Spirit are of a miraculous character.*

Luke, in the first few verses, introduces the fact that the Apostles were instructed “*not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised*” (v. 4). They received this promise of the Father only ten days after the ascension of the glorified¹ Christ. As Peter pointed out at that time, the *pouring out* was a partial fulfillment of that which had been prophesied by Joel (2:28-32). This reference by Peter clearly indicated the wide spread distribution of the Spirit. It was to be on “all flesh” without discrimination as to age, race, sex or position². In clear unmistakable terms he told the gathered multitude that what they could “*see*” and “*hear*” (i.e. the tongues of fire and the gift of tongues) was (a) the outpouring promised in Joel, and (b) the Father’s *promise* of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that there is no place in Peter’s inspired exposition of Joel or his explanation of the Father’s promise to Jesus *for* the gift of the Holy Spirit constituting, or even including, what some call the spiritual graces of righteousness, peace or joy. Rather, his exposition and the rest of Luke’s record of the “Acts” demonstrates that the Lord worked “to do and to teach” by three modes:

1. by *miraculous* Spirit gifts³.
2. through visitations of Angels⁴.
3. by providential guidance without visible intervention⁵.

A. The miraculous Spirit gifts

Even some of the passages which appear on the surface to teach a mystical indwelling causing peace and joy, are seen to teach otherwise when carefully examined.

For example:

“*a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 6:5) had the temporary Spirit gift of faith (1 Cor. 12:9). Similarly, a man: “*full of the Spirit and of wisdom*” (Acts 6:3) possessed the temporary intermittent gift of the word of wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8)⁶.

¹ cf. notes on John 14:12, 16.

² See Inter Ecclesial Offices - Apostles, Section E.

³ See the Spirit Gifts, Section D.

⁴ See the additional notes on the *Parakletos*, Section C.

⁵ See notes on Guidance, Section B.

⁶ Both these examples use a figure of speech called “hendiadys, in which two nouns connected by ‘and’ are used instead of one noun or a noun and an adjective” (Webster’s unabridged).

The miraculous was involved even in such passages as Acts 9:31:

“The ecclesias... walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit”.

The word for “comfort” is translated “exhortation” (Acts 13:15), and Luke was saying that the brethren were “walking...in the exhortation supplied by the Holy Spirit” through those who had the gift of exhortation (1 Cor. 14:3). The “guidance” provided to Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2) and to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:6-7) was not intuitive but came through the gift of prophecy⁷.

The table below is a rough quantitative tabulation of some types of miracles in Acts.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT AS PROMISED IN JOEL	Textural references in Acts fulfilling these specific promises.
“Prophecy” in the sense of forthtelling or speaking Words of God, rather than solely foretelling (2:22; 3 :12; 4:8,31; 9:31; 10:19,31; 11:12,21,27,28; 13:2,16; 15:13,28,31,32; 16:6,7; 17:2; 18:5; 20:2,18; 21:4,11).....	24
“Visions” (7:55; 9:3,10,12,27; 10:3,11,17,30; 11:5,13; 16:9; 18:9; 22:6,17; 23:11).....	16
“Wonders and signs” (2:2,3,4,43; 3:7; 4:14,31,33; 5:5,10,12,15-16; 6:8; 7:56; 8:6,13; 9:18,34,40; 10:44;13:11; 15:12; 16:26; 19:6,11; 20:12; 28:5,8).....	28
THE WORK OF THE PARAKLETE AS PROMISED IN JOHN	
“Witness”, prophetically and personally (4:33; 5:29,32; 6:10; 8:5,6,12,25,35; 13:52; 15:8; 22:1).....	11
“Convicting” -- of sin (2:37; 4:4; 5:3,9; 7:51-54; 8:20; 10:6; 13:10,40; 16:29; 17:30; 18:6; 19:18; 24:25; 28:25-27).....	15
- of righteousness (2:37; 3:15; 4:10; 10:40; 13:30,34; 17:31).....	7
- of judgement (as listed below).....	9
Defence before civil and ecclesiastical courts (4:6; 5:27; 6:12; 16:36; 18:14; 22:1; 23:1; 23:34; 26:1).....	9

⁷In the first example there were Prophets present (cf. v. 1). In the second both had the gift of prophecy (cf. 15:32; 1 Thess. 1:5).

‘There are, of course, many other instances of the Holy Spirit at work in Acts. The present writers claim, however, that every instance of the “Holy Spirit” in “Acts” is of a miraculous character.⁸

B. Angels in “Acts”

This is another way that the “Spirit” operated as recorded in “Acts”.

- (1) *ASCENSION OF CHRIST*. “Two men stood by them in white apparel” (1:10). The disciples had not yet received the promise of the Lord.
- (2) *RELEASE OF APOSTLES FROM PRISON*. “the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors” (5:19).
The Holy Spirit was not for the personal use of those who possessed it. That is why an Angel released them.
- (3) *DIRECTION OF PHILIP TO MAN OF ETHIOPIA*. “the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip” (8:26).
“Angelic intervention was used when there was no one available immediately and/or when the more evidently authoritative and powerful presence of an angel was essential to the particular circumstances.”
- (4) *VISION TO CORNELIUS*. “An angel of God coming in to him”. (10:3) Cornelius did not have the Spirit so an angel was used to reveal God’s message.
- (5) *VISION TO PETER* “I have sent them” (10:20, cf. v. 3). reason (3).
- (6) *RELEASE OF PETER FROM PRISON* (12:7) same reason as (2).
- (7) *SMITING OF HEROD FOR ACCEPTING GLORY DUE TO GOD*.
“Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him” (12:23) same reason as (3).
- (8) *COMFORT TO PAUL*. “There stood by me this night the angel of God” (27:23 cf. 3:11) (reason 3).

C. Providence in “Acts”

God also controlled the lives of the Apostles by unseen angelic control by what we term “The Ways of Providence”. This guidance did not come directly to the mind but indirectly in a way that the person did not realize. The persecution which arose over the death of Stephen must surely be seen as a means God used to get the apostles out of Jerusalem. (8:1).

⁸ TEST, Whittaker & Carr, “Spirit” in the New Testament, Vol. 43, P. 185. For example see 8:39 “The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip”.

⁹ IBID, P. 186.

“And they”

It is uncertain to some whether “they” (v. 1) means the 12 Apostles or the 120 (1:15) disciples as there are arguments in favor of both. Arguments in favor of the 12 are as follows

- a) What Jesus had promised in John 14:16 was limited to the Apostles (at least initially).
- b) The gathering which was instructed by Jesus not to leave Jerusalem but which was to wait until the Holy Spirit was given consisted of the 11 (1:2, 4, 8; cf. Luke 24:49).
- c) If we disregard the chapter division, we see that it is the 11 plus Matthias (v.26.) that is the subject.
- d) v. 7 indicates that the speakers in tongues were all Galileans. It is doubtful that the 120 were all Galileans.
- e) v. 14 records that Peter stood up among the eleven.

Arguments in favour of 120 are:

- a) The record begins, “And when they were *all with one accord in one place*” (Acts 2:1). This phrasing looks back to the earlier incident where *the 120* in the Upper Room “*all with one accord* continued stedfastly in prayer.” (1:14-15 RV).
- b) Before the Lord’s ascension he said to “the eleven” . . . and *those that were with them...* tarry ye in the city until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:33, 49).
- c) As the Apostles were the prominent ones and Peter the spokesman it is reasonable to expect that they would do the speaking.
- d) The Pentecost of the Gentiles records that it “fell upon **all those who were listening to the message**” “which have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*” (Acts 10:45, 47 NASB). So again not just the leaders, but **all**.

CONCLUSION

In view of the evidence for the 120 above, there can be no doubt that the Spirit descended on the entire assembly of 120, but we see later the Apostles had special powers as a result.

“were all filled”

The word *pleroo* (filled) replaces the word “baptism” of Spirit from here on.

“with the Holy Spirit”

The Spirit gift of tongues. If, however, the Apostles did not receive the other gifts on this occasion, it is difficult indeed to explain

- a) why they didn’t. The promise of Joel demands it and so does John 14-16.
- b) when they did.
- c) the fact that Peter’s defence was the gift of prophecy as he quoted from the Psalms infallibly.

It seems better to see tongues here as only a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The other gifts must have been distributed on this occasion also.

“and began to speak with other tongues”¹ (cf. Mark 16:17)

Tongue speaking in the first century ecclesia can be identified with foreign languages.

“*Glossa*” and “*Dialektos*” are used interchangeably by Luke. Stress is often placed on the Greek word *glossa* as if to imply that the word in the New Testament means ecstatic utterances. But a comparison of the two Greek words shows them to be used interchangeably in Acts 2. The miracle of this chapter rested on the fact that Galileans, who may never have studied foreign languages (Acts 4:13) were able to fluently speak these languages. Consider the following parallels in Acts 2.

- (a) “And they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues (*glossa*)”. v.4.
- (b) “Every man heard them speak in his own language (*dialektos*)”.v. 6.
- (c) “And how hear we every man in his own tongue² (*dialektos*) wherein we were born?” v. 8.
- (d) “We do hear them speak in our tongues (*glossa*) the wonderful works of God”. v. 11.

Those who claim the “gift” today nearly always display it in a wild, emotional state. With eyes dilated and glassy and with a stiff wooden countenance they jerk up and down, uttering incoherent cries. On the day of Pentecost, however, the people heard the Apostles

“*Speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*” (v. 11)

“*as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (“as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out” mg NASB).

When one possessed the gift of tongues, it did not mean that he would be able to speak it at all times. It did not make him a linguist. The gift was intermittent as the NASB rendering suggests. Paul did not understand the “speech of Lycaonia” for example (Acts 14:11). Those gifted with the interpretation of tongues could understand, however. Note that Holy Spirit and Spirit are used interchangeably in this verse.

v. 8 “*And how hear we every man in our tongue, wherein we were born?*”

In v. 9-11 we have 15 actual languages spoken by the Apostles under the power of the Holy Spirit. Those knowing each language could understand clearly what was said (cf. v. 6). For example, the Elamites would hear a Galilean fisherman giving a talk in Elamite, even though he had never learned the language. It is significant that among the peoples mentioned by Luke, are some whose languages show only dialect differences, suggesting that the gift of tongues enabled the possessor to reproduce these dialect faithfully to the amazement of the hearers.

¹ See notes a 1 Cor. 13:1; 14:21 and Section D – “Tongues”.

² language (NASB)



Acts 2:17, 18 *“It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon... your sons... and on my servants.”*

PROBLEM:

This is a key Pentecostal verse, used to demonstrate present possession of the Spirit.

SOLUTION:

1. If the context of the quotation is checked, it will be seen that it is beyond dispute that the primary fulfillment refers to a time still future when Christ is back on earth.
2.
 - a. It is after the destruction of the Russian¹ hordes:
“I will remove far off from you the northern army . . . and his stink shall come up.” (Joel 2:20).
 - b. It is after Israel turns to the Lord:
“Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel”...
“and my people shall never be ashamed.” (Joel 2:27).
 - c. After this “I will pour out my spirit”. (Joel 2:28) (i.e. on mortal Judah).
 - d. “In Jerusalem shall be deliverance.” v. 32.
3. What happened at Pentecost was a token fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. When the purpose of that token fulfillment was complete (the complete word of God) then the Spirit gifts ceased as Paul said they would. (1 Cor. 13:10).
4. It is therefore foolish to use this verse to demonstrate present possession of the Holy Spirit in any form.

v.18 *“Even upon my bondslaves, both men and women”*

This prophecy of Joel’s applied to male and female, young and old (cf. 1:14). There seems to be a conflict here with Paul’s teaching that women were not permitted to speak in the ecclesia. (1 Cor. 14:34, 35; 1 Tim. 2:11,12). Paul’s teaching however, has reference to teaching or speaking in ecclesias but does not apply to prophesying outside such gatherings. Paul accepted the hospitality of Philip and his four prophetess daughters.

¹ There is so much confusion about the “great and terrible day of the LORD” (v. 31) that it calls for comment here.

V. 31 is not describing the destruction of the northern Russian power (that is destroyed in v. 20) but of Roman Europe which will engage in a religious crusade against the “Antichrist”. This is those who “shall make war with the Lamb” (Rev. 17:14). It cannot possibly refer to the destruction of Gog for it says that “in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance!” Zechariah promises that 2/3 of those in Jerusalem shall be destroyed by battle. The two do not refer to the same period. This destroys the theory expressed in NTTC!

“If Joel is to have a second fulfillment in the last days, we must again preserve the sequence.

And the sequence is

- the pouring out of the gifts
- the signs in the heavenly bodies
- the opportunity of salvation

Preceding immediately the coming of the Lord... I’m not pressing the claim that this is what Joel is saying.”

The sequence is not as NTTC has it but as is expressed in point 2 above. There are two appearances of the Lord:

- a) to the saints; b) to the world.

Neither of these offers “salvation” but only an opportunity to escape death at that time (Zech. 14:16a). Salvation is not instantaneous and never has been. These people will become subjects during the millennium, not the immortal saints.

“I will in those days pour forth My Spirit.”

A partial fulfillment, which resulted in the gifts being demonstrated.

“and they shall prophesy”(cf. v. 11)

Tongues was prophecy in a foreign language whereas prophecy was forthtelling the gospel in a native language. This ability would last until the end of the Apostolic age.

v.33 *“...having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit”*. Christ had promised the Parakletos in John 16:7; the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4, 8. Jesus was the agent in whose name the Spirit gifts were sent, but he was never its original source. This manifestation could not be explained except on the basis of an exalted Saviour of whom the prophets had testified to his coming, his teaching, his death, his resurrection and now his exaltation.

“He has poured forth this which you both see and hear”

Both the peoples’ eyes and ears could testify to the manifestation of the Spirit gift power. It was not inner and subjective.

Acts 2:39 *“Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit¹. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is used in several ways which are incorrect.

- I. It is argued that the present day “Christian” is the one “afar off” and therefore this verse is justification to their claim to be able to work miracles such as the gift of healing and the gift of tongues.
- II. It is argued that the promise of the Spirit was to the believers for all time and that what Peter offered was not the various gifts of the Spirit² but an inner power which should work righteousness in them.
e.g. “The manifestations (miracles)... were the mere advertisement for something greater and more inward, as well as vastly more important... God still, without the outward signs, pours out the Spirit grace richly upon those that call upon him” (TCM Vol. 96).
- III. It is argued that we have no evidence that those Jews received the miraculous gifts on their baptism. (NHSB, P. 11).
- IV. It is argued that there is no evidence of the widespread nature of the Spirit gifts immediately following Pentecost.

¹ cf. notes on v.18 Point 2 and footnote.

² It is argued that this is so because there is no mention of miracles in this verse. See TBSM, Vol. 1 for a complete answer to this problem.

- V. It is argued that the power to work miracles was not what these penitent men were seeking for.
e.g. “Peter, while having the signs... was offering something more important than the signs themselves, the work of God to bring about salvation of the individual” (TCM, Vol. 96).
- VI. It is argued “that, if the miraculous gifts were indeed the subject of Peter’s promise, provision would have been made for their fading out⁵”.
Because he did not it is claimed that what was promised was something non-miraculous.
- VII. It is argued that other passages use the word “children” *tekna* in a much wider sense (than the second generation) as descendants, members of a race, or members of a community ... “Those who come after you” is the most likely meaning here⁵.

SOLUTION I:

1. The present Christian is “afar off” from the gospel if he thinks this! “The phrase in the Greek does not mean succeeding generations. It does not relate to time³.”
2. As clearly indicated in solution II point 4, the phrase refers primarily to Gentiles who knew not the truth but would know it. They did receive the gifts.
3. The gifts⁴ of healings and tongues are not in evidence today because their purpose was fulfilled and they are not available today. Faith healers can only cure psychosomatic illnesses and those who claim to speak in tongues simply cannot.

SOLUTION II:

1. The context demands that the promise of the “gift of the Holy Spirit” was the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus “tarry ye... until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49) and that fulfillment was in the form of a God given ability to speak in “tongues”. This was an outstanding *miracle* and the people recognized this. Peter connects this outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the “promise” in v. 33.
2. The immediate context of v. 39 cannot be separated from v. 33 which describes miracles. To do so is a wresting of scripture. The parallel between verses 31 - 33 and 38 - 39 is very evident.
 - A. V. 31 describes:
 - (1) the death and
 - (2) the resurrection of Christ.
 V. 33 describes:
 - (3) his exaltation to heaven and receipt of the Holy Spirit.
 - B. Verses 38 and 39 are a parallel illustration and show how the believer could identify himself with the experience of Christ.
Baptism is:
 - (1) a symbolic death,
 - (2) and resurrection of a “new man” in Christ.

³ I. Leask “Acts of the Apostles” (Durban North, S. Africa, P.O. Box 6056, 1969, P. 59.

⁴ See Section D. - The Spirit Gifts.

⁵ NHSB P. 18 footnote 4.

Christ would then pour “forth this which you both *hear* and *see*.”

(3) The receipt of the Holy Spirit was a mark of approval (cf. Acts 11:17) and showed that God had exalted them to “heavenly places in Christ”.

C. Acts 10:43 - 48 is an obvious parallel to Acts 2:37 - 38.

repentance	Brethren what shall we do (37)	Cornelius, thy prayer is heard (31)
baptism	baptized (38)	baptized (48)
forgiveness of sins	(38)	remission of sins (43)
receive Holy Spirit gift as sign of approval	(38)	Can any man forbid water (to) these which have received the Holy Spirit (44 - 47)

This Holy Spirit was the ability to speak in tongues; not some mysterious nonentity.

3. A comparison of the various uses of the words “the gift of the Holy Spirit⁶” in Acts shows that it always refers to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.
4. The promise of the Holy Spirit was not to believers for all time but:
 - (1) “to you (old men of Joel 2:28) and your children” (your sons, daughters of Joel 2:28) - the Jews gathered for Pentecost.
 - (2) “to all that are afar off” (cf. “all flesh” of Joel 2:28) refers primarily to the Gentiles as an examination of Eph. 2:17 and Acts 22:21 will show.

We do not doubt the power of inspiration to move Peter to speak things he did not understand. It is probable at this point that Peter’s vision was limited and did not extend to the question of salvation for the Gentiles (cf. ch. 10). To him then “those afar off” would probably have been thought of as those of the Dispersion. Two scriptures support this idea:

“unto all Israel, that are near and that are *far* off”. (Dan. 9:7).

“Mordecai... sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and *far*” (Est. 9:20).

Peter was addressing the “men of Israel” (Acts 2:22) but that does not preclude his words going farther than he understood, and including Gentiles. Scripture shows that the Gentiles did receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. and the family of Cornelius are examples.) There is nothing in this passage to indicate how long this promise would last. Other scriptures⁷ however, show that these gifts would only last until the canon was completed.

⁶ cf. Acts 8:20; Acts 10:45; 11:17.

⁷ 1 Cor. 13:10; Eph. 4:13.

5. The “gift of the Holy Spirit” was given to witness for the Lord; to convince, convert and upbuild other men and women, and not to exert a personal (mystical) influence on the mind of those who possessed it. (Nor would the crowd Peter spoke to expect such a happening!)
The witness of those newly endowed with the Spirit and returned to their respective countries was a very effective way, arranged by the providence of God by which the truth should have an initial spreading abroad.
6. Perhaps the words of Paul give a fuller explanation to the brief words of Peter⁸. By the Holy Spirit, both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father, and will *become* a habitation of the Father.

“And that he might reconcile both⁹ unto God in one body by the cross having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were *afar off*.” RV

“in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also *are being* built together into a dwelling of God in¹⁰ the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:16, 21, 22. NASB).

Perhaps Peter is also referring ahead to this time when the gift of the Holy Spirit to the believer will be a spirit nature.

7. It can be seen, therefore, that Acts 2:39 is not talking about a continuing gift of the Spirit in the hearts of the believers from Pentecost down to our time¹¹.

SOLUTION III:

1. The problem states a partial truth. On the other hand there is *no* suggestion that *any* direct activity of the Spirit occurred.
2. When Paul went to Corinth (Acts 18), “Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized” (v. 8). Although the promise was unto all that were *afar off*, yet there is no mention at all of the Holy Spirit coming to these believers. Yet we know that many (if not all) in the ecclesia at Corinth did possess miraculous gifts. Because there is no direct evidence to the effect in Acts 18 we cannot assume that no miracle-working gifts were sent to the Corinthians.

⁸ It is certainly true that in the first century the Holy Spirit was “given as a pledge of our inheritance”. (Eph. 1:14).

⁹ Jew and Gentile.

¹⁰ “through” (AV)

¹¹ see TEST, Carr & Whittaker, From Pentecost through the Acts, 1973, P. 183-184. This is denied by some (NTTC) but denial is not proof. Nor is the “to all generations” (Eph. 3:21) an indication of who is meant by “As many as the Lord our God shall call.” This refers to those who give glory to God. It is not necessary to have the Spirit to give glory!

It is important to note that there is no place in Peter’s inspired exposition of Joel or his explanation of the Father’s promise to Jesus for the gift of the Holy Spirit consisting, or even including such “spiritual graces” as righteousness, peace or joy.

3. When Paul came to Ephesus (Acts 19) he found a Jew, Apollos, with some followers. Paul asked whether they had received the Holy Spirit after they had believed. We notice how that Paul expected that they would have received the Holy Spirit. What did Paul expect that they would have received? Miraculous gifts, or some Spirit activity to help in good living? Note the words:

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” (v. 6)

This is probably what Paul expected they would possess when he asked the question. Evidence that the spirit had been poured out on the Apostles was the fact that they spoke in tongues. There is not the slightest suggestion in Acts 2 that the initial bestowal of the gift of the Spirit had any other effect.

SOLUTION IV:

1. It is right to say that there is no evidence given in the form of examples immediately following Pentecost but it is wrong to say there is no evidence of miracles being meant¹² in this context. There is, of course, no reason to expect concrete evidence. The theme of Acts is the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles and little is said about the early days of the ecclesia.
2. When we come to the epistles¹³ in which ecclesial problems are discussed, we have abundant evidence of the widespread nature of the Spirit gifts. Hebrews 6:4-5 confirms this evidence.
3. When we place the above explanation in juxtaposition to the Problem we find a parallel and a contrast:
 - a parallel in that there is no evidence in the form of examples in the immediate context that the Spirit came in a form to help believers to be righteous.
 - a contrast in that there is no Scriptural evidence elsewhere for it being something which “helped them live acceptable lives”.
4. The only reason that the statement in Problem IV has any validity is because of the word “immediately”.

We have demonstrated in the introduction that the 120 received the gift of the Spirit yet it seems that only the 12 apostles spoke in tongues and Peter alone used the gift of prophecy. This can easily be explained by the fact that the Apostles were the leaders. (Acts is largely a narrative about two Apostles Peter; ch. 1-12 and Paul; ch. 13 to end. The last 8 concern only Paul).

¹² See Solution II

¹³ See exposition on Corinthians.

Shortly after Pentecost there is much evidence of miracles being performed by those who were not Apostles.

Stephen “did miracles and wonders” (6:8)

Philip “did miracles and signs” (8:5)

Ananias healed Saul’s blindness and foretold his mission (9:17)

Cornelius and his household spoke with tongues (10:46)

Prophets spoke (11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10)

Twelve disciples of John spoke in tongues (19:6).

Only miraculous gifts were promised and only these were given.

SOLUTION V

1. It is true that these believers did not seek the ability to work miracles or they would have had “neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.” Conversely it is not true that they sought for something unavailable to them or anyone else. They sought forgiveness of sins and would have welcomed the opportunity to spread this gospel to others. To that end they were given the gifts to assist them to witness for Christ.
2. The gift of the Holy Spirit was something that came to them as believers and not something that came to create in them believing hearts. Enlightenment came to them by the word of God so *expounded* that the divine purpose was made plain and their obligation brought home to them. Peter did not say “You have been the subject of a divine operation by the exercise of God’s power directly upon your minds” - he did say “Repent” or change your mind.
3. To see v. 39 as describing bestowal of an inner power which would work righteousness in them is to
 - a) go beyond the facts of the verse.
 - b) suppose that God cannot impute righteousness to a man forgiven of his sins in baptism and who strives to obey the Gospel.
 - c) make a statement that is not in accordance with Scriptural testimony. The bestowal of the gifts did not cause righteousness.¹⁴ Nor does or did God bestow something that would directly cause righteousness. To have done so would have removed “free will” from the believer’s life.
4. To emphasize that the gifts were not what they needed, and that some source of inner strength and comfort was required, is to impose our thinking upon the chapter. That they needed strength and comfort no one doubts. To suggest from these words that this came directly to their hearts through the gift of the Spirit is very bad exposition. We know that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were necessary for the growth and edification of the early ecclesias, but it did not operate directly but indirectly through men who spoke the revelations they

¹⁴ cf. Section B, “Did not cause righteousness”.

The “free gift” and the “gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:15,17) is not parallel to “the gift of the Holy Spirit”. The former is what the hearers of the gospel were made aware of (i.e. eternal life). They were made aware of this “gift” by listening to the Gospel which was preached by those who possessed the “gifts of the Spirit.”

received. Who then are we, to doubt that this is the phenomenon to which these words refer? To suggest that the description of the believers' joy and fellowship in 41 - 47 is evidence of 'the inward reality of the Spirit' is of no relevance. The Samaritans had a similar experience before they received the Holy Spirit (8:8). There are also other instances where, significantly, there is no mention of the gift of the Spirit, e.g. Acts 8:39; 16:34.

5. On the day of Pentecost the converts had witnessed the double miracle of "prophecy", quoting Psalms infallibly, and "tongues", translating them into the many foreign dialects of the Dispersion. To these Jews, still stunned by the sudden realisation that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed their Messiah, and that he had been raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, there would be nothing to suggest that the Holy Spirit could be anything but the power behind all the staggering events and the marvels they had just witnessed. Nothing could be further from their minds than the idea that the promised Holy Spirit was primarily a transforming inward grace, especially since Peter had given no hint of it in his speech, and after their baptism "many 'wonders and signs' (Joel 2) were (still being) done by the apostles" (2:43). They had been convinced, convicted, and converted by the indisputable fact of supernatural events. As each of the 3,000 received one of the gifts by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, the scope of the outpouring gradually widened. The Lord himself, in his infinite wisdom, was "distributing (the gifts) severally as he willed" (1 Cor. 12:11), so that each bestowal was no doubt suited to the future role of its recipient (see Testimony, July 1973, pp. 256-7). And the converts' new life in Christ was vibrant with joy as they "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship (shared through the saving knowledge that came through that teaching) and in prayers" (2:42).

Against such a background it is by no means "irrelevant" that the promise of the Spirit, in response to the agonised appeal "Men and brethren, what shall we do?", should be one of power, to perform miracles, and notably to prophesy. This conclusion has been dubbed "morally questionable", and yet the present writers honestly consider that the text allows of no other conclusion.¹⁵

SOLUTION VI

1. This argument at least allows that it is possible for Acts 2:38 to refer to miraculous gifts.
2. The problem is an argument from absence and is therefore invalid. The author of the problem statement is found in the position of stating what Peter "would have" done. Does he know more than Peter?

¹⁵ The above is from TEST, Vol. 45, P. 164.

3. At this early stage of the outpouring of the gifts there is no reason to suppose that any exposition on the gifts should have included reference to “their fading out”. The pattern is the opposite. When the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10) Peter did not say “You know these gifts are only temporary” nor is there any reason that he should have. Also when Paul gave the gifts to the Ephesians (Acts 19) he did not say they would cease.

SOLUTION VII

1. The word is “*teknon*” (B), (S), (V), (Y) not *tekna*!
It occurs 99 times (Y) and has quite a variety of meanings. The argument expressed in the problem, therefore, proves nothing. Other passages may use the same word but that does not define the meaning here.
 2. As demonstrated in solution II point 4 “children” refers to the “sons and daughters” of Joel 2:28.
 3. In any case the prophecy concerns Jews. Where is the evidence of Jews receiving this so called “non-miraculous Spirit” for many generations? There is none!
- 5:9 *“Then Peter said to her, ‘Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test?’”*

The AV is not a true translation. She and her husband had decided to put the Holy Spirit under test to see if they could get away with it. The sin of Ananias was covetousness, lies, pride and double-mindedness.

By the gift of discerning of Spirits Peter knew they lied. By the gift of the miracles of judgement¹ the sentence was pronounced and carried out. The result was the strengthening of the ecclesia (v. 5).

v.32 *“We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit which God gave to the ones obeying Him”.* (MARS) (cf. 15:28; Heb. 2:3, 4).

What a blow to the pride of the Sadducee - the fact that none of them had the gift of the Holy Spirit was an evident token that God was not with them. The disciples had the Holy Spirit gifts only because Christ had risen from the dead and ascended to God. He in turn gave them the gifts as a proof that Christ had triumphed over death and had ascended to the Father. (Eph. 4:8-10).

This verse demonstrates that the Holy Spirit was given to almost all converts in the first century in fulfillment of Acts 2:39. The tense used here shows that the meaning intended is continual obedience.

6:5,6 *“They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit... and these they brought before the Apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.”*

¹ See Section D - “Miracles” (of judgement).

PROBLEM

It is claimed³ that Stephen and Philip were filled with the Holy¹ Spirit before they were given miraculous powers by the laying on of hands of the Apostles and that therefore the miraculous powers were intended to fulfil a role separate from and subordinate to the supposed personal and inner non miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.

SOLUTION

1. The assumption that the phrase “filled with the Holy Spirit” stands for an inward spiritual grace or activity rather than miraculous powers is contradicted by the occurrences of the phrase elsewhere:
 - “I have filled him (Bezaleel) with the Spirit of God” (Exod. 31:3) - a miraculous gift of “wisdom” for the construction of the Tabernacle.
 - “He hath filled him (Bezaleel) with the Spirit of God” (Exod. 35:31).
 - “Elizabeth was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:41) and prophesied, repeating, without knowing it, the Angel’s salutation to Mary (Luke 1:28).
 - “Zecharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied” (Luke 1:67).
 - “Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit...” (Luke 4:1) - following his baptism.
 - “They (the 120) “were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:4).
 - “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, ‘Ye rulers of the people’ ... ” (Acts 4:8)
 - by the spirit of prophecy (Mark 13:11).
 - Stephen “being full of the Holy Spirit... saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and said... ” (Acts 7:55-6) - this involved the gift of revelation or apocalypse (1 Cor. 14:6), and probably also of prophecy.

2. There is clear textual proof that when Stephen and Philip were said to be “filled with the Holy Spirit” they had already received such spiritual gifts as the Lord judged were needful for the work that lay ahead of them. The choice of the seven deacons, including Stephen and Philip, was not a decision of merely human judgement. They were selected because they were “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”. By the figure of speech hendiadys² the phrase means they were chosen because they all had “Holy-Spirit wisdom”, which was a special miraculous endowment (1 Cor. 12:8, etc.), supplied to them by the Lord himself.

3. The ceremony of laying on of hands was practised in Israel for widely different reasons, and this must be taken into account in the case of Stephen and Philip just cited. The ritual occurs:
 - (a) As a symbol of benediction (Gen. 48:14f; Matt. 19:13, 15, etc).
 - (b) As a symbol of the transfer of sin to a sacrifice (Exod. 29:10,15,19; Lev. 1:4, 12).
 - (c) As confirmation by witnesses on the head of persons charged with a capital offence (Lev. 24:14).

¹ The text does not have Holy at v. 3. (NEST).

² See Introduction to Acts footnote 6.

³ NHSB, P. 11.

- (d) As the outward sign of the delegation of, or appointment to some special office or assignment (Num. 8:10; Acts 6:6; 13:3).
- (e) As an outward sign of healing (Matt. 9:18; Acts 9:12, 17).
- (f) As an outward sign of imparting the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17,19; 19:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

The seven deacons received from the apostles a prophetic confirmation of their call, and a blessing on their work before they assumed their new responsibility, exactly as did Barnabas and Saul from prophets at Antioch before they started on their missionary work (Acts 13:3). It is therefore incorrect to say that Stephen and Philip did not possess any of the Spirit-gifts until the apostles laid their hands on them (Acts 6:6).^{3 4}

8:15 *“Peter and John... prayed for them (Samaritans), that they might receive the Holy Spirit”.*

John was one of those who on an earlier occasion sought to call down fire upon the Samaritans (Luke 9:54-56). This record indicates that the Apostles alone could be the agents by which others received the Spirit gifts. The power to pass on the Holy Spirit rested with God. Philip could do miracles and signs but, not being an Apostle, he could not be the agent of transmission.

v.16 *“for it had not yet fallen on any of them.”*

This demonstrates that the bestowal of the Holy Spirit was not automatic at baptism.

“but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (RSV).

This is the same as “the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).

The Apostles were concerned about how the Samaritans would fare in the absence of Philip, because there would be no one to guide them in their study of God’s word. The solution was that they would be given the Holy Spirit so that they could be guided by the gift of prophecy, knowledge etc., and so be built up or edified.

v.17 *“Then they began laying their hands on them.”*

This act was a necessary part in imparting the Spirit. It was only through “the laying on of the Apostles’ hands (that) the Holy Spirit was given” (v. 18).

“and they were receiving the Holy Spirit”

This divine gift was only given after some time had elapsed so that they would have had time to prove themselves worthy of such honour.

This power in the Samaritans must have been manifested otherwise how could Simon see (v. 18) that “the Holy Spirit was given”?

v.19 *“Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit”.*

In God’s design only the Apostles were to have this power. The historical period in which we are now living is between the former and latter rain and is a period of spiritual drought where the sun has gone down on the prophets and we are without the Holy Spirit to guide us, except in so far as the Spirit abides in the Word of God. The statement in v.18 that only the Apostles could pass on the Holy Spirit is something people cannot answer when trying to prove that they have the Holy Spirit.

³ Compare the case of Joshua, of whom God said to Moses: “Take thee Joshua... a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him...” (Num. 27:18).

⁴ cf. TEST, Vol. 45, P. 166.

“And Ananias went his way putting his hands on him.”

Putting = Grk. *epitethemi* = “laying his hands” (RSV). This does not always signify the bestowal of the Holy Spirit:

- a) In 6:6 the Apostles laid their hands upon the Seven but Stephen, is earlier described as “a man full of . . . the Holy Spirit”. This was then an act of dedication or appointment to office.
- b) 13:3 presents another case. Both Barnabas and Saul not only possessed the Spirit (11:24; 9:17) but had already been appointed to the work (v.2). This action expressed union of intent.

“hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight”

The emphasis of v. 12, v. 18 and 22:13 indicates that the primary purpose of the laying on of hands was for the recovery of sight. Healing was often accompanied by the laying on of hands (Luke 4:40; Mark 6:5; 16:18). Ananias was therefore probably exercising the gift of healing. (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9).

“and be filled with the Holy Spirit”.

This is the *only* one of the three records in which the laying on of Ananias’ hands is associated with the reception of the Holy Spirit.

It is important to realize how significant this is, for in 2 Cor. 12:12, Paul substantiates his apostleship upon the ability to perform signs and wonders using the Holy Spirit gifts. In 1 Cor. 9:2₁ he states effectively that the fact that the Corinthians had the gifts was evidence that he was an Apostle because he gave the gifts to them. The basis of the bestowal of the gifts has already been established₂. It could be direct from heaven or indirectly through the hands of an Apostle. However, the person who received the gifts from an Apostle could not in turn pass them on. With this principle in mind, we can appreciate Paul’s comments in Gal. 1:1, 11-12. He clearly emphasizes that he was an Apostle through Jesus Christ, and God the Father - and not of (DIA) or from (APO) man. It is significant therefore that in the three records, the role of Ananias in relation to the bestowal of the Holy Spirit is played down. Also, there is no mention here of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as for example in 10:44; 19:6. The writer of Acts is, therefore, not intending to convey the idea that the Holy Spirit was transferred by an unknown Ananias. Such a role was Christ’s alone.

What then was the role of Ananias? It is clear that he was associated with the reception of the Holy Spirit as this verse clearly implies it. The answer is that the power was not transferred from Ananias but came direct from the Lord in heaven as in the case of the other 12 Apostles.

A comparable event: At the baptism of Christ by John, the Holy Spirit came independently of John (Matt. 3:13-17).

¹ see notes there.

² see Section B - “Bestowal of the gifts”.

“So the ecclesia throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord.”

Edification occurred by the operation of the gift of prophecy. (1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4: 11,12). “Fear of the Lord” may refer to the result of the miracle of judgement (Acts 5:1-9).

“and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit” ...

Comfort (or consolatory exhortation) was made possible through the revelations given by those who had the gift of prophecy. This comfort (*paraklesis*) is a cognate with *Parakletos*₁ (Comforter, AV) of John 14-16.

Pentecost of the Gentiles

10:44 *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening”....*

Cornelius was “a devout man and one that feared God...” (v.2). It must not, therefore, be assumed that the Spirit was given so that he could believe. The context says the very opposite. The Spirit gift of tongues was what “fell” on them. The reason is given in v.45.

v.45 *“All the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed”*
 “Circumcised” Jews did not expect the sharing of the promises with the Gentiles. The lesson had just been given to Peter through the vision and now the “circumcised”, (along with Peter) were shocked by what they heard. They would be converted Jews after that.

“because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also”.

This had been stated many times but the Jews found it difficult to accept.

v.47 *“Surely no one can refuse water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we”*

The “we” possibly included six brethren who were accompanying Peter (Acts 11:12) but more likely it refers to Jews in contrast to Gentiles.

This miraculous manifestation was obvious to the circumcised that God had set His seal of approval on the Gentiles. It was bestowed before baptism to dispel any doubts. It was a sign given in most unusual circumstances for the Holy Spirit usually came upon baptized believers.

11:12 *“And the Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings.”* (cf. 8:29; 10:19.)

Through the gift of prophecy this revelation was made to Peter.

v.15 *“... the Holy Spirit fell upon them”* (cf. 10:44).

The word “fell” indicated the origin of the gift of tongues. It was from above.

¹ see Section F - Word Studies.

² see notes at Acts 2:4 - “filled”.

“just as upon us at the beginning” The gift was the ability to speak in foreign languages just as it had been earlier at Pentecost. The “us” refers to Jews.

v. 16 *“you shall be baptized”*

It is true that baptized is used here but this is a quote from chapter 1:5. This does not, therefore, negate the point already made on “pleroo”.²

“with the Holy Spirit”

These are the words of Jesus before his ascension. The “filling with the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2 was a fulfillment of that promise but here again was another manifestation of it. This being the case, Jesus’ words must have applied to Gentiles as well as to Jewish believers.

v. 17 *“If God therefore gave to them the same gift”* (cf. 15:8)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female” but all are one in Christ Jesus.

“as to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ”

It was therefore, not the Holy Spirit which caused the change of heart in the disciples. It was the resurrection. The state of acceptability rests on belief on the Lord Jesus Christ not on circumcision.

13:4 *“so being sent out by the Holy Spirit”*.

The revelation (v. 2) would have to come through one of the prophets (v. 1). Here was a special commission to “proclaim the word of God” (v. 5) to the Gentiles. It was therefore the Divine Will that Barnabas and Saul were to do this work.

v. 52 *“And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”*

Persecution brings joy in most cases. (Matt. 5:12). The messages of edification given by Paul and Barnabas through the gifts of the Spirit would have added to the disciples’ joy (converts, NEB) joy. (cf. also 1 Thess. 1:6). If we adopt the inference of the NEB (i.e. converts) the problem is virtually removed. They would have been filled with joy because of what they heard.

“When the Gentiles heard this, they were (overjoyed, NEB) glad”.

Because they believed and became converts, they would have received the Holy Spirit gifts, as promised in 2:38, 39. We must not, however, assume the joy came directly by receipt of the Spirit. Rather it developed within them from what they heard proclaimed by the Apostles.

15:9 *“He made no distinction between us and them”*- Jews and Gentiles.

“cleansing their hearts by faith”

(cf. 10:15, 43 not directly but indirectly). Cornelius was one who feared God (10:2).

“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”. (Rom. 10:17). God arranged circumstances so that Cornelius heard the gospel. The hearing produced faith and that in turn caused repentance. Because of this repentance they were baptized (10:48). Thus God imputed righteousness to them; therefore their hearts were cleansed. The whole operation was of God, but indirectly through the gospel.

“... *the Spirit of Jesus, did not permit them;*”

We cannot be conclusive as to how this message came. Paul had the gift of prophecy (1 Thess. 1:5) and this revelation would probably have come via that gift or through another prophet (15:32). The purpose of this revelation is seen in v. 9. Christ had work for Paul in Macedonia and Achaia. Notice that in *this* case “Spirit of Jesus” is equal to “the Holy Spirit” of v. 6.

v.14 “*The Lord opened her heart.*”

PROBLEM

Surely, here is evidence of the Holy Spirit causing enlightenment of Lydia’s mind to the Gospel.

SOLUTION

1. Those who argue for present possession argue that:
 - a) enlightenment is a direct result of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) “all you have to do is open your heart and be led”.
 As can be seen below this is not what happened at all.
2.
 - a) The opening did not cause the enlightenment. Rather the opening was so that she could be enlightened by the **words** of Paul.
 - b) Note that it was not Lydia who opened her heart but that it was the Lord who did the opening².
3. God, through acts of providence, calls many to His way. God was at this time opening the door of faith unto the Gentiles³. No one, however, comes to an understanding of the Divine plan without giving attention to the Word of God. This Lydia had done in that she was one “who worshipped God” and “she attended unto the things spoken by Paul”.

v.16 “*a certain slave girl having*” a young damsel who was a slave.

“*a spirit of divination met us*” The margin gives us the meaning. “Python” was (in mythology) the name of a great dragon at Delphi. It was supposedly killed by Apollo who was given the title of “Pythius” and inherited its power to act as an oracle or prophet. Plutarch says that such “Pythons” were ventriloquists who had the power to cause an illusion of origin of voice. All this was akin to demon worship.

v.18 “*But Paul... said to the spirit*” This is Luke’s record. He was a doctor and would be interested in her mental condition. Modern medical science knows that there was no evil spirit in the girl but the people of Paul’s day did not know this. Therefore they wrote in the language of the day.

¹ The words “of Jesus” are indicated by most translations and by NEST.

² The fact that Lydia is specially mentioned would seem to indicate that this was an exceptional case. The text in no way suggests that the direct action of the Holy Spirit was the necessary means by which Lydia’s heart was opened. The decision whether to believe or reject what she heard was entirely Lydia’s own. The message of the Word, first dimly in the Law (Rom. 2:15), and then, supremely, in the Gospel preached by Paul, combined with the “ways of providence”, were the means by which Lydia was brought to baptism. (cf. also Acts 26:18; 28:27).

³ Acts 14:27.

“I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!”
i.e. “Disable this power of ventriloquism”.

“and it came out at that very moment” i.e. “it was disabled”. This ability ceased. The words “came out” only mean the condition ceased.

18:5 *“Paul was pressed in the spirit.”* (AV)
“Paul began devoting himself completely to the word” (NASB). It seems that the meaning is that Paul was encouraged by the coming of helpers Silas and Timothy. It was a stimulus that increased his zeal. “Spirit” here means mental attitude.

19:2 *‘Paul said to them’* (disciples at Ephesus) *“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when (since, AV) you believed?”* These men were ignorant as to the True Baptism. (v. 3 cf. v. 5). The Holy Spirit refers to the gifts of the Spirit and in particular tongues (v. 6), and prophecy. Ephesus was a cosmopolitan city and the many nations who were represented there would require the gift of tongues if all were to hear the gospel. This is the last mention of tongues in Acts.

Paul’s question indicated that he expected that they would have the Spirit gifts. (cf. Acts 2:38, 39). You will observe that Paul did not say, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit to enable you to believe”.

This demonstrates that men are capable of belief of the truth without being endued with something they call “Holy Spirit”. (cf. also John 7:38, 39.)

‘And they said to him “No, we have not even heard whether the Holy Spirit has been given”’. The similarity between these disciples and Apollos’ indicates the possibility that the twelve were disciples of Apollos.

20:22 *“And now, behold, bound in the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem”*
Paul felt that his going to Jerusalem was in God’s Plan and Purpose and that nothing he could do could prevent his getting to Jerusalem. Just as he had on a former occasion been prevented by the Spirit power of God from going to Asia, so now he was prevented again because it was in the Divine purpose that he should go to Jerusalem.

v.23 *...“the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me”*

As Paul went from city to city, he received knowledge by the Holy Spirit Power (through the gift of prophecy?) that he could expect afflictions in Judea.

v.28 *“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers”*: “overseers” = *episkopous* = bishops.

This term refers to the elders (or arranging brethren) cf. v. 17.

‘Following direct apostolic teaching, the exercise of the early special gifts of the Spirit were expected gradually to give way to the constant manifestation of its fruits. The early ministers of the Word of life, apostles, prophets and teachers, were to yield, clearly with apostolic sanction and active direction, to the more permanent ministry of overseeing elders (bishops) and deacons. That bishops and deacons were the responsible serving brethren of the ecclesias in the second half of the first century is attested by Scripture and non-canonical documents¹’..

¹ NFCE, P. 94.

“They kept telling Paul through¹ the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem” (cf. v. 10-14). The apparent contradictions between the words of the Spirit here with the urging of the Spirit telling him to go to Jerusalem, is explained by the fact that the words of the disciples here were warnings of the dangers which lay ahead and were not specific instructions to Paul not to go. This interpretation is supported by comparing v. 11:

“Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle...”

with v. 12:

“And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem”.

By means of the Holy Spirit, they could foresee the troubles that would come upon Paul and, therefore, urged him to stay away from Jerusalem.

23:8 “For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection”.

They had no need of resurrection because they believed in the supposed immortality of the soul. They followed Plato in this view.

“nor an angel” The existence of God’s immortal angels is so obvious from a study of Scripture that it requires no proof here.²

“nor a spirit” Because the Pharisees confessed to believe that a “a spirit or an angel” (note the **singular**, v. 9) might have spoken to Paul does not prove the claim of most false religions that this “spirit” was a departed human spirit or soul. Far from it. This singular “spirit” whom the Pharisees conceded **might** have spoken to the Apostle was really the **resurrected** and corporeal [see John 20:25-27] Jesus (the cause of the Sanhedrin’s dilemma), though they were not prepared to admit it. Note Paul’s dramatic testimony on the previous day that they would have heard:

“And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest” (Acts 22:7, 8). “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening (“live-giving”, NASB) **spirit**” (1 Cor. 15:45).

So the simple fact is that the Sadducees did not believe in something that was real, while their opposition, the Pharisees, believed in something that was real, though they were not prepared to admit that the “spirit” who had spoken to Paul was in fact their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. That is why they used the slightly ambiguous word. But Paul’s use of the same word in 1 Cor. 15:45 causes the word to lose its ambiguity in this context.

v.9 “... Suppose a Spirit or an angel has spoken to him?”

“Spirit” and “angel” are explained in v. 8.

¹ NASB mg. has “because of impressions made by the Spirit”.

² For more details see J. Luke, *Angels of God*, CSSS, 85 Suffolk Road, Hawthorndene, South Australia 5051

THE SPIRIT IN ROMANS

'Flesh' and 'spirit' are used by Paul with the following general meanings:

FLESH is not primarily the natural physical being inherited from Adam but the state of mind of men unguided by God's Word. Not even descent from David or circumcision can profit those with this mind.

SPIRIT is not a divine unspoken moral influence descending from God, but the state of mind of men guided by God's Word which results in the resurrection - birth of a Spirit creature who is in all ways a son of God. It also does *not* stand for the power of God.

Significantly "Holy Spirit" (*pneuma hagion*) does not occur between chapter 5:5 and 9:1. Yet *pneuma* without the adjective occurs 23 times between these two verses and these 3 chapters (6, 7, 8) are the three "conversion"¹ chapters. This fact in itself is a powerful blow to the popular idea that the Holy Spirit, independently of its operation through the "Word of the gospel", is directly involved in the process of conversion. There is clearly a divine selection of terms used in Romans on the subject of the Spirit. It seems clear that in the context of the Epistle as a whole, "spirit" carries a meaning(s) different from "Holy Spirit" which is consistently used with reference to the miraculous power of God².

1:4 *"declared the Son of God with power according to (the) spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead:"*

It was because of his holy character ("the Spirit of Christ") that the Father raised Jesus from the dead and thereby attested again to Christ being His Son. There are similar terms to "a spirit of holiness" in the Bible:

i.e. spirit of fear	(2 Tim. 1:7)	patient in spirit	(Ecc. 7:8)
spirit of meekness	(1 Cor. 4:21)	faithful spirit	(Prov. 11:13).
poor in spirit	(Matt. 5:3)		

v.9 *"God...whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son."*

In Acts 19:21 Paul "purposed in the spirit" to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." The question arises as to whether it was only Paul by himself who intended to visit Rome, or whether he was simply recording here the instructions given him by Christ through the Holy Spirit. Verses 10 and 11 suggest that, whether or not he had received direct instructions from the Lord, his own desire was strongly in favor of the visit. Rom. 15:23 confirms this. Therefore "spirit" probably means "mind".

¹ See Section B "Conversion".

- Ch. 6 demonstrates how a believer enters into Christ.
- Ch. 8 shows how Christ enters the believer.
- Ch. 7 is autobiographical and the apostle discusses with frankness the inner struggle he has had between the innate propensity to sin and the new man which longed to "perform that which is good". This struggle continued in spite of his conversion and his possession of the Holy Spirit!

This is devastating evidence for those who refuse to acknowledge that the motions of sin continue to be active within the minds of the converted. cf. also Gal. 5:17. Whatever the interpretation of "spirit" in these chapters it is something which also requires a life long struggle against sin.

² quoted largely from TEST. Vol. 44, P. 151.

v. 11 *“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift”*

Although the Roman ecclesia had several gifts (Chap. 12), they obviously lacked in some gift; otherwise Paul would not have made this statement. The Romans had probably received these gifts on trips to Jerusalem. One of the main purposes of the gifts was to make the infant ecclesia mature through such gifts as “wisdom”, “knowledge” and “prophecy”. This longing of Paul’s, then, was much more than the desire to enable them to “work a few miracles”. His purpose is stated in the next phrase.

“to the end that ye maybe established” (see Eph. 4:13) This statement suggests that Paul wished to impart the better gifts such as wisdom and prophecy.

v.16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ¹: for it is the power² of God unto salvation.”*

This statement is only half understood by Christianity. To them the “gospel” is the good news of Christ’s redemptive work of salvation from sin. The “power of God” is transferred by them from the gospel itself to mean the direct action of God on the heart by the Holy Spirit.

The true gospel is, of course, the GOSPEL of the KINGDOM. This was what Christ and Paul preached (v. 15). To see it as anything else is a gross distortion of the context and of Bible truth.

The reason that the gospel is powerful is stated:

“for God’s righteousness is revealed in it.”

2:29 *“But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart”* The real purpose of circumcision was to indicate a cutting off of fleshly thinking, so that the heart became filled with spiritual things.

“in the spirit” Those who cut off fleshly thinking had carried out the spirit or inner meaning of circumcision and were regarded as circumcised (v. 26). These would judge those whose circumcision was only outward in the flesh (v. 27, 28). These obeyed the commandments, though they did not keep the ritual.

“not in the letter”

Those who obeyed the letter (ritual) by being physically circumcised but who did not keep the real meaning (commandments) of the law were not Jews (v. 27).

The contrast is not between the Holy Spirit and the Bible!

5:5 *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes used to show that the Holy Spirit is a present possession and that it is by that means that we can have the love of God and grace in our hearts†.

¹ “of Christ” is not in the best texts.

² Dynamis is inherent power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature.

† cf. Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness”.

SOLUTION:

1. Once the correct tense is substituted, the problem is removed. The tense is aorist₂ and should be translated “has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.” (RSV)
Therefore this verse refers to the Holy Spirit being in the Romans and Paul and it must be admitted that this had reference only to the first century and cannot be made to apply to us₃.
2. What was the love of God? It was the providing of a means of reconciliation (in the sacrifice of His Son). It is extremely dangerous to equate the Spirit of God only with the love of God. The Spirit is also involved in wrath, death and destruction.
3. How had it been shed abroad? “By revelation” “unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit”. Eph. 3:2 - 5.

NOTES:

“*ashamed*” = *Grk. kataischuno* and is the same word as in the LXX of Joel 2:26 and 27₄ (which introduces the *pouring out*). It can be clearly seen that Paul is alluding to Joel here. Whether in the sphere of creation, redemption or judgement, the Spirit is God in action. The Spirit provided the means for love (i.e. the message) and revealed God’s love but was not in itself a sanctifying influence.

“*has been poured*” (RSV)

“poured” is the same word as in Acts 2:18, 33 and looks back to Pentecost and Joel’s prophecy, which refer to miraculous gifts including tongues and prophecy.

“*into our hearts*” - not directly by thinking into the brain. The Gospel of the love of God in Christ had been imparted by the ministry of the Spirit gifts. This love had flooded the hearts of Paul and his readers.

“*by the Holy Spirit*”

Both this verse and 9:1 clearly use “Holy Spirit” with reference to the supernatural gift. Probably this had reference to the “gift of prophecy” or “knowledge”.

“*which has been given to us*” It was not a subjective thing but one for which there was concrete evidence. It was because the gifts had been given, that revelation occurred. It would not have occurred if they had not “been given” the Holy Spirit.

v. 15, 17

“*The grace of God, and the gift of grace₅ which is by one man, Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many.*”

“*For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ*”.

² Romans, EXPO, P. 624 and RV.

³ cf. notes on v. 15, 17.

⁴ Concordance of the Septuagint (London: Bagster, 1971). P. 129.

⁵ See Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness.”

PROBLEM:

Verse 5 is linked with verse 15, 17. Once this is achieved, it is then proclaimed that the real purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not to perform miracles but to work an inner righteousness, in the heart of the believer².

SOLUTION:

1. The gift of righteousness is something that is imputed, not something actual (cf. Rom. 4:6). Also the gift of righteousness was **not** one of the gifts of the Spirit and is never described as such.
2. This aspect of the grace³ of God is the forgiveness of sins⁴ as must be evident upon a straight through reading of this chapter in another translation. Paul is talking about the sacrifice of Christ, (v. 18) and how we can have access to God to obtain forgiveness, v. 2. He most certainly is not describing the entrance of theological 'grace' or the imposing of 'righteousness' in the heart of the believer.
3. Paul is contrasting:
the sin of Adam (which caused death) with the sacrifices of Christ (which brought forgiveness and opened the way to life.)

ADAM	CHRIST
v.12 "sin came into the world through one man and death by sin."	v.10 "We were reconciled to God by death of His Son."
v.15 "Many died through one man's trespass."	v.15 "the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. The NEB is clearer "Its effect (Adam's sin) is vastly exceeded by the grace of God (in providing the sacrifice) and the gift (forgiveness) that came to so many by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ."
v.16 "the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation."	v.16 "the free gift following many transgressions brings justification."
v. 17 "death reigned through that one man."	v.17 "Those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness (will) reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."
v.18 "one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men."	v.18 "one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men." (RSV)

¹ See Section B - "Did Not Cause Righteousness."

² cf. TBSM, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit, Vol. 1, P. 69.

³ see Section B - "Grace, Solution 1 c".

⁴ a) "We are now justified by his blood" (i.e. sins forgiven at baptism).

b) "Much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God" (i.e. by Christ acting as a mediator we obtain forgiveness after baptism - if we ask for and mean it.)

It is a gross distortion of facts to make this grace refer to “more private and personal influences” of the Holy Spirit. Is the Atonement of Christ to be further distorted by those who ought to know better?

4. The Holy Spirit was the medium through which:
 - a) Christ was raised making possible this forgiveness.
 - b) this forgiveness was revealed by Paul to the Romans.

The love of God or the gospel (in providing a way of forgiveness) was shed abroad so that it filled the hearts of the believers. This revelation of God’s love was revealed by the Holy Spirit which was given unto us (Paul). V. 6 was a demonstration of what the Holy Spirit had revealed to Paul. Paul in turn revealed this love of God to the Romans.

7:6 *“But now we have been released from the Law... so that we serve in newness of the spirit”*. (cf. Rom. 2:29).

“Spirit” here has the same meaning as in chapter 8; “the new life in Christ” which operated on the basis of faith.

“and not in oldness of the letter”

This was the Jewish concept with the mind fixed on the literal observances of the but without recognition of the “spirit” and truth represented therein.

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

PROBLEM:

‘...it seems to me certain that the Spirit throughout is the Spirit of God, God’s active strengthening help in the outworking of the Christian life. Such passages as, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”, do not in my view, say that we must have the disposition of Christ. They tell us that if Christ does not in some real sense dwell in us by the Spirit, we are not his disciples¹.’

SOLUTION:

The whole chapter is a discussion of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. In verse 9 Paul says, “Ye are not in the flesh.” But we definitely are! He also says we are “in the spirit” which we are not! Evidently, then, he is using “flesh”, and “spirit” in a figurative way².

‘If we interpret the Spirit of God as a reference to a divine power bestowed by God directing us, as the Spirit was bestowed in the first century, then the moral issues which Paul is emphasizing are lost, and salvation then depends upon the divine gift of the spirit; and since that gift is dependent upon God’s will, its absence could not be in any wise a condition of blame. To grow God-like a man must be a diligent disciple, giving attentive ear to the divine counsel, and then being a “doer of the word”. But if we identify the Spirit with a power which the first century Christians allegedly had, making that power “the Spirit of Christ”

¹ TCM, Vol. 96, P. 167.

² J. S. Thomas, TEST, (1954), P. 369. Although the word “spirit” is usually printed with a capital, is it not evident that the very antithetical form of Paul’s statement requires that if we print “Spirit” we should also print “Flesh”? The words “flesh” and “spirit” are contrasted, being used as synonyms for the two classes of terms at the close of Chapter 7, and clearly meaning all that is summed up in the phrases “the old man” and the “new man”. (TCM, Vol. 63, P. 253).

and “Christ in them”, we reduce the divine dealings with men to something akin to a non-moral activity, in which salvation results from an operation almost like a magical process. The plane of activity, however, is moral and religious - “He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:8)[†]

CONTRASTING TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE THE DUALITY IN A PERSON	
The old way of thinking	The new mode of thinking and feeling created in a believer by the gospel.
sin that dwelleth in me the law, that evil is present with me	a clean heart and right spirit a new spirit a new creature
me, that is my flesh a different law in my members the law of sin in my members	heart of flesh the inward man the new man created in righteousness and true holiness
the old man	renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him.
flesh	the hidden man of the heart spirit

v. 1 “Who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”

The RV with all modern editors of the Greek text omit this phrase. It would, therefore, seem to be a gloss from verse 4.

v.2 “For the law of the Spirit of life”

“For the new spiritual principle of life” (Phi)

This phrase should be compared with: and contrasted with:

“the law of God” (7:22,25)

“the law of sin” (7:23, 25; 8:2)

“the law of my mind” (7:23)

“another law in my members” (7:23)

The Holy Spirit through Paul defines its own terms in Romans. At Romans 8:2 Paul writes:

“For the law of the spirit (of life in Christ Jesus) hath made me free”.

The words bracketed are intended to define the word “spirit”, so that each time it is used in the same grammatical construction it will stand for “life in Christ Jesus”. It does not refer to a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Law here has the meaning of “operation, procedure, a principle¹ or conduct”. The “principle” of the Spirit or the gospel was revealed through the apostles and prophets by His Spirit.

[†] TCM, John Carter, Vol. 92, P. 366.

¹ It is translated as “principle” in NASB, NEB and KNOX in 7:20, 21. It is not comparing the ‘Law’ of Moses with the teaching of Christ, but natural thinking with spiritual.

“When the knowledge of that purpose and will of God finds an entrance into a person’s mind, the new mode of thinking, by metonymy might be called the spirit”.² “While obeyed, it confers a right to eternal life.”³ “The law of the Spirit is the regulative influence of the word”⁴ (cf. John 6:63). The words have nothing to do with “the present possession of the Spirit.”⁵

v.4 *“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”* (RV)

The words flesh and spirit are contrasting terms and are used antithetically.⁶ The ‘flesh’ is the name for the ‘old man’, the ‘spirit’ for the ‘new man’. The existence of the gospel is due to God directing the prophets to speak and write as they were moved by the Spirit. “Therefore that which is begotten by the Spirit-word can very fittingly be called ‘spirit’”⁷.

‘The context always helps fix the meanings of the words used ... As “flesh” does not describe the material body, but denotes the thoughts and ways in which flesh expresses itself, so “spirit” indicates the mental and moral development which has its ultimate source in God, who is Spirit, and who has revealed His purpose by His power, which is also called Spirit.’⁸

The words do *not* mean that there is a present indwelling of the Spirits: They mean a new way of thinking.

v. 5 *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the spirits.”* (RV)

“and people who are controlled by the spiritual think of what is spiritual” (GSPD). “spiritual things” (CON, MON)

Those governed by fleshly thinking follow slavishly its dictates but those governed by the Word - the “Spirit” being put for its product (“they that are after the Spirit”) seek to imbibe and reflect the principles it reveals (“the things of the Spirit”)¹⁰.

The “things of the Spirit” relate to the words of Jesus (John 6:63). It could also refer to the virtues mentioned in Gal. 5:22-23. A person following the word, will build these characteristics into his life.

v. 6 *“For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace.”* (RV)
“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (AV)

The carnal mind is the natural thinking of the flesh which is not illuminated by the revelation of God. The mind of the spirit obviously refers not to the indwelling of the spirit but to the mind or way of thought created by the action of the gospel on a receptive mind.

“The Bible is designed not so much to convey information as to change us by the power of its influence.”¹¹

² CLTR, P. 82

³ Elpis Israel, P. 89

⁴ LOGOS, Vol. 32, P. 143.

⁵ cf. Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness.”

⁶ refer to the preceding table of contrasting terms

⁷ CLTR, P. 85

⁸ IBID, P. 86.

⁹ see notes on v. 4

¹⁰ SPER, P. 30.

¹¹ LOGOS, Vol. 32, P. 181

v. 9 *“But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.”* (RV) The obvious similarity in meaning of the three expressions “Spirit of God” “Spirit of Christ” and “Christ in you” show that there is no need to retain the capital. The word is used in a similar sense to the verses preceding where the RV removes the capital. It is obvious that Christ cannot literally be in us just as it is obvious that we do not presently possess the Spirit in any form.

The absence of the article suggests that “of God” and “of Christ” are genitives of character and if translated as adjectives, as Bullinger suggests, would introduce no ambiguity: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that a divine (Godlike) spirit dwelleth in you. But if any man have not a Christ-like spirit he is none of his”.¹³

“There is no point of identity of a man with Christ if the man does not share Christ’s thinking.”¹⁴ *“Let this mind (attitude) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 2:5). Paul contrasted the “spirit of man” (the natural thinking of the flesh) with the “Spirit of God” (or the mind induced by embracing the truth) and he wrote

“You have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God”
(1 Cor. 2:11-12).

PROBLEM:

This verse is cited to prove the need for the present possession of the Spirit before we can belong to Christ. This is received when you have an ‘experience and accept Jesus as your personal saviour’.

SOLUTION:

1. The above claim fails to harmonize the events that happened at Samaria (Acts 8:12-18). Here we have the record of some who believed and were baptized. They did not have the Holy Spirit until Peter and John came down and bestowed it upon them by the laying on of their hands. It cannot be said that these baptized believers did not belong to Christ until they received the Holy Spirit. Of course they were his, and the Holy Spirit was then given to make them powerful workers for Christ.
2. Simon, a baptized believer, and an associate of Philip was rebuked severely because his desire to possess the Holy Spirit was so strong that he offered the disciples money to receive it.
3. Paul certainly had an experience with Jesus on the road to Damascus. But it still required that his sins be washed away in baptism-. Therefore, to have an experience or to have the Holy Spirit act upon a person is still not enough.
4. The verse, therefore, cannot refer to the Holy Spirit. It refers rather to the mental and moral attitude of a person developed by an assimilation of the word* of God.

¹³ CLTR, P. 87

¹⁴ SPER, P. 30, “The disposition of the great Exemplar” TCM, Vol. 60, P. 8.

† Acts 22:10, 16

* See table on next page.

5. If the word of God dwells in us, so that we know it and obey it, it is equivalent to Christ in our hearts which is another way of saying we have the mind of Christ, and therefore the mind of the Spirit, or the mind of God.

v.10 *“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*

Note the shift in words. Paul makes the contrast not between “flesh” and “spirit” but “body” and spirit. This takes us back to Chap. 7:23 where Paul describes himself as two parts: “my members” in which dwell sin; and “my mind” in which dwells the law of God. In his body he is still in the grip of sin and death: but his spirit (of life in Christ) assures him of life through righteousness.

The body is dead because “I am crucified with Christ¹⁵”.

The “Spirit is life” in the sense that “Christ liveth in me”.¹⁵

The “of righteousness” may refer to that righteousness of Christ or it may refer to that imputed righteousness in the sense of the NEB “because you have been justified”. (cf. Rom. 5:17, 18). The Spirit again refers to a *state of mind*. This “new man” is destined to life eternal.

v.11 *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”*

“Spirit of him” = intention or attitude of God’s mind. In us, the Word produces it. The idea is the same as that of verse 6. In these verses the Apostle is not speaking of the effluence of the spirit but of an attitude conceived by the word (which was given by God through the Spirit).

“by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” Some ancient manuscripts read “because of”¹⁶ instead of “by”. The idea would be that we would be quickened “because of the mind induced in us by the Spirit word; i.e. What was worthy of perpetuation on His own Son will likewise be perpetuated in us if it exists in us.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Gal. 2:20 cf. Romans 6:11.

¹⁶ Gr. “*dia*” +accusative. See AV margin and American Bible Union Version. If a person had the Holy Spirit, this did not guarantee salvation.

¹⁷ SPER, P.31 cf. Rom. 6:8.

*This is evident from the contrast below:

Flesh		Spirit	
7:23	“a different law in my members”	7:22	“law of God in the inner man.”
	“law of sin which is in my members”	:23	“law of my mind.”
:25	“with my flesh the law of sin.”	:25	“I myself with my mind am serving the law of God.”
8:5	“set their minds on the things of the flesh.”	8:5	“the things of the Spirit.”
:6	“the mind set on the flesh is death”	:6	“the mind set on the Spirit (AV “to be spiritually minded”)
:7	“hostile toward God”		is life and peace.”
:8	“cannot please God.”		

The two phrases as seen by the contrast above, are not a description of the absence or presence of God’s Holy Spirit but of walking in God’s laws and allowing it to mould our lives.

Man’s natural state is the thinking and acting of the flesh, but when the word enters our minds and we allow it to do something then we become spiritually minded (cf. Romans 8:2)

This stage of argument had already been anticipated by Paul's reference to the example of Christ at 1:4. The believer may also have his mortal body quickened, if he has made the effort to develop in himself the same "spirit of holiness".

v. 13 *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit¹⁸ do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."*

We cannot of ourselves mortify the deeds of the body but the scriptures "are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). If we absorb and obey the Scriptures we can overcome. In plain language, old habits are overcome by the power of the new ideas. The result will be life. The Holy Spirit was never given for the personal benefit of the possessor so "Spirit" here cannot refer to the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost.

v. 14 *"for all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."*

This should not be confused with the possession of the Holy Spirit by the believer. It is the Spirit-word to which Paul is referring, and which is capable of transforming lives and revealing in sons of Adam the Divine likeness (John 17:17). "To be led by the spirit is the same as allowing the 'new man', which is 'after God renewed in knowledge', to direct life".¹⁹

v.15 *"For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba Father!"*

Anyone who is led by the transforming power of the word can turn to God and cry "Abba, Father". He is dominated, disciplined and guided by the Truth, and has become a child of God.

"Abba" is the Aramaic word for Father and "Pater" is the Greek word for Father thus expressing by its use that the family of God incorporates Gentiles as well as Jews. Abba is the first word a Jewish child learns to say and thus the word expresses intimate, personal love and trust that a child has in his parent. Pater is a more formal expression. It expresses the status and dignity that is due to the Head of the family. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child²⁰ (V). The spirit of adoption is only a tentative position that looks forward to the complete adoption:

"waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (v. 23). This tentative position is further described by Paul:

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love²¹ and of sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7).

¹⁸ The figure metonymy is employed. The cause is put for the result. "Spirit" is put for a spiritual mind.

¹⁹ CLTR, P.89.

²⁰ cf. LOGOS Vol. 23, P. 44.

²¹ cf. John 15:15 "I have called you friends".

Spirit in both cases in this verse means attitude or state of mind. The first refers to the attitude of those under the law.

v.16 *“The spirit itself”* The new man in Christ Jesus shares tenancy of the believer’s mind with “the flesh” described by Paul in 1 Cor. 2:11 as “the spirit of man, which is in him” and as “the spirit of the world” (v.12). “Spirit” in this phrase refers to “the life in Christ” as explained earlier. (cf. “spirit of adoption” (v.15). This is the result of the word understood and obeyed.

“beareth witness” The inner conflict produced by the two natures within the child of God, discussed at length by Paul in chapter 7 is in itself a “witness” that those who experience it are the children of God. Without the intrusion of “the Spirit of Christ” there would be no conflict. This idea is closely akin to that contained in 1 John 5:10:

“He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself”

“with our spirit” This refers to “the spirit of man” which is “the spirit of the world” (1 Cor.2:11,12). It is the “spirit of slavery leading to fear” (v. 15). This verse continues the thought of verse 15 where spirit is used in two different ways.

v.23 *“But also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the spirit”*

This is genitive of partition (TCM, 1926, P. 253) as when we say “half an apple”. The harvest will come when Christ comes. Spirit of course still has the same meaning that it does throughout chapters 6 - 8. Paul is here simply repeating the groan of 7:24.

Although “the Spirit”, “the mind of the Spirit”, “the Spirit of Christ” (by whatever term it is called) in Paul, and all other believers, is imperfectly developed, and still has to compete with “the flesh” for mastery, it is nevertheless comparable to firstfruits because it represents a beginning of that perfection of character that will eventually come with “the redemption of the body.” Any attempt to interpret “firstfruits” here as the miraculous Pentecostal gifts would involve a serious dislocation of thought within the context and would also disregard the otherwise consistent meaning of “Spirit” within Romans.

v.26 *“The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”.*

SOLUTION:

1. The very nature of the statement precludes the Holy Spirit being intended. Imagine the Spirit being in the predicament indicated by the words “groanings which cannot be uttered!” (cf. “all power is given unto me.”²²)
2. We know that in past ages God by his Spirit found very clear expression through the words and deeds of the prophets, and He has the same ability today.
3. The mistake is in supposing that it is God’s Spirit that supplicates. It is the spirit (mind) of the saint, which often fails to express itself properly. This can easily be seen by referring to verse 22 and 23. (“even we ourselves groan within ourselves”).

²² Matt. 28:18

4. “How fortunate for us, in our ignorance and weakness, that our heavenly Father accepts the *intention of our hearts* instead of our words.”²³
5. In any case the Spirit of God is a power and therefore cannot groan since groaning can only be attributed to a person.

NOTES:

“*Likewise*” - “*and in like manner*” (ASV)

“*In the same way*” (NASB)

This word links what Paul is going to say with what he has already said. Just as the hope of the redemption of the body enables us to endure the sufferings of the present time, so this new way of thinking enables us to pray without fear. “When we cannot see the solution to our problems, or our deep need, (born of a sense of unworthiness) makes words difficult to express, the mind that seeks refuge in the Father causes us to throw our burden upon Him in inarticulate groanings.”²⁴

“*the spirit*” - The previous notes and the context shows us that “spirit” here is synonymous with the new mode of thinking.

“*our infirmities*” The power of the truth enables one to derive strength to overcome the natural inability to approach God aright. It is us that

- a) has the infirmities
- b) know not what we should pray for
- c) as we ought
- d) groan (v. 23)

not the Holy Spirit or Christ!

“*spirit itself*”

Grk. neuter gender. The power of the truth believed. The new way of thinking.

“*maketh intercession*”

The word of God will help our weaknesses, will reveal what we should pray for and will produce in us groanings unutterable for even with the help of the spirit word, we find it impossible to give proper expression to our feelings.

Christ recognizes our new way of thinking and even though our prayer is inarticulate groans, He accepts this prayer because of this new thinking. John Carter paraphrases as follows:

“So also the new man helps us to bear our infirmity of the flesh; for we know not how to pray as we ought but the new man maketh intercession, approaching God in prayer with unutterable, inarticulate groanings.”²⁵

²³ TEST, C. M. Gwillian, “Groanings Which cannot be uttered”, 1955, P. 96. “The verses are dealing with what goes on in the believer’s mind (spirit). He prays to God not knowing what to ask for. Should he ask for the sufferings to be removed or should he ask for strength to endure? God knows what is going on in man’s troubled mind.” Leask, Romans p. 6.

²⁴ SPER, P. 33 cf. John 10:27; Matt. 26:39.

²⁵ TCM, Vol. 63, P. 254.

“*groanings*” - sighings. It is the saint who groans in anguished prayer cf. v. 23.

v.27 “*And he that searches the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*”

“*he*” - *Christ*. His ability is the same as the Father’s (cf. Matt. 6:8).

“*mind of the spirit*”

‘Christ knows the disposition induced by the Truth and is not deceived by mere pretence. The Apostle is reminding us that God is not moved by eloquent prayers, but by sincere and heartfelt prayer induced by the Truth²⁶.’ The spirit refers to the saint whose mind has been changed by the gospel to a new (spiritual) way of This phrase is the same in the Greek as “spiritually minded” at v. 6. (see RV).

This suggests that Paul’s reasoning is still moving within the same category of ideas. The Lord Jesus is the one who searches the hearts of the believer, as he told the Thyatiran ecclesia:

“*I am He who searches the minds (inner man) and hearts*”(Rev. 2:23).

He knows omnisciently the state of our minds, and is aware when we lapse into fleshly ways and foolishly drain ourselves of the “life of the Spirit”. It is then that he intercedes for saints who pray and holds up failing hands, as he did for Peter even before the apostle’s denial of him (Luke 22:31-32).

“*according to the will of God*”

Our prayers contain both acceptable and unacceptable requests and Christ acts as a monitor of these. Rev. 8:3 demonstrates that Christ (Rainbowed Angel) receives the prayer incense of the saints, and as he offers it up to God he *adds* “much incense” “to the prayers of all the saints”²⁷ so that those prayers are “according to the will of God”²⁸. In this way we can obey the injunction of Heb. 4:16.

9:1 “*I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit*”.

The NEB and TCNT have “enlightened by the Holy Spirit”. This is an obvious reference to the Spirit gifts.

11:8 “*God gave them a spirit of stupor*”

How often we find that the punishment God inflicts corresponds in its form to that mode of life which man has already chosen. Because the early Christians did not receive the love of the truth, God sent them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie (2 Thess. 2:10, 11). The words above are taken from Deut. 29:4 and Isa. 29:9,10. The second passage describes an intoxication caused by false doctrine. God had poured out upon them a spirit of deep sleep because the word of God was not opened and read. Those who close their minds to the truth of their closed Bibles and seek for “the Spirit” will likewise be confirmed in this drugged attitude of mind.

²⁶ LOGOS, Vol. 32, P. 255

²⁷ RV & NASB

²⁸ adapted from TEST, Vol. 44.

There is no need (or reason) to see this punishment as something that comes directly. Israel's mind became focussed on the details of the ritual observance of the sacrifices on "their table" (v. 9 cf. Mal. 1:7, 8) and so lost sight ("were blinded", v. 7) of the true meaning of the law.

Isa. 29:10 belongs to a context in which Israel is threatened by an Assyrian invasion, and the Prophet sees captivity as a judicial blindness sent by God upon those who had closed their own eyes to His light.

By quoting David, Paul affirms the justice of

- (i) giving darkness (captivity) to those who refuse light.
- (ii) making slaves of those who demanded justification by works (i.e. "bow down their back" v. 10).

14:17 *"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."*

Paul looks forward to the time after (v. 10) the judgement seat. Their concern for meats would not matter then. What Paul is saying is that the "weak" brother will not want to discuss food diet in the kingdom. The virtues that will endure into the kingdom are the true elemental food. These elements will be enjoyed with all the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit in a Spirit body.

Although we are not yet in the kingdom we must serve Christ in righteousness, peace and joy now if we are to be "acceptable to God" (v. 18). The words "in the Holy Spirit" do *not* suggest we must have this before we can have joy. We all can rejoice in what God has done and will do for us by His power.

15:13 *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."*

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes taken to mean that the Spirit dwells in us in some unnoticeable way and gives us hope, joy and peace.

SOLUTION:

1. A keyword to the correct understanding of this verse is the word "power". This power of the Spirit of God was the ability to work "mighty signs and wonders" (v. 19). Let those who cannot do such, cease to wrest this Scripture.
2. The believers¹ who saw such miracles as were wrought by the Apostles

¹ Those at Rome possessed the gifts as is evident from Chapter 12:6-8:

"Having then gifts ... whether prophecy ... or ministry ... or teaching ... or exhortation." (cf. Section B - "Grace" footnote 4.).

This, however, did not cause joy and peace. This is evident upon reading ch. 12: 9-13:14. Most of Paul's comments are showing how to live in peace:

"do not be haughty" (12:16).

"never pay back evil for evil" (12:17).

"be at peace with all men" (12:18). "never take your own revenge" (12:19).

“abounded in hope” because their hope rested on a strong foundation: the manifested power of God. This hope combined with right actions would give them joy and peace.

3. Since God was the source of this power then it is said that He filled them with joy and peace.
4. The possession of the Holy Spirit did not in itself cause joy and peace. This is evident from the previous footnote.

v. 15 *“I have written very boldly to you...because of the grace that was given me from God”.*

His object in writing so boldly in some parts of the letter, was to call to their remembrance the truth believed, and that because God had called him, he was the apostle to the Gentiles, not of his own choice, but of the grace¹ of God.

v. 16 *“ministering as a priest the gospel of God”*

Paul’s ministry was to preach the gospel (wherever directed by the Spirit) to counsel and to exhort the believers.

“that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit”.

Sanctified, that is, by the Holy Spirit in (or through) the message delivered unto them. It was not a direct action but indirect through the gospel.

v. 18,19 *“For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me... in the power of signs and wonders,”*

Christ gave Paul the Holy Spirit gifts. This enabled him to accomplish Christ’s purpose by word and work or to put it another way by preaching the gospel and working miracles.

“in the power of the Spirit”

This preaching with signs following (or preceding) was done “in the power of the Spirit”. Paul having all the gifts of the Spirit was thus fully equipped for the work of this ministry.

v.30 *“by the love of the Spirit”*

Spirit here has the meaning of the new life in Christ as in chapter 8. This new way of thinking provided the love that would cause them to fulfill Paul’s request.

¹ See Section B - “Grace”.

THE SPIRIT IN 1 CORINTHIANS

Like most of the ecclesias established in the first century, Corinth was established by the Apostle divinely commissioned to preach to the Gentiles¹ by a demonstration of the power of God. Thus the operation of the Spirit gifts was something that all at Corinth should have been familiar with from the foundation of the ecclesia. They should have understood clearly the source and purpose of the gifts as well as the added responsibility placed upon those who had them. To the Corinthians Paul was able to say that “ye come behind in no (spirit) gift”, but this did not prevent grave problems among them. Doubts were cast by some on the doctrine of the resurrection, there was drunkenness and gluttony at the Breaking of Bread service. This had invoked the judgement of God so that some had even died. There were other problems:

- (a) worship of leaders rather than of Christ (3:1-9). Those who had the office of governments (12:28) should have corrected the situation.
- (b) going to law before the unbeliever (6:1).
- (c) misuse of tongues (chap. 14).
- (d) sisters were prophesying in the ecclesia and were unveiled (ch. 11).
- (e) Judaizers had made inroads.

All of these problems had arisen within 25 years of Pentecost and within five² years of the establishment of the Corinthian ecclesia by Paul. Obviously the gifts of the Spirit had been misused or not used at all, otherwise the ecclesia would have been edified and been a “mature man” (cf. Eph. 4:12, 13).

Try to picture the situation that Paul had to deal with. He had taught them the truth, imparted to them the gifts of the Spirit and now they claimed that

- (a) his apostleship was self assumed (2 Cor. 3:1)
- (b) he exhibited insincerity of purpose (2 Cor. 1:12-24)
- (c) he lacked apostolic credentials (2 Cor. 3:1-3)
- (d) he embezzled ecclesial finances (2 Cor. 7:2).

What a terrible state of affairs in an ecclesia that was “not lacking in any gift”. This ecclesia shows beyond doubt that possession of even the best gifts did not guarantee a righteous ecclesia. However, things would have been worse had they not possessed the gifts as is evident from Paul’s statement

“*covet earnestly the best gifts*” (1 Cor. 12:31)

To seek the gifts today is to miss one of the primary messages of Corinthians. The gifts were temporary, childish things which only mirrored a dark image of the completed scriptures. The more excellent way was and is *agape*.

¹ He was “a chosen vessel” (Acts 9:15).

² Gallio’s proconsulship of Achaia (Acts 18:12-17) was AD 51-52 because of the inscription found at Delphi in 1905 (CBSC on the NEB P. 18, 19). The dispatch of 1 Corinthians is normally placed at about AD 54-55.

“for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;”
 “Grace” (Grk. *charis*) is probably a reference to the spirit gifts (cf. Eph. 3:2; 4:7) which follow immediately. We sometimes use *favour* for a disposition of the mind and sometimes for gifts. The latter seems to be demanded by the context.

“of God” indicates the source (cf. Rev. 1:1).

“is” should be *“was”* (NASB).

“by” should be *“in”* (RSV, MARS, NASB, MOFF, ROTH)

Paul renders thanks to God for those gifts which God had bestowed upon them through Paul₁ by virtue of their union with Christ. Paul is not saying that Christ gave the Corinthians these gifts directly as some would have us believe.

v. 5 *“that in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in”* *“by”* S/B *“in”* as in v. 4.

“utterance” probably referred to the gift of:

- a) tongues
- b) interpretation
- c) prophecy

and possibly to the offices of:

- a) prophets
- b) teachers but we cannot be sure of the exact category.

But of what value were these gifts if they contributed not to concord but discord and rivalry? V. 10 supplies the answer. Therefore Paul is thinking of the gifts themselves, rather than the use they had made of them.

“all knowledge”

This refers to the gift of knowledge and possibly the gift of wisdom.

v.7 *“So that ye come behind in no gift;”*

RSV has *“so that you are not lacking in any gift”* (cf. 1 Cor. 14:18). Chapters 12-14 are evidence of this statement by Paul.

“Awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ”

This probably is to be understood in the same way as 1 Cor. 14:26; 2 Cor. 12:1; Gal; 1:12, 16. The Corinthians were so preoccupied with their abuse of the gifts that probably they were unconcerned about the *return* of Christ.

2:4 *“And my speech₂ and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”*

Paul did not rely on his own skill in argument or persuasion. He demonstrated he had the Spirit. Let those who claim to have the Spirit demonstrate it in miracles.

“demonstration of the Spirit and of power” may mean *“demonstration by the power of the Spirit”* (NBCR). Note v. 5 which has *“power of God”*.

¹ See 1 Cor. 9:2. Evangelists, who were not Apostles, could have converted them but only an Apostle could bestow the Spirit gifts that the Corinthians had. (cf. 12:4-11).

² Greek *logos*. See Section F - WORD.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Paul was writing this section (ch. 1:17 - 2:16) to combat the inroads of ‘gnosis’ - the intellectual wisdom of the Greeks - into the Corinthian ecclesia. “Christ crucified... (was) unto the Greeks foolishness” and so they began to amend the gospel by saying such things as there was “no resurrection” (ch. 15).

- I. Therefore Paul writes this section with several main arguments:
 - A. the gospel is not wisdom of speech (1:17).
The Greek speaker was skilled in oratory and gave great eloquent dissertation. However, Greek orators were among those “that perish”.
 - B. this wisdom of the wise will be destroyed (1:19).
Since the *gospel is* foolishness to the wise of this world, they will perish along with their wise speeches.
 - C. “What have the philosophers... to show for all their wisdom?” (Phillips) (1:20)

The answer is nothing that is lasting. The Corinthians should not be caught up with this worldly cleverness since God will destroy it.
 - D. “God through the folly of what we preach (will) save those who believe.” (1:21) (RSV)

The Greeks may classify it as folly but it will give salvation.
 - E. “The foolishness of God is wiser than men.” (1:25)
 - F. “God has chosen the foolish” and “weak things of the world” to confound worldly wise. (1:27).
 - G. Yet those in Christ have been shown a wisdom that is from God. (1:30).
- II. Having laid the groundwork of his argument, Paul then adds to it.
 - A. He shows that his actions agree with his argument (v. 1- 4).

1. "I came not with excellency of speech" (v.1) agrees with point IA.
 2. "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (v. 2) agrees with I.B.
 3. The Greeks championed the Isthmian games and to admit weakness and fear was folly cf. I.E.
- B. He further contrasts Greek sophistry with the wisdom of God. (v.5-16).
1. Paul had demonstrated that his statements were true "*by spiritual power*", the Greeks merely said enticing words. (v. 4).
 2. It is reasonable that the Corinthians' faith should "rest" (RSV) in what has been demonstrated by the Spirit and not what is recognized as the "wisdom of men" (v. 5).
 3. Paul "speaks" or reveals this wisdom to those who are "the mature" (RSV v. 6). Yet this wisdom is not the same as the Greek's ("wisdom of this age") nor the same as the Jews' (wisdom "of the princes of this age") which comes to nought.
 4. The Greeks had many sorceries that had secrets, which were not revealed until a person had been initiated into them. They thrived on these mysteries. Paul shows that the gospel not only has a secret wisdom but it is also hidden and it was a much older wisdom.
"But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification" (v. 7 RSV).
 5. Indeed this wisdom is so hidden that "none of the rulers of this age" (v. 8 RSV) knew it. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Messiah.
 6. In fact, this wisdom is so secret and hidden that it is beyond the hearing, beyond the seeing and beyond the imagination of any human philosopher! (v. 9 of NEB) This wisdom is only prepared for those that *love* God.
 7. God had revealed these things firstly *to* the Apostles by His Spirit, (the "us" of v. 10 refers to the Apostles) and secondly by "the things also we (Apostles) speak". (v. 13).
The transmission of this divine revelation was achieved by that "which the Holy Spirit teacheth". It was the power of the Holy Spirit¹ through the Apostles² that conveyed the things of God to "them that love him".
 8. Paul gives an illustration of the meaning of "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The Spirit was the Holy Spirit that had been given to Paul and it enabled him to use Isa. 64:4 correctly. The "deep things" (v. 10) were the Old Testament mysteries that had not previously been explained.

¹ 1 Cor. 2:4, 13.

² In the Corinthians' case it was Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus (2 Cor. 1:19).

9. The Spirit of God not only had revealed to Paul the Old Testament but also “the things of God” (v. 11). Paul³ had not received that which revealed “the things of a man” since that was only the mind of the world (which would pass away) but he had received the Holy Spirit which enabled him to “know the things freely given to us of God.” (v. 12 NASB)
10. Once Paul knew these things he spoke them to others. Natural men would not receive the spoken word, for they were “foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned”. (v.14). This does not mean that those who discerned them must have the Spirit as a possession; it only means they must “love” God and “believe” him. (Ch. 2:9; 1:21). That is the mark of a spiritual man in contrast to a natural man (as contrasted throughout this passage).

The Spiritual man is one with the proper initial disposition of teachableness.

v.15 *“But he that is spiritual discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man.”*

PROBLEM:

1. Because there is no outward manifestation by those claiming present possession of the Holy Spirit, this verse is cited as proof, that it is there, only not discernable.”⁴
2. The AV has “is judged of no man.”
The person who does not wish to demonstrate his claim to possession of the Spirit hides behind this statement.

SOLUTION:

1. The immediate context (v. 16 and ch. 3:1) indicates that the mind is the subject of discussion.
“who hath known the mind of the Lord.”
In Rom. 8:6 Paul writes about the need to be “spiritually minded” and reminds us that to be “carnally minded is death.”
2. A. The AV margin (“he himself is discerned of no (natural) man”) is the preferred reading as is evident upon consultation of other versions⁵.

³ and Apostles.

⁴ cf. Notes on John 10:41 and Section B - “The Supposed difference between the Holy Spirit and Gifts of Holy Spirit”, which answers this problem.

⁵ cf. AV v. 14 “are spiritually discerned” (Gk. “Anakrino” to investigate (B)).

“but his own true value no unspiritual man can see” (GSPD).

“while he is properly valued by none” (BERK).

“although he himself is understood by no one” (TCNT).

- B. The plain teaching of scripture is that we are to “try the spirits” 1 John 4:1 because many false prophets⁶ are gone out into the world. Those enlightened by the word will judge the claims that are made.
- C. One of the Spirit gifts was “the discerning of Spirits”. This would enable the possessor of this gift to determine when the manifestation was of God or false. It is, therefore, IDLE to use the above verse as in Problem 2.

3:16 “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*”.

PROBLEM:

This verse is taken as evidence by those who claim they have the Spirit, “There can be no greater honour for us, yet it is something which we rarely care to call to mind. We can hardly expect to remain a tabernacle for the Spirit with such forgetfulness”⁷

SOLUTION:

1. The passage refers to the Corinthian ecclesia as a whole and not to each separate individual. Paul says:
 - A. “You are... God’s building”⁸ (v. 9).
 - B. “I... laid a foundation.”⁸ (v.10).
 - C. “Someone else is putting up the building” (temple) (v. 10 NEB).
 - D. “But let each man be careful how he builds.” (v. 11), because the day of judgement will reveal what sort of building materials the builder used.

He then says in effect:

If you do not build but destroy then you will
“be destroyed by God”

because

“the temple of God is holy” and you (the Corinthian ecclesia)
are “that temple”,

as must surely be evident to you since

“the Spirit of God dwells” with you. (i.e. in the form of Spirit gifts⁹.)

2. Paul uses similar language in 2 Cor. 6:16.
*‘For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM: AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”’*⁸

These words, which referred to the nation of Israel (and the way in which God dwelled with them through the Glory of the Mercy Seat); Paul now applies to the Ecclesia in Corinth.¹⁰ This concept, therefore, did not start at Pentecost; it belongs to previous ages.

⁶ This is emphasized many times in the NT:

2 Pet. 2:1 “there shall be false teachers among you.”

2 Thess. 2:2 Paul warns them against being misled “by word or by Spirit”.

1 Thess. 5:19-22 “Prove all things.”

2 Tim. 3:8 Paul’s words mean that errorists would imitate the Spirit gifts as the magicians did Moses’ signs.

Rev. 2:2 “Thou hast tried them that say they are Apostles, and are not. cf. also the false prophets and magicians of Old Test. times, Section E - “Prophets”.

⁷ ESSA, P.17 ⁸ NASB ⁹ “You are not lacking in any gift” (1 Cor. 1:7). ¹⁰ see 1Tim. 3:15.

3. The words of this verse do not require that “each believer₁₁ at Corinth had the Spirit.” They only require that some possessed the gifts.
4. This status did *not* cause righteousness as is clearly evident from v.3 “Ye are carnal”.

4:20 *“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”* The context determines the meaning. The “word” refers to the statements of those who had become arrogant (v. 19) and supported the actions of the man who practiced incest (5:1) by boasting (5:6) of their liberty as Christians. It does not refer to the written word (Bible) but to the talk (RSV) or speech (MARS) of an arrogant faction at Corinth. Those who attain the kingdom will do so not because of what they say but because of their deeds.

4:21 *“shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness?”*

“rod” probably refers to the miracle of judgement₁₂. Paul had the power and authority to inflict punishment in various ways (cf. Acts 5:1-10) Chapter 5:4, 5 proves this last statement.

“spirit” here means “attitude”.

The Corinthians were left with the choice of correcting their errors themselves or letting Paul do it when he came.

5:3 *“For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has committed this, as though I were present.”*

Paul called on the ecclesia to deal with the case of incest and gave instructions on how to proceed as though he were present among them.

“present in spirit”₁₃

This could mean “mind” or through one of the gifts of the Spirit. If it be the latter why was it necessary that someone report it to Paul? Col. 2:5 is evidence that although Paul was parted by physical distance still his mind or thoughts were with them.

v.4 *“In the name of our Lord Jesus”*

on behalf of, and with all the authority of their Lord present in their midst.

“when you are assembled”

Paul could have struck the man with a bodily disease from a distance. However to disfellowship a person required that the ecclesia be assembled with the person so that he would know that what was about to happen was a result of divine judgement. The assembly would be the majority of the ecclesia. (cf. 2 Cor. 2:6).

“my spirit” (AV, RV, MARS) “my spirit is present” (RSV)

It is difficult to decide the precise meaning of this phrase. Four combinations of these phrases are grammatically possible₁₄

¹¹ It would appear that all did, however. This is very strong evidence that no one possesses the Spirit today. The gifts were so widespread in the first century that the wild claims of so few today can be rejected on that basis alone.

¹² See Section D - “The Gift of Miracles” and 1 Cor. 11:30, 31.

¹³ It is interesting to note that the NASB translates *kardia* (heart) in 1 Thess. 2:17 by “spirit”. Heart is a figure of speech for thoughts.

¹⁴ EXP0, Vol. 2, P. 809.

Probably it refers to the Spirit gift Paul had which enabled him to work the miracle of judgement. By some extension of his gift, the sentence was inflicted by the power of Christ when the ecclesia made its pronouncement during its assembly. For this ecclesial authority see - Matt. 18:18 in NASB or MARS.

v.5 *“I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”*

The Apostles₁ could punish offenders through the miracle of judgement. This particular case involved disfellowship (v. 13) and the infliction of some bodily disease so that the person would realize his errors and seek reconciliation. This latter is required by the context because mere disfellowship would have only increased the flesh not destroyed it. Also it required the power of the Lord to accomplish it (v. 4). Paul’s reference to his physical disability as “a messenger of Satan” also gives warrant for this interpretation.

“Flesh” stands for the fleshly character or the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Paul wished to see this sinner become repentant so that he would have something worthy of perpetuation in immortality. We learn that the punishment had the desired effect, for in 2 Cor. 2:7, 8 the Apostle tells the brethren to forgive him that had sinned and comfort him. The reversal of the process described here is referred to in James 5:14-17 (which see).

6:11 *“You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God”*

PROBLEM:

These verses are cited to demonstrate present possession of the Holy Spirit₂

SOLUTION:

1. The Gospel understood, believed and obeyed was the means by which the Corinthians were drawn to God.
 “I planted”
 “I laid the foundation₃.”
2. There is no case in Scripture where an unbeliever is drawn to Christ by his receiving the Holy Spirit directly.
3. In the case of the Corinthians they were given the Holy Spirit after they had been drawn by the Spirit-given word (spoken by Paul₄). Justification is a process. The word must be sown. This seed must grow. Only at baptism is a person washed, sanctified and justified. The body becomes the tabernacle of the new thinking or of the Spiritual man. The new man of the Spirit comes to birth, and continues to grow through the knowledge of God, and this knowledge comes through reading or hearing the word. It is all the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the agent of revelation.
4. It is therefore, futile to say these Corinthians were justified because they possessed the Holy Spirit!

¹ cf. Acts 5:10; Acts 13:9,11; 2 Cor. 10:6; 13:2,10; 1 Tim. 1:20.

² TCM, Possession of the Holy Spirit, Vol. 70, P. 112.

³ 1 Cor. 3:6,10. (NASB).

⁴ “I laid the foundation” 1 Cor. 3:10, NASB.

v. 17 “*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*”

Those that through baptism had become members of the body of Christ had done so for the present and also for the future. Since their bodies belonged to the Lord, they should see the incongruity of also joining themselves to harlots. The Corinthians’ body was a temple of the Holy Spirit gifts (v. 19) then; and if they continued to develop their spiritual man, one day the earthen vessel would be raised up through His power and become a Spirit being just as the raised Lord then was. (v. 14). (cf. John 17:21) (1 Cor. 15:45).

The expression “one spirit” is chosen to correspond to the expression “one flesh”. With Christ the union is on the higher spiritual plane, but is just as real and close as the other.

V.19 “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?*”

1. It is the Holy Spirit that is referred to and it *did* reside in them. They had received it by the laying on of the Apostles hands. Although they had the gifts of knowledge, healing, tongues etc., Paul in this context (v. 13-16) had to rebuke them for gross immorality.
2. They were the temple¹ of the Holy Spirit both individually and collectively and they were able to demonstrate it by the exercise of the Spirit gifts they had, but we are *not* in that position are we?
3. Therefore, these allusions, are not “timeless” but were dated - very definitely.

v.20 “*... therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*”

“In your spirit which are God’s” is not found in the great majority of the oldest manuscripts and most editors omit them. Also they are not found in several of the ancient versions.

7:40 “*I think also that I have the Spirit of God*” Paul adds with a touch of irony ‘that I too’ (Gk.) can claim to have the “Spirit of God” as much as any of my opponents. The statement “I think” is not an expression of doubt as to whether he had the Spirit. (cf. 14:37). It is the language of modesty not of misgiving.

Paul was giving *his* judgement as *distinct from* the well known written judgement of the Lord Jesus on other matters.

¹ Paul speaks of the redeemed as “an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21).

1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

Paul had determined that the gifts which Christ had given to the Corinthians were proving to be a source of rivalry and dissension, and he now attempts to correct that situation by answering some questions put to him. While he had of necessity to deal with the operation of the divine gifts, in all their manifestations, his prime concern at Corinth was with only two - "tongues" and "prophecy". These two gifts had been mentioned by him earlier in the epistle and are included in the general term "utterance" (1 Cor. 1:4-5).

Of these two forms of utterance, it is evident that the Corinthians had a far greater interest in tongues than in prophecy. That which was useless in this gift - namely its noisiness and showiness - appealed most to the Corinthians. They liked this noise show much as children like these things, but they had failed to become mature by exercising the constructive gift of prophecy. He therefore exhorts them

"do not be children in your thinking... but... be mature" (1 Cor. 14:20, RSV).

In his opening remarks, Paul establishes two fundamentals that were to form the basis of his exposition:

- 1) whose Spirit it was - "Spirit of God" (v. 6).
- 2) the purpose of the gifts - "for the common good" (v.7), not for the gratification of ambition.

In enlarging upon the second point Paul uses the figure of the human body to parallel the ecclesial body. The Corinthians were not detached individuals with only themselves to think of - but were all constituent members of the body of Christ.

Paul proceeded to apply this truth to correct the false attitudes of two elements of the ecclesia: on the one hand those, who perhaps lacked a gift, felt left out ("I am not of the body") and those who just because they possessed a gift, disdained the former class ("I have no need of you").

By carefully listing the interactive functions of the various members of a physical body, he demonstrated the need for the ecclesia to function as a whole (cf. pain and honour v.26).

After listing the gifts and the inter-ecclesial offices (which would make them realize they were not the only ecclesia) he presses home a devastating fact: it was possible for them *even though they possessed no gift at all* to be better than the possessor of even the best. This would have been a stunning blow to the self-centred brethren at Corinth. To help drive home the point Paul proceeds to give a detailed exposition on *agape* that would have left no wrong doer untouched. To top it off he shows that the gifts were only temporary and could only be compared with immature people or incomplete understanding.

Lest they try to suppress the gifts altogether after his exposition, he tells them not to do that, but to realize which gifts were the most valuable and use those. Lastly he gives practical directions for the right employment of the gifts in question.

“*Now concerning spiritual gifts*” “spiritual” = Grk. *pneumatikos* - a word only used after Pentecost. It is used as a modifier and although “gifts” is not in the text, that seems to be meant¹. Marshall has “spiritual matters.”

The formula “now concerning” with which Paul opened his comments, informs us at once that he was furnishing answers to questions submitted to him (7:1). We can only surmise what these questions were.

“*I do not want you to be unaware*” Paul intended to eradicate the self-centred way in which the brethren were using these gifts to destroy the ecclesia.

The Corinthians knew from *their* pre-Christian experience the dangers of being led astray under undesirable and unprofitable means. He now reminds them of that time.

v.2 “*You know that when you were pagans*”

He states this so that the contrast with “brethren” might be made clearer. They were brethren, not pagans (Gentiles) he reminds them. Not all the ecclesia were Gentiles (cf. Acts 18:8, 13) so this must be understood as applying only to the Gentiles.

“*you were led astray to the dumb idols*” It seems unlikely that the Apostle mentions this because of a problem of imitation of the gifts. Rather he wishes to contrast the difference between what they should be practising now as opposed to what they had done in the past. Nevertheless this phrase is clear evidence that even at this time there were “false spirits”, imitation and fakes².

Some of the idols were Pythia, Sibyl, Dis and Trophonius, and the deluded priests who officiated at these shrines actually thought that they were possessed by these idols.

The Corinthian brethren now knew that the idols were dumb, and therefore they knew that any message the priests gave did not originate with the idol.

The expression “as you were led” indicates they did not go as rational beings; they went as blind people led. He is hinting that now they ought to be thinking men guided by God’s truth. He enforces the rational character of the true gifts later by reminding them that “the spirits . . . are subject”.

“*however you were led*”

Paul is not interested in how they had been led astray in the past, but he was concerned about the fact that these practices were still influencing their behaviour. They still wanted to practise the spirit gifts in an atmosphere of disorder and noise. To Paul, mere ecstasy was evidence of being “carried away” unto dumb idols.

It is evident today that people are led, not by God’s Spirit, but by man’s.

v.3 “*Therefore I make known to you*” Paul now develops the difference between a pagan and a person who spoke by the Spirit of God. Apparently the Corinthians had wanted a criterion to distinguish between that which was truly divine and that which was false, and he now gives it to them - it was doctrine.

¹ Whether men or gifts is meant, must be determined by the context as the word spiritual may be either masculine or neuter. The later is more natural because the gifts rather than persons is the subject of discussion and because in v.31 and 14:1, the neuter form is used (HODGE).

² see “A Survey of *Glossolalia* in Non-Christian Religions” Section D - “Tongues”.

“No one speaking by the Spirit of God says”

Even though the gifts were grossly misused, no one would have deviated from the truth as far as the pagan priests did. Since v.4 to the end of the chapter is devoted to miraculous Spirit gifts, it would be a blatant case of disregard of context if v.2 and 3 was made to teach that the possession of the Holy Spirit in the form of non-miraculous grace is always essential before anyone can confess faith in Christ.

“Jesus is accursed” (cf. Acts 26:11)

The pagan priests must have been known to utter this phrase, because the context demands it. In addition to this *the Expositor’s Greek Testament*¹ refers this to the Jews. When they said this, they were not motivated by the Holy Spirit.

“and no one can say Jesus is Lord’, except by the Holy Spirit”

This does not mean that a person had to have the gifts before he could say: *“Jesus is Lord”*. (cf. notes on Matt. 16:17; cf. 1 Pet. 1:12; Rom. 10:9, 10).

PROBLEM:

It is argued that if we can say Jesus is the Lord then we must be in possession of the Holy Spirit, in the form of non-miraculous “grace”.

SOLUTION:

1. 1 Corinthians 12 (all of it) was written to discuss miraculous Spirit gifts. The above claim (expressed in the problem) is a severe wresting of scripture with a complete disregard of the context.

Paul was here giving the Corinthians a criterion by which they could determine those who had the true spirit gifts. No teacher with the true gifts of the Spirit would say “Jesus is accursed”. This verse does not apply today because no humans possess the Spirit gifts.

2. There is far more in this than appears on the surface, as is evident from the following verses:

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” (Psa. 110:1 cf. Matt. 22:45).

“God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36).

We see then that “Jesus” means “Saviour”, the one who was crucified. When Jesus is referred to as “Lord” it means he is the Son of God. Paul states that the idea of “a Messiah crucified” was

“unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Gentiles foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1:23).

Neither Jews nor Gentiles could of themselves either imagine or teach such an idea. It was necessary that people be taught this divine truth, not by being influenced by the Holy Spirit, but by listening to an exposition of the prophets or apostles.

¹ Vol. 2, P. 886. Anyone hanged was considered cursed. (Deut. 21:23)

3. It can be seen that for a person to say “Jesus is Lord” did not require that the person have the Holy Spirit but only that it be revealed to him by reading the prophets or hearing it from one who had the Spirit.
4. It must be remembered that there were only two groups under discussion:
 - a) those with the gifts who would not say “Jesus is accursed”.
 - b) those pagans (falsely claiming they were possessed) who would not say “Jesus is Lord”.
 see 1 John 2:22, 23.

v.4 “Now there are varieties of gifts”²
 These are listed in v.8-11. Gifts = Grk. charisma (Y)

“but the same Spirit”

It is obvious that Paul is attempting to connect the gifts to the “Lord” and to “God” because it seems that the Corinthians had forgotten the source of the gifts they had as well as the purpose (which was to produce an effective ministry, (v.5 and 6)). Their forgetfulness had led to competition in the use of their gifts.

v.5 “And there are varieties of ministries”
 (cf. v.28)³. “ministries” = Grk. *diakonia* (Y). The gifts enabled the possessor to minister to the needs of others. They were not for private individual enrichment nor for rivalry and jealousy but for the benefit of all (cf. v.7). Strong’s definition includes the idea of a servant attending to others.

v.6 “And there are varieties of effects”
 Grk. *energema* (Y). He is not referring to the bad effect they were having at Corinth because of their misuse but rather to the intended effect⁴. e.g. - edification, exhortation, consolation (14:3) - as a sign to unbelievers (14:22), - to convict the conscience (14:24), - to cause men to fall on their face and worship God. (14:25).

“but the same God who works all things in all”

It is God who produces all the effects through the ones who have the gifts. The statement does not require that all Brethren and Sisters had a gift nor does it mean God is responsible when the gifts are misused.

v.7 “But to each one is given”
 This translation is supported by the RSV, MARS and several others. This gets over the problem the AV presents, in that not all received the gifts (e.g. Simon Acts 8). However, it cannot be stated that only the elders received the gifts.

“the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” manifestation = Grk. *phanerosis*, which comes from a root meaning something apparent, openly and outwardly (S).

² see notes on the gifts Section D.

³ For a comparison with other Epistles see Section B - “Grace”.

⁴ See also The Purpose of the Holy Spirit, Section A.

It was to be used for others; any other use was a misuse of the Spirit. This is irrefutable evidence against the theory that the Spirit is given to benefit the possessor personally. People who pretend to have received the Spirit today can adduce nothing else but *their* feelings, which all terminate in themselves. The AV translation is incorrect.

v.8-10 See Section D, The Spirit Gifts.

v.11 *“distributing to each one individually just as He wills”*

(cf. v.18). This should not be read as “to every one” as is sometimes done. The very fact that the distribution was according to God’s will makes it clear that if a person was unsuited for a gift then he would not get it. (cf. Acts 8:20, 21). Conversely we cannot limit the manifestation of the Spirit gifts to only the Apostles as some have done in an attempt to falsely distinguish between the gifts and the Spirit. It is conclusively evident from this context that the gifts had a very wide distribution; at least at Corinth (cf. v.13).

We cannot divide the gifts into two parts - miraculous and non-miraculous and claim only the miraculous ceased. All gifts were required for the body to function. We have no indication of any other pattern. To propose a semi-system of the Spirit in the hearts of believers is sheer assumption. Either the whole system and all gifts exist today or none of it does. It is obvious to all that the latter is the case.

v.12 *“so also is Christ” (“so it is with Christ”, RSV)*

Christ was the head of this corporate body, even the ecclesia. He directed the body through the gifts much the same as our head directs our body by nerve impulses (cf. Eph. 1:22, 23). Paul is here indicating the breadth of the working of the Holy Spirit in contrast to Corinthian partisanship. The functioning of the physical body provides an appropriate analogy of variety in unity within the ecclesia.

v.13 *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”*

The past tense (“were”) is supported by RSV, NASB and MARSHALL. The process is described by Peter (Acts 10:35-43) and by Paul (Col. 3:10-16). Spirit is a figure of speech for the source of the word (spoken in the past, written for us) which produced the attitude necessary for the result - baptism.

‘Without the spirit there could have been no testimony: and without the testimony, and the divine confirmation of the testimony there would have been no faith; and without faith no justification; so that it may all be said to be of the Spirit, that is, of God¹.’

Paul’s emphasis here is that there was only one Holy Spirit power, which through the Apostles (and other possessors) had enlightened them all.

“We were all made to drink of one Spirit” cf. John 7:37-39 and notes there. The “Spirit” here refers to that which was previously mentioned in the context. (i.e. the SPIRIT GIFTS). Paul is continuing his argument here, not introducing another. The universal receipt of the gifts cannot be doubted in light of such evidence from Scripture. What they received was perceptible evidence that Christ was continuing his work of doing and teaching (through the Apostles primarily and to a lesser extent through the rest of “his body”). The drinking here has reference to the outpoural of the gifts mentioned in this context, not to some ethereal

¹ TCM, Vol. 13, P. 98. J. Thomas.

grace. The extent to which the ecclesia received the gifts (“all”) is clear evidence against a few receiving it today as they claim. (see - “Baptism of the Spirit”, Section B).

v.19 *“And if they were all one member”*

This hypothetical structure together with v. 29-v.31 demonstrates that members did not all possess a common gift such as tongues. Rather Christ placed various gifts in the ecclesia which would function much as a human body does; not as “one member but many”.

v.20 *“But now there are many members, but one body.”*

The discontent of the lower members (v. 15-16) and the scornfulness of the higher (21) were signs of selfish individualism indifferent to the ecclesial body that needed all members to function properly.

v.24 *“God has composed the body, giving more abundant honour to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body”.*

Because God had made the less spectacular gift of more importance, that in itself should have been sufficient reason for the body to function properly. Dissatisfaction with one’s particular gift, or contempt for that of another was disloyalty to God and distrust of His wisdom.

v.27 *“Now you are Christ’s body”*

The ecclesia as a whole represents Christ, yet we are all “individually members of it”.

“and individually members of it”

Grk. = *from parts* (cf. v.9) all the individual “parts” made the “body”.

v.28-30 See Section E “Interecclesial Offices”

v.29 *“Are all apostles”... prophets...?*

These questions all expect ‘NO’ as an answer and emphasize once more diversity and interdependence. God did not want anyone to be self-sufficient. He so arranged things that all the brethren should need each other. Coveting the gifts of others denied completely the interdependence that each member had for the other. It was childish, self-centred thinking, even sin because “God arranged the organs in the body as he chose”.

v.31 *“But earnestly desire the greater gifts”.*

That is greater from God’s point of view - not the Corinthians. They had been doing the opposite, but now Paul instructs them to look at the gifts positively. The person who seeks to please God must be active not passive. The person who wanted a spiritual gift had a part to play, along with God’s bestowal in its acquisition. God will help us if we ask according to His will, but He will not guide us unless we go first.

“And I show you a still more excellent way”

This way would help them escape the perils now besetting their progress.

After describing - briefly the Spirit gifts and offices, Paul now shows that the gifts only were of relative importance. They were only interim in design (v.8) and were to be superseded by faith, hope and agape (v. 13). The use of the gifts, without the superintending influence of agape, was an abuse of their purpose (which was to confirm the word (Mark 16:20) and to edify the ecclesia) (Eph. 4:12).

Chapter 13 is obviously one which links together two aspects of the name subject

- i.e. a) the gifts (defined positively) (ch. 12).
- b) the misuse of the gifts (defined negatively) (ch. 14).

The conclusion of ch. 12 stresses the organic unity of the body of Christ. Members ought to “have the same *care* for one another” (v. 25). Spirit gifts were “for the common good” (v. 7), as distinct from merely personal satisfaction from their exercise (cf. 1 Cor. 14:3-5).

This stress on *caring* is carried on into chapter 14.

“So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the *edification* of the ecclesia” (14:12).

Paul is not giving an exposition on agape but is contrasting it to the characteristics the Corinthians demonstrated.

v.1 “*Though I speak*” This is a hypothetical possibility. “If I speak” (NASB, RSV, Nestle). The context of the *gift* of tongue speaking (12:10, 28, 30; 13 and 14:2-22) and the clear reference to the gifts of prophecy, wisdom, knowledge and faith (cf. 12:8) in the next verse, show that the “tongues” must relate to the ability to speak foreign languages.

“*with the tongues of men*”

i.e., the foreign languages and dialects of men (cf. Acts 2:6-11). This statement proves that tongues was the God given ability to speak foreign languages that had not been learned.¹ “Tongues”, Grk. “*glossais*” relates to the languages of men. It is translated “languages of men” in the Concordant Version. “*Glossa*” does *not* refer to the unintelligible utterances that currently characterize Pentecostal meetings. Note the following uses of the word where

- a) Foreign languages are intended:
Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:5.
- b) Intelligible speech inferred:
Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2 :11; 1 John 3 :18.

“*and of angels*”

This obviously refers to divine messengers otherwise no additional emphasis would be achieved by its mention here.

Angels in Scripture *always* communicated in the languages of men. This expression could refer to the manner in which angels would have to adapt their language to the language of the person to whom they appeared. If angels have a language peculiar to

¹ See Section D - “The Gift of Tongues”. The tongues were “of men” not gibberish! This verse confirms that.

themselves, this is not revealed in Scripture². The Apostle's hypothetical emphasis here, parallels his stress in Gal. 1:8-9. There are *no* reasonable grounds for assuming that the phrase relates to unintelligible gibberish. What an outrageous insult to angels!

Tongue speaking without regard for order and decency had resulted in chaos at Corinth (1 Cor.14:23, 39-40). Such exhibition was as profitless as the useless noise of a foundry.

v.2 “*And if I have the gift of prophecy*” “The gift of” is not in the Greek text but is clearly implied. One could only have prophecy if he were the vehicle for the expression of this Spirit *gift* (cf. 12:10-28). Although the second most important office, it did not profit the occupier if he did not have *agape*.

“*and know all mysteries*” “mysteries,” Grk. “*mustarian*” - “what is known only to the initiated” (Y). This word relates to *revelation* from God (e.g. 1 Cor.2:7; 4:1; 15:51) and is probably an allusion to 1 Cor. 12:8:

“For to one is given the word *of wisdom* through the Spirit.”

Although the use of “if” indicates that this is a hypothetical question, this gift is not available in any form today³. This “mystery” was manifested and is contained in the Scriptures of the (Christian) prophets (Rom. 16:25, 26).

“*and all knowledge*” - “*knowledge*” = Grk. *gnosis* - a reference to the Spirit gift of knowledge⁴ (cf. 12:8).

“*and though I have all faith*”

In this context “faith” almost certainly has reference to the *gift* of faith (12:9). As we have shown elsewhere, some of the other gifts required the use of this gift.

“*so that I could remove mountains*”

Here is the gift at its utmost stretch. cf. Matt. 17:20 and Luke 17:6.

“*but do not have love, I am nothing*” - Even the gift of faith apart from *agape* was *personally* profitless in the Divine estimation.

v.3 “*And if I give all my possessions to feed*”

This may refer to a misuse of the interecclesial office “helps” (1 Cor. 12:28) or “he who gives” (Rom. 12:8). Should they not have recalled the miracles of supply, and performed them again if necessary? The Greek conveys the idea of converting possessions into bits of bread to feed the hungry⁵. The personal action rather than the one dependent on Christ would have given glory to the person rather than Christ.

² The Rabbis held that Hebrew was the language spoken by angels. See EXPO, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), P. 897.

³ See notes on GUIDANCE (Section B) and James 1:5;

⁴ See Section D for exposition.

⁵ (Y), NEST. Concordant Version has “morselling out all my possessions” i.e. small amounts to large amounts.

“And if I deliver my body to be burned”

This could have been a misuse of the gift of faith (cf. Daniel 3:25, 28) or gift of serving (Rom. 12:7) or a misunderstanding of the gift of healing. Since the context most certainly deals with the gifts, it seems reasonable that this act should have some connection with the use of a gift without agape, but we cannot be positive as to which one it was.

MISSING ASPECTS OF AGAPE AT CORINTH

v.4 *“Love is patient”*

Paul is here laying the framework for his rebuke about their lack of patience. They all wanted to speak at once it appears. (cf. 1 Cor. 14:27, 30-33).

“love is kind”

This characteristic is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22; cf. Col. 3:12).

“is not jealous” (cf. 3:3). Since the Spirit gifts were distributed throughout the ecclesia, jealousy over the more esteemed gifts would easily arise. Consider, for example, a socially prominent Corinthian who, as a convert, received either a lowly esteemed gift or no gift at all; whereas a slave, or an artisan in the ecclesia received the gift of miracles or tongue speaking. This was the case:

“God has so composed the body, and only a spiritual mind emulating agape, would show care for his brother (cf. 12:27, 25).

“love does not brag”

(cf. 4:6) A brother formerly with no social status in the world, finds himself the vehicle of a highly esteemed gift, e.g., tongue speaking. How will the new convert respond to this newly acquired “power” and prestige? - by boastful claims? or by treating other less spectacular gifts and their possessors as inferior? (cf. 12:21-24).

“is not arrogant”

The special temptation of those with the gift of knowledge. The same phrase is used by Paul in 8:1 -

“Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies”.

This *gnosis* required maturity to grow into *epignosis* - a full knowledge fashioned by agape (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-8).

v.5 *“does not act unbecomingly”*

(cf. 11:5) (indecent, shame (S)). The Apostle pointed out that unbelievers might well conclude that the brethren were “mad” (1 Cor. 14:23), unless the meetings maintained a decorum of decency and order (14:40).

“it does not seek its own”

(“Love does not insist on its way.” RSV) The tongue speaker will not *insist* on public performance when others are as well qualified to speak (cf. 14:26-33 and 12:14-24). Those at Corinth sought personal gratification by the exercise of their gift (14:2).

“is not provoked” Gifted brethren at Corinth were told by Paul that “the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets” (14:32). Volatile members in the assembly must not merely ventilate their own feelings or revelations, but must have regard for the spiritual character of the meeting and the individual growth of the “weak” brethren so that all may be edified.

“does not take into account a wrong suffered”

The lack of restraint by some surely must have offended those with a more introverted nature. Those who did not have a gift were probably told that they were not needed (cf. 12:15-17).

PERMANENCE of AGAPE CONTRASTED WITH THE TEMPORARY DESIGN of the SPIRIT GIFTS

v.8 *“But if there are gifts of prophecy”*

This “prophecy” relates to the *gift* of prophecy for the following reasons

- (a) Prophecies about future events testify to the character of their Revelator (Isa. 41:21-23); as such they could never be abolished.
- (b) The context demands that the reference is to the gift. (12:7; 14:3-5).

“they will be done away”

“Done away” translates the Grk. *katargeo* and is a different word than *ekpipto* which is translated by “Charity never *faileth*” in the AV.

The very purpose of those gifts - that of dealing with a purely temporary situation; and their mode of operation - that of contributing only at intervals - were proof enough that they lacked permanence.

The gifts then, can be seen as dealing with a purely temporary situation, in contrast to *agape*.

“if there are tongues” - Similarly “tongues” does not relate merely to languages-but rather to the Spirit gift of tongue-speaking (cf. 12:10; 14:2).

“they shall cease”

the plural “they” and the plural “tongues” indicate many languages and not one unknown language as some claim. This translation is supported by the AV, RSV and Nestle. A reasonable case can be made from the testimonies of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Chrysostoin and Augustine that in the post-apostolic era, speaking in tongues ceased.⁶

“if there is knowledge” Grk. “*gnosis*”, relates to the *gift* of knowledge (as in 12:8). Clearly knowledge will not be abolished, even at Christ’s return, therefore it is the *gift* of knowledge which was abolished. This was finally accomplished when the Spirit spewed the Laodicean community out of His mouth.

Whichever Spirit gifts Paul’s readers prized the most, whether two highly spiritual ones (prophecy and knowledge) or an outstandingly spectacular one (tongues), they would only be temporary: they were to “fail, cease and vanish away”.

Why does Paul only select 3 gifts? They are the ones with which the ecclesia at Corinth was most interested. He was not implying that only these 3 would pass away but that all would since three is the first perfect number.

⁶ see Robert Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967), P. 50-51.

v.9 “*For we know in part*” - “In part” from Grk. *merous* which comes from a root meaning to get a section or allotment; hence a division or share (S). Paul is attempting to demonstrate that the gifts were temporary and incomplete. Paul is not saying “we know because we have a gift⁷”. This is evident from the context. The “know” refers to the gift of knowledge (v.8). He is saying ‘we only have partial knowledge’.

“*we prophesy in part*” - Instead of the gift of knowledge, the gift of prophecy is the subject.

‘Although the operation of the gifts was under the direction of the Lord, they were fragmentary, with each additional oracle making only a partial contribution in only one of many ecclesias to the knowledge of the purpose of God as a whole.

Their knowledge increased “bit by bit” (Moff), and in this, the experience of the Christian church was no different from that of the Children of Israel through the Hebrew prophets. At all stages of Israel’s history, the prophetic word never came in the form of “systematic theology”. Each message was given in and restricted to an immediate national or personal crisis; even the predictive element was couched in the terms of the context in which it was given. Each single message made only a relatively small addition to the slow progressive revelation on the principle of “here a little: there a little”. So it was in the early Christian church; each ecclesia would receive exhortation, apocalypse and teaching, which were infallibly appropriate to its own particular spiritual needs. Yet each message was only a “part” of “the whole counsel of God”.⁸

v.10 “*but when the perfect comes*”

Marshall translates “but when the perfect *thing* comes” “Perfect” from Grk. *teleios* = “ended, complete” (Y). It comes from a root meaning complete (in various applications of labour, growth, mental and moral character, etc.) (S).

Two interpretations are usually given to this verse -

1. That “perfect” refers to Christ. The implication from this is that the gifts will be available until the return of Christ.
2. That “perfect” relates to the completed scriptures.

SOLUTION:

1. The first interpretation is incorrect for then the passage would mean that the Holy Spirit gifts would be withdrawn at Christ’s coming, but this will not be the case. Paul clearly tells us that those who were “partakers of the Holy Spirit” had tasted of the “powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:4,5). Joel 2 indicates a primary fulfillment of the outpouring of the gifts is to occur after the return of Christ.
2. The context shows that 2 is the correct meaning of the verse. The emphasis on the abiding of faith, hope, love⁹ is antithetical and this is lost if 1 is retained. The very fact that these characteristics are said to abide, is evidence that the gifts were “to cease, pass away, be done away”. Faith and hope will be realized by the kingdom, and will not abide into it.

⁷ Some expositors say that this is the meaning of Paul’s words. (i.e. We know from parts).

⁸ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 473.

⁹ see notes on v.13.

3. The same word *teleioi* (mature) is used in Eph. 4:11-16. The work “of the ministry” included writing the epistles and books of the New Testament. The gifts were only in evidence “until” they achieved their purpose.
4. *Teleios*¹⁰ does not necessarily relate to a completeness only achieved at the return of Christ. The word is used in contexts which imply a *relative* maturity reached by believers before Christ’s return.
 - a) “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect” (mature NASB) (1 Cor. 2:6).
 - b) “in understanding be men” (mature) (1 Cor. 14:20).
 - c) “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect” (mature, RSV) (Phil. 3:15).
 - d) “For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age (mature) even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb. 5:13-14).

These verses indicate that the word “perfect” can apply to the righteous and is not restricted to Christ.
5. If Paul had meant that the Spirit gifts were not to cease until Christ comes, he would have concluded by saying: “*But now remain the Spirit gifts*” but he does not.

CONCLUSION: Before the Apostolic times, only the Old Testament existed, but subsequently, God’s revelation was brought to completion or perfection by the writing of the New Testament.

“*the partial will be done away*” - When the books of the NT were written, there was no further need for the spirit gifts. Once the Spirit gifts had combined to produce Scriptures “able to make one wise unto salvation” and to fully “equip the saints” in all subsequent generations the sun would go down on the prophets of the new Israel as it had done on those of the old (Mic. 3:6).

v.11 “*When I was a child*” Grk. *napios*” - “babe (without full power of speech)” (Y). cf. Heb. 5:13. By overstressing tongues, despising prophecy and undervaluing love, the Corinthians were displaying immaturity.

“*I used to speak as a child*” “speak” = Grk. *laleo*.

“*think as a child*” “think” Grk. *phroneo* to set the mind or affections on (Y) (AV “understood”).

“*reason as a child*”, “reason” = Grk. *lagizomai* same as “thinketh” (AV) (v.5)

“*when I became a man*” There may be a subtle allusion to the gift of tongues (“I spake”), the gift of knowledge (“I understood”) and the gift of prophecy (“I thought”, “reasoned” mg). These would “be put away” - rendered inoperative by maturity.

¹⁰ (V) defines its use here as “referring to the complete revelation of God’s will... in the completed Scriptures”. *Teleios* is also used in reference to the Scriptures in James 1 :25.

“I did away with childish things”

‘Paul here tells us something of his personal spiritual experience as he reflects on his own growth in Christ. He admits that in his early days in the Truth the Spirit gifts had pleasantly excited him; the “visions and revelations of the Lord” had brought him dangerously near to becoming “exalted above measure” (2 Cor. 12:7). But now, looking back on that spiritual childhood, he could advise the Corinthian brethren that the true life and service in Christ had deeper values than the phenomenal manifestations of Spirit-power which had been granted to bring the first-century ecclesias to spiritual manhood.’¹¹

v.12 *“For now we see in a mirror”* Ancient mirrors were made of burnished metal - a specialty of Corinth. Trying to understand the whole truth “now” was like seeing an imperfect reflection in the mirrors of Paul’s day. This phrase has reference to the incomplete picture that the nine gifts gave.

The gifts provided the Corinthians with only a partial perception because they were not yet mature in mind (14:20). They were mere babes in Christ (3:1), unable to partake of the solid food belonging to the spiritual man. Without co-ordination of the parts of the Christ-body for the edification of the ecclesia, a “face to face” encounter with divine revelation through the Spirit was impossible. Even then it was not possible because the gifts only operated in part and did not give a full “picture”.

“dimly” “a riddle” (NEST) By looking into the partially revealed Word, man obtained only a dim or confusing picture of the revelation of God to himself, but with the completion of revelation, man could then see himself as he was seen by God in the divine purpose.

“but then face to face.”

This is an obvious allusion to Exod. 33:11 (cf. Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 34:10). The face to face of Exod 13 was through a mediator - an angel (Acts 7:30, 53). Similarly, the written word was to become the vehicle for dissemination of divine revelation, but nonetheless, still “face to face”. This perfect law of liberty (James 1:25 cf. 21-24) the culminating work of the Spirit of Truth - was capable of accurately revealing the manner of man looking into the burnished mirror (James 1:23-24). The completed N.T. canon elucidated O.T. scriptures (as did Christ orally), foretold things that would come to pass and finalized the last revelation to man. When we read this word of God we *hear* God “face to face”, as did Moses.

These two illustrations are given by Paul to demonstrate the relative importance of those who had the gifts and of those who had the completed revelation of God. The first is taken from human life and the second is abstract riddle.

“now I know in part” - *ek merous* - (cf. v.9,10). Now I have partial knowledge. This occurrence of *merous* provides the key to interpreting v.9, since Paul probably had all nine Spirit gifts. It therefore seems unlikely that *merous* refers to the distribution of the gifts. Rather it refers to their mode of operation. The gift contributed only at intervals, and even then only in fragmentary form.

¹¹ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 473.

“*but then I shall know fully*”. When the complete Bible comes, I shall know completely. The “then” probably refers to when the revelation was completed about AD 96? Paul, of course, did not live to see this - he did not always know the perils which lay before him (e.g. Acts 20:22). For the Corinthians; many would live to that time. For Paul, the “then” must wait until resurrection.

“*know fully*” from Grk. *epignosko* - “full knowledge” (Y).

Does the “then” relate to Christ’s return or to some time prior to this? Can *epignosis* only be achieved at Christ’s return? The answer to these questions will either support or weaken the interpretation of when the “perfect is come” (v. 10). The following analysis supports the proceeding interpretation of verse 10 since *epignosis* is clearly seen from its 9 other occurrences to relate to full godliness obtainable *before* the return of Christ. Consider the following references:

1. Titus 1:1-3 - “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and acknowledging (Gr. *epignosin*) of the truth which is after godliness.
In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.
But hath in due times manifested His word through preaching . . .”
2. In the prison epistles written from Rome, Paul implies in his prayers that full knowledge could be obtained by believers before the return of Christ. See e.g. Phil. 1:9; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9; 3:10.
3. “Full knowledge” is often related to belief and obedience of the Truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25).
4. See 2 Pet. 1:5-11 where *epignosis* (v. 8), translated “knowledge”, is required for entrance into the kingdom of God (vs. 9-11).
By looking into the “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:21-25), one could obtain the exact reflection God intended, not that one would quantitatively know all things, even about Scripture, but maturity would be imparted – a full knowledge so that the believer would be no more a child, “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men...” Eph. 4:14).

“*just as I also have been fully known*”

It is uncertain who is being referred to . There are two possibilities:

1. As I am (*epignoskos*) known completely to all of you.
2. This may refer to the fact that Paul was fully known by the Almighty. (Heb. 4:13).

v. 13 “*And now abide faith, hope, agape*”

“Now” is Grk. *nuni* meaning “at this moment” (Y). So the *now* defines the present time of mortality and probation. Hope and faith will become inoperative when the thing hoped for arrives (Rom. 8:24-25) but love is a divine characteristic which will outlast faith and hope. Faith and hope belong to the present and not to the kingdom age. Faith will give place to sight. Therefore, there must be a period of time *after* the passing of the Spirit gifts in which faith and hope “abide”. Hence the passing of the Spirit gifts cannot be at the return of Christ; but at some time prior to this¹².

¹² See Section D - “Latter Day Outpouring of the Spirit”.

PROBLEM:

It is claimed that these three are the gifts that would continue.

“However the more excellent way of 1 Cor. 13 is still the way of the Spirit and involves the spiritual gifts of faith, hope and love.”¹³

SOLUTION:

1. Hope and love were not, gifts of the Spirit and are not listed as such in 1 Cor. 12: 8-10, 28. (The expression *charisma* is never used in the N.T. to describe love.) They were and are virtues which develop¹⁴ from a knowledge of the word of God. Because faith is grouped with these two virtues, we know that it is not referring to the “gift of faith” of chapter 12.
2. The emphasis on faith, hope and love remaining is also an emphasis on the Spirit gifts *ceasing*. The whole theme of the chapter requires that it is agape that is to remain and the gifts would pass away. The Spirit gifts were:
 - a) only “in part” (v. 9, 10).
 - b) were “childish” (v. 11).
 - c) allowed Paul only to “see darkly” (v.12).
 - d) not as excellent a way as “following after agape” (12:31).
3. “For 6,000 years, faith, hope and love have continued to be the essential combination in the preparation of God’s children. It has been the threefold cord that cannot be broken during the production of Christ like characters. The first two are the creation of the last, which is the greatest, and the only one that exists eternally, because it is without beginning and without end. Faith and hope came into being as the result of sin, and will depart when sin and its consequences are for ever removed.”¹⁵

1 CORINTHIANS 14

Chapter 14 is a continuation of the theme of the spirit gifts. Prophecy is compared to tongues in order to persuade the Corinthians to a more extensive use of the gift of prophecy in preference to the gift of tongues in which they had over indulged with the impure motive of attracting attention to themselves.

1 Corinthians 14 is a poor chapter to determine the proper purpose and use of tongues because Paul is obviously dealing with the abuse of tongues, and is not giving a positive explanation of the subject. For example, he mentions speaking in tongues when no one there understood that language. He also states that tongues were not to be used in an ecclesia that had no need of them.

Most people who do not understand the subject of a debate would prefer a positive dissertation rather than try to piece together the debate. We are in similar position to the latter, because we must piece together the problems surrounding the spirit gifts.

¹³ ESSA, Quench Not the Spirit, P. 16.

¹⁴ AGAPE is listed as a “fruit of the Spirit” along with joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is evident that the possession of a “gift of the Spirit” did not cause any of these. cf. Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness”.

¹⁵ TCM, Vol. 72, P. 401.

The only information we have is the answer to the problems but we do not have the problem itself. Paul knew what he was talking about and the ecclesia at Corinth would understand him, but it may be much more difficult for us to reconstruct the scene so we can understand also.

Under the circumstances it is necessary to hold fast what is clear and to make the certain our guide in explaining what is obscure. It is clear:

- a) that tongues mean languages.
- b) that the speaker in tongues was in a state of calm self-control. He could speak or be silent (14:28).
- c) What he said was intelligible to himself and could be interpreted to others.
- d) That the unintelligibility of what was said, arose not from the sounds being inarticulate gibberish, but from the ignorance of the hearer.

Decently and in order

v.1 *“Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts”*

The gifts had been so misused that some had forbidden others “to speak in tongues” (v.39). No doubt the more orderly brethren at Corinth had tried to suppress all the gifts because of the trouble associated with them.

The gifts, however, were given for a purpose. It was wrong to be negatively inclined towards them or even neutral. *Agape* was not to be pursued by forgetting everything else. It was necessary to “desire earnestly” the gifts. This desire would find expression in meaningful prayer for their bestowal.

“but especially that you may prophesy”

There were so many moral and doctrinal problems at Corinth that the best use of the gifts would be to edify the existing members of the ecclesia, rather than try to attract more members through the use of the more spectacular gifts such as tongues, miracles etc. i.e. “prophecy is a sign... to those who believe”¹ (v.22).

v.2 *“For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God”* The interpretation of the gift of tongues which has been advanced, may seem difficult to harmonize with this verse but let us consider the alternatives.

It is incongruous and contrary to Divine order that the gift should be one of ecstatic tongues unknown to men. (cf. 13:1)

“But let it be supposed, for argument’s sake, that the brother did speak to God in an unknown tongue, and that an inspired interpreter translated the prayer or praise back to the assembly. A logically minded “unbeliever” testing out the “sign” could easily argue that the tongue had been self-induced and that another brother had merely pretended to interpret it.”²

This fact is strong evidence against the theory that tongues were ecstatic. On the other hand anyone who claimed to speak a foreign language could easily be tested by recourse to someone who spoke that language.

¹ cf. v.3, 4.

² TEST, Vol. 43, P. 302.

“for no one understands”

The proper interpretation of this verse is that the tongue mentioned was a language unknown to the ecclesia at Corinth. No one there would understand him but God, who knows all languages, understandeth him. He would only speak mysteries in the spirit if there was no one in the ecclesia who understood that particular language.

The reason of his not being understood is in the medium of communication, not in the things communicated. The meaning is, not that no man *living*, but that no man *present*, could understand.

“but in his spirit he speaks mysteries”

(cf. margin “by the Spirit”) i.e. through the gift bestowed by the spirit. He would only speak mysteries to those in the ecclesia who did not understand that particular language. The difficulty was in the language used, not in the absence of meaning.

v.3 *“But one who prophesies³ speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation”*. “edification” = Grk. *oikodome* from *oikos* meaning by implication “a family more or less related” and *doma* = “to build” (S) (cf. 1 Cor. 3:9). exhortation = Grk. *paraklesis* (S); consolation (comfort AV) = Grk. *paramuthia* (S) meaning consolation with tenderness. The prophet spoke in the native language of his hearers.

v.4 *“One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself”* i.e. only himself)

Though he had no interpreter when alone, he could edify himself in the knowledge that the praise or prayer of his heart was faithfully reflected in the foreign tongue. It seems that this verse assumes that the tongue speaker did not bother to restate in the language of the ecclesia the message he had just given. It is rather unlikely that the tongue speaker did not know what he had said. He may not have understood the foreign language but he probably knew in his own language what he had said. By exercising the gift he would know that he had the gift, thus strengthening himself. He did edify himself because he understood himself. This verse proves that the understanding was not in abeyance, and that the speaker was not in an ecstatic state.

“but one who prophesies edifies the ecclesia”

This in contrast to only edifying himself. The gifts were given “for the common good” therefore for a person to use them for personal gain would probably have been a misuse of the gift.

“Agape vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own” (13:4, 5).

Certainly it was wrong to use tongues in an ecclesia that had no need of them.

v.5 *“Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues”*

TMs is abundant evidence (together with 12:30) that not all had this gift. Paul did not undervalue this gift (v.18) but it was to be used at the proper time.

“but even more that you would prophesy” (AV has “rather”) The idea here is that the ecclesia at Corinth already possessed members who could prophesy but would not because they were “deemed less honourable” than those who spoke in tongues.

³ See notes on this gift and 12:10.

“greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues”

Prophecy was for “those who believe” (v. 22) that they might be edified. Tongues was mainly a sign “to unbelievers”. To practice it in the ecclesia was not nearly as edifying as prophecy because that is the way God intended it.

“unless he interprets” If the ecclesia did not understand the language spoken then “the one who speaks” would be a “barbarian” to them.

Speaking under the influence of the Spirit was common to both tongues and prophecy; the only difference was in the language used. If the speaker interpreted, then this was equivalent to prophesying. The absence of the gift of interpretation does not prove that the speaker himself in such cases was ignorant of what he uttered. It only proves that he was not inspired to communicate in another language what he had delivered in a tongue.

Had he done so, it would have been on his own authority, and not as an organ of the Spirit.

“so that the ecclesia may receive edifying”

That was the purpose of prophecy and tongues (provided they were interpreted).

v.6 *“if I come to you”*

This is a hypothetical position since Paul would not abuse the gift in this way.

“speaking in tongues” in a language you do not understand.

“what shall I profit you unless I speak to you by way of revelation”

Both the Expositors Greek Testament and Hodge suggest the four clauses be paired, the first pair matching the second so that they become:

(speaking) as a prophet by revelation or
as a teacher with a doctrine.

“or of knowledge” (cf. 12:8).

“or of prophecy”

The outward expression of that which has come from above by revelation.

“or of teaching”

(doctrine in the AV) - the outward expression of knowledge.

v.7 *“If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp; do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played?”* (RSV).

If tongues were ecstatic gibberish no one could understand it because it would have no meaning. The tongues mentioned here were interpreted by those who had the “gift of interpretation”. You cannot interpret something that is not a rational expression of thought. Meaningless babble is therefore rejected as no gift at all. The obvious design of the illustration is to show the uselessness of making sounds that are not understood. It is plain from what follows, as well as from the drift of the whole discourse, that the simple point of the analogy is that as we cannot know what is piped or harped, or be benefited by it unless we can discriminate the sounds emitted; so too we cannot be benefited by listening to one who speaks a language we do not understand.

v.9 “*So also you*” This shows that the previous illustration was to elucidate the proper meaning of tongues.

“*unless you utter by the tongue*” by means of the tongue as an organ of speech. It is not the gift that is meant in this verse. However, since it occurs in context it is explaining the gift of tongues.

“*speech that is clear*” “*intelligible*” (RSV)
- an intelligible discourse. This does not imply that those who spoke in tongues uttered inarticulate sounds. The opposite of intelligible is not inarticulate but unintelligible (because it is a foreign language) since it is not understood.

“*how shall it be known what is spoken?*”
It can't be and neither could the interpreter know!

“*For you will be speaking into the air*”
This is the effect of the Pentecostal - “hot air”!

v.10 “*There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages*” That tongues was the ability to speak foreign languages is here proved beyond doubt.

“*in the world, and no kind is without meaning*” (i.e. none are inarticulate). What appeared to be unintelligible to those at Corinth would be quite understandable by the appropriate foreigner if and when he came upon the scene. The difficulty was not in the language used, but in the ignorance of the hearer.

v. 11 “*If then I do not know the meaning of the language*”
This means roughly the same as “no man understandeth him” (v. 2). If a man utters incoherent, inarticulate sounds, which no living man could understand, that would not make him a foreigner, but one who was deranged or under self-hypnosis.

“*I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, (‘foreigner’ RSV) and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.*”
This passage shows that the tongue was a foreign language and this was precisely the reason that it appeared unintelligible to the Corinthians. The word barbarian means simply one of another country, i.e. a foreigner (cf. Rom. 1:14). A person who does not speak Greek (by implication).

v.12 “*So also you*”
The practical application of the previous illustration. As all such unintelligible speaking is worthless, the Apostle exhorts them to edify the ecclesia.

“*since you are zealous of spiritual gifts*”
The Greek is spirits (MARS) but is meant to imply the spirit gifts under consideration. It refers to the forms in which the Spirit is manifested.

“*seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the ecclesia*” (AV)
The purpose of the gifts was “for the common good” (RSV 12:7).

v. 13 *“Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret”*

Interpretation was more than merely repeating the message of the tongue speaker in the language of the audience. It would also enable the possessor of this gift to understand foreign languages. For this reason it was of more value in communicating the gospel than tongue speaking, as a tongue speaker could speak with his mouth the foreign language but he could not understand the response or question. It would be like a one way conversation. The two gifts -tongues and interpretation - would enable a two-way conversation. It seems that a tongue speaker thought in his native language but his tongue, under the power of the gift, formed the words of a foreign language. He could therefore, by remembering what he had said⁴, switch to his native language and repeat the message to the congregation without in fact having to actually interpret. The effect was interpretation but the mechanics was merely repetition. However, this does not appear to be Paul’s point in this verse but we add it here by way of detail.

v.14 *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful”*

It is sometimes argued from this verse that tongues is the Holy Spirit overtaking the gifted believer in such a manner that unintelligible sounds would be uttered (“my spirit prays”), but his understanding (his cognitive powers) were impotent. The following points give the solution:

- (1) The word “unknown” (AV) is not in the Greek text and should read as above.
- (2) The statement, “my mind is unfruitful”, does not mean “my mind is impotent.” Paul was commenting on the abuse of the Spirit gifts in the Corinthian ecclesia. When he says “my mind is unfruitful”, he refers to bearing fruit in other believers, and not to the cognitive powers of the tongue speaker. This is proven in v. 12: “seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the ecclesia”. A man who prayed in a foreign language in an assembly of believers when no interpreter was present, was merely praying with his spirit but his mind was not bearing fruit (he was not edifying and instructing his fellow brethren) since they could not understand the meaning of his prayer.
- (3) Moffatt catches the intent of this verse when he translates: “my mind is of no use to anyone”. Paul elsewhere expresses concern that fruits may be born in other members of the ecclesia; “Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the ecclesia” (v.12).

Notice that this verse concerns communal prayer. A person that prayed in a language that the audience did not understand would not produce fruit among those on whose behalf he was praying.

v.15 *“What is the outcome then?”*

What is the practical conclusion from what has been said?

“I shall pray with the spirit”

Paul would pray in a foreign language by the exercise of the gift of tongues.

⁴ It would not be inspired if he did not have the gift of interpretation, since he could make a mistake because of forgetfulness.

“and I shall pray with the mind also”

Prayers and praises should be both spiritual and intelligible, otherwise the unlearned could not join in' them. (v. 16-17). In this context the meaning is that if he were to pray in a tongue he would also pray using the gift of interpretation so that others could understand his mind as well as himself. This verse must be interpreted in the context of v. 13 and v. 16.

“sing” to sing or chant. Singing was from the beginning a part of Christian worship. (cf. Eph. 5:19).

Since the Corinthians would no doubt continue to use tongues in the assembly, though not desirable, they would be acceptable if interpreted. After this continued for awhile the shift would probably be to prophecy which accomplished the same thing but with half the effort.

v. 16 *“Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only”*

“Bless” is to give thanks including praise and thanksgiving. To pray in a foreign language by the gift of tongues is the meaning.

“how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted” say the ‘Amen’? “Ungifted” that is, in interpretation of foreign languages. It may also mean anyone who does not know the foreign language spoken, but the context shows this is not the meaning here. The members were just as likely to be ungifted in interpretation as any outsider was. “The place of the ungifted” was not an area in the room but the relation of the speaker to the listener.

“at your giving of thanks” the same as “bless”.

“since he does not know what you are saying” This was the position of the “one who fills the place of the ungifted”. It is impossible to join in prayers uttered in a foreign language if you are ignorant of the language spoken.

v.17 *“For you are giving thanks well enough”* (beautifully).

In a way acceptable to God and profitable to yourself. This verse proves the speaker understood what he said. The scriptures recognize no unintelligent worship of God.

“but the other man is not edified” If understanding is required before edification can occur (this is obvious here) then the tongue speaker must understand what he is saying. For if the unintelligible is useless, it must be so to the speaker as well as to the hearer.

v.18 *“I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all”* He used the gift properly however. As Paul was the missionary to the Gentiles in distant foreign countries, this gift would have been of immense value.

As written v. 18 - 24 are very difficult to understand and many strange theories have been advanced, all of which have their problems. However, if we try to gain an overview first (rather than a detailed analysis) we can easily grasp the meaning. So that we may understand verses 18 - 24 the following paraphrase is made.

(18) I speak in tongues (properly) more than you all. However, in this ecclesia I would rather speak five words that people can understand, rather than 10,000 words in a language (no one understands).

(20) Be not childish in your thinking but mature (and realise the significance of what you do).

- (21) The law says strange language is a sign of a curse to people who will not listen (since they are in reality unbelievers).
- (22) So then using the gift of foreign language (where not profitable) clearly indicates that the ecclesia are (like Israel) unbelievers (i.e. mad!) but using the gift of prophecy indicates they are believers.
- (23) If only foreign languages are spoken ungifted men or unbelievers which enter will say you are mad.
- (24) But if all prophesy and an unbeliever or ungifted enter (he will understand) and be convicted.

Speaking mysteries condemned

v.19 *“however, in the ecclesia I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.”*

In this verse we see that speaking mysteries is condemned by Paul. This clearly proves that the Pentecostal practice is false. The Corinthians were vaunting the gift of tongues to no profit. They were praying and speaking in foreign languages merely to demonstrate their possession of this gift, but more could profit by such talk, hence Paul’s comment here.

For Paul to have exercised the gift of tongues at Corinth would have meant he would have spoken in a language no one understood (i.e. not Greek) unless they had the gift of interpretation. That is why he did not want to exercise the gift at Corinth.

If however, Paul went to an ecclesia which could not speak Greek or Hebrew, tongues would have been of immense value and Paul would have exercised the gift by using a language that ecclesia understood. We need only refer to Acts 2 to prove the above statement.

The statement then was specific to Greek speaking ecclesias and was not meant as a general comment. The purpose of the gift was to instruct. It was not to be used for show.

v.20 *“Brethren, do not be children (i.e. childish) in your thinking.”*

It was mere childishness in the Corinthians to be so delighted with a gift that they could not turn to any practical account. One of the characteristics of children is the disposition to be pleased with trifles. Paul wished the Corinthians would lay this aside.

“yet in evil be babes” (i.e. childlike) Young children display comparative innocence because of young age. (Matt. 18:2). In the exercise of “liberty” and especially the gifts, the Corinthians had displayed the following evils:

impatience	(14:27),	bragging	(12:16),
unkindness	(12:21),	were easily provoked	(12:25),
jealousy	(12:19),	arrogancy	(5:2),
pride	(14:2).		

“but in your thinking be mature” “men” (AV).

They were to realize the significance of what they were doing. To help them see exactly their position, Paul quotes from the Law a pertinent verse.

v.21 *“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that they will not hear me saith the Lord.”*

“Moses had told Israel that God would bring against them a nation whose tongue they would not understand (Deut. 28:49).⁵ And now Paul saw in the misuse of the gift of tongues a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy of similar import (Isa. 28:11,12).

God had spoken to Jewish captives (taken captive because of their unbelief) in the language of their captors, revealing his purpose through prophets in the Aramaic of Assyria and Babylon. The same humiliating irony was suffered by the Roman-dominated Jews at Pentecost.”⁶

The tongues and lips of Isaiah 28 do not therefore refer to ecstatic utterances in a state of religious fervor, but to the foreign languages spoken by the invaders of Israel.

From this quotation the Corinthians might learn that it was not a mark of divine favor to have teachers whose language they could not understand. They were turning a blessing into a curse. The gift of tongues was designed, among other things, to facilitate the propagation of the gospel, by enabling Christians to address people of various nations each in his own language. Used for this purpose it was a blessing; but to employ it for the sake of display by addressing those who could not understand the language employed, was to make it a curse.

Paul by quoting this verse was attempting to drive home the point that strange language being spoken in the ecclesia (Israel first, new Israel then) was a sign of a divine curse to people who would not listen or hear since in reality they were “unbelievers”. From the way the Corinthians worshipped it was evident they did not really believe a lot of the truth.

Because Israel (and the Corinthian ecclesia) did not want to listen, God spoke to them in a language that would confirm their desire. This is brought out by Marshall “and not so they will hear me”.

v.22 *“So then tongues are for a sign”*

Speaking in a foreign language which no one understands, is a sign (i.e. a clear indication of divine judgement). When people are disobedient⁷ (Corinth had rejected prophecy) God sends them teachers they cannot understand. This implication is inherent in the argument.

“not to those who believe, but to unbelievers”

The Corinthian ecclesia should understand that Paul was calling *them* (in this verse) unbelievers. To give the word “unbelievers” any other interpretation would involve a conflict with the next verse, where it is obvious that what the Corinthians practiced was *not* a “sign” to *real* unbelievers but a hindrance to them. Prophecy was a “sign” to unbelievers (v.24) but the Corinthian abuse of “tongues” was not (v.23).

“but prophecy not to unbelievers but to those who believe”

The true believers of the ecclesia would have preferred prophecy, whereas the “unbelievers” preferred the abuse of tongues. Prophecy was understandable to believers. Tongues edified only the unbelievers of the ecclesia. Paul has not yet come to those outside the ecclesia.

⁵ cf. Jer. 5:15; Isa. 33:19; Ezek. 3:6.

⁶ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 303.

⁷ Corinthians were just as disobedient as Israel was in the past.

“and all speak in tongues”

There is no contradiction here with v. 5 and 12:30. The “all” must refer to all those who had this gift. Tongues here refers to languages which those ungifted in interpretation could not understand. This does not necessarily imply either that all present had the gift, or that all who possessed the gift spoke at one and the same time although from v. 27 and 30 it may be inferred that this was sometimes done.

“and ungifted men”

Simply one who was ignorant of the gifts and of the languages spoken (cf. 24). It was not a believer (v. 24 and 25).

“or unbelievers enter” Those who were not Christians. Those (not knowing all aspects of the gift) hearing the unorganized display of the gift, would go away instead of repenting and joining the ecclesia. This class of persons may have known some of the tongues spoken but would be ‘unlearned’ in others, therefore his comment:

“will they not say you are mad?”

As those who did not understand the foreign⁸ languages spoken at Pentecost said. Paul, therefore, condemned the practice on the grounds that it caused confusion in the assembly and brought ridicule on the truth.

Attend any revivalist meeting and see how those words apply. Hearken to the meaningless jargon, the hysterical shouting of Hallelujah, and the uninhibited paroxysms of emotionalism. This is not a manifestation of the Spirit but the mere excitation of the flesh.

v.24 *“But if all prophesy... he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all”* The united testimony of the congregation would convince the unbeliever of the truth. This demonstrates that prophecy was just as much for the non-Christian as the baptized believer. These words prove that the “unlearned” were not Christians as distinguished from Jews or Gentiles (here called unbelievers), for the same effect (conversion) is said to be produced on both the unlearned and the unbeliever. The unbeliever was (in this verse) those who didn’t know the truth; the unlearned means non-Christians who did not know the language spoken in a tongue.

v. 25 *“The secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you”.*

The truth will cause the unbeliever to judicially examine himself. He will be induced to accept the way of salvation in Christ and so worship God in truth. (cf. John 16: 8- 11).

Special directions as to the mode of conducting their public assemblies, v.26-40

v.26 *“When you assemble, each one”* One has this and another that. There might have been many more manifestations than there was time for manifesting them. v.26-38 explains the rules governing the situation.

“has a psalm”

A psalm is a song of praise to God. This can hardly mean one of the Psalms of the Old Testament, but something revealed for the occasion, (cf. v.15, Eph. 5:19).

“has a teaching”

A teacher (12:28) had a message probably received through the gift of knowledge.

⁸ The only ones who did not understand were those who spoke Greek (and possibly Aramaic).

“has a revelation” As a prophet he has received a revelation from God which he desires to communicate, cf. 29 and 30, v.6.

“has a tongue” A message of prophecy in a foreign language. If so he would have to abide by the rules in v.27 and 28.

“has an interpretation”
through exercise of the gift, he was prepared to give the interpretation of some discourse previously delivered in a foreign language. (cf. 12:10).

“let all things be done for edification”
In the lively situation that existed it is easy to see that confusion could result. Indeed it is clear that it did, so Paul’s effort was designed to correct this evil. It was not enough that a man felt himself the subject of divine influence; or that acting under it would be agreeable or even profitable to himself. He must sit in silence unless the exercise of his gift would benefit the ecclesia.

v.27 *“If any one speaks in a tongue it should be by two or at the most three”*

Two solutions are possible

- a) Only 2 or 3 tongue speakers should exercise their gift at any one meeting otherwise there will be no time for anything else.
- b) Diaglott renders: “If anyone speak in a foreign language, let it be by two or at the fact the most three (sentences), in succession and let one interpret”. This rendering is supported by that Paul uses the singular, in relation to tongues. Interpretation is much easier when the flow of words is restricted to 2 or 3 sentences⁹.

“and in turn and let one interpret” (MARS)

They were not to speak together but in succession. Before any could speak they would have to ensure there was an interpreter present. Presumably the interpreter would speak immediately after or even during the tongue speaking. (cf. 14:40).

v.28 *“but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the ecclesia”*

It was possible that the person who had the gift of tongues also could interpret. This verse demonstrates that the gift of tongues was not uncontrolled outbursts of gibberish but intelligent worship that could be suppressed. The use of the singular “him” clearly supports the second solution to v. 27.

“and let him speak to himself and to God”

If we take this the way it reads, then the person must have known what he was saying. If he did not understand then he would not be speaking to himself but only to God.

Although tongues was one of the most spectacular of gifts, it was only when alone with God that the brother could exercise his gift without the need of an interpreter¹⁰. This is why Paul stresses the need to be able to interpret.

v.29 *“And let two or three prophets speak”*

Only 2 or 3 prophets were to speak at any one assembly and then only in succession: “one by one” (v.31). There was an opportunity that “all” could prophesy, but not at any one assembly. They would have to wait until another assembly.

⁹ see v. 29.

¹⁰ If all understood the language, there was no need to interpret.

“Note the plural term ‘prophets’. Here the indication is that three prophets would be allowed to occupy the time at any one meeting. If the Diaglott rendering of v. 27 is correct, then there is a balance in Paul’s argument. The fact that he allows three speakers for prophecy and only one for the gift of tongues, and even then in short sentences, indicates the relative importance which both gifts had for the organized ecclesial meeting.”¹¹

“*and let the others pass judgement*” i.e. let the rest of the prophets judge whether those who stand up to exercise the gift have really received a revelation. (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21). From this it would seem that the prophets had the “gift of discerning of Spirits.”¹² (12:10) (cf. O.T. prophets).

v.30 “*But if a revelation is made to another who is seated*”

From this we learn that the prophet who was speaking the revelation that was given to him stood to give it.

“*let the first keep silent*” The meaning of this can be twofold:

- a) the one speaking must at once stop.
- b) the receiver of the new revelation must wait until his predecessor had concluded his discourse. The imperative form of the expression is in favour of the former view. This would suppose that the fact of a new communication being made, indicated that it was entitled to be heard at once.

There are, however, two reasons against adopting the former view:

- a) The interruption of a speaker by whatever means was itself disorderly and therefore contrary to the whole drift of the apostles directions; and
- b) what follows in the text is most naturally understood as the reason why the receiver of the new revelation should wait. The meaning may be “Let the first be silent *before the other begins*”.

v.31 “*For you can all prophesy one by one*” This gives the reason why two prophets should not speak at the same time. They could all have an opportunity to speak. Three could speak at this meeting and the rest would have to wait until another time.

“*so that all may learn*” Even prophets could learn! One style may suit one hearer and another style might suit another hearer.

“*and all may be exhorted*” (To be admonished and comforted).

v.32 “*and the spirits*” That is the “inspired words”. As this verse is connected by ‘and’, it contains an additional reason for the injunction of v. 31.

“*of the prophets are subject to the prophets*” In view of the mention of confusion (v.33) in this context, Paul must mean that the Prophet could use or abuse his gift. He was not a robot but had a choice as to whether he would exercise his gift or not. Just as those who spoke in tongues were able to keep silence if necessary (v.28), so prophesying is under the control of the one possessing that

¹¹ J. Martin, Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, 1965, P. 71.

¹² cf. Section E - “Prophets”.

ability.¹³ This being the case, there was no reason why one should interrupt the other, or why more than one should speak at the same time.

v. 33 *“for God is not a God of confusion”*

The exercise of the gifts was under the control of the one who manifested them. God never impels men to act contrary to the principles he has ordained. (cf. v. 40).

“but of peace” When men pretend to be influenced by the Spirit in doing what God forbids, we may be sure they are impostors.

v. 34 *“Let the women keep silent in the ecclesia”* (cf. 1 Tim. 2:11- 15).

“As in all the ecclesias of the saints” should be connected with this verse rather than the previous one. The reasons are:

- a) v. 33 has an appropriate conclusion without it.
- b) If connected to v. 33 they do not give a pertinent sense.
- c) If connected to v. 34, this passage becomes parallel to 11:16 where the custom of the ecclesias in reference to the deportment of women in public is appealed to as authoritative.

The reasons which Paul advances are fourfold:

1. The fact that no ecclesia allowed it, was in itself strong proof that it was contrary to the spirit of Christianity.
2. “for it is not permitted unto them to speak” the weight of apostolic authority.
3. The authority of reason - “but (they are commanded) to be under obedience”. Both Jews and Greeks adopted the rule that a woman should not be a public teacher.
4. The scriptural ground is expressed in the words “as also saith the law”. The O.T. clearly demonstrates that a woman was to be in subjection to her husband. e.g. - Gen. 3:16.

The prohibition of speaking related only to the ecclesial meetings¹⁴. The prophet Joel had predicted that

“Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;” a prediction which Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost as evidence that what others experienced was, at least, a token fulfillment of the prophecy.

Acts 21:9 mentions the four daughters of the prophet Philip who prophesied. The apostle Paul seems to take for granted in 1 Cor. 11:5 that women received and exercised the gift of prophecy¹⁵. It was, therefore, only the exercise of the gift in the ecclesia that was prohibited.

“but let them subject themselves” Paul tells Timothy that women are not permitted to teach nor to usurp authority over the men, and he obviously means at meetings where both sexes are involved. (1 Tim. 2:12). Conversely he tells Titus that they were to be teachers of good things among their own sex. (Titus 2:3-5).

¹³ Many commentators understand Paul to mean “that the spirits of the prophets are subject to one another,” i.e. to other prophets; and therefore if one is speaking he should yield to another who wishes to speak. The idea is not justified by the context. This has just been stated in v.29. Also it would suggest merely a reason why one ought to yield to another. What the apostle says and wishes to prove is, that one can yield to the other.

¹⁴ cf. v.33, 34, 35.

¹⁵ There are many references in Scripture to Prophetesses (Ex. 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Isa. 8:3; Luke 2:36-38). Elizabeth and Mary both uttered words of prophecy.

v. 37 *“If any thinks he is a prophet”*

If anyone claimed (rightly or wrongly) to possess any gift of the Spirit and refused to recognize the Apostolic authority they refused to obey God. (cf. 1 John 4:6).

“or spiritual”

‘The epithet on which the party of Apollos especially prided themselves’.¹⁶ He that hears not the Scriptures is not of Christ despite any claims he may make.

v. 39 *“do not forbid to speak in tongues”* Because of the trouble in the ecclesia over this gift, this was possible (cf. 1 Thess. 5:19). To avoid misunderstanding in regard to his previous comments, Paul adds this qualifying statement. The tongue speaker, as stated above, must have his message interpreted.

v. 40 *“But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner”*

Ecstatic gibberish spoken in a highly emotional state is the exact opposite of the Apostle’s command, as anyone who has witnessed the modern Pentecostal phenomena can testify. To conduct worship “decently” is to make a pleasing impression on all who are right-minded. “In an orderly manner” reminds one of a marching army as contrasted to a mob. The apostle here condemns any ecclesia acting independently of others, as well as a member acting from fleshly impulses without regard to others.

THE SPIRIT IN 2 CORINTHIANS

In this Epistle we find Paul for the first time openly confronting the Judaizing reaction which threatened to obliterate the Gospel. The argument of chapter 3 contrasting the “law” and the “spirit” suggests they were exalting the Law somewhat from the point of view of the Judaizers who went to Antioch (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:12).

This letter is the outpouring of his heart occasioned by the information that he received. It tells us several things in relation to the subject of the Spirit:

- a) The excommunication of the incestuous person and the bodily affliction had its desired result 2:5 - 7.
- b) Paul was not omnipresent or omniscient as some would suggest in 1 Cor. 5:3. This is proven by 2 Cor. 7:6-7.
- c) The exposition of 1 Cor. 12-14 had apparently cleared up the problem because the subject is not raised here.
- d) So that he might exhort them to holiness and good works, he appeals in several places to the fact that they had been given the Spirit. (e.g. 6:14-18; 8:7)

1:22 *“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”*

“Sealed” = Grk. *sphragizo* meaning “to seal, impress” (Y). The aorist is used indicating a completed act at a definite point in time.

“Earnest” = Grk. *arrhabon* meaning “pledge” (Y)

¹⁶ Conybeare & Howson, P. 410.

The word relates to a first installment given in pledge of full payment in due course. (cf. 2 Cor. 5:5). This divine seal was evidenced in the Holy Spirit gifts which validated the Apostle's authority claim by "*signs, wonders and mighty deeds*" (2 Cor. 12:12). But this was only a "tasting" of the "powers of the world (age) to come" (Heb. 6:4, 5). Indeed KNOX gives this idea in his translation: "*And given us the foretaste of his Spirit*". These words cannot apply to us since we have not been sealed by the Spirit in the sense of this verse. (cf. 5:5; Eph. 1:14).

2:13 "*I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus*" Here the word *spirit* conveys the meaning of *mind* and the word *pneuma* is so translated by the RSV. TCNT translates:

"I could get no peace of mind".

While Phillips is obviously a paraphrase, still it gives the idea:

"I was on edge the whole time because there was no sign of brother Titus". (cf. Rom. 1:9; 12:11).

3:3 "*Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*"

In what way were the Corinthians engraved by the Spirit of the living God? By the following:

1. The Gospel which was the *power* of God (Rom. 1:16). This Gospel was conveyed through the Apostles (2 Cor. 5:18-21). This enlightenment effected a metamorphosis - a "*new creation*", (2 Cor. 5:17).
2. By the indirect operation of the Spirit through gifted men in the ecclesia, e.g. prophecy, teaching and revelation which would inscribe the divine instruction upon the fleshly tablets of the heart (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-11).
3. By the influence of Apostolic example (2 Cor. 1:7; cf. 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Cor. 11:1).
4. By the superintending influence of divine providence (Acts 18:10).

In case someone thinks that the writing (Grk. *eggrapho*) was a direct influence of the Spirit, let him or her recall that Proverbs 7:3 indicates that we can do this for ourselves.

*"Bind them (my commandments) on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart."*

"Spirit of God" is without the definite article and is parallel with "the word of God" in 2:17.

Paul uses the words that he does because it introduces the contrast which is to follow between the "Letter" and "Spirit" - the position of the Judaiser and the Apostles.

Close attention to the immediate context is particularly rewarding here and Moffatt in particular captures the fact that Paul is the one who actually does the inscribing:

"You make it obvious that you are a letter of Christ which I have been employed to inscribe... on tablets of the human heart. "

3:6 "*...not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*"

Sometimes “the letter” is understood as the written Bible, and “the Spirit” is understood as a mystical inner influence at work in the believer’s heart. However such an interpretation fails to take into account the context which demonstrates a totally different meaning of these words.

The ministration of the “Spirit” superior to that of the Law

Paul now proceeds to attack the position of the Judaiser by clear contrasts between the temporary, transient design of the Law of Moses (“the letter”)¹ and the enduring, eternal nature of the new covenant (“the spirit”). These contrasts are set out as follows:

THE LETTER	THE SPIRIT
death	new covenant
chiselled in stone	written and engraven on fleshly tablets of human hearts
letter kills	spirit gives life
had a fading splendor	greater splendor
dispensation of condemnation	dispensation of righteousness
transient, fading	permanent
veil retained	veil lifted
bondage	freedom

While the following points are true this does not seem to be the reason why Paul terms the gospel the “ministration of the Spirit”.

1. The early preaching of the Gospel by Peter at Pentecost was preceded by the outpouring of the Spirit (gifts) as promised by Christ. (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-18).
2. Converts to the Truth were instructed by the Spirit, manifested through Spirit gifted teachers, prophets, apostles and tongue-speakers (1 Cor. 12).
3. The Holy Spirit enabled the preachers of the Gospel to attest to the validity of their message by the “signs” - miracles that were performed (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:4; cf. Acts 19:11-12; 28:3-6).

“the letter killeth”

This highly figurative phrase is a beautiful example of the vigour and concentration of Paul’s thought. First the “letter” is put by metonymy for that which is written, the Law; secondly, the law is personified as an active power which can put a person to death; and so, thirdly what is really an indirect consequence of the “law” is attributed to the law as a personal action. Literally, the law results in death because of man’s failure to keep it: but how much more vivid to put it in the active, concrete form, “the letter killeth”.

“the spirit giveth life”

The action attributed to the Spirit can equally well (as death from the law) be an indirect consequence. Literally the Spirit which gives the word and so works on men’s minds is the source from which a new life comes.

The “spirit” is again used metonymically for “*the dispensation of the Spirit*” and relates to the great promise of forgiveness of sins through faith and the imputation of righteousness to life eternal. The dispensation of the Spirit was a “ministration of righteousness” - a better covenant because it was established on better promises (Heb. 8:6).

¹ by metonymy

The glory had a hidden meaning. The spirit-illumination of the face of Moses contained a mystery - God-manifestation (cf. Luke 20:35,36). It was a reflection of divine Glory to show the nature and power of the author of the ministry and the intended object of that ministry - namely the bringing of men and women into divine contact so that they might be the reflectors morally and ultimately the embodiments in nature of the glory. It is certain that the children of Israel had no idea of this and this fact was typified by the veil over Moses' face illustrating their inability to "look to *the end*[†] of that which is abolished."

Their inability to understand was confirmed by the fact that a sanctuary was required that they might have visible assurance of the divine presence.

v.8 "How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"

"Will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendour?" (RSV).

Paul argues in effect as follows: Seeing that the dispensations are different, the "letter" being transient, and resulting only in death, then the dispensation of the "Spirit" - a new covenant which brings life - will be accompanied with far greater splendour. It is of course, obvious that Paul is comparing the physical glory which accompanied the giving of the Mosaic Law with the *moral* glory of the "Spirit".

It is important to view these words from the correct perspective. Paul's thought is not "a ministration *from* the Spirit" but rather a "ministration *about or leading to* the Spirit". This is evident in a parallel phrase "the ministration of righteousness". It cannot be said that righteousness caused the ministration or that it was a ministration *from* righteousness. So likewise condemnation did not bring the other ministration. It was rather a ministration *leading to* death and condemnation.

v.17 "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

PROBLEM:

This is taken to mean that:

- A. We can presently experience the "Indwelling Presence of the Spirit" if we submit to it. "For the present... the Indwelling Presence of the Spirit of my Lord means for me the buoyancy and enlargement of heart, the clarity of vision, the spiritual discernment, the infinite possibilities for transfiguration unto perfection which are realized in Christian liberty¹".
- B. This "abiding presence of the Spirit" gives us liberty from "external codes". "He is now freed from the restraints, the prohibitions and the discipline of an external code² to regulate his conduct... There must be... a realization of *unbounded* liberty¹."
- C. It also guides us depending on how much enlightenment we receive. "The indwelling of the Spirit... confers upon him the God-given right to judge for himself what is the Divine will for him and to follow the dictates of his conscience in accordance with the progressive measure of enlightenment vouchsafed to him¹," He is "accountable only³ to God through His Son¹."

[†] i.e. Christ, which led to Spirit nature for them.

¹ ESSA, P.32-34.

² see Section B, "BASf".

³ Notice the clever way in which this Brother places himself above the Arranging Brethren and the Statement of Faith.

- D. The first century ecclesia (because they had this “indwelling of the Spirit”) displayed “perfect unity and harmony¹” The spirit is a gift that enables us to lead lives of holiness.

SOLUTION:

- A. The verse has nothing to do with “the indwelling Presence of the Spirit”. Rather the word spirit refers to the
- word of God (2:17)
 - ministration of righteousness (3:9).
 - the gospel (4:4)
- Simply it refers to the *Spoken* (3:12) word of the new covenant.
- B. Paul nowhere mentions unbounded liberty or freedom from laws governing conduct. The liberty Paul spoke of here is clearly defined in the next verse. It was the ability to see beyond the Law to the glory of the Lord. Also ‘the one who says, “I have come to know him”, and does not keep His *commandments*, is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ (1 John 2:4).
- C. The statement expressed in Problem C is rubbish! Nowhere in the Scripture can anything close to this be found. The only enlightenment we can have has been revealed and will not be revealed individually again.
- D. This statement (expressed in D above) establishes beyond doubt that the writer of the statement has not got a clue about the first century ecclesias, to say nothing of the operation of the Spirit. Corinth displayed marked disunity!
- carnal divisions (1 Cor. 3:1-4),
 - contentions (1 Cor. 1:10, 11)
 - going to law before the unbeliever (1 Cor. 6:1).
 - incest (1 Cor. 5 :1),
 - heresies (1 Cor. 11:19).

A list of a least 30 things could easily be compiled to show the lack of unity and harmony which existed at Corinth at one time.

One of the purposes of the miraculous *gifts* (not indwelling Spirit) was the edification of the ecclesia. This was obtained by a person exercising the gift for the benefit of others, not himself. The possession of the Spirit did not cause holiness⁴.

Conclusion

Many obviously invalid interpretations of this verse may be given if it is wrenched from the context or from the Bible. We must not be text pickers, nor dreamers.

“*Now the Lord*”. ““The Lord’ means the Spirit” (MOFF) (WEY). The Lord here is the same as in v. 16 where it refers to the Angel of the Presence who bore the title YAHWEH when he appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai. V. 16 is a paraphrase of Exod. 34:34 in the LXX, and this must be born in mind when determining who “Lord” refers to. It can be seen therefore, that “Lord” does not refer to Christ. In Paul’s application of the narrative of the veiling of Moses, the counterpart of “Lord” in the New Covenant is “spirit” which has already been contrasted in v. 6 with the letter of the Mosaic Law.

¹ ESSA,*

⁴ See Section B - “Did not cause Righteousness.”

Paul is clearly saying that “the Lord” of *Exodus 34* stands for or represents “the spirit” in the allegory he is developing. The reflected glory on Moses’ face was representative of the free spiritual fellowship he repeatedly enjoyed with the Angel of the Presence (“the Lord”) (cf. Acts 7:38 and 53).

“is” i.e. means (MOFF) (Wey) or represents - cf. 1 Cor. 11:24 “This is my body”.

“*that spirit*” - “*Spirit*” stands for the “dispensation of the Spirit” of v.6.

In the allegory Paul is developing he says that the Angel of the Presence (Lord) represents “the Spirit” as opposed to “the letter” which Israel saw.

Paul normally uses the Greek definite article with “Lord” when he means Christ and omits it when he means Yahweh. In this passage, only the first “Lord” has the article, and here it is retrospective.

‘Now that Lord (i.e. Yahweh - the Angel v. 16) whom Moses approached, means for us in the allegory the Spirit’.

“*and where the Spirit*” (gen. of apposition.) = “the spirit, that is to say, the Lord” (Companion Bible).

“of” Westcott and Hort (WH) suggest the phrase is “Where the Spirit is Lord”. Here the “of” is equivalent to “that is to say”.

“*the Lord*” (is)

“*(there is) liberty*” In contrast to the fear which Israel had in beholding the reflected glory of the “Lord” (Exod. 34:30) cf. John 8:32; Rom. 8:15.

The freedom (RSV) included the ability to gaze with unveiled face upon the glory of God revealed in Christ through the gospel.

For a summary we can paraphrase the verse:

“The angel of the presence (Lord) represented the real meaning of the new covenant variously termed ‘word of God’ (2:17), ‘ministration of righteousness’ (3:9), ‘the light of the glorious gospel about Christ’ (4:4), ‘our gospel’ (4:3) and in the allegory ‘Spirit’ - God manifestation.

For us of course, the glory of God is revealed in Christ (cf. 4:6) and this replaces “the Lord” in the allegory.

As the train of thought is followed in this chapter one thing becomes clear: neither the term “letter” nor “spirit” can be treated with narrow literalism. “Spirit” does not mean a vaguely defined intention nor does it mean ‘Holy Spirit’. The word stands for that which leads to spirit life and for that activity brought to focus in Christ Jesus.

v.18 “*the glory of the Lord*” - “*the Lord*” here is the same as in v.16 and 17. The message of the Divine allegory does not end with the lesson for the Jew concerning the fading glory of Moses. Paul advances further by saying that “we *all* (by contrast with the solitary figure of Moses), with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of ‘the Lord’¹ are transformed into the same image from glory to glory² even as from ‘the Lord’¹ the Spirit.”

“*transformed*” (changed AV) Grk. *melamorphoomai* = to change ones form (Y) by feeding on food which causes metamorphosis. This food for us is the word of Christ not a mythical ‘spirit’.

¹ YHWH again, but for us now manifested in Christ not the Angel of the Presence.

² Unlike Moses whose facial ‘glory’ faded.

“*Spirit of the Lord*” (AV) should be translated as “(the) Lord (the) Spirit” (NEST, Wey, DIAG, RV)

“The Word ‘Spirit’ is in the Genitive of Apposition (Companion Bible). It would then read “the Lord”, that is to say “the Spirit”.

Weymouth’s translates the phrase as “even as derived from the Lord the Spirit”. This rendering best brings out the identification of “Lord” and “Spirit” in v.17, and is supported by most translations.

To say that ‘we are changed *directly* by the Spirit of the Lord’ is to miss the message of the chapter, which describes how the new covenant is dispensed by qualified ministers (3:6) i.e. the Apostles.

4:6 “*For God...hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

Except for the few apostles who were inspired to write the new testament and those who possessed the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, prophecy and teaching; enlightenment comes (and came) through the written and spoken word.

Paul in this verse is drawing an extended metaphor from Gen. 1:3-5. The light of God’s creating initiated regeneration on an earth that was “without form and void”. Likewise the enlightenment which came from the *spoken* gospel regenerated perishing man. Just two verses before Paul states that the “light” he is concerned about is “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (v.4). It was “by the open statement of the truth” (i.e. preaching, RSV) that this gospel was made known. The same process operates today. We obtain knowledge of Christ by hearing or reading the gospel not by receiving “enlightenment by the Spirit”.

“*We have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts*”(2 Pet. 1:19).

Paul quite often in this epistle employs the royal “we” meaning “I”

“we despaired even of life” (1:8),

“we had the sentence of death within ourselves” (1:9),

“do we need, as some, letters” (3:1).

Moffatt captures this clearly in his translation:

“For God who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness’, has shone *within my heart to illuminate men* with the knowledge of God’s glory...”

If this is the real meaning of the verse then the process on that occasion was limited to *him*. This seems highly probable, as Paul occupied a very special place in the purpose of God. (cf. also 2:15, 16).

v.13 “*We having the same spirit of faith*”¹ Paul quotes from the experience of Hezekiah in Psa. 116:10 (LXX) as having the same disposition (spirit) of faith. Hezekiah was delivered from imminent death as was Paul (2 Cor. 1:9,10) hence he had the same faithful attitude or disposition. Note the allusions to death in Psa. 116: 3, 4, 8, 9, 15.

¹ Hodge suggests that this was the Spirit gift of faith but this explanation does not fit the context. Paul is speaking of personal faith. The language is inappropriate for something given to overcome fear.

“...God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.”

“Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee” (RSV) (cf. 1:22). The Holy Spirit gifts the subject of promise (John 14:26; Joel 2:28-32) had been given as a pledge or guarantee of a later fuller manifestation at the Second Advent. The token fulfillment with the coming of the Advocate and Spirit-gifts (John 14:16; 1 Cor. 12:8-10) was a “tasting” of the powers of the age to come. (Heb. 6:5, 4; cf. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13-14). It was also a pledge of God’s promise to “swallow up” mortality with life.

6:6 “by kindness, by the Holy Spirit,…” The definite article does not occur, and this makes possible the translation of Marshall.

“in a holy spirit”

and GSPD (Goodspeed)

“in holiness of spirit”.

This translation gives the possibility of a totally different meaning to the phrase. The phrase is seen to no longer refer to the Holy Spirit or the Gifts but to an attitude produced by the action of the word in a good and honest heart. It is a developed characteristic, not a gift or an inworking of God’s power. The ultimate source of this attitude is the Holy Spirit but indirectly through the Word.

The Greek allows the meaning that Paul properly exercised the Spirit gifts at his command. However, since the Holy Spirit is given such an inconspicuous place the meaning probably is a “spirit that is holy”.

v.16 “For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM’”¹.

“I will dwell among them” (MARS).

“I will dwell and move among them” (MOFF).

Christ’s body is called a temple, because in him dwelled the *fulness* of God. (John 2: 19). The verse is partially a paraphrase of Lev. 26:11, 12.

In times past He had dwelt in their midst by the Shekinah glory which overshadowed the mercy seat in the Most holy place in the tabernacle. God dwelled in the Corinthians by the Holy Spirit gifts which they had (cf. 1 Cor.6:19).

In the wilderness wanderings the Angel of the Presence (exhibited to Israel by cloud and pillar of fire) was visible evidence that God walked among them.

In the first century there was no visible evidence of God walking among His people (such as there was in Sinai). However, such promises as John 14:23 and facts such as Rev. 2:1 (cf. 1:20) indicate, together with this verse, that God (and Christ) abode with or walked among the ecclesia.

Present application

We do not have the gifts, so it is obvious that God does not dwell in us in the same way as He did in the first century. God dwells in us only through Christ’s words abiding in us and us bearing fruit because of that fellowship (John 15:7,5). We are the temple of God if we manifest Him in our lives. This does *not* mean that God dwells in us by some mystical means through the Spirit². The words of Heb. 1:14 still apply today.

¹ cf. Exod. 25:8; Ezek. 37:27; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:5;

² See Notes on John 17:23.

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit¹”

There may be some disciples who feel that this apostolic admonition is not intended for us. Filthiness of the flesh they may think of as something quite remote, while filthiness of spirit fails to express an intelligible idea to which thought can give attention. However, filthiness of spirit as the Apostle uses the expression can be seen on every side and far too often in the ecclesias. “Of Spirit” means “of mind or heart” as is evident in the following table.

filthiness:-	
of flesh (obvious physical evil)	of spirit (subtle faults of the mind)
tax gatherers and harlots (stealers and fornicators) adultery	Pharisees (Matt. 21:31) (self-righteousness)
those who practice evil (Romans 1:26-32)	everyone that looks on a woman to lust (Matt. 5:27-28)
fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers, (1 Cor. 6:9-10).	those who give approval to those who practice evil
lust of flesh (1 John 2:16).	puffed up or arrogant (1 Cor. 5:2) rejoice in iniquity (1 Cor. 13:4,6).
	pride of life, lust of eyes.

There are therefore, two kinds of sin: those that affect the body and those that affect the mind. Christ’s words demonstrate that filthiness of the spirit is much worse than of the flesh. (See Matt. 21:31).

8:7 “Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.”

Paul is almost certainly referring to the Spirit gifts (cf. “so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift”, 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:13).

“in faith” Likely the gift of faith (1 Cor. 12:9) a prerequisite for performing some miracles (cf. Matt. 17:20).

“and utterance” Grk *logos*. This probably relates to the Spirit gifts of wisdom and knowledge. Note the context of the following:

a) 1 Cor. 1:5 “utterance” = Grk. *logos* cf. v. 7 “so that ye come behind in no gift”

b) 1 Cor. 12:8 - “word (*logos*) of wisdom” and “word (*logos*) of knowledge”.

The RSV translates *logos* in this verse by utterance”.

“and knowledge” (*gnosis*) a Spirit, gift (1 Cor. 12:8). The Spirit gifts were given not only to confirm the spoken, (and later the written word) (Mark 16:20), but also for the “perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). As such, the gifts were able to assist the brethren at Corinth in all diligence. No doubt they had also responded to his exhortation on *agape* in 1 Cor. 13.

¹ see 1 Cor. 7:34 cf. 1 John 3:3; Phil. 4:8.

“For if... you receive a different spirit which you have not received...”

The whole construction of this verse is difficult, but the basic idea is that since you put up with a man who preaches another gospel you should therefore put up with me (Paul) because, after all, I was the one who betrothed you to Christ.

This false Apostle is a deceitful worker (11:13) when he says to you that you can receive different spirit (gifts) than those which you have received.

12:18 *“Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps?”* The Corinthians had only to think first of Paul, and then of Titus, to be reassured that in motive (*“the same spirit”*) and also in action (*“the same steps”*) they were one and the same as men working for Christ.

13:10 *“I write this while I am away from you, in order that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.”*

Paul wrote this epistle so that the Corinthians would examine themselves and correct their errors before Paul came to them. If they did this, then Paul would not have to exercise the gift of miracles of judgement I. Christ had given this power to Paul for edification. From the Corinthian's point of view it may have looked like the gift caused destruction but their view was incorrect, because the gift could only be exercised for good. Christ would not sanction an unjust decision, or clothe the arm of man with supernatural power to inflict unmerited punishment.

v.14 *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”* (RSV).

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes taken to mean that “those who have ‘the Spirit’ in some mysterious way are on the track and all others are not.

SOLUTION:

1. The Bible nowhere speaks of a fellowship in which only those who have the Spirit are a part. The claimant is only assuming what he must prove.
2. There was only *one* fellowship in the first century - *“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship₂, and in breaking bread and in prayers.”* Acts 2:42.
Here by the Spirit's guidance was begun a fellowship based on the gospel₃

¹ See Section D - “Miracles (of judgement)”.

² This is further emphasized by John. This last survivor of the apostles makes reference to this fellowship. It is essential to note his pronouns:

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3).

The “we” who have “seen” and “heard” can be no other than the apostles, the chosen witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. The “we” and “our fellowship” was the apostles' fellowship. Others were introduced into it by accepting their gospel. In this way, fellowship was established with the Father and Son.

“Grace, love and fellowship” are the blessings sought by Paul for the Corinthians. As Paul puts it they come from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but John speaks of fellowship through the Apostles. Paul thinks of the divine source - the Holy Spirit which guided the Apostles; John thinks of the human instruments - the apostles who were guided by the Spirit in founding the fellowship.

³ J. Carter, TCM, Vol. 92, P. 448. James Norris in NFCE interprets the above verse as “that fellowship established by the work of the Holy Spirit”. (P.3). This “can be taken as an allusion to the fellowship which acceptance of the Spirit's teaching undeniably and inevitably brings”, TCM. Vol. 93, P.251.

3. Fellowship with the Spirit is not possible since the Holy Spirit is not a person.
4. The interpretation of the phrase “fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (RSV) depends on whether the genitive case is subjective or objective. Both are possible grammatically. The following examples illustrate how syntax can affect the meaning.
 - A. “The preaching of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 16:25).
Subjective: The preaching *by* Jesus Christ.
Objective : The preaching *about* Jesus Christ.
 - B. “Zeal of God” (Rom. 10:2).
Subjective: Zeal shown *by* God.
Objective : Zeal *towards* God.
 - C. “The Love of Christ” (Eph. 3:19).
Subjective: The love Christ has *for* us.
Objective : The love we have *towards* Christ.

The first two examples are objective genitives, and the third a subjective genitive.¹

This conclusion is based on an evaluation of the contexts of the passages.

In the passage under consideration, the first 2 phrases are clearly subjective genitives, namely

The grace Christ had granted them
and the love God had shown towards them.

It is necessary to render the third phrase in the subjective also.

“The fellowship *established* by the Spirit” because of Point 3.

Paul was in effect praying that the Holy Spirit power might continue to promote their fellowship together²

5. Even if it be conceded that the correct interpretation is “a fellowship formed by those who had the Holy Spirit” (and it is not) then it must also be admitted at once that the Holy Spirit that the Corinthians had was the power to work miracles as can be seen from 1 Cor. 12:7-11.

This manifestation ceased as Paul said it would.

We cannot, therefore, use this verse as justification to claim present possession of the Spirit in a non-miraculous sense.

¹ H. Sheppard, TCM, Vol. 96, P. 273 and quoted in TEST, Vol. 43, P. 260.

² “It is a fellowship men enjoy with each other as a result of the Spirit’s work” (TCM, Vol. 92, P. 448).

THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS

Paul uses “flesh” to refer to “the will of man” rather than the nature we all inherit. He uses “spirit” referring to “the new life” lived in accordance with the revelation (in spoken form) of God through the Spirit.

For example in 4:29 Abraham followed his and Sarah’s inclinations and ideas in begetting Ishmael; in begetting Isaac he believed and acted in accordance with God’s instructions.

In Galatians Paul uses ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ with this special meaning to prove that Jews cannot inherit the things promised to Abraham simply by natural descent while giving in to the lusts of the flesh. The Christian Jews (who did not keep the Law (6:13)) were trying to influence Gentiles to be circumcised ‘in the flesh’ so that they and their Jewish teachers could escape persecution (6:12). The Judaism these Jews were offering was really a thinly disguised paganism with its loose morals (4:8-9).

Paul, therefore, uses the terms ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’ in these circumstances.

3:2 “Did you *receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?*” (NASB)

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes linked with Gal. 4:6 to bolster the theory that the real believer still can receive the Spirit in his heart if he has sufficient faith.

SOLUTION:

1. There is little doubt that some of the members of the ecclesias in Galatia, were present at Pentecost and received some of the Spirit gifts² as Peter promised they would. (Those of Phrygia were Galatians.)
2. Two interpretations of this passage must be rejected at once: i.e.
 - A. that the Spirit refers to some mysterious experience which cleansed their hearts and worked inner righteousness³ in the recipient.
 - B. that the “Spirit here referred to is that which is begotten in a person by the spirit word⁴”

The question which Paul asks is a rhetorical one in which the answer is obvious. Here was an experience that all would remember well. It was unmistakable proof of divine approval and this is the basis of Paul’s use of it to demonstrate that it was wrong to go back to the Law. Since the experience was something that was obvious to all both theory A and B above must be rejected.
3. Because point 2 must be obvious to all the problem is answered. There is no evidence in the verse for the “Spirit” idea contained in the problem.

¹ see CLTG, P. 10, 11 and map at Acts 2. It would be highly probable that some of the Phrygians were included in the 3,000 people that “were added” that day.

² No doubt others had received the Spirit gifts at the hands of Paul. See Acts 19:6 where some Ephesians received the gifts in this manner. It is suggested in v.5 also: (“provides” is in the continuous tense.)

³ cf. Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness”.

⁴ SEME, P. 10.

4. The above points are made conclusive by v. 5. The “Spirit” that Paul is talking about was capable of working “miracles among you”.
5. The verses say nothing about the Spirit today; they refer only to what the Galatians received in the first century.

v. 3 *“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”¹*

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes wrongly taken to mean that perfection can only come by “receiving the Spirit in an experience.”

SOLUTION:

1. This verse says the very opposite. Whatever they had received had not caused perfection nor had it assisted them in that direction. Rather, Paul had to rebuke them because they were striving to obtain perfection “by the works of the Law” (v.2) that is by the flesh. (v. 3).
2. The Galatians had begun by “hearing with faith”¹ not by receiving an effluent from heaven.
3. The “Spirit” in this verse probably refers to two things:
 - A. The gospel³ (“hearing of faith”) v. 2
 - B. The Spirit gifts promised by Peter in Acts 2:38, 39 (“Received ye the Spirit”).
4. This verse supplies a similar contrast to that found in Romans 8. The contrast is between fleshly thinking and spiritual thinking. The Corinthians also, manifested fleshly thinking after they had received the Spirit gifts and had been taught to think spiritually.

v.5 *“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”*

PROBLEM:

It is sometimes assumed that the “He” of this verse refers to God or Christ. It is then claimed that if we can have sufficient faith today we also can receive the Spirit which causes “growth and inner zeal, etc.”

SOLUTION:

1. Zeal for God and emotion† are often confused. Emotion is not evidence for zeal and zeal is not necessarily characterized by visible emotion.

¹ NASB

² cf. Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness.”

³ cf. CLTG, P. 62 “The contrasted ‘Spirit’ and ‘flesh’ stand here for the grace and blessing of life by the gospel, and the way of fleshly ordinances. The words describe the two sources of their life.”

† See notes on 1 John 4:4 and footnote 1 there.

2. “Growth” in the truth is the result of us being instructed in the *word* and using this source as the basis of purging sin from our lives.

Peter said that we start as babes on the milk.

“As babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).

Paul shows us that we must partake of the *meat* of the word so that

“by reason of use their senses (are) exercised to discern both good and evil².”

There is no other source that can cause growth. Those that claim additional revelation place themselves in the same category as the Pope and the Mormons.

3. The word “He” refers to Paul. Consider the following evidence.
- A. The language used in this verse to determine motive is inappropriate for the High and Holy One of Israel who inhabits eternity.
 - B. Translators have clearly placed their bias on this verse by capitalizing the “he” or substituting “God” for the text which reads “The (one) therefore supplying³” etc.
 - C. Bullinger describes the word *epichoregeo* (ministereth) as “to furnish upon i.e. besides, in addition, supply further, super add.” Paul had given the Galatians the Spirit in addition to the outpouring received at Pentecost⁴.
 - D. Paul worked “miracles among” them, thus demonstrating that God was with him. Paul’s remarkable conversion with which they were all familiar gave the answer to the question - by the hearing of faith.

v.14 “*Christ... having become a curse for us... in order that... the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*” (NASB)

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes used to support the theory that we are promised the Spirit today, and it is only our lack of faith that prevents us from having it.

SOLUTION:

1. Paul, in this chapter, is showing that the principle of *faith is* superior to law and that Abraham, who was given the promises, was never under the law. He then goes on to demonstrate how that the promise of the Spirit (which is the blessing of Abraham) comes to the Gentiles through Christ.

² Heb. 5:14

³ MARS.

⁴ This agrees with the notes on v. 2 in footnote 2. Paul is dead and cannot “minister to you the spirit” in any form.

2. The “blessing of Abraham” is stated in v. 8
 “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU” and refers to justification by faith in God’s promises.

The “*promise of the Spirit*” refers to the “seed” (v.16), “that is Christ” and “the inheritance” (v. 18) of the land. If we are “Abraham’s offspring” then we are “heirs according to promise” (v.29). If we are *heirs* then obviously we have not received the promise yet. Nor has anyone else¹. To do so we must become spirit (i.e. immortal) beings.

3. Why is it then called “the promise of the Spirit?” Because the Spirit was the agent employed by the LORD in making it known to Abraham and by Spirit is meant YAHWEH (the agent by the figure metonymy² is put for the principle). Similar usage is found in the following:

“The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue... Yet *he* hath made with me an *everlasting* covenant” (2 Sam. 23:2, 5).

“The Lord God and His Spirit, hath sent me” (Isa. 48:16).

“Let him hear what the Spirit says” (Rev. 2:7).

4. The fact that Paul and the Galatian Believers (v.2) had the Spirit gifts as an earnest or down payment of the full *future* outpouring; is not the dominant theme nor does it seem that Paul alludes to this at all in this verse. The object of Paul’s letter was to combat Judaism.

4:6 “*And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!*”(RSV).

PROBLEM:

It is claimed that here is evidence that God gives the Spirit to his Sons today as always.

SOLUTION:

1. This verse does not mean we must have the Holy Spirit before we can approach the Father with this intimacy any more than “God sent forth His Son” means Christ was in heaven and was bodily sent forth. Literal language has its place but not here.
2. The meaning of the verse may be elucidated by the correspondence of the ideas contained in the table following.

¹ “These all died in faith not having received the promises.” (Heb. 11:13).

² Figures of speech are employed by God to emphasize a point. For example, when God is called the “Fear of Isaac” it denoted that He was the God of Isaac and also One whom Isaac revered.

By speaking of the “promise of the Spirit”, Paul indicates that the God who had confirmed Paul’s gospel, was the same one who by His Spirit had revealed His will and purpose in the past. It was the same Spirit that would make possible the fulfillment of the promise. cf. CLTG, P. 79.

SON	SONS (adopted)
God sent forth His Son i.e. by the operative power of the Holy Spirit the Son was sent forth	God sent forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts. i.e. by the power of the Spirit ₁ word the spirit (mind) of Christ is fashioned in men. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. (Eph. 2:10)

3. The Spirit of his Son was that tender, respectful, obedient love that Christ manifested to his Father. It was that strong intelligent confidence in the Father's love that he appreciated and leaned upon. Because we look upon God in that light, we too can turn to him with the cry, "Abba, Father₂" "The titles also combine Jew and Gentile in a common salvation to the Father on high₃."
4. The Lord's prayer underlines all the love and respect contained in the words "Abba, Father." It is made up of nine parts:
 - 3 petitions that reveal our utter dependence upon Him,
 - 3 requests that express our love for God, and
 - 3 statements that express His exalted position as Father.

v.29 *"But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh"* Ishmael was born because of fleshly impulses in Sarah. This illustration refers to the Jews.

"persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit", Isaac's birth was initiated and made possible by God working a miracle on Sarah's womb. Those born according to the Spirit in the allegory refer to the Disciples of Christ. (cf. v.28).

"so it is now also" The natural Jew persecuted the Spiritual Jew even at that time.

5:5 *"For we through the Spirit, by faith are waiting for the hope of righteousness"*. "Through the Spirit" can be misleading. There is no definite article, and as on many other occasions in Paul's writings, notably Romans 7 and 8, the spirit denotes that which is the new life in Christ. It was this new life of faith which caused them to have hope that they would be declared righteous (2 Tim. 4:8).

¹ The process was:

- a) revelation by the Spirit to the Apostles
- b) Word spoken by the Apostles
- c) the word was written by the N.T. prophets.

² see notes on Rom. 8:15.

³ Galatians, Scripture Study Service, P. 17.

*“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh”*¹. Spirit is an idiomatic expression meaning the “new life in Christ”, whereas “flesh refers to fleshly thinking - not to flesh itself. This struggle is adequately displayed in Rom. 7. This conflict goes on in every disciple. Yet we have the example of Christ who waged successful campaigns in the warfare against “flesh”.

v.22 *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”*.

PROBLEM:

It is sometimes claimed that these “fruits” are gifts of the Spirit or gifts of God.

“All who have been baptized into his name have let the Spirit influence their lives, but the Spirit must be given the opportunity to take root and grow. Paul... writes of a singular composite fruit of the Spirit... God is the giver of these *gifts*”.²

SOLUTION:

1. Nowhere in Scripture is it stated that these are gifts of the Spirit. The gifts defined by Paul are “the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretations of tongues.” The two lists are mutually exclusive.
2. A slight shift in emphasis makes a very great difference in meaning in this verse. If we say that these are attributes developed by giving the Spirit given “word” the opportunity to take root and grow within us, then we have biblically explained this verse.
Paul uses the words “flesh” and “spirit” in the same way here as he does elsewhere. “Flesh” refers to fleshly thinking and “spirit” to the new way of thinking that is in accord with God. Fleshly thinking and spiritual thinking are the contrasts Paul develops in v.19-24.
3. God can (and does if we ask for it) assist us to bring forth these fruits indirectly by the ways of providence but it is simply not true that God imposes these attributes upon us in the form of direct gifts.
4. Paul uses much the same type of language in Eph. 5 :9-13. There “works of flesh” are termed “unfruitful works of darkness” and “fruit of the spirit” is termed “fruit of the light”.

Those who follow the “Light of the World” and develop attitudes based on the “light (gospel) of life” will bear the fruit mentioned in this context. Those bearing sanctified fruit will receive at “the end aionian life” which is “the gracious gift of God”. (Rom. 6:22, 23).

¹ cf. TCM Vol. 81, P. 49, 62, 76.

² ESSA, P. 20.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

PROBLEM:

These verses are sometimes linked with v.18 to try to uphold the theory that we must possess the Holy Spirit before we can be led of the Spirit. We must open our heart, let the Spirit come in and cleanse us.

SOLUTION:

1. The words do not mean either:
 - A. the Holy Spirit gifts.
 - or
 - B. some mystical divine effluent causing righteousness.
 Working miracles would not have helped them overcome the problem they had. Theory B is incorrect because if this was the case why the need for the exhortation?
2. Possession of the Holy Spirit in any of its mortal manifestations did not cause righteousness¹ or correct doctrine. No doubt those of Galatia possessed the Spirit Gifts as much as those of Asia² and of Corinth. They, however, were being seduced by:
 - A. Judaisers 5:1-3
 - B. another gospel 1:6-7
 - C. works of the flesh 5:15, 26.
3. The “Spirit” here can be defined as the “words of Jesus³” or the truth. The word “Spirit” is used because the teaching of God (which if obeyed leads to the fruits of v.22) came to prophets and apostles through the Spirit⁵.
4. To walk in the Spirit is to obey Christ’s words in our daily walk.

To be led of the Spirit is to let God’s word dominate our thinking to the point that it determines our actions.

“In verse 16 Paul had spoken of ‘walking in spirit’, the reference being to the individual walk in the way of life. In verse 25 he uses another word (but translated by the same English word) which denotes a walk in relation to others: “to walk in line”; hence the idea of marching, and with perhaps the suggestion of discipline that is involved in its use as a military term. “If we live in the Spirit”, if the new life is our personal environment, then “let us also march in spirit”; let our united activities be animated by the same principles⁶.”

¹ cf. Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness.”

² The letter to the Ephesians was possibly a circular letter meant for all of those in Asia.

³ John 6:63

⁵ cf. Rev. 2:29 “the Spirit with”.

⁶ CTLG, P. 132.

“...the one who sows to the spirit”.

As in Gal. 5:17, Rom. 8 and others, this usage of spirit is an idiom, meaning “the new life in Christ”. This new life springs from the incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. 1:23).

“shall from the Spirit reap eternal life”

Spirit here is the same as above. The newness of life, if persevered in and nurtured, produces a character having in God’s mercy some basis for perpetuation. The reaping is not wages and we are not worthy of it, but in God’s mercy we will receive it.

v.18 *“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Amen”*

Philemon 25.

The doxologies here are a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (synecdoche). The meaning is “mind” but refers to “you”. This is evident by comparing the other doxologies of Paul

1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 6:24;
(esp.) Col. 4:18; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18;
Titus 3:15; Heb. 13:25.

THE SPIRIT IN EPHESIANS

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, was less encumbered with pastoral cares than, for example, in his first letter to Corinth. This enabled him to explain the Ministry of the Spirit in sublime detail to the contemporary generation and for those who would experience the result of it in later generations.

One key word in Ephesians related to the subject of the Spirit is the Greek verb *pleroo* (translated “to fill, to be filled”). Paul does not use the phrase “baptism in Spirit” in Ephesians but he uses *pleroo*, which is linked with the meaning of *bapto*¹ in its secondary sense as employed in Acts. It should be noted that *pleroo* is a cognate of *pletho*, the word used in Acts 2:4 to describe the baptism in Spirit of the Disciples.

The Father’s Gifts to His Children (4:1-16).

There was a real danger that the Spirit gifts which they had received would detract from the unity which was necessary in the Truth. This was the experience of the Corinthian ecclesia (1 Cor. 12) and Paul hastened to prevent a repeat performance. In the fourth chapter we have a detailed explanation of the gifts so that the reason why they had been given would not be lost sight of.

The following points are covered:

- a) the unity of the family of God (v. 1 -6).
- b) origin of the gifts (v.7-10).
- c) the nature of the gifts (v. 11).
- d) the reason for the gifts (v.12-16).

Ephesians is very logically presented and on a very high spiritual level. The latter seems to be the reason why the Spirit is mentioned so much. The logical progression may be summarized as follows:

- a) Prayer that the Ephesians might receive the additional Spirit gifts of wisdom and knowledge so that they could reflect the fulness of God. (1:17, 23).
- b) An exhortation not to follow the spirit of disobedience, but to remember the hope that they were now related to - “a habitation of God”.
- c) Paul prays that they might grow to maturity.
- d) In Chap. 4 he explains that the gifts had been given to assist them to that end.
- e) In Chap. 5 he demonstrates what the fruit of the Spirit should be.
- f) Chapter 6 presents a mature person who is able to successfully fight against spiritual wickedness without the help of the Spirit gifts.

The progression is from childhood, to maturity, to being a soldier for Christ.

There may seem to be a contradiction between Paul’s prayer in 1:17 and chapter 4. On the one hand Paul prayed that they would receive more gifts, yet on the other hand it seems they already had an abundance of the gifts. The solution lies in the fact that chapter 4 does not describe gifts that they already had. These were inter-ecclesial offices, but not necessarily offices that existed at Ephesus before the time of the writing of Ephesians.

¹ See Section B - “Baptism of the Spirit”.

“in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed¹ with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes cited to try to demonstrate that we have the Holy Spirit as a seal of approval and if we do not have it then “we are none of His”. It “is an indication of the *present* promised power of the Father of all, close at hand, in the hearts of those who will receive him”.²

SOLUTION:

1. The order should be carefully noted. The verse does not say that they received the gospel by being given the Spirit. Christ did not think into their minds the gospel nor were the Ephesians intuitively led to belief. Rather the order was:
 - A. “after *listening* to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation “(v. 13).
 - B. “having also *believed*”
 - C. only then “you were sealed”.
2. “Earnest” = Grk. *arrhabon* = pledge³, instalment⁴. It was similar to our “deposit” or down payments. It was not a continuing subsidy. It is, therefore, not reasonable to cite this passage in claiming “continued possession of the Spirit”.
3. The word “until” has misled some into thinking the spirit gifts would continue to the day of redemption. The word is “unto” as most translations certify, i.e. “with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession.”
4. Because the first century believers had this seal, there is no reason for us to suppose we should have it since Paul tells us the Spirit manifestations were “powers of the age to come.” (Heb. 6:5).
5. This Holy Spirit power was therefore, an earnest or tasting of the fulness to come in the time of the kingdom.

v. 17 *“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is wrested by some to mean that God gives them the Spirit (which is then possessed by them) which intuitively leads them in wisdom and/or revelation.

SOLUTION:

1. A contextual exegesis of this verse is the only correct one. It seems clear that Paul is reflecting on his experiences in life and that he now prayed that the Ephesians would experience what he had. He prayed thus for two reasons:

¹ “The word ‘sealed’ in the Greek is a mercantile term that referred to the distinctive mark used for identification of ownership. Thus, when Christians exercised their Spirit gifts in public they showed to the world that they bore the stamp of God”, TEST, V. 43, P. 228.

² NTFE, Part 2, side 2.

³ (Y) and NASB. It was a guarantee (2 Cor. 5:5. RSV), cf. 2 Cor. 1:22.

⁴ MOFF

⁵ NASB margin

- i. That the Ephesians should be to the praise of the glory of Christ even as he had been.
 - ii. Since their manifested faith and love was evidence that their emotions had been effected by the gospel (“the eyes of your heart having been enlightened¹”), Paul wanted them to experience *epignosis* and wisdom in the ecclesia just as he had advanced in his life in Christ. (1:8).
2. Paul was praying that the Ephesians would receive:
 - i. The gift of the “word of wisdom” (1 Cor. 12:8).
 - ii. The gift of “revelation” which probably the apostles, prophets and teachers had. (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26, Eph. 4:11-14).
These gifts would enable the Ephesians to become nature in his absence as defined by verses 18 and 19.
 3. This verse cannot be applied to anyone today because the Spirit gifts are not available.

PRESENT APPLICATION

God, in his mercy, provided the written word for our edification. We do not have these Spirit gifts which Paul prayed the Ephesians would receive (“childish things”, 1 Cor. 13:11); but we have that which is “mature”. This is all that we require by way of revelation.

v.23 “*the fullness*” Grk. *pleroma*. This is a derivative of *pleroo* used in this phrase also. These words clearly link with the Lord’s promise of “baptism in Spirit” (Acts 1:4) which in its fulfilment is described in Acts as being “filled with Holy Spirit”. cf. John 1:16 and notes there.

“*of him*” i.e. Christ. The fulness of Spirit in Christ was in turn “poured out” on believers, so that they were “filled with Holy Spirit”.

“*that filleth*” = Grk. *pleroo* (cf. 3:19; 4:10; 5:18; Acts 2:2; 13:52) where this word clearly is associated with the Spirit gifts.

“*all in all*” This phrase occurs in 1 Cor. 12:6 RV, NASB “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh *all things in all*”. J. Thomas translates this verse “the fulness of him who filleth all things - all Spirit gifts - in all the spirituals”†

Christ had “filled” his ecclesia, baptizing it in Spirit, as the miraculous sign that it was his “body”. Here is no vague, mystical charisma. Paul affirms instead that the “filling” was an extension of Christ’s own resurrection and glory, a pouring out of the same miraculous Spirit power by which Christ had been raised from the dead and lifted into heaven. (v.20-23).

¹ This is a parenthetical expression (ROTH, NEST, MARS, DIAG).

† TCM, Vol. 13, P. 99.

“For through him we both have access in one Spirit, to the Father.” “In whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the spirit”

PROBLEM:

These verses are cited by some to show that we have the Holy Spirit now; that it is a present possession and that unless we do we cannot have proper access to the Father, because we are not truly His.

SOLUTION:

1. Would anyone suggest that God did not answer the prayers of those Samaritans (who believed Philip and were baptized) until they received the Spirit?

No, of course not! But there is still a better example than that. Take Cornelius. God told him through his angel, before he was either baptized or had the Holy Spirit:

“Thy... prayers are come up... before God;” but Cornelius had no Holy Spirit at that time. Dismiss from your mind, therefore, that God answers only the prayers of those who have the Spirit.

2. If it is insisted that “spirit” always refers to Holy Spirit then look at Eph. 2:2. Is this the Holy Spirit? “God forbid!” Cf. James 4:5.
3. The verse clearly says that it is through him (Christ) that we have access. It is, therefore, not because of any present possession of Holy Spirit that the access occurs. The verse can be translated “for it is through him that we, the Jews and Gentiles, united in one spirit, (mind) are now able to approach the Father.” (TCNT) “The word access (Grk. *prosagoge*) = *properly*, the introduction, a technical term for presentation to a royal presence³.”
The idea is that those united in one mind, (that mind being energized by the Word) both Jews and Gentiles, have the opportunity of being presented before the throne of God through Christ.
4. How does God hear our prayers? By His Spirit probably. But this does not require us to “possess” it. Paul, however, in this verse is not describing the medium of transmission but the Mediator. The Greek does not say “by” but “in one Spirit.”
5. When will v. 22 be realized? When this spiritual temple is erected:
“Ye are *being* built together into a dwelling place⁴.”
Only when all the saints are gathered together after the return of Christ will the saints be immortalized and be fitted into their prepared place.

¹ Let it be remembered that there is no capital S on Spirit in the Greek text.

³ SEME, P. 40 (cf. Eph. 3:12).

⁴ MARS, P. 763.

(The mystery) “*is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*” Paul points out in this context that the mystery (of the Gentiles being included as fellow heirs with the people of Israel) was communicated to him and the other apostles “by the Spirit”. Paul shows that he had been particularly commissioned for this work, and had been specially endowed with the “gift of the grace of God” (Holy Spirit) for this purpose (v.2-8).

v.7 “*I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*”

PROBLEM:

This verse is seen by those who claim that they have the Spirit as a present possession as an indication of “the effectual working of the Spirit convincing the believer of the reality of the love of God₁.”

SOLUTION:

1. How was Paul to convince the believer of the reality of God’s love? Verse 8 supplies the answer. By preaching! Paul did not give the-believer the Spirit to do this. He spoke the Gospel confirming it with miracles₂.
2. Paul had the Holy Spirit but that did not convince him of the reality of the love of God. He saw this reality long before on the road to Damascus as a light from heaven and heard it as the voice of the glorified Jesus.
3. This Holy Spirit power that Paul had was given so that *other* men might gain salvation.

“Unto me is this grace given... that I should *preach* among the Gentiles... and to *make all men see*...”

It was not given for Paul’s personal benefit.

v.16 “*He would grant you, ... to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;*” NASB

PROBLEM:

“If such verses have any meaning at all, then it is abundantly clear that the REAL children of God have in all ages received the gift of the Holy Spirit†.”

SOLUTION:

1. Here the figure of speech metonymy* is used. “Spirit” stands for what the Holy Spirit has produced (i.e. the Word of God.)
2. The object of this strengthening was that they might
 “not lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf” v.13.
 The Spirit was never given to prevent trial.

¹ TBSM, Vol. 1, P. 69.

² cf. 1 Cor. 2:5 “that your faith might rest in the power of God.” RSV.

† AMAX, P. 3.

* where the cause is put for the effect.

3. Paul's thought can be seen in the parallel passage in Colossians: "Strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, *unto all patience and longsuffering* with joy." (1:11)
4. Paul's prayer was that they might be invigorated to exploit their potential by the mental absorption of the word³ of God⁴."
5. If all they had to do was receive strength directly from God by the "indwelling of the spirit" then Paul would not exhort the Ephesians to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (6:10) nor would Paul have listed those 6 pieces of armour⁵ and called them the "whole armour of God."
6. Paul was not exhorting them to seek from God some mysterious inner strength. He rather prayed that the inner man (the new man in Christ Jesus, which had been conceived and brought into existence by the Word of God which issued forth from the lips of the Spirit filled apostles, prophets etc.) might be strengthened by the same Spirit; that the Spirit of God working among the brethren of their ecclesia might so minister to their needs, supplying them with the milk and Christ dwell, firmly and securely, in their hearts by faith⁶. Verse 5 sets this pattern.

Notes

The new man (2:15) in Christ must be looked after and further nurtured in the things of the Truth. So Peter, having directed us to consider the way in which we have been born again by the Word, proceeds to exhort, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). Paul in Heb. 5: 13-14 speaks of the need to progress from milk to "strong meat" which is to be found in the oracles of God.

Paul's prayer in Eph. 3 on behalf of the Gentiles is along these lines. He wanted the Father, who had brought them into His Family (v.15) by His word, to strengthen this "inner man" by His Spirit.

Peter says that the newborn babe is strengthened by the word; Paul prays that they might be strengthened by the Spirit. Do they contradict each other or is there two sources of strength, or is there a third alternative?

They do not contradict each other nor are they saying that there are two sources of revelation for us. The Holy Spirit gifts were given to the brethren of the first century in order that they might be guided into all truth (among other things). Paul in 3:5 spoke of new revelation being

³ for them probably spoken but for us written.

⁴ SEME, P. 53.

⁵ a) "loins girded with truth"

b) "breastplate of righteousness"

c) "gospel of peace" covering the feet.

d) "shield of faith"

e) "helmet of salvation"

f) "sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

⁶ TBSM, Vol. 1, P. 105. (John Allfree).

given by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets. Peter, likewise speaking of the word which brings about the new birth says:

“This is the word by which the Gospel is preached unto you.”

Of this gospel, in the same chapter he says that it was

“preached... with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” (1 Pet. 1:12,15).

Paul is not praying that God would grant the believers some mystical inner power of righteousness. He is praying that the “inner man” which had been conceived by the Word, developed by the Word, quickened by the Word and brought into existence by the Word, might now be further strengthened by the Word as new revelation and instruction fell from the lips of the Spirit gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers - that the Spirit of God working among the ecclesias of those days might so minister to their needs, supplying them with milk and then with the meat of the Word, that they might be truly strong and in the Apostles words, “Christ... dwell in (their) hearts by FAITH” (v.17).

The notes on Eph. 4:7-14 demonstrate that this working of the Spirit in the Ecclesia was only for a limited period of time. For believers today to expect God to strengthen them in some mysterious way by His Spirit is to expect what God never promised at any time and to misunderstand the workings of the Spirit in the first century. It was not the Spirit that saved men even then, but the Word of God which fell from the lips of those who spoke as they were moved by God’s Spirit. Much of what these N.T. apostles and prophets spoke had been written down and classed with the O.T. as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16).

The Word of God, in its written form, is no less powerful than when it fell from the lips of the Spirit gifted apostles and prophets. Only in the pages of God’s Word can we hope to increase our appreciation of divine things to the extent where we become rooted and grounded in love and “able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge” (v. 18, 19).

To seek such direct from heaven is to take the first major steps down the road to that brand of apostasy which we see in the Evangelical churches¹.

v.17 *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith”*

The definite article “through *the* faith” is present. This is an idiomatic expression for “the gospel understood and obeyed”. Today we use “the Truth”. “The Faith”, understood and obeyed, causes us to be born again into a state termed “in Christ”. This is a new way of life in which obedience and fellowship go together. The closest we could come to a definition of “Christ” in this verse is “a Christ like attitude”.

v.19 *“that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”*.

The Ephesian believers formed an ecclesia in which the Spirit was miraculously alive, not only with “signs and wonders”, but also as the source of revelation and knowledge of Christ’s

¹ This is largely quoted from TBSM, Vol. 5, P. 78.

redeeming works in atonement as well as in coming kingly glory. As yet, Scriptures from the Christian prophets¹ were few because their work was at first largely oral within the Ecclesial assembly.

Against such a background, it is not difficult to understand what Paul's message was intended to mean when he wrote v. 16 - 19.

Paul's prayer for the Gentiles is that ultimately they might be "filled with all the fulness of God". The key word is "all". The contextual location of the above phrase demonstrates that this is the end result, not something which achieves the result.

Although the Apostles could say at the time of the writing of John's gospel

"And of His fulness we have all received, even grace upon grace"²

they could not claim that which was said of Christ:

"For in Him *all* the fulness of Deity dwells" (Col. 2:9) (cf. also Col. 1:19).

The full realization of this prayer must wait, for not until mortality is swallowed by life will we be free from "sin that dwelleth in (us)." But there must be progress now. Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith. The inner man must be built up so that he can demonstrate his existence by works of love. Characters must be developed in all dimensions that resemble God Himself as revealed through His Son.

v. 20 *"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within₃ us."*

PROBLEM:

This is a favourite verse of those who claim that "God guides and directs a Brother's thoughts by the power of His Spirit, so that the words spoken are in accord with the divine plan and purpose"⁴.

SOLUTION:

In the next chapter, Paul proceeds to consider this power - the Holy Spirit gifts, as they operated in the first century Ecclesias. He shows clearly that those special gifts were given for a specific purpose and only for a limited time.

To claim the power described in the problem is to claim the Spirit gifts of prophecy by which revelation was given.

The result of that power - the written word - still works. This "word of God is alive and powerful" and can perform the same function as the spoken word did in the first century.

a) The unity of the family (4:1-6)

v. 3 *"Endeavouring to keep the unity of₅ the Spirit in the bond of peace"*. This was an appeal by Paul to maintain that bond which bound Jew and Gentile together, even the peace of Christ (2:16-17).

¹ see Section E.

² John 1:16, NASB.

³ Although the Greek preposition "en" is translated "in" well over 1,000 times, it is rendered "among" on 114 occasions (Y) and this seems to be the most appropriate rendering here.

⁴ F. B. "The answer to Prayer" TBSM, p. 69 (A letter to the editor).

⁵ "that comes from"?

The diversified gifts, distributed among ecclesial members (4:7-12) were Christ's appointed means to enable them to attain this unity; "be no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, but speaking the truth in love... may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (4:13-15).

However the gifts could be misused in such a way as to bring discord rather than unity, so Paul first labours the unity that should abound in the family of God.

This usage of spirit may be idiomatic, meaning (as in verse 13), "the unity of the faith".

4:4 *"There is one body and one Spirit"* This reminds us of Paul's word picture in 1 Cor. 12:12-27 about the body (especially v. 12):

"for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

In that chapter also we have Paul emphasizing that the various gifts come from "one and the selfsame Spirit" (v. 11) (cf. also v. 13, 4).

b) The Origin of the Gifts (v.7-10)

v.7 *"But unto every one of us", "each"* (RV)

This demonstrates the widespread nature of the spirit gifts at Ephesus.

"is given grace"

The word *grace*₂ here refers to the Spirit gifts mentioned in this context.

"according to the measure of the gift of Christ"

This ties the acceptance by God of the completed work of Christ on earth with the outpoural of the gifts.

Paraphrased v. 7 reads

"But while we have all these in common, to each of us severally a special grace has been given, in the measure with which Christ has bestowed his gift on each₃."

PROBLEM:

It is claimed that perhaps some of the manifestations of the Spirit at Ephesus were not miraculous; thereby inferring that the claimant to present possession of the Spirit need not demonstrate his claim.

SOLUTION:

1. The "gifts" were given "unto men" so that they could be:

- a. apostles
- b. prophets
- c. evangelists
- d. pastors and teachers.

All these were gifts that could be demonstrated and there would be no doubt who possessed them.

² See Section B - "Grace".

³ F.F. Bruce, Expanded Paraphrase of the Epistles of Paul, (Paternoster Press), 1965.

2. The gifts were given for three stated purposes:
 - a. “for the perfecting of the saints”
 - b. “for the work of the ministry”
 - c. “for the edifying of the body of Christ”
 and were given only for a specific period of time,
 i.e. “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” (v.13 RSV).
3. These gifts were not given for the benefit of the individual who received them, but were to be used to make the ecclesia “mature”.

v.8 *“he (Christ) gave gifts to men.”* It is apparent that there is a difference in the wording of Psalm 68:18 (“*hast received⁴ gifts*”) and its quotation in Ephesians (“*gave gifts*”). The Levites were a gift from God to the nation of Israel, (Num. 8:19; 18:6) but they were also a gift to God (Num. 8:16).

It is possible that the Levites were the “gifts”, alluded to in Psa. 68:18
 “that the LORD God might dwell among them”.

The thought here in Ephesians is exactly parallel to that in Exod. 31:1-6. In both instances the LORD “gave” special men, recipients of special gifts, for the work of building the habitation of God, that the Lord might dwell among them.

There are five stages mentioned by Paul in v.8-10 and the thoughts expressed by him have their origin in the Exodus deliverance. The following stages are noted by Paul:

- (1) he descended first.
- (2) he ascended.
- (3) he led captivity captive.
- (4) he received gifts for men.
- (5) that God might dwell among them.

We may briefly trace these stages in the Exodus deliverance:-

- (1) God DESCENDED first (manifest in the Angel of the Presence).
“Yahweh said, I am come down to deliver them” (Exod. 3:7-8).

The people were delivered, and their Deliverer descended into the depths of the Red Sea leading in procession those who had been subject to Egyptian bondage.

- (2) HE ASCENDED ON HIGH - the deliverance for which He came down having been accomplished and the people led to Sinai, we read that “Moses went UP unto God, and Yahweh called unto him out of the mountain...” (Exod. 19:3).
 God had ascended up on high.

- (3) HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE - “*Thou hast led in procession a body of captives*” (ROTH). Concerning Israel in Egypt it is written, “The children of Israel sighed by reason of BONDAGE, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the BONDAGE” (Exod. 2:23).

From this bondage God, having descended into the lower parts of the earth, delivered them and ascended up on high.

⁴ The Hebrew ‘LAQACH’ can carry the meaning of receiving or giving. (Y).

(4) He received (GAVE) GIFTS FOR (TO) MEN - see (5).

(5) THAT YAHWEH MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM. Concerning the tabernacle we read - *“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them”* (Exod. 25: 8). The way in which this tabernacle was built is very relevant - *“See, I have called by name Bezaleel... I have filled him with the SPIRIT OF GOD, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship”* - i.e. so that they could make the tabernacle (Exod. 31:2-3. See also verse 6 and ch. 35:30-35).

Thus at the time of the Exodus, Spirit gifts were given to men so that they might prepare a dwelling place for God.

We must note that:

- (a) God could not dwell among His people until the dwelling place existed.
- (b) Spirit gifts were given so that the tabernacle might be built.
- (c) It is evident that once the tabernacle was built, the need for these gifts ceased - there is no evidence that when Bezaleel and his companions died that these gifts were passed on to others.

The work of God through the Lord Jesus and the ecclesia was typified by the events of the Exodus and the tabernacle in the wilderness. This is the basis of Paul’s remarks in Ephesians 4. We may trace out the same process in the work of God through His Son:-

- (1) HE DESCENDED FIRST (manifest in the Son).
“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath VISITED and redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68).
“God with us” (Matt. 1:23).
“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world” (John 16:28).
- (2) HE ASCENDED ON HIGH
“Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father” (John 16:28).
“No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven” (John 3:13 RV).
- (3) HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE - (He led in procession a multitude of captives).
“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death (the “deep” of Rom. 10:7 cf. Red Sea in Exodus) he might... deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to BONDAGE” (Heb. 2:14-15).
- (4) HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.
“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear... the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:33-38).
- (5) THAT GOD MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM.
 The purpose of the gifts.

“He that... ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.”

This “fill (*pleroo*) all things” refers to the pouring out of the Spirit gifts at Pentecost in fulfillment of John 14:16. Paul’s use of this verse in this context is conclusive of that. Christ ascended, and shortly afterwards the Spirit gifts descended to compensate for his physical separation from his disciples. It should be noted that Paul’s reference to Christ’s “filling all things” after his ascension is immediately followed by a catalogue of the Spirit-gifted offices of the first century.

The *all things* of this verse are therefore to be identified with those first century believers who were privileged to be “filled with the Holy Spirit” and who constituted the body of Christ, their head (Eph. 1:22-23). This filling of the ecclesia was to serve not only within their own lifetime, but also afterwards because they left on record the revelations and teachings that they wrote. This was and still is an all-sufficient provision for bringing the body of Christ to maturity.

c) The Nature of the Gifts v.11

See Footnote 4 of Grace in Section B which relates this list of inter-ecclesial offices⁵ to other New Testament occurrences.

The table below shows how every major work that Jesus promised the “Comforter” would perform was fulfilled in the giving of the Spirit gifts.

EPH. 4:11	JOHN 14 - 16
apostles	“bring all things to your remembrance” (14:26). “testify of me” (15:26).
prophets	“shew you things to come” (16:13).
evangelists	“reprove the world” (16:8).
pastors	“guide you into all truth” (16:13).
teachers	“teach you all things” (14:26).

d) The Reason for the Gifts (v. 12-16)

v. 12 “for *the* perfecting of the saints”

The gifts were not given to personally benefit a saint, but were given so that he may assist other saints to be perfected. This is an important point⁶. The NASB has:

“for the equipping of the saints for the work of service”.

“for the work *of* the ministry” The Acts and Epistles record the accomplishment of this work by the Apostles, Prophets and teachers.

⁵ See also Section E - “Inter- ecclesial Offices.”

⁶ See Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness.”

“for the edifying of the body of Christ”

This was a major aspect of the inter-ecclesial offices of 1 Cor. 12:28.

“until we all attain to the unity of the faith” (NASB)

The ecclesia was then in its infancy. The gifts were given so that it might attain the maturity of full grown manhood. When this was achieved the purpose of the gifts would cease. As a result of the labours of the Spirit gifted brethren, this was accomplished.

Ecclesias were established throughout the “world”, elders were appointed, early problems were solved and the New Testament written. The work having been accomplished, there was no further need for the gifts. The ecclesial tabernacle having been built, the gifts were no longer required and therefore ceased.

“unto a perfect man” Perfect is the Greek *“teleios”* meaning mature. It is translated “men” in 1 Cor. 14:20 and “full age” in Heb. 5:14. It is parallel to Paul’s expression in 1 Cor. 13:10.

Note that it says “perfect man” not “perfect men”. Jesus is the head of this perfect man and the ecclesia is his body. The whole forms “the fulness of Christ”. However v.17 demonstrates that their cooperation was required for this to materialize. The mere possession of the Spirit gifts did not guarantee it. In order for the gifts as manifested in the offices of v.11 to produce this unity, the faithfulness of the ecclesia was required. This is an important point and leads to our next thought.

The application today

Although we have no Spirit gifts today, we have in the Word of God the distilled essence of those gracious words which fell, under Spirit guidance, from apostolic lips. This written word is just as powerful in the form we have it as it was when the apostles spoke it or wrote it with their pen. This Word is “living and powerful”. It can make us “no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” By the Truth which the risen Lord has communicated to us through the Spirit filled apostles of the first century, the ecclesia today can be “joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth” (4:16).

v.30 *“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”*

PROBLEM:

It is sometimes claimed that this does not refer to the gifts of the Spirit but to inner peace, joy and righteousness, in the “heart”.

SOLUTION:

1. The context demands that it refer to the gifts and/or to inner-ecclesial positions, established by Christ giving these gifts unto men.
 he gave some apostles, and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers².” (Eph. 4:11)

¹ see Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness”.

² cf. 1 Cor. 12:28.

2. The context also demands that it did not cause peace, etc.
“let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you” (v.31) cf. 28, 29.
3. Grieve “the Holy Spirit” meant to abuse or misuse the gifts or to act in a manner which was unholy.
4. Israel did the same thing in the days of Moses:
“In all their affliction He (God) was afflicted and the angel of His presence³ saved them... But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit.”³ (Isa. 63:9-10).
5. Literally, the Holy Spirit is impersonal - it is power. But it is used by metonymy for God who had given it. The use of the figure suggests that God is grieved at the lack of response to His goodness (shown by the fact that they had been sealed by this power). The Ephesians lacked response in that they still spoke “unwholesome words”.

5 :9 “*For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness...*” (AV).
“fruit of the light” (NASB, DIAG, RV). (See also ASV, WEY, PHI, NEB).

The contextual and textual evidence is that the word should be “light” not Spirit. Contextually, Paul is contrasting light and darkness, v.8, 11, 13.

v.18,19 “*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*”

PROBLEM:

These verses are used by some as proof that they have the “Spirit” as a present possession.

SOLUTION:

1. The verse does not prove anything of the sort. It can not even be established that all the saints at Ephesus had the Spirit gifts.
Chapter 4:11 is a strong evidence that only some[†] received the Spirit and only for a specified time*. Once the Scriptures were completed this need ceased.
2. These verses can not be interpreted as literally as the claimant of “present possession” would like, e.g.
 - a. A person who speaks to themselves is today regarded as being a bit *mental*.
 - b. It is not literally possible to sing and make melody in one’s heart. Singing is produced by the action of wind on vocal chords, mouth, tongue etc.
Making melody is the process of playing notes on a musical instrument.

Verse 19 does not require or allow this exactly literal interpretation and neither does the phrase “be filled with the Spirit”.

³ cf. notes on the *Parakletos* (John 14-16 Additional notes).

[†] Although every member did not receive Spirit gifts, all received the benefits which flowed to the ecclesia from the gifts (cf. v.7).

* v.13 “Till we come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.”

3. The contrast³, as most commentators recognize, is not between “wine” and “Spirit” but between “drunk” and “filled”. The contrast is
- i. “be not drunk”
 - ii. “but be filled”.

This important fact leads on to the next point.

4. It seems very likely that the figure of speech termed metonymy⁴ is employed by Paul in the words “be filled with Spirit”. The cause or instrument was the Spirit⁵, the effect or state produced was that of being “filled” with the word. This filling found expression in singing and speaking to others the message of joy.

5. How did the Spirit produce this state of being filled? Was it a power that physically entered the Ephesians or was it a revelation given to the Apostles and elders who in turn spoke, sang and *wrote* what had been revealed to them? The record shows that it was the latter⁶. The parallel passage in Colossians helps us to understand Paul’s figure here.

“Let the *word* of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord” (3:16).

6. In this context to be “filled with Spirit” means to be filled with “the word of Christ⁷” to such an extent that it causes joy in our hearts. Instead of the excitement of wine, we must have the exhilaration that comes from the ardent love of the word of God.
7. No doubt Paul is alluding to the gross misconduct that was evident at Corinth during the Lord’s supper, (1 Cor. 11:20, 21).

6:17 “*And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*”

PROBLEM:

Some very weird ways of looking at this verse have been aired recently.

- e.g. “let it be noted it is the armour *of God*, not something which we ourselves can provide. For any one of us to claim that we can use that sword by our own intellectual skill... is worldly presumption.”

“The reference is not to the Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture”.

³ “The contrast is not between the instruments but between the states - between two elevated states, one due to the excitement of wine, the other to... enlightenment.” EXPO P. 363.

⁴ “When one noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation”. Bullinger “Biblical Figures of Speech” (London: Eyre and Spottiswoods, 1898).

⁵ Carter agrees with this. “The Spirit is the filler, and through the Spirit they become full” CLTE, Carter, P. 140, cf. Psa. 119:11: “I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee”.

⁶ cf. Section B - “Enlightenment”, and ch. 4:11-16.

⁷ Paraphrased: “Seek the fullness which the Spirit gives.” NBCR, P. 1120.

SOLUTION:

1. God has given us the sword and he has given us the intellectual capacity to understand, to obey and to wield that sword. These facts are not worldly presumption but facts which those filled with worldly presumption generally ignore.
2. The only people promised the sort of ability mentioned in the second part of the problem were the first century believers who had the gift of the 'word of knowledge'. The work of the *Parakletos*, as demonstrated in the notes on John 14-16, was both miraculous and limited in time.

Those who pretend to fight the type of warfare mentioned by Paul without their Bible are deluded indeed. We may be sure that the sword of the Spirit is the whole of God's word, not "individual" parts of it.

3. 'The Word is the "sword of the Spirit" by a metaphor which contemplates the Spirit in prophets and apostles in ancient times, as a warrior. By this, men may be subdued to God - that is enlightened, purified and saved, if they receive the word into good and honest hearts, and "bring forth fruit"... By this they become "Spiritually minded" ... The present days are barren days, as regards the Spirit's direct operations.'¹
4. This sword is active and energetic and more cutting than any two edged sword.

6:18 *"Praying always with all power and supplication in the Spirit"*

PROBLEM:

"There are only two sources of spiritual knowledge for us... the first is the Bible... The second source is... prayer."

SOLUTION:

1. The above statement disagrees with the BASF₂ and all the evidence of the Bible₃. It may have been true in David's case and in the case of the New Testament Prophets, but it is not part of the fabric of our lives.
2. Prayer in Spirit is sincere, hearty, and true. "In spirit" means "in a way which is acceptable" and is based on an understanding of God and the Gospel.
3. There is no reason to suppose that the prayer was for knowledge.

¹ Christendom Astray, R. R., TCM. 1940, P. 100.

² See Section B -'BASF'.

³ See Section B -'Prayer, Divine Assistance', etc

THE SPIRIT IN PHILIPPIANS

Paul had gone to Philippi because of the vision he received by the Spirit gift of prophecy: “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” By divine intervention through angelic agents, God caused an earthquake that set the prisoners free. This miracle convinced the Jailor and his household of the need to be baptized. (Acts 16:14-26). These miraculous events involving Philippi are evidence of the operation of the Spirit there.

1:19 *“For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance¹ through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”*

Through the Spirit, Christ had clearly indicated that Paul would experience hardship. In addition, the Spirit revelations were a controlling influence in his journeys. (cp. Acts 13:2; 16:6; 18:9; 20:23; 21:11; 23:11)

These revelations, which guided his steps, would have strengthened Paul who would realize how closely Christ was involved in his activities.

v. 27 *“...You are standing firm in one spirit”*,

The rest of this verse defines this phrase. The idea is that in singleness of mind the ecclesia should act like a team of athletes united together as one body bending its whole life energy “for... the gospel.” Phil. 4:1 describes this as standing “fast in the Lord”.

“with one mind striving together for the faith”

The two phrases above are parallel so that “spirit” = “mind”.

2:1 *“If any fellowship of the Spirit.”*

PROBLEM:

This is sometimes cited as proof of the present possession of the Holy Spirit.

SOLUTION:

1. This fellowship which was formed by the work of the Holy Spirit[†], was much more than having a share of the Holy Spirit². This fellowship finds practical expression in working together, worshipping together, and if need be, suffering together. This is evident in the following:
“that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Phil. 3:10 NASB.)
2. We cannot have fellowship³ with the Spirit because the Spirit is not a person.
3. The RSV rendering may help: *“Any participation in the Spirit”*:
Here the idea is that of participation in the blessings and the advantages which God through His Spirit has revealed.
4. “Fellowship of the Spirit” has been the joy of believers in all ages:
“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another.” (Mal. 3:16).

¹ Grk. *soteria* = safety, soundness (Y) salvation (AV), release (MOFF).

[†] cf. notes at 2 Cor. 13:14.

² That was only a temporary part of fellowship (Eph. 4:13) and was not a requirement of it. (cf. Acts 8:12, 15).

³ see 1 John 1:3-4; Acts 2:42 which express a fellowship of the Spirit.

*“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”
 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*

“Work all the more strenuously at your salvation with reverence and trembling, for it is God who in his goodwill enables you to will this and achieve it” (MOFF).

“For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure”. (RSV).

“For God is the *one* operating in you both the to will and the to operate *on behalf of* the (his) goodwill.” (MARS)

PROBLEM:

This verse is often quoted along with a string of like passages without explanation or contextual consideration in an attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit directly controls our ‘will’ so that we ‘do’ things which will give God pleasure.

SOLUTION:

1. It is said that anything can be proved out of the Bible by such tactics as above, i.e. “Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him”. “Jesus said, Go and do thou likewise”.
2. The context shows it is a partnership. We must work (v.12) and God must work (v. 13). “We are labourers together with God¹.”
How?
Paul plants.
Apollos waters.
God gives the increase.
Our part is insignificant but necessary². The planting and watering must be done if there is to be an increase.
3. For God to work with us, in⁴ is and through us, and for us to possess the Holy Spirit, are two totally different things³.
4. God, in the “ways of providence”, works in this manner. There is no reference here to the believer possessing the Spirit gifts.
5. Those who use this verse to try to demonstrate present possession should be pressed hard for an explanation of Eph. 2:2
“the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”.
6. The emphasis lies on God for two reasons. First in the matter of salvation they have to do *not* with Paul⁵ (much more in my absence), but with God. Second they must not enter upon this momentous course lightly, but with “fear and trembling”, for if they miss the goal they have set aside the purpose of God (in their lives).
7. Ephesians 1:3-14 demonstrates clearly the workings of the partnership mentioned in point 2.

¹ 1 Cor. 3:9 cf. Eph. 2:10.

² See ‘An analysis of the Christadelphian Responsibility to Preach the Truth’, R. Abel. (Summary points of a three-night series at the Christadelphian Church Street Bible Class, Nov. 1967).

³ See Section B - “God working through Men” which clearly demonstrates this.

⁴ The word ‘in’ can be translated ‘among’ (cf. MARS at 2:5).

⁵ “Not in my presence only” suggests that the Philippians slaked off a bit when Paul was not around.

GOD:

- blessed the Ephesians with every spiritual blessing (v. 3)
- chose them in Him (v. 4)
- adopted them as sons through Christ (v. 5) (the kind intention of His will).

EPHESIANS: that more may give praise to his glory (v.6).

GOD:

- provided redemption through Christ's blood (v. 7)
- forgiveness of sins because of His abundant mercy.
- made known unto us the mystery of His will (v. 9)
- with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of times (v. 10)
- we have obtained an inheritance (v. 11)

(because He works all things after the counsel of His will).

EPHESIANS - to the praise of His glory (v. 12).

GOD - provided message of truth, the (13) gospel of salvation.

EPHESIANS - believed (13).

GOD - sealed them with the Holy Spirit of promise.

8. The assumption expressed in the problem is that God does this directly by His Spirit. Other verses, however, show that it is through His word that He works in us:
"the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."
 (1 Thess. 2:13).

Conclusion

We can see from this that the Spirit does not directly control our will. By preaching He shows us how sinful we are and how merciful He is. We can accept or refuse this offer of salvation. Any spiritual desire can be said to be God working in us because He has provided the message that creates the desire. Spiritual work is the result of God manifestation. (cf. also Rev. 4:11).

3:3 *"we . . . worship God in spirit"* (RSV)

Our interpretation must take into account that Paul is contrasting "Spirit" with "flesh".

Worshipping in flesh is to do as he lists in v. 4-6. It was to trust in:

- a) circumcision of the flesh
- b) fleshly descent from Israel
- c) keeping the Law
- d) zealous acts against "heresy".
- e) works.

Worshipping in spirit is the recognition that "the LORD hath redeemed his servant" (Isa. 48:20). (cf. John 4:24; Rom. 2:29; 1:9). Such worship is free from such externals as place (Jerusalem) and law. If the heart is right in our worship, then we worship in spirit (sincerity, Josh 24:14).

4:23 *"be with your spirit"*

cf. Gal. 6:18 notes and Luke 2:40 footnote 2.

⁶ The word "also" implies two stages:

- (i) preached and heard (no profit).
- (ii) mixed with faith it profits the hearer because. it is living and active. (Heb. 4:2,12).

THE SPIRIT IN COLOSSIANS

The interpretation applied to Ephesians re Paul's use of "filling" and "fulness" as having reference to the infant ecclesia's "baptism in Spirit" is corroborated when applied also to Paul's use of the terms in Colossians. The idea of "fulness", and the use of various cognate forms of the Greek verb *pleroo* (to fill up) are marked features and this points to a parallel use of identical thoughts and expressions as in Ephesians.

1:8 Epaphras *"also informed us of your love in the Spirit"*

The "spirit" is a New Testament idiom meaning "the new life in Christ".

v. 9 *"We... pray... that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"*.

"filled" = Grk. *pleroo*. This word tells us that Paul is again speaking of the Spirit's miraculous ministry in the first century ecclesias. As in Ephesians 1, he follows up this prayer for the more liberal bestowal of the spirit gifts upon the Colossians by references to the cross (v. 20), by which Christ made the new dispensation possible; and to the resurrection (v. 18), by which God gave a powerful token that the new creation had begun. This prayer was realized because Paul writes in 2:10 "and in him ye are made full" (ASV). The source of the filling was Christ "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3). The principle function of the Spirit was to guide the infant ecclesia by the gifts into "all truth" (John 14), and ultimately, to commit those "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" to paper for the enlightenment of others who did not have these Spirit gifts.

v. 27 *"which is Christ in you (Gentiles) the hope of Glory"*(AV)

The Apostles had received the gospel through the Spirit gifts, which they in turn taught to the Gentiles. "Christ in them" was not any mystical indwelling but a clear reference to the enlightenment of the Gentiles to the purpose of God, which gave them *"the hope of glory"*.

1 & 11 THESSALONIANS

These letters were the outcome of Paul's first expedition into European territory, in which Paul was the subject of very particular and direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

They were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6). "And a vision appeared to Paul... a certain man... saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (v. 9).

Paul was moved by this vision to go to Macedonia. This resulted in the gospel being preached at Thessalonica. Paul used the gift of miracles to give the people much assurance that he spoke the words of the Lord. This caused them to receive the word in much affliction. They were then given the Holy Spirit (4:8) which in turn enabled them to prophesy and to discern the spirits (5:20,21). However, it seems that some did not like the messages, which came by the gift of prophecy and wanted to "quench the Spirit" (5:19).

1 Thess. 1:5,6 *"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance... and ye became followers ... of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit."*

PROBLEM:

It is claimed by some that:

- A. the gospel is:
 - (1) the word and
 - (2) the Holy Spirit
- B. a person who accepts the gospel receives (directly from God) joy, which is one of the "fruits of the Spirit."

SOLUTION:

- A. (1) The verse is describing how the gospel *came* to the Thessalonians. Paul is *not* describing what the gospel is. This is an important point and eliminates the problem A. above.
 - (2) Paul's letter to the Corinthians is clearer. "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Cor. 2:4). Paul spoke and he demonstrated that he had the Spirit to prove that he was speaking the word of God.
 - (3) The gospel came in:
 - "word" - what Paul spoke.
 - "power" - the regenerating influence these words had on them.
 - "Holy Spirit" - by means of miracles the Apostles were able to demonstrate that the words they spoke were from God.
 - "assurance" - the confidence the missionaries manifested in their message.
- B. (1) "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith..."¹ but these are not received directly from God in the form of the Spirit. They are the products of a person who "walks in the Spirit" and are the opposite of the

¹ Gal. 5:22.

works of the flesh. A person walks in the Spirit by obeying the word of God, thereby conforming his character to that of the Creator.

- (2) The RSV and the NASB margin translate the phrase
“with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit”.

The idea here is that the Holy Spirit - indirectly through the gospel caused the joy. It was the gospel which caused the Thessalonians joy and that Gospel was revealed to the Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit².

- (3) Joy and suffering in the Truth are inseparable. Suffering generally produces the attitude of joy.

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials” (James 1:2).

“Sorrowing yet always rejoicing” (2 Cor. 6:10).

“In much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy” (2 Cor. 8:2).

“Jesus... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2).

- (4) The written word of the Spirit can convey that same joy to us as did the spoken word in Paul’s day.

4:8 “God... hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit.”

PROBLEM:

It is claimed that this verse can apply to us today.

SOLUTION:

1. Paul was writing specifically to the Thessalonians in about AD 52 from Athens. While these letters were written for our edification not all things therein apply to us.
i.e. We are not “ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia” (1:7). We are not persecuted by the Jews of “Judaea” (1 Thess. 2:14,15).
2. Paul had the Holy Spirit and no doubt some at Thessalonica did also but these manifestations of the Spirit were limited to the first century and were not in evidence since that period because they accomplished their purpose.¹
3. The emphasis is that those who ignored Paul’s teaching were despising not Paul but God, because Paul spoke by the Holy Spirit. The word “us” probably refers to Paul, Silvanus and Timothy (1:1).

¹ cf. Section B - “Outpouring Limited and Special”.

² By a common figure Metonymy where the cause is put for the result.

“Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings.”

PROBLEM:

This passage is grasped at by those who claim to have the Holy Spirit in an effort to point out that those who do not accept their claims are in fact disobeying scripture by trying to suppress such (false) claims.

SOLUTION:

1. The power must be there before it can be quenched. It was in Paul’s day but it is not now¹.
2. The “Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”² and could be restrained by them³ as Jeremiah could restrain the Holy Spirit⁴ (but not comfortably).
The Thessalonians proposed to extinguish the false by suppressing all manifestations of the Spirit. But this deprived them of needed ministrations of the true. Paul counselled them not to do this - but to test all teachers and to retain the good (v. 21). The punctuation of the RV shows that v. 19 - 22 are all one statement dealing with one subject.

“And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved...”

1. It is likely that in this passage “spirit” means “mind”† and “soul” means “life”. The expression is, therefore, synonymous with the whole person. Consider the following:
 - a) Spirit, soul and body are synonymous with the whole person since the preceding words
 “and the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*”
 imply a parallelism between the two expressions.
 - b) The word “spirit” is used elsewhere by the Apostle Paul as synonymous with the mind:
 - i) “For I verily, as absent in body but present in spirit” (1 Cor. 5:3).
 - ii) “That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind...” (Phil. 1:27).
 - iii) See also 1 Cor. 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1.
2. A corpse is a body without life. An idiot is a body with a soul (life) but only with an improperly functioning spirit (mind).*

2 Thess. 2:2 *“neither by spirit”*

This means ‘neither by one coming to you claiming to be endowed with the Holy Spirit gifts of authority’. It is parallel to the idea “deceitful spirits” in 1 Tim. 4:1 and, the same thing as is mentioned in 1 John 4:1-3.

¹ Where is the claimant of the Holy Spirit who can prophesy today? This is the gift that was being quenched as is evident from the second part of the verse.

² 1 Cor. 14:32.

³ “If a revelation is made to another sitting by let the first be silent”. (1 Cor. 14:30, RSV).

⁴ “His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of bearing” (20:9).

† PHI renders pneuma by “mind”.

* AWSA, P. 111.

These liars claimed “that the day of Christ was at hand”. Paul demonstrates that these “spirits” were false because there must be a “falling away first and a manifestation of the man of sin”. The “spirits” teaching was false just as their claims to having the spirit were. Today it is the same. False claims accompany false teaching.

v. 8 *“That Wicked... whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth”* (AV). Through the Spirit gift of miracles of judgement† all that needs to be said is the word and the prophecy of Isaiah 11:4

“with the spirit* of his lips shall He slay the wicked”

will be enacted. It is interesting to see how Paul, by the Spirit, opens up that prophecy here.

v. 13 *“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes connected with 1 Peter 1:2₁ to try to demonstrate that we “possess the Spirit”.

SOLUTION:

1. We can see the obvious bias in the AV translation by comparing different translations.
 - a) “of spirit” (RSV margin)
 - b) “in sanctification of spirit and belief of truth” (Diaglott, ROTH)
 - c) “by sanctification of spirit” (MARS)
 - d) “by the consecration of your spirit and by faith in the Truth.” (MOFF)
 - e) “in sanctification of spirit” (NASB margin)
 - f) “in holiness of the spirit₂”

The Greek, “*en hagio pneumatos*” literally translated, reads, “in sanctification of spirit”.
2. Peter and Paul penned the same phrase exactly “in sanctification of spirit₃” so the context and general teaching must decide the issue.

(A) The following structure will demonstrate the meaning.

FOLLOWERS OF THE LAWLESS ONE	THE CHOSEN OF GOD
a) Believed the lie (11)	In belief of the truth (13)
b) Had pleasure in unrighteousness (12)	in sanctification of spirit (mind) (13)
c) Received from God a working of error - their natural punishment (11)	“called by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory.”(14)
d) were doomed to perish (10)	“were chosen to salvation” (13)

(B) This could be restated as follows:

- (1) The apostle shows how salvation is to be secured.
 - a) Holiness of life - “sanctification of spirit.”
 - b) Christian faith - “in belief of the truth.”

In other words (but altering the order) - right faith and *practice*.

† See Section D - “Miracles” (of judgement)

* The word in Heb. is ruach (Y).

¹ cf. notes on this verse.

² Concordant Literal New Testament

³ This conclusion is strengthened in view of the suggestion that Silvanus assisted Paul to write 2 Thess. and Peter to compose 1 Peter.

- (2) He implies that there is the possibility of a fall from grace. He exhorts them in 2 Thess. 2:15:
- a) to “stand fast” (to hold their ground as regards their whole Christian attitude and life.)
 - b) to “hold the traditions” taught by word or epistle. Again, faith and *practice*.
- (3) He prays that they may “continue in the present state of salvation, (present tense) that God will ‘stablish’ them.”
- a) “in every good word.”
 - b) “and work.”
- Once more - Faith (“Word”) and Practice (“Work”)⁴
3. What Paul is saying is that God has chosen them for salvation - and then Paul cites the way the choice operates:
- a) through sanctification of spirit in the development of holiness of mind, and
 - b) belief of the truth by which they were cleansed from erroneous ideas⁵.
4. Even non-Christadelphians accept the idea above.
- (A) i.e. Moffatt says “ ‘of the Spirit’ may be either
- a) wrought by the (holy) Spirit or
 - b) of the spirit (cf. 1 Thess. 5:23, 2 Cor. 7:1) as of the heart.
- The absence of the article is not decisive against the former rendering, but the latter is more probable in view of the context; the process of belief involves a love of the truth and a belief in it (i.e. in the true gospel) which is opposed to *religious delusions*⁶
- (B) “This salvation... has its human conditions: in sanctification of spirit and faith in the truth. God chooses none to salvation apart from these qualifications⁷.”
- (C) “It seems best to take the two phrases as parallel, both expressing not the divine activity but the human response⁸.”
5. The Greek words translated “belief of truth” are unquestionably... genitive of the object⁹. The proximity of the phrase “sanctification of spirit” is such that it ought to be understood similarly¹⁰. “Spirit” would then refer to the state or condition of the believers.
- This is demonstrated by the following
- A. “belief of the truth”
 - subjective: belief the truth *has for* us.
 - objective : belief we have towards the truth.
 - B. “in sanctification of spirit”
 - subjective: sanctification effected by the Spirit
 - objective: sanctification of the (human) spirit
or towards the spirit.
- Obviously A cannot be subjective. It is most improbable that two adjacent Grk. phrases of apparently similar construction are to be interpreted differently.

⁴ A Hall, The Epistles to the Thessalonians 1 and 2

⁶ James Moffatt, EXPO, P. 50

⁸ Professor Beare quoted in TCM, Vol. 94, P. 5.

¹⁰ Findley

⁵ J. Carter, TCM, Vol. 92, P. 449

⁷ Findley, CBSC (1908), P. 155.

⁹ TCM, W. L. Bedwell, Vol. 94, P. 5.

“He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit”

“He” (RSV, NEB, NEST, DIAG). There is no real justification for “God” as in the AV.

“vindicated in the Spirit” Because of his Godliness, Christ, “the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit” being. His claim to be the Son of God was vindicated by his resurrection from the dead. (cf. Romans 1:4).

4:1 *“But the Spirit”* This is a figure called ‘metonymy of the adjunct’ where Spirit is put for God. Probably the message which follows, came to Paul through the gift of prophecy which he had.

“deceitful spirits” “seducing” AV

These were men not only falsely claiming to have the Holy Spirit but also using that claim to lead the ecclesias astray.

v. 12 *“Be thou an example... in spirit”*

“In spirit” is not in the Greek text of Nestle and should be omitted.

2 TIMOTHY 1:14 *“That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us” (RV)*

The Holy Spirit here was one of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10) which Timothy had received in order that the body of Christ might be edified. (v. 6).

It is very easy to see the limited reference this verse has in direct application, as “us” in this context refers to Paul and Timothy *only*.

Timothy had the inter-ecclesial office of “evangelist¹” (2 Tim. 4:5). We recall that Philip the evangelist had the gift of miracles. Due to the position of being the Spiritual leader at Ephesus, Timothy probably had the gift of the “word of wisdom” and perhaps “governments”. (1 Cor. 12:28).

3:5 *“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is wrested by those claiming the present possession of the Holy Spirit. “Christianity without the Holy Spirit is a form of Godliness, but denies the POWER thereof².”

SOLUTION:

1. This is a severe wresting of Scriptures. Those who engage in this activity do so unto their own destruction. This cannot possibly be applied to students of the Word. It applies only to those who are “false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” Paul then declares that those in the verse above are the sort which “creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts”
2. The verse does not refer in any way to “Christianity without the Holy Spirit.” It refers to those without a holy spirit (or holy mind).
3. Feather than referring to “Christianity without the Holy Spirit”, the context (v.8) shows that it was those who attempted to simulate the gifts; just as the pagan magicians attempted to do in Moses time. These men denied the power of the gospel and sought pseudo gifts instead.

¹ cf. Eph. 4:11 and Section E.

² AMAX, P. 4.

“According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ.”

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes wrested to mean that unless we have the Holy Spirit shed on us then we are not heirs of eternal life. We are not on the track if we have not had this experience.

SOLUTION:

1. Most of the confusion surrounding this verse is removed when “*of the Holy Spirit*” is correctly translated as “*by the Holy Spirit*.” The change is small but the emphasis is changed from:
 - A. They had the Holy Spirit within them once but somehow lost it and it now needed to be replenished.
 - to B. The old man (or natural tendencies) were being gradually changed day by day to a new man by the words of the apostles. These words had been revealed to the Apostles *by* the Holy Spirit.

1. B. is a Biblical principle as is indicated in the verses that follow but 1.A. isn't.
 “that by revelation was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief... which in other generations was not made known... as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God... in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known” by “the church”. (Eph. 3:3-10 NASB).
 “God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. 1:2).
2. It *cannot* be demonstrated that Paul was referring to all believers on Crete in v. 6 so how can anyone extrapolate this to mean us? The personal pronouns clearly demonstrate that this was a personal letter from Paul to Titus². Verse 6 refers only to Paul and Titus.
3. Where is the example in Scripture where the direct outpouring of the Holy Spirit actually saved a person? The burden of proof lies with he who asserts. It certainly is not true that the possession of the Holy Spirit caused a man to be renewed³. This comes by the action of the word on the heart.

What then does this verse mean?

“*He saved*” Grk. = *sozo*. “The verb is in the aorist tense which in Greek commonly indicates one particular occasion.” (Expositor’s Bible) i.e. baptism.

¹ NASB

² “Paul”(1:1) “to Titus”(v. 4), “I left you”, “that you”, “I directed” (v.5) Ch. 3:8 “I want you to speak.” Only in the last verse are all included.

³ see Section B - “Did Not Cause Righteousness”.

We must as Peter says: (1 Peter 1:3-9)

- a) “be born again”
- b) be tried to give “proof of your faith”
- c) obtain “as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls”.

We are not saved ultimately until the return of Christ. Paul says we are “heirs according to the hope of eternal life”(Titus 3:7).

“by the washing of regeneration” Grk. = *paliggenesia* = create again (B) This is the same as “He might redeem us from every lawless deed” of 2:14 (cf. Psa. 130:8). We are redeemed “with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18). Paul in Eph. 5:26 explains “having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word”. (cf. 1 Pet. 1:25; John 15:3).

Belief of the gospel plus baptism is what Paul means. We are “created again” at baptism, the gospel having changed our thinking, the water having buried our old man. The rising out of the water is the rising of a “new creature”.

“renewing by the Holy Spirit”

This “renewing”¹ probably has reference to the word “purify” in 2:14. It is growth in the truth after baptism has taken place. It is said to be “by the Holy Spirit” because it was this medium through which Christ revealed his word to the Apostles. (Eph. 3:3-10); Paul in Colossians 3:10-17 demonstrates what renewing entails:

“Put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge”

*“Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing one another,
and forgiving one another...”*

And put on love...”

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”

“be thankful.”

“let the word of Christ dwell within you with all wisdom.”

As has been demonstrated, the phrase does *not* mean the Cretians got a renewed supply of the Holy Spirit because they had lost the old supply.

The “Word of Christ” believed and obeyed² was the renewing influence, not an “indwelling of the Spirit”.

“which he poured out”

This reference back to Pentecost and Joel (cf. “pour out”, Acts 2:17-18,33; 10:45) demonstrates that the gifts are meant. These miraculous gifts enabled the Gospel to be proclaimed, and the ecclesias to be edified, exhorted and comforted. This renewing action of spoken words caused the hearers to be transformed. (Rom. 12:2).

¹ see Rom. 12:2 which contains the only other occurrence of the word ‘anakainosis’ (Y).

² see notes at John 3:5.

THE SPIRIT IN HEBREWS

“We can speak direct to God, and He can speak direct to us, not of necessity either through angelic ministrations or by the Spirit-Word. How does He do it? How does He hear our prayers? By His Spirit, obviously. Gradually over the years, my views have mellowed.”¹

The implication in the above rather loosely worded statement is that God does speak directly to us today. The writer starts off by saying that God “can” and ends up with God “does”. There is a world of difference between the two, and the writer to the Hebrews clearly defines this in his first two verses. Obviously God can, but He doesn’t speak directly to us any more than we see angels today. Angels are “sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” but they do not appear to us. They could but they don’t and that is a major point. God has spoken in times past “by the prophets” and by His Son and through those who “were made partakers of the Holy Spirit”, but He does not speak to us today. God has also kept silent in the past. This is seen not only in the fragmentary nature of the O.T. but also in the fact that the times during which He spoke have been followed by long periods of silence. Thankfully, during these long periods of silence, man was not left destitute, for God’s written Word was available. In the hearts of faithful men this word is “living and active”² (RSV) and is able to create new men and women. So it matters not, therefore, if there be silence from heaven. We have the complete revelation.

“The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple”
(Psalms 119:130).

2:4 *“God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders”*
These signs were visible tokens or marks causing people to understand.

“and by various miracles”

Grk. *dunamis* = supernatural power. The primary purpose in the first century was not to alleviate distress and suffering, but to prove that the one performing the miracles spoke or wrote from God.

“and by gifts³ of the Holy Spirit according to His own will”

Gifts = distributions (mg) and is translated by “dividing” (4:12). God joined with the Apostles in the testimony of this great salvation by the distribution of His Spirit power among them. (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 4:33, Gal. 3:5).

3:7 *“Therefore just as the Holy Spirit says”*

Paraphrased “in the very words of the Holy Spirit”. The Psalm quotation (95:6-8) which follows, is the Spirit’s utterance - through the prophet David - to David’s contemporaries, (these Hebrews) and still, at a greater distance in time, to us. It is as authoritative, and as much a divine utterance as the audible voice at Sinai. That fact demonstrates the power of Paul’s inspired writing; to the Hebrews and to us. (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 10:15-18).

In the Psalm, the pronoun “He” refers back to God. The source of the utterance from David and Paul was, therefore, God through the Holy Spirit.

¹ from an “older brother”, TEST, Vol. 43, P. 196.

² Heb. 4:12, cf. John 6:63.

³ The ability to pass on gifts?

“For the word¹ of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit...”

The exhortation of v.11 is enforced by a reference to the power of the word of God and its effects. This word had come to them in the Gospel preached and in the oracles, which had been committed to and preserved by the Hebrews. It was completely effective to accomplish its purpose, and to condemn them for failure.

“word” is not here a title of Christ (as is wrongly assumed by some), but refers to the spoken and written gospel as is evident from the prior context and the following notes. The context is talking about the gospel:

- v.2 - “good news...word”
- v.6 - “good news... disobedience”
- v. 11 - “same... disobedience”
- v.12 - “word”.

To see the word described similarly see 1 Peter 1:23, 25; Jer. 23:29; Isa. 40:8; 55:11; 59:21; Heb. 6:5; and Eph. 5:26.

“living” This has been illustrated by Paul’s use of David’s words in Psalm 95. In this Psalm God still speaks, for it is still “Today”, and it will continue to be God’s message to men until “Today” reaches its close. It is “living” as a record that God has made, and kept, for our instruction to make us wise unto salvation. Paul says that Gen. 15:6 was not written for Abraham’s sake alone, but for us who believe (Rom. 4:23). If written for us, the word of God is not a dead “letter”, as so many regard it, but it is a living message from God.

Stephen says that even the covenant received at Sinai were “living oracles” (Acts 7: 38). See also Matt. 24:35.

“active” - “powerful” (AV). The “word” is effective to perform that which God designed it to do. It will not return to Him void, but will accomplish its purpose. The word is both active and powerful. It is active in that it produces results and it is powerful in the amazing type of results that it produces.

“of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18).

“...Ye received the word of God... which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

“sharper than a... sword” - the word of God is often likened to this instrument (Eph. 6:17; Rev. 1:16; 2:12).

“spirit” denotes that which is spiritual. cf. Jude 19, 1 Cor. 2:14. The word of God exposes the spiritual things in men. No other book lays so bare the human heart, for no author other than the author of the Scriptures knows unerringly all its hidden mazes.

“able to judge” “The word I spake is what will judge him in the last day.” (John 12:48). A man may examine himself in an endeavor to know himself, but his results will be much quicker and more accurately reached if he is also a student of the word.

6:4 *“For in the case of those who have once been enlightened”* A person can only be enlightened once by the word of God. Those who had heard and understood the message proclaimed but rejected it could not expect to repent later and receive forgiveness.

¹ see Section F - “Word” for additional notes on this verse and a word study on “word”.

“and have tasted of the heavenly gift”

Following the pattern of the promise in Acts 2:38, this heavenly gift was the forgiveness of sins which left the person in a righteous state. This (cf. gift of righteousness, Rom. 5:17) is of course tied to the Lord Jesus since he was the “gift of God” for our salvation (John 4:10).

“and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit”

This was the possession of the power given by God through His Spirit for proclaiming the truth with signs following. This language indicates that the outpoural was almost universal among those of the ecclesia, since it included those who did leave the truth.

v.5 *“and have tasted of the good work of God”*

To “taste” something is not to “eat with fulness”. Perhaps this gives a clue as to the meaning of this phrase and the following. Two of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (which operated on a “tasting” basis) were the “word of wisdom” and the “word of knowledge”. Perhaps to “taste of the *word* of God” means to receive and use these gifts.

“and the powers of the age to come” Those who had received Spirit gifts such as “miracles” and “healings”, and who had exercised these gifts on certain occasions, but who still fell away were about as evil as a person could be. These gifts are more aptly termed “powers of the age to come”, than perhaps such gifts as knowledge.

9:8 *“The Holy Spirit is signifying this”*

Paraphrased “By this arrangement the Holy Spirit brings the fact to man’s notice”. We mark once more the authoritative position assigned to Moses’ writings. Paul says that God, through the Holy Spirit, arranged the structure and services of the tabernacle to have a signification. (cf. Gal. 3:8).

v.14 *“... Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself...”*

Christ, though tempted like us, overcame sin. This perfect obedience is, we believe, expressed by the words “through the eternal spirit”. Paul does not say “through the Holy Spirit”, although he would have expected the use of those words had he meant them. Also there is no definite article in the Greek. Rotherham’s translates “through an age-abiding spirit”. Several times in scripture, the word “spirit” denotes amoral character developed in a person by their application to the principles of the word.

It is called “eternal” because it was of that perfect quality which has abiding worth and which qualifies for a permanent existence. That character was, therefore, made eternal by God.

12:9 *“...shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?”* The word spirit contrasts with flesh, the natural body that we all possess by being born of human parents. The analogy suggests that *spirit* connotes that which is born of God. This is variously expressed in scripture

“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;”

“Of his own will begat he us with a word of truth;”

¹ see Romans 8; 1:4; Gal. 5:16 and Section F - “Spirit”.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit”.

The formative agent employed by God is the word of the truth of the gospel, by which a new mental and moral being is brought into existence. This “new man” is the spirit, of which God is the Father¹.

The phrase ‘is applied to those only of mankind to whom God is related as a Father. Sinners have fathers of the flesh, but they have no Father of their spirits in the sense of the apostle... In order to have spirits of which God can or will acknowledge Himself to be the parent, they must be begotten of the Father according to His will by the word of truth, and then be born of water into His spiritual family. Then... they will be recognized by the Judge of all as perfectly justified human spirits.’² (cf. Num. 16:22; 27:16; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 22:6.)

v.23 *“But you have come....*

to myriads of angels

*to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in
in heaven, and*

to God, the judge of all and

to the spirits of righteous men made perfect³ and

to Jesus, the mediator...”

This breaking of the verse into clauses enables us to see more clearly the various parties concerned. Also the “ecclesia of firstborns” is clearly a different group than “the spirits of righteous men”.

The first probably refers to those in Israel who were faithful; the latter to those who had died “in Christ”.

In actuality the spirits will not be made perfect until the granting of immortality at the Lord’s return.

It is difficult to define precisely the meaning of “spirits” in this passage. “Lives” seems to be a fair approximation. In Heb. 12:9 the writer states: “Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?” This verse appears to allude to Num. 16:22; 27:16. The intent of these references being that God is the giver of life, and therefore must be respected when He chastens or punishes. Therefore “spirits” refers to *lives* or *characters* of persons made perfect.

John Carter’s comments are similar.

‘The word “spirits” carries the thought of... v.9, and in this place can best be understood as “spirits *even* just men made perfect” - “of just men” being in apposition with “spirits”⁴.

¹ J. Carter, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, TCM, P. 162.

² J. Thomas, *Apostasy Unveiled*, P. 69.

³ see AWSA, P. 112.

⁴ CLTH, P. 171.

“If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” AV.

PROBLEM:

This verse is often strung together with others without regard for context and historical background, in an attempt to prove the theory that the Spirit directly increases our mental power to understand the Bible and/or apply it if we ask God to do so¹. It is the subject of many vague and mysterious interpretations, none of which add to our wisdom.

SOLUTION:

1. Are we to understand that a man’s natural or inherited capabilities, his intelligence, skill, genius and general brain capacity will be increased if he asks this of God? If God does this then the parables of Christ become meaningless, for they teach that every man is rewarded for the use he has made of such talents as he possesses.
2. To understand what this “wisdom” is that James speaks of, it is only necessary to look at the earlier verses:

“When you encounter various trials... let endurance have its perfect result... But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God”.

The wisdom in the case is, then, the ability to discern the working of the Father’s hand while undergoing various trials. The highest form of wisdom is involved in this recognition.

How can it be said that God “gives” this wisdom liberally to him who asks for it, seeing it is not a miraculous physical gift which operates directly on our brain? Surely by controlling circumstances and directing them so that we perceive the working of God’s hand even under “manifold temptations”.

We do not then pray for wisdom in the sense of asking for a mental gift or endowment. We pray to be helped to know God and to understand that he is working in our lives.

3. Divine wisdom comes through the channel of the Scriptures, and the man who turns from these, can expect no response to his prayer.
4. James goes on to caution the petitioner about not being “double minded”. The sad thing about so much profession of the present possession of the Spirit is the fact that it is allied with so much doublemindedness² and so little “speaking the oracles of God”.

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”

Since the Greek in this verse is uncertain†, it is difficult to be sure what James is saying. However the AV, NEB and MARS have a similar translation - it makes sense the context and

¹ See Section B “Guidance and Prayer”.

² If this is doubted, then try discussing the subject with a claimant and generally anything but the fruits of the Spirit will be manifest by him.

† Out of 10 different N.T. translations, there are 10 ways of translating this verse!

agrees with Nestle's Greek text. According to Lightfoot, the singular *graphie* (scripture) in the N.T. always means a particular passage of Scripture†. It is suggested without dogmatism that the verse referred to is Gen. 6:5.

“Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

The spirit (heart) of man (or the whole imagination) is only evil continually.

5:14-17 *“Is any sick among you? 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 shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”*

PROBLEM:

“The advice of the Apostle James... is applicable today... and we would encourage its application today... This we believe to be a direct operation of the Healing Power of God in response to faithful prayer from believers, and seeking the assistance of Ecclesial eldership¹.”

SOLUTION:

1. When the context is considered, it is evident that the “sickness” is associated with the “sins” the man has committed. The word “if” can also be translated “though”.
 - A. Examples of how sickness may be inflicted because of sin are to be seen below:
 - (1) In Corinth (1 Cor. 5) a man in the ecclesia was practising fornication with his father's wife. So Paul instructs that this person is to be delivered to “Satan for the destruction of the flesh”. This was probably the inflicting of a disease by the elders because of the man's wanton sin.
 - (2) 1 Cor. 11 -31² gives a much clearer example: “For this cause many are ... sickly and many sleep.”
 - (3) cf. also John 20:22-23; Mark 16:18.
 - B. This reference in James appears to deal with another aspect of a similar matter. Here was one who, initially, had sinned grievously and would not “confess his sin”, and, consequently, suffered from “sickness”. This having produced repentance, he would then “call for the elders of the church”,

† EXPO, P. 458.

^{1*}, (intelligence), June 1971.

² 1 Corinthians, R. Abel, P. 31.

‘For this cause - Paul is stating a cause and effect relationship between the weakness, sickness and death evident in the ecclesia and their profanation of the Lord's Supper. Obviously such a connection could only be posited by divine revelation to him. Is this how he knew the truth of the reports of verse 18?

many are weak Grk.: “asthenes”, “without strength” (Y). The word is used of bodily infirmities (2 Cor. 10:10; 12:7-9; Gal. 4:14-15).

And many sleep - “and some have died” (RSV)

v.32. **But when we are judged** the AN. Translation disguises the fact that the judgment of the Corinthian ecclesia was then in progress. The verb is imperfect indicative (being judged (Marshall)) proving the condemnation was a corrective discipline divinely administered and still proceeding.’

- (who had the Holy Spirit) who would “pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”³
2. It is sometimes argued that the “sick” person was only spiritually sick but this explanation is not without the following problems
 - A. When people are spiritually sick generally they do not want a visit from the elders; rather they reject any such visitation.
 - B. The language⁴ used indicates that this sickness was a direct result of a mental outlook on the truth. The actual sickness was physical but the result of spiritual sickness. This seems to be the reason two different Greek words are used⁵.
 - C. It was not the sick person’s⁶ prayer which caused the saving (as is argued by those who spiritualize this passage) but the prayer of the elders which was instrumental in the saving. I.e. “let them pray over him.”

³ J. S. Thomas “The Holy Spirit and its Work” Testimony 1955, P. 94.

This explanation is based on the precise significance of the Greek. (For an excellent treatise on this passage see “The Epistle of James” by N. Smart ch. 11, p. 184.)

This is also the explanation of Bro. Thomas who says:

‘A woman “bound together with a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years” is said to have been “bound of Satan” or the adversary, for that time; and here restoration to health is termed “loosing her from her bond” (Luke 13:10-17). Paul also writes . . . commanding them to deliver the incestuous brother “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh”; that is, inflict disease upon him that he may be brought to repentance, “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”. Thus he was “judged and chastened of the Lord that he might not be condemned with the world”. This had the desired effect; for he was overwhelmed with sorrow. Wherefore, he exhorts the spiritually gifted men of the body to forgive and comfort or restore him to health. (James 5:14)’. (Elpis Israel, p. 100).

⁴ (a) “save” - is used of healing from sickness and infirmity, in which case it normally appears in the AV as “made whole” (i.e. Matt. 9:21-22).

(b) The proximity of the statement that “the Lord shall raise him up” (the verb is used on several occasions of acts of healing - cf. Matt. 9:5; Mark 5:41) restricts the meaning before us to the healing of the sick man’s physical infirmities.

⁵ astheneo (v.14) - without strength, weak
kamno = suffer from fatigue.

⁶ No doubt his faith was important otherwise he would not call the elders.

3. The advice of James is not applicable today because:
 - a. there is now no divinely appointed eldership as there was in the first century⁷.
 - b. no human today possesses the gift⁸ of healing⁹.
4. We are not suggesting that prayer for the curing of sickness is of no avail. God can and will do this if it is His will. However as is stated above the reference in James 5 is not to ordinary sickness, but to one divinely imposed for sin.
The Holy Spirit was never used to heal everyday cases of sickness with no intent to further the gospel. It was used to further the gospel message by confirming it with signs showing the message was from God.

⁷ This is evident by comparing Acts 20:17 (RSV), Paul “sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders” (Grk. ‘presbuteros’ (Υ)) with Acts 20:28 (RSV) “in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians” (Grk. episkopos (Υ)).

At least this shows that the elders at Ephesus were divinely appointed. No one can claim this today.

⁸ cf. “Spirit Gifts Not Now Available” - Logos.

⁹ To argue that the “gifts of healing” (being a first century manifestation of the Holy Spirit) is not meant in this context is to miss most of the allusions to this type of language in the New Testament.

- a. The only other “anointing with oil” in the N.T. is in Mark 6:13 where the sickness was healed by the apostles who were doing the healing by the gift of healing.
- b. It would appear that James is using the word “oil” as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. See the following passages where “oil” refers to the Holy Spirit given to Christ.

“Thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil gladness above thy fellows.”

Psa. 45:7 cf. Heb. 1:9.

“With my holy oil have I anointed him.” Psa. 89:20.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the LORD hath anointed me.” Isa. 61:1.

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Spirit and with power.” Acts 10:38.

Therefore this anointing of James was probably a symbol that the “gift of healing” was to be performed.

- c. We are reminded of the healing of the one born blind (John 9:11) whose eyes Jesus anointed. The clay was only an external symbol of the “gift of healing” which Jesus used to heal the blind man.

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”

PROBLEM:

This verse is sometimes used to indicate we are “sanctified by the Holy Spirit being given us.”

SOLUTION:

1. The evidence, grammatically, contextually and expositionally³ points to a definite bias of the translators of the AV.
“Grammatically the words admit of the interpretation which sees in them the sanctification of the *human* spirit (mind) (genitive of the object)...¹”
2. Peter is basing his whole argument on the spiritual significance of Exod. 19 and 24. Every word he uses is based upon usage in Israel’s experience. They were “chosen” by God to be set apart (sanctified) as a nation, “separated” by carnal ordinances, ratified in the “sprinkling” of shed blood upon the people; and by all this they were promised an inheritance.

The spiritual Israelites too were “chosen” to be “separate” not in outward form, but by the inward purification of heart and mind through obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which they hoped for an “incorruptible inheritance”.
The whole series of contrasts demands that outward separation of Israel should have an inner sanctification as its counterpart ²*
3. In a Christadelphian exposition of 1 Peter we have the following
“sanctification of the Spirit”
This is the separation induced by the Spirit-word. Jesus taught that the truth comprised the spirit (John 6:63) and Paul and John did likewise (Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6). Where it does not have such effect - separating believers from the course of this world - its full power has not been appreciated.’⁴
4. Peter was referring to the state of sanctification of believers⁵ and not to the mechanism of sanctification.
5. This sanctification was the result of “obedience” to the truth v.22. This “truth” was “the living and abiding word of God”... “which was preached” unto them. It had resulted in them being “born again” through that “imperishable seed” (v.23-25).
6. There is *no* evidence for the theory expressed in the problem.

¹ Plumptre, CBSC, P.93, cf. Notes on 2 Thess. 2:13 where the exact phrase occurs.

² J. Carter, TCM, Vol. 92, P. 449 and TCM, Vol. 94, P. 5-7.

³ cf. Section B - “Sanctification”

⁴ H.P. Mansfield, To the Strangers Scattered Abroad - LOGOS

⁵ cf. 1 Pet. 1:22.

“...the Spirit of Christ within them (prophets)...”

The phrase Spirit of Christ is objective genitive. It was not “Christ’s Spirit” or “Spirit from Christ” or spirit which Christ gave but “the Spirit *which taught about Christ.*”

In His revelations to man, God had Christ as the central theme. These revelations came to God’s Prophets through the Spirit. Therefore, the Spirit taught the Prophets about Christ.

There is only one Spirit power, namely God’s (Eph. 4:4), and this worked in the Prophets... “by thy spirit in thy prophets” (Neh. 9:20; cf. 2 Pet. 1:21). This inspired them to testify prophetically about Christ¹. Later this same Spirit power was manifested through Christ without measure.

v.12 *“... these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven”...* The gifts of “word of wisdom”, “word of knowledge” and “prophecy” were the means by which the Apostles preached the gospel. The *Parakletos* taught them “all things” (John 14:26). This power of the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost “sent from heaven” and it enabled them to immediately preach the Gospel with such force and conviction that 3,000 were baptized as a result of that day’s activities (Acts 2: 2-4, 40-41) (cf. also Rom. 16:25).

v.22 *“Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren...”*

The words “through the Spirit” are not in the Greek text of Nestle, and the best of the other texts.

3:18 *“For Christ... having been... made alive in the spirit;”* Peter is not referring merely to the power which effected the resurrection but to the final change in the resurrected body when it was clothed with the Divine nature, or Spirit.

v.19 *“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison”*

By the power of the Spirit, Christ was quickened (v.18). With this same Spirit Christ preached in person to “spirits in prison” before his death. Peter is speaking of a class or type of persons (not a particular group) which existed both in Noah’s day and Christ’s². The “spirits in prison” is an expression for a people in bondage to sin³ (Isa. 42 3; 61:1). The people were the Gentiles as the following tabular comparison demonstrates.

1 Peter 3:18-19	1 Timothy 3:16
- Christ... being put to death IN THE FLESH	- He was manifested IN THE FLESH
- but quickened BY THE SPIRIT	- Justified IN THE FLESH
- ...by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.	- Preached unto the Gentiles

¹ cf. Isa. 53:2,12; Psa. 22:1,27.

² see Luke 17:25.

³ see also Eph. 2:1-2.

But why refer to men as “spirits imprisoned”? Because “spirit” relates to the sentient element in man by which he perceives, reflects, feels and desires (Mark 2:8; Luke 1:47,80; Acts 17:16; 2 Cor. 7:1). The Lord appealed to the thinking part (the mind) of man that was imprisoned to sin.

4:6 *“For the gospel has been preached even to those who are dead, that... they may live in the spirit”...*

Many translations confuse the issue by their arrangement of the words but Marshall clarifies: “For indeed for this (reason) good news was preached, to dead men in order that on one hand they might be judged according to men in the flesh, on the other (they) might live according to God in the spirit.”

The sequence is this:

- a) the gospel is preached to those who are (now) dead¹.
- b) Upon responding they are condemned and maligned by men in the flesh. (v.4).
- c) However, God who is Spirit, will grant them life (eternal) because Spirit judgement is right but flesh judgement is wrong. (Isa. 2:3,4).

The idea is: though men condemn them, Christ will not. The contrast is between those who judge:- men and God.

Paraphrased: The reason the gospel was preached was that (although they would be condemned by men of flesh) the dead might live in the future.

v.14 *“...the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”.*

The definite article is present therefore “the Spirit of *the* Glory” refers to Christ. This verse is parallel in thought and expression to v.13, i.e.

Suffering now, but rejoicing when his glory is revealed (v.13).

Reproach now but blessing when the Spirit of Christ and of God rests on you (v.14).

Rotherham’s translates “rests” as “is bringing rest”. The word *anapauo* (rests) can also mean “refreshed” and is so translated in 1 Cor. 16:18; Philemon v.20.

The words “If you are reviled for the name of Christ you are blessed” allude to Matt. 5:11. The second part of the verse; “because the Spirit of the glory and of God is bringing rest” alludes to Matt. 5:12 “for your reward in heaven is great”.

The exultation or blessing is the future reward (at the proper time, 5:6) of a spiritual body.

2 PET. 1:21 ... *“men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”*

The Holy Spirit gift of prophecy moved God’s Prophets to utter (and write) the words they did (2 Sam. 23:2; Neh. 9:30; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 1:1. James 5:10).

¹ The “dead” were not dead when preached to. We can be sure of that! The dead in this context refer to those (like Christ) who were put to death or martyred because of their righteousness (cf. Matt. 5:10-12). There was a lot of persecution in those days, much of which resulted in death:

“brother will deliver up brother to death, ... and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death” (Matt. 10:21).

These murderers killed the body, but because the gospel was preached to the believers before that happened, the murderers were not able to kill the (future) life. (Matt. 10:28, cf. 39).

“but the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him.” (RSV)

PROBLEM:

“Receiving this anointing (which is claimed to be “Ask and ye shall receive”) is all important because it can teach us accurately.”

SOLUTION:

1. The “anointing” was a first century manifestation of the Spirit gifts, i.e. “to another the word of knowledge” (1 Cor. 12:8).

“God has appointed
first apostles
second prophets
third teachers¹.”

2. We are not now taught in this manner because the scripture is complete and this manifestation of the Spirit ceased after the completion of the Scriptures.

Rather we are taught by “the word of God² which effectually worketh in you that believe³.”

- 3:24 *“The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given⁴ us.”*

PROBLEM:

This verse is used to try to demonstrate that if we have the Spirit we come to know things that we would not otherwise know.

SOLUTION:

1. The abiding depends on keeping “His commandments⁵”, not on surrendering to the Spirit effluence. (cf. 2:28).

2. The abiding is a two-way thing⁶. This abiding is explained in 1 John 2:24 “As for you, let that abide in you which you *heard* from the beginning. If what you *heard* from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

What they *heard* was the *gospel*.

¹ 1 Cor. 12:28 (cf. 14:26, John 14:26; 16:13).

² In our case, written; in the first century it was largely the spoken word (i.e. “which ye heard”).

³ 1 Thess. 2:13.

⁴ The verb is aorist. Plummer, CBSC, P. 139. The rendering “has given” or “gave” (Marshall) points to a past act and not a continuous experience.

⁵ This is also evident in the following quotes: “but whoever keeps His word in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.” “the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” (1 John 2:5-6 NASB).

⁶ This is perhaps clarified by looking at the example of 1 John 5:18, 19 where the “world is in the wicked one and the wicked one is in the world”.

3. The knowledge *they* had of their fellowship with God came by the Spirit in the Apostolic teaching. *We* have knowledge of our fellowship with God by the *written word* (which came by the Spirit).

4. The Apostles had the gifts of the Spirit (teaching, prophecy, etc.) and were inspired to write their Epistles. We do not write Scripture and do not have the “gifts of the Spirit”.

4:1 “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit*” Any claim in John’s time that one had a gift would have quickly led to a request for the evidence of its possession. “Spirit” means a person who claims he has the Spirit.

“but try the spirits to see whether they are from God”

There were many “false Christ’s and false prophets” even at this time (Mark 13:22; 2 Pet. 2:1; 2 Thess. 2:2-7 cf. 1 Thess. 5:19-22; Acts 19:13). To try the Spirits was to use the gift of discerning of Spirits¹. The doctrinal criterion is also plainly stated so that even today we can “try the Spirits”. Most who claim to have the Spirit believe in a trinity and would not admit Christ came “in the flesh ²”

v.2 “*By this you know the Spirit of God.*”

“Spirit” means those who claim to have the Spirit (as in v. 1 and 3). “Spirit of God”, therefore, is a person who has the Spirit gifts from God.

v.4 “*Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.*”

v.12 “*If we love one another God dwelleth in us...*”

v.13 “*Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us of his Spirit.*”

PROBLEM:

The words “he is in us because he hath given us of his spirit” are wrested to mean that God’s Spirit comes into our heart (if we open it to him) causing a feeling of enthusiasm. If we feel this enthusiasm then we have “got the Spirit”.

SOLUTION:

1. Enthusiasm† is not evidence for the indwelling of the Spirit. It may be induced:
 - a) by a powerful leader such as Hitler.
 - b) by the emotional music played at a Pentecostal revival meeting.
 - c) by a bottle of liquor.
 - d) by winning something, etc.

¹ We do not have this gift but we have the complete word in its place. We must use that to test the spirits.

² This particular test was used to determine those who belonged to “the anti-Christ” (v.3). Those in the brotherhood who claim to have the Spirit hold to other false doctrines. (See Sections A and B).

† A word from the Greek “*enthousiasmos*” meaning god possessed (*en* = in, *theos* = god) (Webster’s). It can easily be seen that the word “enthusiasm” has deep overtones of paganism. Anyone therefore, who claims to be god possessed because he is enthusiastic is echoing the beliefs of the Greek pagan of about Homer’s time. (900 B.C.). Cf. also LOGOS Vol. 29, P. 72.

2. The context says nothing about us opening our hearts so that the Spirit can come in. Rather John is showing believers that love₂ necessitates the rejection of those who claim to have the Spirit but fail to
 - a) teach the correct doctrine₃. (.3)
 - b) listen to the word₄ (v. 6)
 - c) manifest the love₂ of God to their brethren (v. 8,20).
 The context also shows that he that feareth the day of *judgement*₅ has “something imperfect in his love” (WEY, v. 18).
3. Because God had given the gifts of the Spirit, the recipients received revelations and knowledge of their fellowship with the Father which was otherwise unknowable. Because it was revealed to them, they revealed it to others by word and then they wrote accurately by inspiration. We know of this fellowship through the word.
4. It certainly is true that God can work in us “both to will and to do His good pleasure.” However, God working in man and man possessing the Spirit are two different things₆.

² Gk. “Agape” - a divine love not to be confused with sentimental emotion, or sensuality motivated by lust. Agape is defined in 1 Cor. 13 as a characteristic that is

“very patient, very kind” (Rhm)

“is neither anxious to impress” (Phi)

“makes no parade” (Moff)

“nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance” (Phi)

“is never rude” (Moff)

“does not insist on its own way” (RSV)

“is not easily provoked but joyfully sides with the truth” (Wey)

Experience has shown that generally those who claim to have the Spirit do not manifest the above characteristics when having discussions with their brethren about their claim. John says “He that loveth not knoweth not God” (v.8).

³ It has also been demonstrated by those who claim they have the Spirit that they are foremost in attacking the B.A. Statement of Faith. Phrases such as “Christ did not give us any commands, only the Spirit” are oft repeated by those claiming Spirit possession. It can be seen, therefore, that those “spirits” who claim Spirit possession but have incorrect doctrine, are the “spirits of error”.

⁴ Those who claim to be “led of the Spirit” seem to belittle the word of God. It is treated as something that cannot be exciting; something lacking life that needs the added ingredient of the outpouring of the Spirit to cause growth. We must remember:

a) that God “hast magnified thy word above (together with NASB) thy name.” (Psa. 138:2).

b) that “the word of God, effectually worketh also in you that believe”. (1 Thess. 2:13)

c) that “the sword of the Spirit” is the word of God. (Eph. 6:17)

d) that the scriptures “are able to make thee wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15).

e) that we are “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God”. (1 Pet. 1:23).

We must, therefore, be careful not to diminish the importance of the word lest God take away our “part out of the book of life”. (Rev. 22:19).

⁵ It is significant that at least some who claim Spirit possession, have seen a need to alter clear teaching, on the judgement to the following theory: - no judgement for righteous, just a dispersal of the various rewards. Could this be because as John says they “fear” the day of judgement?

⁶ cf. Section B - “God Working in Men”, and 1 Thess. 2:13: “... the *word* of God, which performs its work in you who believe”.

“And it is the Spirit that beareth witness”

This was the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 Thess. 2:10; John 5:34, 37; 8:18; Heb. 10:15) in Christ and the Apostles who witnessed that Christ was the Messiah.

“because the Spirit is the truth” (R V)

The Greek text supports the RV because the article is present. Compare with John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13. (cf. John 6:63; Eph. 6:17).

v.8 *“For there are three which bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood”*... These three witnesses[†] are those described in v.6. They represent Truth, Baptism and Sacrifice.

The Spirit bears witness: John 1:33; 15:26; Acts 10:38; John 7:38, 39.

The Water bears witness: John 1:31, (cf. 4:10, 14); to the new birth John 3:3-5.

The blood bears witness: John 6:55; 19:34, 35.

Christ was inducted into his public ministry through baptism (the water) and concluded it with his sacrifice on the cross (blood). He was raised by the Spirit and glorified by the Spirit. The miracles he wrought and the words he spoke were a witness that he had the Holy Spirit.

JUDE v.19, 20.

“These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit₁. But ye, beloved... praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.”

PROBLEM:

This is yet another verse that is used to “demonstrate that we must have the Spirit”.

SOLUTION:

1. The words *spirit* in verse 19 and *Holy Spirit* in verse 20 are without the definite article in Greek. It's absence here would seem to make it possible to read verse 20 as “a holy spirit₂” (for a spirit of holiness) - a spirit (mind) moulded by Divine teaching and influence in contrast to the *spirit of the flesh*.
2. This explanation is in accord with the context and conveys the meaning.
3. “Spirit” then stands for “the mind of God” which when it is received in faith, changes the outlook and disposition of men from the natural to the spiritual. That mind is communicated to us only in two ways.
 - a) by assimilating the Word of God.
 - b) by responding to providential guidance in life.
4. These words should not lead anyone to think he must have the Holy Spirit before he can pray. The following reasons demonstrate why:
 - A. The Spirit is not available today, and

[†] see TCM, Vol. 53, P. 489, “The Witness of God”.

¹ NEB has “they are themselves wholly unspiritual”. TCNT has “animal and unspiritual”.

² The Companion Bible makes this distinction ‘= holy spirit, and is so printed in CB. This usage (without articles) occurs 52 times in the N.T. and is always wrongly rendered “the Holy Spirit”.’

B. The example of the Samaritans and Cornelius prove otherwise†.

5. We must pray according to the knowledge we have received from the study of God's Word, which word was given by the Holy Spirit in the form of revelation to the Prophets and Apostles.

REVELATION 1:4

... *"Grace to you and peace... from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;"*
(RV, MARS) (cf. 4:5)

The salutation in verses 4 and 5 comes from three sources

- (1) "From him₁ which is, and which was, and which is to come" (v.4) i.e. the Lord God₂ Almighty (v.8).
- (2) "From the seven spirits which are in the presence of the throne of him" (DIAGLOTT) mentioned in point 1.
- (3) "From Jesus Christ" (v.5). i.e. the Son.

To help us understand what the seven spirits refer to, can we now look with John at the open door of chapter 4 and see as well as we can what he saw?

Inside the door was a THRONE.

Round his throne were 24 ELDERS.

Before the throne were 7 LAMPS OF FIRE.

Also before the throne were CHERUBIM.

What John saw through this open door was a temple scene, very much like what an Israelite of old might have seen had he peeped through the door of Solomon's temple, except that this temple had no veil, and one could see right into the most Holy Place.

The THRONE was the equivalent of the MERCY SEAT.

The ELDERS were like the 24 COURSES OF PRIESTS.

The 7 LAMPS were in place of the 7 LAMPS₃ of the 7 BRANCHED LAMPSTAND.

The SEA was like the SEA in Solomon's temple.

The CHERUBIM were like the CHERUBIM over the ark.

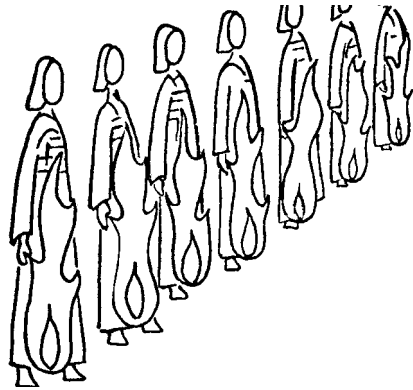
These seven lamps are also called the "seven spirits of God". Those seven lamps stood before the throne in heaven, just as in Solomon's temple the flames of the MENORAH burnt in the Holy Place before the veil.

† cf. point 1 on Eph. 2:18.

¹ It is interesting to note that the Codex Vaticanus has "God" in the text.

² "God" is in the Greek text. (NEST)

³ Thus a clear distinction is made between the lampstand and the lamps which were placed on that stand. The "lamps" provided the "light" for the "lampstands".



You will see from the diagram that we have represented these lamps, or spirits, as Angels. This is because we find later that there were seven angels standing before God (Rev. 8:2) and because of the Psalm which connects the two ideas,

“Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire”. (Psa. 104:4)

These seven spirits are seen later as belonging to the Lamb; but then they are also called ‘eyes’

“having seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth”. (Rev. 5:6)

These ‘seven eyes’ remind us of the ‘seven eyes’ on the symbolic stone placed before Joshua in Zech. 3:9; and of the flames on the seven - piped lampstand, which were also called ‘eyes’ (Zech. 4:10).

All these symbols are therefore connected; and we have lamps, spirits and eyes all meaning much the same thing. But there is one more symbol in Scripture which connects with all these; in Rev. 1:20 the stars in the right hand of the One like the Son of Man are called the ‘angels of the seven churches’, the lampstands representing the ecclesias themselves. You can see that the same idea is being used here as in Zechariah, in the vision of the seven lamps before the throne, and the seven eyes belonging to the Lamb. But the burning lights on the lampstands are called stars.

So we have four connected symbols, flaming lamps, spirits, eyes and stars, all of which are the same in essence.

What we have here is, again, the same kind of heavenly symbolism we have already met with so often. The stars in the sky are, basically, part of the symbology of the rulership of the heavens over the earth. Naturally, as they run across the sky from east to west, they are like a multitude of eyes, watching over the deeds of men; and so they are a fitting symbol for the ‘eyes of the Lord’ which run through the earth. But the means of God’s rulership over the earth is as often as not the work of angels. Thus the stars of heaven are a fitting symbol for angels -in fact, in Scripture the phrase ‘host of heaven’ is used equally for stars and angels. So stars, spirits, lamps and eyes are all symbols of the rule of the angels over the earth under the hand of God.

But why are there here seven angels? We know that angels, called ‘Elohim’, were particularly concerned with. God’s seven creative acts on the earth. These seven angels, then, before the throne, are particularly symbols of angels as God’s creative force, which can also be a destructive force, pulling down the created things in seven opposite acts to those of creation. So it is these seven angels who set in motion the trumpet and vial judgments on the earth, which result in the things of the old creation being destroyed, so that God may create all things new.

In conclusion we see that “the seven spirits” are angels. (cf. Heb. 1:7, 14).

v.10 *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”*... (cf. also 4:2; 17:3; 21:10)

Might not these words mean that John actually received¹ that² vision³ on the ‘Day of the Lord’, i.e. the day of the Lord’s judgement on the Jewish nation in AD 70? The evidence of John 21:22 is that John tarried till Christ came in judgement. “Tarried” means “lived until”. Now Christ “came” in AD 70, so John would have lived at least until after that.

There is another line of reasoning which supports the suggestion above and it hinges on the general principle expressed in Amos 3:7:

*“Surely the LORD God does nothing
unless He reveals His secret counsel
To His servants the prophets.”*

The Olivet prophecy takes us up to and including AD 70. It is suggested that the Apocalyptic vision was seen at the end of the Jewish age and that (on the basis of Amos 3:7) the Apocalypse takes over where the Olivet prophecy leaves off.

3:1 *“... He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this...”*

(cf. 5:6). The notes on Rev. 1:4 have demonstrated that the seven Spirits are the seven stars:

i.e. Spirits are angels	(Heb. 1:7, 14)
The 7 lamps are 7 angels	(Rev. 8:2)
The 7 lamps are 7 Spirits	(4:5) therefore
The 7 eyes are 7 Spirits	(5:6)
The 7 stars are 7 Angels	(1:20)

Also in 5:6 we see that the “seven horns” of the Lamb “are the seven Spirits of God”. It is therefore possible that the figure hendiadys is employed here. As each noun conveys a different aspect of power, both are employed.

16:13,14 *“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet; For they are the spirits of demons working miracles...”*

The interpretation of this verse will depend on how we identify the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. Some just look at the world situation and see which powers could cause Armageddon. However we must interpret this verse contextually, otherwise we may be deceived⁴ by these spirits.

Our only Scriptural background on frogs is in Exodus 8 where the frog plague was to teach the Egyptians that they worshipped the wrong deity. The frog was regarded as a symbol of the frog god ALLED HEQUIT, the chief deity in upper Egypt and was a symbol of pro-creative power. The frog, therefore, indicates false religion.

¹ Please note I am not suggesting here that John wrote at this time.

² Other visions were received later.

³ through the gift of prophecy

⁴ Just as the Roman Catholic counter-reformation developed Jesuit futurist interpretations to deceive Protestant readers and take the heat off themselves, so they developed the deceitful diversion that Islam was the False Prophet and fought the crusades. Again this new theory was initiated by the Catholics to take the heat off Protestant expositors that claimed the Pope was the false prophet. See Bible Magazine volume 14 #2, pages 14 & 15.

The only major false religion that claims to work miracles (Rev. 19:20) and causes craft to prosper (Dan. 8:21-25) is Catholicism. Since we have identified frogs with false religion, it follows that the “spirits” are the teachings or instructions of those mouths which believe this false religion that causes the action of the gathering of the nations.

We know, for example, that the Spirit is the Truth. Therefore “unclean₂ spirits” in this context must be the falsehood₃ that these three entities [the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet₄] share. They are the *spirits of demons* because their policy is one of madness or insanity driving them on to the war of “the great day of God Almighty”.

18:2 *“Fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.”*

There is a double meaning to the words employed here. The context states basically that because of her immoral worship, Babylon will suffer desolation. Now we know and the Bible states that the same was true of ancient Babylon. What we see, therefore, is that the demons, evil spirits and birds represent two things:

- 1) figuratively false worship then
- 2) literally desolation.

The first is clearly evident in the context. Verse 3 is joined to verse 2 by “for” which means that it explains that verse. We have, therefore, the explanation that:

Verse 2	Verse 3
(a) demons =	the wine of her impure passion.
(b) foul spirits =	(religious) fornication.
(c) unclean birds =	the merchants of the “earth”.

These symbols can be further defined as

- a) false teaching (idol worship) (cf. Jer. 51:7)
- b) false worship (audiences)
- c) a system in which priests cause sales of relics, souls, etc. (priestcraft).

Because of these things, Babylon the Great will suffer the same demise as ancient Babylon. Only the goat, howling desert creatures and unclean birds will dwell there.

There are 3 passages in the O. T. that speak of the end of ancient Babylon in terms equivalent or similar to this verse: Isa. 13:21; 34:14 and Jer. 50:39. (cf. Isa. 21:9.

² Grk. *akathartos* =impure (Y) from ‘a’ (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative meaning ‘cleansed’. The word therefore, means ‘impure’ both ceremonially and morally (i.e. lewd) or especially demoniac. (S). It means in this context a religion not purged, pruned or cleansed.

³ see notes on Matt. 12:43

⁴ Christadelphian expositors for decades have identified the Dragon with the eastern leg of the Roman empire, the Beast with Europe, and the False Prophet with the Papacy. E.g. Eureka and What The Spirit Saith unto the Ecclesias, J Knowles.

The table will illustrate the meaning of the symbols in Rev. 18:2:

She has become a dwelling place of:			
demons	shaggy goats ₁ (demons - LXX)	hairy goat (demons - LXX)	crier ₄ (ROTH) mad (v. 38)
every unclean spirit	howling desert creatures (hyenas, jackals)	howling desert creatures (wolves?, wild dogs)	howlers (ROTH) jackals (NASB)
every unclean and hateful bird ₃	owls, ostriches	Night hog (screech owl, AV)	owls, ostriches
Rev. 18:2	Isa.13:21	Isa. 34:14 ₂	Jer.50:39

In Jer. 50:38 it says:

“They are *mad* upon their idols.” The same Hebrew word *halal* occurs in Jer. 25:16 and is the result of drinking wine. The same idea occurs in Jer. 51:7. Keil says the word means to act or behave like a madman, rave, or let oneself be deprived of reason. (This is almost the equivalent of the Gk. word “demon” as used in the NT.)

The punishment upon Babylon (Rome) for being drunk with the wine of the false teaching about idols which has deprived them of reason (to be mad), is destruction and the placing there of wild goats which cry much like the idol worshippers. (Jer. 50:39 ROTH). The punishment for false worship will be the howling (or wailing) of the kings of the earth (v.9) and their replacement by howling desert creatures. As for the priests that consume “flesh” like the scavenger birds₅ they will be replaced by every hateful unclean bird.

Conclusion

The Spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3), because it is the spirit of error (v.6), is an “unclean spirit” that claims to have Spirit powers. Because of its claim to infallibility and possession of the keys, Rome has succeeded in seducing the kings of the earth with her *evil* spirits (teachings, cf. John 6:63).

19:10 “... *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*”

This could mean one of two things:

- (1) The real reason (spirit) of this₆ prophecy is for the testimony of Jesus not the worship of Angels.
- (2) The prophecy of this₆ Spirit (i.e. Angel) is for the testimony of Jesus.

22:6 “*the God of the spirits of the prophets*” cf. 1 Cor. 14:32. Spirits here means “inspired utterances”. This angel was the same angel that inspired the prophecies of Old Testament prophets.

¹ The LXX has demons. The AV Satyrs is misleading and unfortunate.

² A judgement strictly speaking on Edom but surely we can see the connection with Rome.

³ Leviticus 11 defines unclean birds as the: eagle, vulture, buzzard, kite, falcon, raven, ostrich, sea gull, hawk, pelican, carrion vulture, stark, heron and bat.

⁴ cf. Isa. 34:14 The “hairy goat shall cry” (NASB). This is exactly what those thought to be possessed by demons do.

⁵ cf. Rev. 19:17,21. The Greek ‘orneon’ (bird) is probably connected with a word signifying to perceive, to hear (V). The priests of Rome cause people “to hear” by promoting idol worship in their sermons.

⁶ The article is present (cf. DIAG).

SECTION D

THE SPIRIT GIFTS

INTRODUCTION

To get a true understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in its present application, it is necessary to consider in as much detail as is possible, the miraculous ministry of the Spirit in its historical contexts. Once this is done, the student will become aware of the widespread distribution of the gifts, and will be able to understand with clarity many passages which before were obscure and hazy.

Care must be taken not to confuse the various “manifestations of the Spirit” with the inter-ecclesial offices. This distinction was termed by Paul

“diversities of gifts” and
“differences of administrations”

The most complete list of the “gifts”¹ is in 1 Cor. 12:8-10.

1. The Word of Wisdom
2. The Word of Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Gifts of healing
5. Working of miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discerning of Spirits
8. Divers kinds of tongues
9. Interpretations

The most complete list of the differences of ministries² is contained in 1 Cor. 12: 28. Our knowledge of the movements of the Apostles (in particular), plus the statement “God hath set some in the ecclesia”, shows us that some of these ministries were definitely inter-ecclesial in function. The offices were

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Teachers
4. Miracles
5. Gifts of healings
6. Helps
7. Governments

¹ See “Grace”, Section B - footnote 4, for a tabular comparison of the gifts mentioned in the various books.

² See Section E - “Inter-Ecclesial Offices”.

While it is fairly obvious which gifts would be required for the ministries of prophets, miracles and gifts of healings; it is not so obvious which would be required by the other four ministries. However, we do know that Paul the Apostle was a prophet (Acts 20:29, 28:28), a worker of miracles (Rom. 15:18), and spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 14:18). We also know that the Apostles ordained by Christ had the ability of passing on the gifts by the laying on of hands. It is quite possible that those who were appointed by the Spirit to be elders³ in an ecclesia were given gifts that would enhance the personal qualifications they already had developed. Perhaps their office was “governments”.

AN EXTRA BURDEN TO HOLINESS

“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required”

This statement by Christ illustrates a principle that operated with those who had the Spirit gifts or those who witnessed its operation. Also, those who have in their hands the main product of the Holy Spirit have an added responsibility. Several examples will illustrate this personal responsibility.

Moses (who had a sufficient measure of the Holy Spirit to enable the LORD to give some of it to seventy elders) had this added responsibility.

Because he had neglected to have his son circumcised, “the LORD met him, and sought to kill him” (Exod. 4:24-26). In performing the miracle of bringing water out of the rock he did not give God the glory so was not allowed to enter the land (Num. 20:8-12).

Samson was a Nazarite who defiled his separation, and was eventually punished, by having the Spirit removed. Samson’s case illustrates how a person who had the Spirit could still possess the gift for some time even though he neglected his personal responsibilities. Eventually, however, when the sin became great, the gift was removed. (Judges 16:20).

A prophet was slain by a lion because he had disobeyed the word of the LORD. The additional responsibility is seen clearly here because the “man of God” was led into disobedience by one who claimed to be “a prophet” who had received an additional revelation (1 Kings 13:9-26).

This is a tremendous example to us because those who claim to have received additional revelation are liars because their instructions to us contradict the instructions the LORD has already revealed to us through His Word.

Saul disobeyed the LORD and so “*the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul*” (1 Sam. 16:14).

³ “Presbyters”, “bishops”, “elders” and “overseers” in the AV are all covered by two Greek words: episcopoi and presbyteroi. The Ephesian brethren who met Paul at Miletus are called “elders” (Gk.: presbyteroi) and also “overseers” (R.V. bishops: Gk.: episcopoi) in the same narrative (Acts 20:17, 28). The two Greek words are therefore synonymous in the New Testament, and the various translations of them cover one office only. It is possible that Jewish Christians preferred to use presbyteroi since this word was commonly used of the elders in the Jewish synagogues and city communities, while Gentile Christians would prefer episcopoi, which was a title common throughout the Roman world of business and law.’

(Test. Vol. 43, P. 256).

David, after his crimes of adultery and murder, prayed fervently that God would not take away “*thy Holy Spirit from me*” (Psa. 51:11). He recognized that his actions would require God to take away the gifts of prophecy, teaching and revelation, which he had.

Israel “rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.” (Isa. 63:9-10).

The first century ecclesia at Ephesus because of its misconduct, was warned by Paul “*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are (R.V. were) sealed unto the day of redemption*” (Eph. 4:30).

THE GIFTS COULD BE AND WERE MISUSED

We have already pointed out how that Moses misused the gift of miracles (Num. 20: 8-12). The disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans because they did not receive Jesus. (Luke 9:54).

Tongues were obviously misused at Corinth, otherwise Paul would not have written at length to them about that subject (1 Cor. 14).

THE GIFTS COULD BE AND WERE⁴ IMITATED

There were many false *prophets* in Old Testament times and Christ prophesied that there would “*arise false Christs, and false prophets, and (these) shall shew great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect*” (Matt. 24:24).

In Exodus 7 we have recorded the imitations of the magicians of Egypt. Paul in his opening statement, records the fact that the Gentile converts at Corinth formerly believed that they were led by the spirit of dumb idols. (1 Cor. 12:2). With this warning in mind, he shows them the criteria to determine between the imitations and the true. It was what the claimant said about the gospel that determined the issue.

Because one of the gifts was the “discerning of spirits” we are left with no alternative than to understand that it was to discern between the true and false manifestations. If the gifts could be imitated in the first century, then they can be in the twentieth. This then is the explanation for what is claimed today since the true gifts are not available today.

CONTROL OF THE GIFTS

Paul’s detailed comments in his epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians outlined the proper use of the gifts. Tongues, being the most common and one of the most spectacular gifts, was often misused, hence Paul’s instructions on the subject in 1 Cor. 14⁵.

⁴ See Modern claims to Holy Spirit.

⁵ This is enlarged upon in the analysis of this gift. See verse by verse notes, Section C, and the Gift of Tongues.

“Prophecy” was a gift that was despised because it convicted those who heard the message. It could be compared in effect, to a straightforward exhortation today. Few people like to be told to improve. This caused those in Thessalonica to suppress this most spiritual gift. Therefore, Paul commands that they:

*“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.”*⁶

Timothy, a timid and introverted person, suppressed the use of the gift that he had. Paul in writing to him, rebuked him three times because he controlled his gift to such an extent that he did not use it when he should have. Paul exhorted him to:

“stir up the gift of God” (2 Tim. 1:6)

“neglect not the gift that is in thee” (1 Tim. 4:14)

“do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5).

These three examples show that the gift was controlled⁷ by the person who possessed it.

THE GIFTS WERE A SIGN

The gifts were a sign to the unbelievers that Christ was working through the person who possessed the gift. Christ stated (in Mark 16:17) that

“these signs shall follow them that believe”.

He then listed five things that would be an actual sign.

The eight signs of John’s gospel demonstrated that Christ was indeed the Messiah. Thousands of years before, Moses had used the gift of Miracles to convince the Pharaoh that God was with him. His serpent, which became a rod and his hand becoming leprous, were the first two signs. Then followed the famous ten plagues.

GIFTS USELESS WITHOUT FRUITS

As Paul demonstrated in 1 Cor. 13 unless one manifested the fruits of the Spirit, the gifts were nothing, and comparable only to clanging brass or a tinkling cymbal.

DIFFERENT MEASURES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Moses has sufficient of the Spirit that the LORD “took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease” (Num. 11:25). Here it can be seen that Moses had more than seventy times the measure of the spirit of the elders. Elijah only had half as much power as Elisha (2 Kings 2:9).

Christ received the “Spirit without measure” (John 3:34), yet we know that his disciples did not receive this amount. In turn the Apostles could impart the Spirit but others could not (Acts 8:12, 14-15).

We see from these examples that the Spirit was given in different measures, “as he will”.

⁶ 1 Thess. 5:19, 20.

⁷ see also “The Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Cor. 14:32).

THE GIFTS⁸ WERE POSSESSED

The gifts given at Pentecost and afterwards were a direct transfer of one or more aspects of Holy Spirit power from God via Christ to man. They were a distinct entity given and received as a possession. This is clearly evident in that the gifts could be and were misused. Such misuse cannot be blamed on God, any more than other moral evils can be blamed on God (even though He created us).

EPOCHS OF SPIRIT GIFTS

We find in the Bible various epochs in God's revelation to man. There are three main epochs:

1. In the time of Moses.
2. In the time of Christ and the Apostles.
3. A latter Day Outpouring.

These epochs of Spirit are evidence that the needs of the time required a more direct control by God of the process of salvation for His creatures.

1. *In the time of Moses.*

The experiences of the children of Israel during the time of the plagues in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea mark a certain era in this revelation. When the Israelites were safely in the wilderness there was no further need of these particular miracles. The record of Numbers 11, when part of Moses' Spirit was transferred to the seventy, clearly indicates that the gift of prophecy operated at that time.

Before Moses died, he laid his hands upon Joshua so that "Joshua the son on Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom" (Deut. 34:9 cf. Num. 27:18-23).

Another unique example of the Holy Spirit gifts, was in Bezaleel who was filled with the spirit of wisdom, understanding, knowledge and workmanship so that he could construct an edifice where God could dwell. (Ex. 35:30-31). Once this was complete there was no further need of this particular manifestation of the Spirit.

Apart from these manifestations, we see the gift of Prophecy operating in a few righteous men such as Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah and in all the prophets. One result of this manifestation is the books which bear their name (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21). Shortly after the return from captivity in Babylon there was a long silence of the prophets as Micah had predicted.

"The sun shall go down over the prophets" (3:6).

2. *In the Time of Christ and the Apostles.*

The second major epoch occurred with the ministry of God's Son, which brought the gospel to both Jew and Gentile. Christ was begotten by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit of God at his baptism. He manifested by this power that Isaiah's prophecy (61:1,2) was fulfilled. After choosing twelve disciples, he imparted to them temporary capabilities that enabled them by the Spirit to have authority over mental and physical diseases (Luke 9:1-2). After Christ led captivity captive he gave gifts unto men. This we know of as "Pentecost" when unschooled

⁸ See section F, Word Studies - "Gift".

Galilean fishermen spoke in at least 15 different languages and/or dialects. Paul in 1 Cor. 12 describes the purpose⁹ and scope of this manifestation. These miracles and signs formed a special epoch in God's revelation and manifestation. In this regard the New Testament manifestation was no different than the previous epoch. Once the manifestation had fulfilled its purpose, the gifts ceased just as they had before. They will not be in evidence again until the resurrection era.

3. *Latter day outpouring of the Spirit.*

As must be expected, this third epoch will see the greatest outpouring of the Spirit gifts that the world has experienced. It will be part of that grand consummation which will eventually see all the earth filled with Spirit beings. This was obviously God's purpose in creating man in His own image. Apart from the fact that the righteous will receive incorruptible Spirit bodies, there is the little understood work of God with His people Israel. The latter rain of the Spirit on converted mortal Judah (primarily¹⁰) will have for its primary purpose a witness to the unrepentant ten tribes of Israel in their dispersion. These Jews will recognize that Christ is the Messiah as witnessed by their brethren. They will then become prepared to be Christ's soldiers in the destruction of the wicked¹¹. Prophets other than Joel speak of this pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel in the future:

“upon the land of my people shall come thorns and briars... until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high”... (Isa. 32:13, 15).

“When I bring them back from... the lands of their enemies... I will not hide my face from them any longer for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel” (Ezek. 39:27,29).

If we regard Zechariah chapter 4 as having a future application, then the work of building (v. 9) and the work of levelling opposition (v. 7) will be initiated “not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts.” (v. 6).

This epoch will last 1,000 years. Once this is past, there will be no need for the gifts in mortals as there will be no mortals.

We see, therefore, that each epoch of outpoural accomplished defined tasks of limited duration. It was a direct power which the possessor was able to clearly manifest so that all knew he had the gift.

EVIDENCE OF DECLINE IN THE FIRST CENTURY

All the occurrences in Acts of the Holy Spirit being poured out indicate that all the people involved spoke in tongues. Yet within 20 - 25 years of Pentecost we have a clear indication that no longer did everyone speak in tongues. In 1 Cor. 12:30 we have the rhetorical question of Paul “All do not speak with tongues, do they?” The withdrawal of this gift can be further seen in that after the writing of the first letter to the Corinthians, it is never mentioned again. In its place came the written word, the collection of New Testament writings.

⁹ see notes on 1 Cor. 12 and Section A - “Purpose”.

¹⁰ The incipient fulfilment of this at Pentecost was also an essentially Jewish affair. The Spirit was only subsequently poured out on Gentiles.

¹¹ see Micah 5: 8-15; Esther 9:5.

NON-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

“Our whole information (concerning the supernatural gifts) must be derived from Scripture, because they appear to have vanished with the disappearance of the Apostles themselves, and there is no authentic account of their existence in the Church in any writings of a later date than the books of the N.T.”¹²

GIFTS NOT AVAILABLE TODAY

1. Acts 2:17 (“And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh”) is almost always quoted by modern Pentecostals, as evidence that what occurs in their assemblies is biblical. However, a study of the context of Joel 2:28 (from which Peter quotes), clearly shows that the primary application of the prophets’ words are still future.

“Ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the Name of the Lord your God... And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel... And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit.”

Clearly this prophecy will be fulfilled by the Jewish people in the future, since they do not recognize that God is “in the midst of Israel”.

2. If God planned that His true followers would have the Holy Spirit today, then we would see plain indisputable evidence of it. To have to argue about the possession of the Spirit is the very disproof of the validity of the claim.

Any explanation of the remarkable phenomena associated with the claim today must be sought in fields not associated with the Word of God¹³.

Today’s “faith healers” can only cure psychosomatic illnesses, in contrast to the power manifested in the first century to raise the dead, for example. Add to this the fact that the same “cures” are claimed by most pagan religions, and you see that the “faith healers”¹⁴ are a hoax.

3. The ability to pass on the spirit gifts was the special privilege of the Apostles only¹⁵. This is indicated by the fact that although Philip’s preaching was accompanied by Miracles (Acts 8:7), the Apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to transmit the Spirit gifts by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-18). With the death of the Apostles, there was no one able to transmit these gifts, so they ceased.
4. 1 Cor. 13:8-10 is clear evidence that the gifts are not available today.¹⁶ The two word pictures in v.11¹⁶ and 12¹⁶ are additional evidence that the gifts were only childlike and partial. Maturity would come when the completed scriptures came.

¹² Conybeare & Howson, “Spiritual Gifts”, P. 334. Life and Epistles of Paul

¹³ See The Gift of Tongues - “The Modern Glossolalial Utterance Analyzed”, Modern Claims to Speaking in Glossolalia.

¹⁴ See “The Gift of Healing”.

¹⁵ cf. notes on Acts 9:17.

¹⁶ see notes on these verses in Section C.

MODERN CLAIMS₁ TO THE GIFTS

While the majority of “Christians” talk about the descent of heavenly “grace”, there is a growing minority which claim to possess the gifts₂ of the Spirit. Those who claim thus, engage in the ad circulum fallacy of argumentation. They only assume what they must prove. Their authority is nearly always extra Biblical (i.e. “guidance” or “an experience”).

Christ predicted that miracles and prophesying would be done in his name, apart from his sanction or power (Matt. 7:21-23; cf. 2 Thess. 2:9). Therefore an experience or a miracle cannot be appealed to as the sole judge of the source of that event. Both Paul₃ and John₄ clearly demonstrate that the claimant must undergo a test₅. Does he teach the correct doctrine?₆ The answer is “no”! Since the doctrines taught are unscriptural the claimant is therefore subject to the severe condemnation of Scripture:

“If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8,9).

Heb. 13:8 (“Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever”) is often advanced as evidence that the gifts must be available today.

SOLUTION:

1. It is not a question as to whether Christ can make the Spirit gifts available today. The question is rather “is it his purpose to make the Spirit gifts available today”?
2. To argue that Christ must do today what he did in the past is to put a ridiculous simplification and limitation on his sovereignty. The meaning of this verse is that Jesus is immutable (unchanging in his character and person).
3. The fact that the past actions of Christ are not being repeated does not reflect on the essential character of Christ, but rather indicates that the purpose which they served is now past. One example illustrates this point:

Before his death the disciples were told not to preach to the Gentiles (Matt. 10:5,6) but after his resurrection the disciples were told to preach the gospel to all nations (Mark 16:15).

¹ This subject is covered specifically under the various gifts.

² as outlined previously.

³ 1 Cor. 12:1-3.

⁴ 1 John 4:2-3

⁵ If the inspired teaching of Paul was put to the test of Scripture (Acts 17:11) how much more the statements of latter day claimants to Spirit gifts?

⁶ This is enlarged on in “the gift of Tongues”.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE GIFTS (at Corinth)

- I. Gifts which have reference to the intellect.
 1. the word of wisdom
 2. the word of knowledge.

- II. Gifts which depended on the gift of faith.
 1. faith
 2. operating in deeds a) Healings b) Miracles
 3. prophetic utterances²
 4. distinguishing between true and false spirits.

- III. Gifts related to tongues
 1. kinds of tongues
 2. interpreting tongues.

An exposition of these gifts follows.

Each gift has four sections:

- A. is a general explanation of the gift.
- B. includes mention of Old Testament manifestations or their equivalent.
- C. an explanation of the exercise of the gift by Christ while on earth.
- D. First century practice in the use of the gift.

The word of God is not only food upon which a son of God can grow, but it is a spiritual gymnasium in which spiritual faculties may be exercised and spiritual strength developed.

H. MADELEY

¹ See Section B - "Grace, for a complete list.

² The words of the prophet would be based upon the future, presenting a vision of ultimate glory, while the teacher (1 Cor. 12:29) would be more gifted in providing a systematic presentation of basic principles. The difference can be seen today in the exhorting brother and the lecturing brother.

THE GIFT OF THE WORD OF WISDOM

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom” 1 Cor. 12:8.

- A. This gift operated when a difficult situation arose, so that the possessor could silence the opponent or perform his required duty.

‘Since Paul said (1 Cor. 2:6) “we speak wisdom among them that are perfect” (or mature), by comparison with those in Corinth who were still babes (3:1), apparently the gift ranked fairly high. It was a necessary qualification for the seven deacons selected in Jerusalem (Acts 6:3), and was probably the gift possessed by the brethren who held the office of “governments”. The gift would serve to handle problems of administration and conduct, and would include the giving of practical advice based on guidance received through other gifts.’¹

From the foregoing it is evident that the gift was not given indiscriminately. Only those who manifested restraint and natural wisdom would have received it. This practice contrasts with the gift of tongues which was almost universally given (Acts 2:39). Therefore, any explanation we give to such verses as Prov. 4:7 and James 1:5 must take this into account.

This wisdom was divine wisdom supernaturally imparted. It is not to be confused with earthly wisdom described in verses such as Ecc. 1:16-18; Ezek. 28:12, 17 and James 3:14-16. It is contrasted to this by the fact that it is God’s wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6). Nor is this gift to be confused with spiritual wisdom that comes from a study of scriptures. Luke 2:40-52 describes Christ as having wisdom of God but it was not the “word of wisdom” because he had not yet been baptized (cf. ch. 3:21, 22).

Without this gift, the operation of other gifts may have resulted in serious consequences. We recall the incident in which James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven (Luke 9:54).

- B. In Old Testament times Bezaleel and Aholiab were especially endowed with the gift of wisdom for providing the more intricate skills required to make parts for the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:3, 6).

“Joshua... was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him” (Deut. 34:9).

The gift was also granted to Solomon at his own request to enable him to govern his people wisely, and is best illustrated by his judgement on the two women who both claimed to be the mother of the same child (2 Chron. 1:10; 1 Kings 3:9).²

- C. The Prophet Isaiah³ foretold that Christ would have “the Spirit of wisdom”⁴. Luke records that he was “filled with wisdom”. Christ used the gift often to defeat his opponents⁵.

¹ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 258.

⁴ LXX *pneuma sophias*.

² TEST, Vol. 43, P. 258.

⁵ see Luke 13:17; 14:6; 20:40.

³ 11:2

- Matt. 21:23-27 supplies an example. After being challenged by the chief priests as to what authority He had to perform miracles he answered by asking them a loaded question which they could not reply.
- He used the gift in the temptation in the wilderness by a right application of the facts.
- John 4 reveals another example. His knowledge (the gift) of the woman of Samaria was applied, by the gift of wisdom, to convict her of sin and her need of a Saviour.
- Christ used the gift almost in every act which he did. He used the gift in order not to get side tracked or led into argument (Luke 12:13-15). His acts fulfilled prophecy and demonstrated that he was Messiah.

D. Christ in turn promised his disciples the same power:

“I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute” (Luke 21:15).

It was a requirement of the seven brethren chosen to “serve tables” (Acts 6:3)⁶. Stephen was an example of a person who fulfilled the promise Christ made

“They were unable to cope with wisdom and the Spirit⁷ with which he was speaking” (Acts 6:10).

⁶ The figure HENDIADYS is employed meaning the Holy Spirit gift of wisdom.

⁷ NEB has “inspired wisdom” which understands that the figure HENDIADYS (parallel structure) is employed.

THE GIFT OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

“to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8)

It was second in Paul’s list of spiritual gifts following the “word of wisdom”. This indicates its relative importance.

A. What was this gift?

It was the supernatural impartation of facts that the individual at the moment had no way of learning by natural means. It was termed the “word” of knowledge because without the power of expression, such gifts would only be valuable to the possessor. It was not something learned through the process of education. Nor was it knowledge obtained through a direct study of the scriptures. However, that is a necessary part of obtaining knowledge of God even for those who possessed the gift.

- *Jesus* said: “Search the Scriptures” (John 5:39).
- *Paul* added: “Study to shew thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).
- *Daniel*, who had many prophecies revealed to him, was required to refer to the scriptures to learn that the captivity would be seventy years.
 “I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Dan. 9:2).

The gift of the word of knowledge was, therefore, in no sense to take the place of regular study of God’s word.

VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS

- 1) God imparted knowledge by audible voice - as He did to Samuel. 1 Sam. 3:11.
- 2) It came through dreams or visions as to Daniel. (Dan 2:19).
- 3) Probably those who held the inter-ecclesial office of “teachers” (1 Cor. 12:28) had the “word of knowledge” and would receive “revelations” (1 Cor. 14:26).

LIMITATIONS

- It was partitive in operation:
 1 Cor. 13:9 “We know in part”.
 In other words the person through whom the gifts functioned did not automatically have at their fingertips all knowledge. This is also implied by Paul: “And if I have all knowledge” (1 Cor. 13:2).
- As with the rest of the gifts, knowledge was nothing without agape.
 “I am nothing”, (1 Cor. 13:2).
- It was intermittent in operation. After Elisha had told the Shunammite woman that she was to have a child, the child had died unknown to Elisha. This is evident in his words:
 “Let her alone for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me” (2 Kings 4:27).

- The gift was not intended to invade the privacy of another person's thoughts unless some hypocrisy or evil needed to be exposed.
- It was only a temporary gift and was to cease and vanish away. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Cor. 13:8).

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE USED WITH OTHER GIFTS

The raising of Lazarus provides an example where at least four gifts were used in succession to the glory of God. While Christ and his disciples were beyond Jordan word came to them that Lazarus was sick.

- (1) *"The Word of Knowledge."*
By this Jesus knew that Lazarus was "sleeping" and so he was determined to return to Jerusalem to raise him. (John 11:6-14).
- (2) *"The Word of Wisdom"* dictated that decision to stay two days in Perea and finish his work there even though he knew this delay would cause the death of Lazarus.
- (3) *"Prophecy"* - *"Thy brother shall rise again"* (v. 23).
- (4) *"Faith"* - *"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."* (v. 41).
- (5) *"Miracles"* - *"Lazarus come forth!"* (v. 43).
Lazarus, in a state of decay, was restored to life and to health.

PURPOSES

The following section demonstrates that this gift had varied purposes. It was used to:

- (1) avert serious danger.
- (2) reveal secrets of men's hearts.
- (3) give encouragement.
- (4) convert sinners to the Truth.
- (5) "bring all things to your remembrance₁."
- (6) teach the Apostles "all things"₁.

B. OLD TESTAMENT

While the Old Testament does not contain the phrase "Word of Knowledge" yet there are many examples of something almost the same as that₂.

- (1) To avert disaster.

In many instances this special knowledge came at a crucial moment, in some cases making the difference between life and death.

- Daniel - Had not God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel when He did, both he and his companions would have been slain (Dan. 2:13).

Here we see two gifts operating together. It was probably the word of knowledge that enabled Daniel to know the dream and probably he interpreted the meaning of the vision by the gift of prophecy. If in fact it was not, then it was something very similar. Certainly it was a prophecy and God revealed it to Daniel.

¹ John 14:26

² 1 Kings 19:9 "The word of the LORD came to him".

- Elisha 2 Kings 3:6-26

Elisha, by divine revelation, was able to provide the means of securing water in the desert. If it had not been provided, the Army of Judah and the Army of Israel (and Edom) would have been “delivered into the hand of Moab!” This, however, was not all. Divine knowledge foresaw what would happen when the morning sunshine fell on the scene. When the Moabites arose they “saw the water on the other side as blood. And they said . . . The Kings . . . have smitten one another: now therefore Moab, to the spoil.” When they “came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote” them.

(2) *To Reveal the Secrets of Men*

1 Sam. 8:10-18 - *The disposition of the new king.*

1 Sam. 9:19,20.

(3) *To Impart Necessary Facts*

1 Sam. 9:15-16; 9:17; 16:7

(4) *To Give Encouragement*

The example of Elijah is very clear. He became depressed because he was convinced that he was the last one in Israel who had not turned to Baal. Jezebel was now after his life. He wanted to die.

‘And he said: “I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down their alters, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (1 Kings 19:14).

But then came “the Word of the LORD to him”:

“Yet I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him”.

It was also revealed that the Baal worshippers would be destroyed because Elijah was to anoint Jehu king over Israel, Hazael king over Syria and Elisha was “to be prophet in thy room”. “And it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay”. (1 Kings 19:17-18).

(5) *Detection of Evil*

- *Joshua*

In the case of Achan who sinned by taking the Babylonian garment and the silver and wedge of gold, Joshua knew that something was seriously wrong when his army was smitten at Ai but he did not know what was the cause. This was revealed to him by the LORD perhaps by the word of knowledge.

“Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it among their own stuff.” (Josh. 7: 11)

Joshua was also able to determine without error, by some process of elimination, who was at fault.

- *Elisha*

The servant of Elisha (Gehazi) was discovered by supernatural knowledge to have gone after Naaman and received a reward, on the pretence that two sons of the prophets had unexpectedly arrived and needed help. And Elisha “said unto him, Went not my heart with thee”? (2 Kings 5:26).

Elisha then employed the gift of MIRACLES to smite Gehazi with leprosy for his sin.

- *Samuel*

The word of the LORD came “unto Samuel, saying,

“It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.” (1 Sam.15:10,11).

Divine knowledge was revealed to Samuel that enabled him to discover the sin of Saul.

C. CHRIST and the WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

“But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24-25).

(1) By the word of knowledge Jesus knew what was in the heart of His own disciples.

- When he met Peter, He at once understood his temperament, his strength and his weakness, and was able to say to him:

“Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone” (John 1:42).

- To Nathaniel He said,

“Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile” (John 1:47).

When the astonished Nathaniel wanted to know how Jesus knew this, the Lord replied, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee” (John 1:48).

- He knew who would betray him

“Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70).

(2) By this gift Jesus knew that his disciples were in danger while crossing the Sea of Galilee. He arose from his prayer and “went unto them walking on the sea” (Matt. 14:25). Here is an example of the word of knowledge and the gift of miracles being used together to save people.

(3) The Word of Knowledge during the Last Week

Although the gospels are full of evidence that Christ used the word of knowledge during his ministry, the closing days of His mortal life give very pronounced evidence

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” (Matt. 16:21).

To synchronize his movements to enable him to fulfil the many prophecies during his last week, Christ certainly had access to divine knowledge. The following examples elucidate the use of this knowledge that he had.

- a) *“Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me and if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.”*
(Matt. 21:2-3).

This was to fulfil two prophecies as Matthew shows in verses 4 and 5.

- b) *“and he (Jesus) said unto them, Behold when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in... he shall shew you a large upper room furnished; there make ready... the passover”* (Luke 22:10-13).
- c) Jesus knew who would betray him and was able to identify him:
“He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And...he gave it to Judas Iscariot” (John 13:26).
- d) Because Jesus had the power of the “word of knowledge” he foresaw that Peter would deny him and therefore he was able to make a short term prophecy.
“I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.” (Luke 22:34).

D. PURPOSE IN NEW TESTAMENT

- (1) *To convert sinners to the Truth*

Jesus used the word of knowledge to convict the woman of Samaria of her sin and to demonstrate that he had Divine authority. He revealed to her that he knew all about her past life which caused her to say “Sir I perceive that thou art a prophet”. (John 4:19).

She in turn returned to the city and told others. The result was that “many of the Samaritans believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.” (John 4:39).

- (2) *To reveal secrets of men’s hearts*

Peter’s ministry clearly reveals the operation of the “word of knowledge”. The believers in Jerusalem had said that none “of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common.” Yet Ananias and Sapphira had agreed together to lie to the Apostles about the proceeds from land which they had sold. It was revealed to Peter by the “word of knowledge” that selfishness had filled their hearts causing them “to keep back part of the price of the land” and to lie about the actual amount. (Acts 4:32-5:11). The record indicates that they could have done what they wanted with the land or the proceeds as long as they did not try to make out they were doing something that they weren’t.

“Whiles it remained was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?” (v.4)

The real sin was that of hypocrisy. The result was that “great fear came upon all the ecclesia” (v.11).

Paul and the Word of Knowledge

The life of Paul gives many purposes for the “word of knowledge”:

- (3) To give Ananias the street, house address and name³ of Saul so that he might go there to restore Saul’s sight.
“And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:11-12.
- (4) The word of knowledge also removed any fear Ananias had of Saul.
“I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done...”
“But the Lord said . . . he is a chosen vessel unto me” (v.13 and 15).
- (5) The word of knowledge showed Ananias that Paul was expecting him:
“he (Paul)... hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in” (v.12).
- (6) By the word of knowledge⁴ Paul was forbidden to preach in Asia and Bithynia. It was then revealed in a vision that the “Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto the” Macedonians (Acts 16:6-10).
- (7) Through this gift, Paul was forewarned by others that if he went to Jerusalem he would be bound and delivered “into the hands of the Gentiles⁴” (Acts 21:10).
- (8) By means of the word of knowledge, Paul was able to warn the centurion of the ship that was to take him to Rome, that he should remain in harbour to avoid “injury and much damage not only to the lading and ship, but also of our lives” Acts 27:10.
- (9) To *Give Encouragement*. Paul was again given knowledge that
 - a) he would be brought before Caesar.
 - b) no life would be lost.
 - c) the ship would be lost.

The Word of Knowledge and the *Parakletos*

The Apostles possessed the gift and were, in accordance with the promises of Christ in John 14-16, able to retain infallibly in their memories those things that Christ had said unto them. They also were taught “all things” in accordance with that promise.

Following the Old Testament precedent (1 Pet. 1:12), the New Testament prophets would not always be able to grasp the full meaning of the revelations which came through them. Those who had the gift would “open” it up (Luke 24:32; Acts 17:3).

It is reasonable to conclude that this gift would be widely distributed among the “teachers” (Acts 13:15; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). In the early days of the ecclesia before the Scriptures were written and circulated, this gift would contribute to the oral doctrines described variously as “that form of teaching” (Rom. 6:17), “the form of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13), “the tradition” (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6), “the doctrine” (1 Tim. 6:3), and “the truth” (2 Tim. 2:25; Tit. 1:1).

It would seem highly probable that thus gift, (in conjunction with the word of wisdom and the gift of prophecy) was the means of revelation of a lot of NT scripture.

³ See Acts 10:5-6.

⁴ Here we see an overlapping of the “word of knowledge” with “prophecy”. This may even be considered the latter rather than the former.

⁵ Notice how prophets and teachers are mentioned, thus distinguishing between them.

THE GIFT OF FAITH

“to another faith by the same Spirit” 1 Cor. 12:9

- A. It seems fairly certain that this gift enabled a person to perform great feats which he otherwise would not have been able to - “so that I could remove mountains” (1 Cor. 13:2). It also seems that this gift was a necessary requirement for the proper operation of at least some of the other less showy gifts¹. If a person, for example, had the gift of wisdom or the gift of knowledge but did not have the courage to speak to others the things that had been revealed to him, then they were of little use. This is possibly why it is placed third in the order of importance by Paul.

It is essential to distinguish between the *gift* of faith and the *quality* of faith. The former was part of a temporary arrangement which was to “vanish” away; while the latter is something which has been exhibited since Abel and continues to dwell in the believer’s heart (Eph. 3:17).

These two principle kinds of faith are

- *natural* (Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:1-3, 6; 1 Cor. 13:13)
- *supernatural* - 1 Cor. 12:9. This was a direct Gift from God. It is possible that the gift of faith is meant in James 5:15.

It is probable that the gift of faith was required for Peter to walk on the water (Matt. 14:29-31). At times this gift has been given to some of God’s servants to enable them to encounter special hazards and to deliver rare testimonies for their God.

The gift was passive in operation in contrast to miracles, which was active. (Mark 11:20-24).

If Christ had succumbed to the temptation to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, it would have been a misuse of the gift of faith. cf. Ps.91:11

- B. It is difficult to distinguish between natural faith in God and the gift in the O.T. especially in such a chapter as Hebrews 11. Possibly the gift was the supernatural conviction that God would reveal his power in a specific case. 1 Kings 18 offers an example. It took more than natural faith for Elijah to know that God would answer his prayer with fire.
- C. The raising of Lazarus is evidence of the gift of faith in Christ’s life. “Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me” (John 11:41, 42).
- D. Both Barnabas and Stephen were said to have been “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit”, which by the figure of speech hendiadys², means Holy Spirit faith. The boldness for which the early disciples prayed³ was probably this same gift. The prayer:
 “Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness”
 and then the answer:
 “The place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness”.
 (Acts 4:29, 31).
- The evidence of this passage (and others) clearly points to a temporary gift of supernatural character.

¹ “God has allotted to each a measure of faith”. (Rom. 12:3) (This chapter is concerned with the gifts).

² Acts 11:24 is an example. Barnabas had the gift of faith.

³ See also Acts 4:13; 9:27; Eph. 6:19.

THE GIFTS OF HEALINGS

The “gifts of Healings” 1 Cor. 12:9

- A. These gifts were primarily concerned with physical illness. Their main purpose was not to reveal the possessor as a smart doctor but as a visible sign that God was with them so that the people would (having seen the healing) listen to the message they preached, and give glory to God (cf. John 9:3).

It should be noted that the original has gifts of healings in both verse 9 and 28. In other words it was a multiple gift which enabled the possessor to heal in various ways and to heal various illnesses.

The gifts operated in various ways.

1. Laying on of hands (Mark 16:17-18).
2. Command of faith (Matt. 8:16-17).
3. Through a spoken word (Matt. 8:8,13; John 4:50, Psa. 107:20.)
4. Through a cloth (Mark 6:56; Matt. 9:20; Acts 19:11-12).
5. Through an act of faith (Luke 17:14).
6. Through shadow (Acts 5:15).

There were various healings

1. blind, deaf and dumb (Matt. 8:16).
2. epileptics and insane (Matt. 17:14-21). (required fasting and prayer)
3. Involving creative acts (John 9:1-32).
4. diseases (Acts 19:11-12).
5. raising the dead - restoring vital organs, reversing brain damage (John 11:2-46).

The gift was an inter-ecclesial office (1 Cor. 12:28). As can be seen from the way that the gifts of healing operated, they were entirely supernatural in nature and had nothing to do with the medical arts.

- *Conditions on healing*

- Action was necessary. (Matt. 9:6; 12:13; Luke 17:14; John 4:50-52)
- faith was evident -
 - woman (Matt. 9:22)
 - blind man (Matt. 9:29)
 - mother’s faith (Matt. 15:28).

Healing was not done indiscriminately. 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 2:25; 1 Tim. 5:23 are inconsistent with the claim that under all conditions, if there is faith, there can be healing¹.

B. O.T. Manifestation.

The healing of Naaman the leper was evidence of the gift of healing in Elisha. 2 Kings 5:8-15.

¹ cf. Preliminary Points No. 9.

- C. The prophet Isaiah prophesied² that the Messiah would heal the sick. After Jesus had read this prophecy in the synagogue at Nazareth he said

“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”. (Luke 4:21).

When the disciples of John questioned Christ’s messiahship, he quoted Isa. 61 (in reference to the healings he had been performing) as an answer.

- D. The healing that the disciples performed was for the purpose of gaining converts, as stated above. Acts 5:14,15 gives an example. The healing was associated with the multitudes which “were constantly added to their number”.

This explains why Paul could not heal himself and why Timothy with his stomach troubles and frequent ailments were not healed (1 Tim. 5:23).

Paul also had to leave Trophimus at Miletus because he was sick (2 Tim. 4:20). Sickness in these cases was for the perfection of the character³. For the gifts of healings to have been exercised on these occasions would have made the person too elated⁴.

Modern “Faith Healing” (so called)

In this subject we are concerned with three things:

- a) does God answer the prayer offered in faith?
- b) the gifts of healings.
- c) Faith healing.

1. God has, and still can, if He wishes, answer the prayer of faith to heal the sick. We do not deny the power of prayer.

2. We do deny that the gifts of healings operate today. There is no evidence anywhere to support the theory that they do. However, to deny the present existence of the Spirit gifts is not to deny that “cures” are effected at faith-healing meetings. Given sufficient mental excitement “miraculous” cures are not impossible, but this is not evidence of God’s intervention, but rather to the “faith” of the patient.

² Isaiah 35:5,6; 61:1.

³ cf. 2 Cor. 12:10.

⁴ see 2 Cor. 12:7.

Roman Catholics and Pentecostals, with mutually antagonistic teaching, both claim miraculous¹ healings, and both have admitted that some "miracles" claimed divine are, in effect, not so. This is a significant admission. Recourse to divine healing is not needed to explain these claims.

¹ The question really is what do we mean by miracles (other than as in 1 above)? To answer this we quote a M.D., A. Rendle Short, "The Bible and Modern Medicine", P. 127.

"Doctors, like other people, make mistakes and are not infallible prophets. If we are to attempt some kind of definition of a recovery that would be miraculous, it must be sudden, complete and long-lasting. The patient must have been suffering from organic bodily disease with structural changes of a kind that do not normally get well. The element of suddenness is important. No doubt this definition is rather arbitrary, and some of the miracles of the gospels would fall outside it, though others would be included. The medical profession with few exceptions would agree that sudden, complete, and long-lasting recovery from such afflictions as the following, without ordinary medical or surgical treatment, might fairly be called miraculous: a histologically proved ulcerating cancer of the breast or tongue; life-long blindness with gross corneal opacities; blindness due to optic atrophy; a paralysed leg of long standing with great muscular wasting; a traumatic dislocation of the hip joint. On the other hand, most doctors have seen cases of recovery, even sudden recovery, of such a character that laymen would be sure to regard it as miraculous if they did not know all the facts. Two personal experiences may be quoted as illustrations.

Shortly after the first World War, a young man walked into my out-patient department complaining of paralysis of the arms. He had been discharged from the army with complete flaccid paralysis of the right arm following a bullet wound through the neck in the region of the brachial plexus, that is, the main bundle of nerves supplying the arm, and he produced papers giving full particulars and the names of eminent specialists who had treated him. But this morning, he had been taken with complete flaccid paralysis of the left arm also. I told my class of students that it was obviously functional, and when I held his arm vertically over his head and let go, it did not drop, but he brought it down gradually. We arranged for suitable treatment to be started tomorrow. He went to his lodging, got his landlady to feed him with a spoon and light a cigarette for him, and as he smoked it, he recovered the full use of both arms. We had been so impressed by the names of the specialists, and the deep scars over the nerves, that we had barely looked at the right arm, but it now became clear that the paralysis was functional on both sides.

Fairly recently, I operated on a woman with symptoms characteristic of cancer of the colon. At operation, there was a mass in the colon with the usual look and feel of a cancer, and a nodule in the liver that seemed clearly to be a secondary growth. Both were irremovable, so we did nothing and gave the husband a gloomy prognosis. Three years later, she came to see me, perfectly well. It was not a miracle. It was merely an error of diagnosis. What an advertisement either of these patients would have been for Lourdes, or Christian Science, or a faith-healing mission!

The alleged cures after the ministrations of one or the other of the above are by no means always permanent or even longlasting, and they fall almost always into one of the following categories. Perhaps the patient was a chronic invalid, liable to ups and downs, and only too anxious to convince himself that he was better. Or, a patient who had been making the worst of an ailment decided to make the best of it. Or, there had been a medical mistake as to the diagnosis. Or, the condition was functional, and the excitement of a big meeting highly charged with emotion, or the promises of an enthusiastic healer, effected a sudden cure. That is to say, nearly all the cases can be simply explained, by suggestion."

What then is responsible for the phenomena? The answer is that they are not genuine miracles at all, but a phenomena well known to science - the triumph of mind over matter.

"Faith" healing is the psychological result of mind over matter. Most doctors, whatever their persuasion, recognize the need for "faith" in effecting cures, for they recognize the power of mind over matter. "Faith" in their vocabulary does not necessarily mean to acknowledge God, but expresses a condition of blind acceptance of the patient in the one (whether he claims it to be of God or man) who is to effect the cure.

POINTING BONES



The Pointing Bone

The power a 'doctor' has over POINTING BONES the patient is sometimes remarkable. The power that the witch doctor has over the Australian Aborigine is an example. In a ceremony called "pointing the bone" (which is well known and attested by science) the bone is pointed at the victim who dies a lingering death. Fear of the witch doctor has caused the death. In many cases medical science is powerless to stop it. On the other hand the medicine man can effect a cure that will elude his more knowledgeable white brother. Both death and cure have been brought about by psychological processes. It involves the 'faith' of the victim or patient in the potency of the magical means of death or cure. It does not involve any miraculous powers.

The powers of hypnotism and mesmerism are also well known. Men can be induced to do all sorts of strange things so long as they commit themselves completely to the one under whose spell they have voluntarily given

themselves². It has been used to cure certain nervous disorders and to dull pain.

Similar psychological processes can be induced by the dramatic stimulus of an emotional revival meeting, in which a form of mass hysteria is often deliberately encouraged. Under the influence of enthusiastic singing, arousing oratory, the emotions of the audience are whipped up until a high degree of excitation is developed and many find themselves en rapport with the speaker. By such means all inhibitions are released and the mind can be brought to such a state as to drive pain from the body, or to effect minor temporary cures.

Such emotionalism is of the flesh and not of God. The evidences are quite as convincing that the "Dervishes of Arabia and the Theosophists of India" are now possessed of the "miraculous powers of God", as are those of the so called Christian claimants.

3. Pentecostals often catalogue Testimonies of paralytics, the deaf, and drunkards as indications of the curative powers of the "Holy Ghost". The following comments by a medical doctor indicate that such examples are not proof of *divine* healing:

"Diseases may be divided into three classes: first, those which are entirely mental; second, those which are physical but tend to cure themselves; third, those which are physical but do not tend to cure themselves. Eighty to ninety per cent of all diseases belong to the first two classes. A man with a paralysis of his leg of mental origin (or) with a head cold... gets well under the attention of a faith healer, a chiropractor, or even by taking patent medicine, and all but the paralytic will get well if nothing were done. On the other hand, such diseases as diphtheria, malaria, syphilis, cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis, and pernicious anaemia do not get well with faith healing, chiropractic treatment, or psychoanalysis... Under the ministrations of a faith healer these patients would die. But even if they did, the faith healer's result would be still 80 or 90 per cent effective,"³

"None of the parts of the body is superlative or independent; they are all dependent and correlated. Each organ of the body when disordered manifests a characteristic disturbance, and this disturbance involves all of the parts of the body which are dependent upon the functioning of that organ... ⁴ The basis of faith healing lies in the influence of the mind on the activity of the body. The mind is a function of the brain and through the brain is in constant communication with every part of the body by means of the nerves that extend to and from the brain. The activity of every organ of the body is controlled by the nervous system."⁵

"Paralysis of a limb and lameness are common symptoms of hysteria; the limb may be drawn up in a deforming contraction, or palsied. Persons with hysteria

² The methods employed by the Nazis under Hitler, the Chinese Communists, the Catholic Jesuits the Voodoo cult in Haiti, the Methodists under John Wesley and modern Evangelicals to indoctrinate the unsuspecting are remarkably similar if not identical. William Sargant in his 'Battle for the Mind' (Pan Books Ltd, 33 Tothill St, London, England, 1959) demonstrates how politicians, priests, psychiatrists and police forces the world over achieve their ends by the science of brainwashing.

³ Howard W. Haggard, M.D., *Devils, Drugs & Doctors: The Story of the Science of Healing from Medicine-Man to Doctor*, (Pocket Books, Inc., New York, 1959), P. 305,306.

⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 304. ⁵*Ibid.*, P. 296.

may become mute or blind, their sensations may be perverted, they may vomit obstinately or lose their appetite and waste away. Hysterical women may believe themselves pregnant and show all the signs of that condition, suppression of the menses, colostrum in the breast, morning sickness, and swelling of the abdomen. This may continue until the time for delivery has long passed and their minds have turned to some other manifestation.”⁶

“Not all men and women who have responded to faith cures are hysterical. There are numerous cases of bedridden invalids crippled by rheumatism and unable for years to put a foot on the ground, who nevertheless under some great stress, such as the house burning down around them, have shown remarkable returns of activity. The rheumatism which had crippled them had been real in the beginning, but during a long illness they had got into the habit of believing themselves crippled even after they were well. They had lost confidence in themselves.”⁷

4. Apparently “miraculous” results have been reported without the patients affirming belief in God. Some warts may be “charmed away” by pretending to pass under a ray, or simply suggesting to the patient that they will go away.

5. Even in the time of the apostles, some who failed to understand the truth in Jesus Christ, did not hesitate to falsely claim miraculous powers in his name: “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” (Acts 19:13). Warning that such would be the case is explicitly indicated in the following references:

- a) Jesus - “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:21-23).
 - “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” (Matt. 24:24).
- b) John - “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1).

⁶ Ibid., p. 300

⁷ Ibid., p. 301

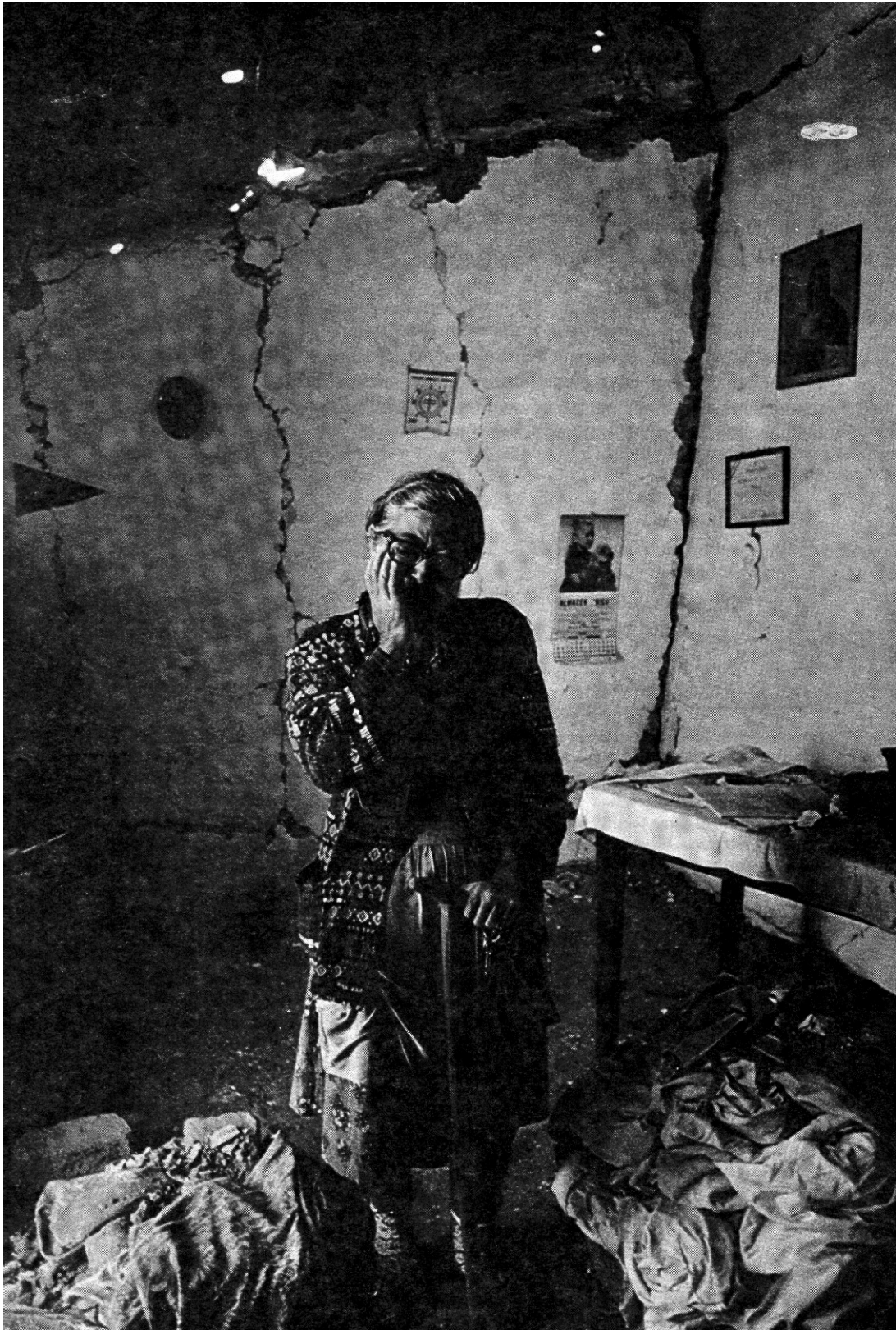
- c) Paul - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come... But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
(2 Tim. 3:1, 13).⁸

6. Modern 'faith-healers' cannot tell which of their patients will be healed and which will not. The miracles of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles were not apparently subject to any such doubt.

7. When the gospels and the epistles were written and circulated, the written evidence was far more important than the unexpected recovery of a sick person could be. Sudden recovery may prove nothing at all.⁹ It was far better that new converts should base their faith on the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ than on some miracle they might chance to have witnessed.

⁸ Some rather sensational claims are made in Pentecostal publications. In an article, "They Let God Be Their Dentist!" A.A. Allen reports the testimonies of six persons who allegedly had their teeth miraculously filled. "God filled four teeth for Beulah Clark as she sat in the audience", the article states, and "James drove all night in faith that God would do the work. He did! God filled three teeth." *Miracle Magazine*, 14, No. 9, (June 1969), P. 6. Only in small print in Allen's *Miracle Magazine* can a reader find the careful demurrer: "... A. A. Alien Revivals, Inc. and 'Miracle Magazine' assume no legal responsibility as to the degree of permanency of reported healings, deliverances or miracles..." *Ibid.*, P. 3.

⁹ An example is that of Adriana de Reichstein of Zacapa, Guatemala pictured overleaf. Mute for more than a year, she regained her speech the night of the earthquake, Feb. 4, 1976. (From *National Geographic*, June 1976, P. 828.) Obviously the condition was only functional.



THE WORKING OF MIRACLES

“to another the working of miracles” (I Cor. 12:10)

A. This gift enabled the possessor to perform spectacular deeds of many different kinds. In contrast to the word of wisdom, which was used when there was a spiritual danger, this gift usually was performed when there was a physical danger or problem at hand.

The working of a miracle had two results:

- a) it gave glory to the Father.
- b) it was a sign that the Lord worked with them (Mark 16:19,20).

Because of this, the gift was never to be used for personal convenience.

e.g. Christ could have used the gift to turn stones to bread but this would have been a misuse of the gift (Matt. 4:3,4).

Also the gift was not to amuse or entertain.

e.g. Christ would perform no miracle to satisfy Herod’s curiosity (Luke 23:8,9).

Nor would he produce a sign for the unbelieving Pharisees.

Various Kinds of Miracles

- a) raising the dead (usually young persons)
- b) supply
- c) judgement (discipline)
- d) deliverance
- e) overruling nature (Matt. 14:24, 25)
- f) unique miracles (strength of Samson).

If it is possible to imagine such a thing as a divine spectrum then miracles would possibly fit between the gift of healing and divine intervention. The gifts of healings did not involve creative action and were less dramatic. The gift of faith by contrast was passive.

Divine Intervention should not be regarded as the gift of the “working of Miracles”. This gift operated through human beings. There are, however, many events recorded in scripture that happened apart from human agency.

- a) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- b) miracle of the burning bush
- c) the Pillar of fire.
- d) the confusion of Tongues at Babel. (Gen. 11:7-9).
- e) The star of Bethlehem.
- f) the preservation of clothing. (Deut. 29:5; Neh. 9:21)
- g) wet and dry fleeces (Judges 6:36-40)
- h) donkey that talked (Num. 22:22, 31)
- i) flood (Gen. 7:11).

These events were the result of divine intervention, not the gift of the working of miracles.

Raising of the Dead

This miracle was much less common than the “gift of healing”. It required that the condition causing death be corrected plus the breath of life (spirit) had to be restored. After decay has set in resurrection necessitates re-creation.

The following examples illustrate the gift of miracles used to raise the dead.

- 1 - raising of widow’s son by Elijah. (1 Kings 17:17-24).
- 2 - raising of the Shunammite Woman’s son by Elisha. (2 Kings 4:18-37).
- 3 - the raising of the Widow of Nain’s son. (Luke 7:11-16).
- 4 - the raising of Jairus’ Daughter. (Luke 8:42, 49-56).
- 5 - the raising of Lazarus. (John 11:3-44).
- 6 - the raising of Dorcas. (Acts 9:36-42).

In the four N.T. examples a command was given indicating the person had the gift of the working of miracles. As would be expected no command was given in the O.T. examples, indicating the prophet had less authority and, therefore, less of a part in the miracle. In all examples the miracle caused God to be glorified.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prayer	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Seclusion	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Command	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faith Evident	No	v.30	No	v.50 Father	v.24 Martha	v.38 Widows
Purpose	v.24	v.37	v.16-18	v.26	v.45	v.42

Miracles of SUPPLY

- Water from the Rock. (Exod. 17:6).
- the meal in the barrel (1 Kings 17:12).
- widow’s oil increased (2 Kings 4:2-7).
- 20 loaves fed 100+ (2 Kings 4:42-44).
- water to wine (John 2:7).
- feeding 5,000 (Matt. 14:17).
- feeding 4,000 (Matt. 15:34, John 6:9).

We note from these miracles that they begin with what is at hand, and God multiplies it. It seems possible that a wrong effect may have been possible (cf. John 6:26).

Miracles of JUDGEMENT

- the 10 plagues (Exod. 7 - 12).
- drought (James 5:17, 18 cf. 1 Kings 17:1).
- destruction of Korah (Num. 16).
- fire from heaven (2 Kings 1:10,12).
- judgement against Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:4, 5).
- judgement against Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10).
- judgement against Elymas (Acts 13:9-12).
- judgement against Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20).

In the New Testament these types of miracles are termed binding and loosing. Peter was given the authority to “bind” a person because of their sin:

“Whatever thou bindest shall having been bound in heaven” (Matt. 16:19).

Later the same authority of judgement was extended to all the disciples (Mt. 18:18; John 20:23). This authority meant the ability to inflict physical punishment upon an intractable brother. If this had the desired effect, then those who had the miracles of judgement would be called in to “loose”¹ the brother.

The first recorded gathering of the disciples in this binding capacity was when they “retained” the sins of Judas (Acts 1:18,19).

At Corinth

The brethren who made a drunken feast of the Lord’s Supper were “drinking judgement to themselves” (1 Cor. 11:29 RV). This offence caused a widespread “chastening² by the Lord”

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (died) (1 Cor. 11:30; cf. 15:6).

The reproaches that Paul levels at the ecclesia contained the threat of more than mere verbal reproof:

“Let such an one think this, that, such as we are *in word* (supernaturally inspired) by letters when we are absent, such will we be also *in deed* (supernaturally empowered) when we are present” (2 Cor. 10:11).

“... our authority... for your destruction” (1 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17.

Loosing

The following from Gal. 6:1 indicates (along with James 5:14-15) how this sin was forgiven and the infliction removed:

“Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are Spiritual (empowered with Spirit gifts capable of removing the “binding”) restore such a one in the spirit (attitude) of meekness.”

Miracles of Deliverance

- opening of the Red Sea (Exod. 14).
- breaking of the drought (1 Kings 18:41).
- staying of the sun (Joshua 10:12).

Miracles Affecting Nature

- curing the springs (2 Kings 2:21)
- burning up water (1 Kings 18:37, 38)
- calming the sea (Matt. 8:25, 26)

¹ see James 5:14-15

² see 1 Cor. 5:3-5.

B. The Old Testament records many miracles:

- a) raising the dead
- b) the plagues in Egypt
- c) miracles of supply
- d) miracles of judgement (1 Kings 13:4-6) Samson, Elisha (2 Kings 2:23,24).

C. Christ performed countless miracles:

- a) raised the dead
- b) healed mental diseases
- c) nature miracles. These miracles all gave glory to God.

D. In fulfillment of the promise by Christ the first century scene was one of abundant miracles. In this way the truth was established in a godless and antagonistic environment -Acts 4:29,30; 19:11; 1 Cor. 2:4 are some examples.

Conclusion

The gift could be:

- a) wrongly used (Luke 9:54).
- b) imitated³ (Magicians of Egypt). (2 Tim. 3:8).

These gifts were necessary in the first century (and before) to give glory to God. They are not required now because we have a written record of these things.

³ The reader is referred to the book "Counterfeit Miracles" by B.B. Warfield (Box 652, Carlisle, Pa. 17013 U.S.A.) which clearly shows that those who claim the same charismata as occurred during the apostolic age, cannot prove their claim.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

“to another prophecy” (1 Cor. 12:10)

A. This gift, like the others, was supernatural in function and those that had it could demonstrate it.

Prophecy was one of the best gifts for edification (1 Cor. 14:39), and was closely allied with discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 14:29).

Prophecies could be:

- long term (Rev. 1:3) or
- short term (Acts 21:4, 10-11; Acts 20:22-23).

Its varied operations make it more difficult to define than some of the other gifts.

In the O.T. prophecy was primarily foretelling, whereas it was in the N.T. primarily forthtelling - revealing God's will to man. However this does include the former.

It was an utterance gift and possibly was a vehicle for the manifestation of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

A prophet may prophesy and lose his reward. Prophecy may operate through an unrighteous person.

- Balaam - Num. 24:3-24; 31:16.
- Caiaphas John 11:49-52; cf. Matt. 7:22-23; cf. 1 Cor. 13:2.

B. *In the O.T.* most prophecies carried the element of predicting the future. The revelation of God was received in various ways:

- a) visions cf. 1 Sam. 9:9 (seers); Isa. 6:1; Jer. 1:11,13; Ezek. 1:4 etc.
- b) audible voice 1 Sam. 3:9; Jer. 1:4.
- c) directly into his mouth Num. 23:5; 2 Chron. 20:14-17.

The relationship of a prophet to the source of the prophecy is illustrated by Exodus 7:1,2 where the angel (LORD) “said to Moses, ‘See I make you as God to Pharaoh and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.’”

To understand the full range of the gift of prophecy we must begin in the Old Testament.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>foretelling</i> | Jude 14, 15. |
| 2. <i>exhortational</i> | Deut. 28-33. blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience. |
| 3. <i>Prophecy in song</i> | Exod. 15. The song of the redeemed. Judges 5. |
| 4. <i>Edification</i> | Psalm 1. |
| 5. <i>Messianic Prophecy</i> | Psalm 2, 16, 22, 23, 45, 68, 69, 53, etc. |
| 6. <i>Prophecies of judgement</i> | Num. 16:28-30; 1 Kings 13:1-2. |
| 7. <i>Prophecies of Lamentation</i> | Jeremiah's. |
| 8. <i>Apocalyptic Prophecies</i> | Isa. 24-29; Dan. 7-12. |

Peter sums up O.T. prophecy₁ in his epistle:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

C. In fulfillment of Deut. 18:15 Christ was a prophet and exercised that gift. He was recognized as such:

“This is the prophet Jesus” (Matt. 21:11).

Christ had visions (Luke 4:5) and heard a voice from Heaven (John 12:28).

D. *In the N. T.*

Both prophecy itself and the act of prophecy carry the basic meaning of “public exposition” (Y). There are however several specialized categories of the gift of prophecy:

1. *foretelling* (revelation prophecy)
 - a) The prophet Agabus₂ predicted a dearth, which would come to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. (Acts 11:27-30).
 - b) The book of Revelation was predictive.
 - c) Prophecies of Christ (Matt. 24 etc.).
 - d) Paul warned (Acts 21:4)
2. *edification, exhortation and comfort* (1 Cor. 14:3)
 - a) 1 Cor. 14:3, 4.
 - b) 1 Cor. 14:24,25, conviction to the sinner.
 - c) exhortation Rev. 2:4-5.
 - d) comfort 2 Cor. 1:4; 2 Cor. 2:6,7.

After a token fulfillment of Joel 2:28,29 at Pentecost several members of the ecclesia received visions:

- e.g.
- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a) Ananias | Acts 9:10 |
| b) Cornelius | Acts 10:3 |
| c) Paul | Acts 16:9 |
| d) John | Revelation. |

Paul probably heard “a voice” in Arabia which made known to him the mystery (Gal. 1:12). In any event both 2 Cor. 12:4 and Acts 27:23 demonstrate that Paul did receive revelation by hearing a divine voice.

Instructions for use of the gift (1 Cor. 14:29-38).

- a) Let the prophets speak by two or three.
- b) Let the other judge cf. 1 John 4:1-3.
- c) The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (v.32).
- d) Prophecy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted (v.31).
- e) If one prophet is speaking and a new revelation comes to another, let the first be silent.

¹ see Section E - “Prophets”.

² Acts 21:10.

- f) women to keep silent in the ecclesia.
- g) No one to argue about these instructions as they were the commandment of the Lord (v.37).

False prophecies

The O.T. records numerous examples of false prophecies³. Moses gave the test of a true prophet to enable others to evaluate prophecies:

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deut. 13:1-3.

Because the gift of prophecy was so subject to imitation, the Spirit in the Apostolic age provided the gift of discerning of Spirits to enable the ecclesia to determine what was true and what was false.

When a man (prophet) forsook God and gave himself over to falsehood, God permitted lying spirits to deceive him or in some other way strengthen that position. (1 Kings 22:17-22).

The following examples from the N.T. demonstrate that false prophecies were to be expected:

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders;” (Matt. 24:24).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1).

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers” (Jude 8.)

Application today

In Apostolic times the gift of the Spirit was required before any could prophesy, for the complete revelation of God was not yet given.

Today, the gift of the Spirit is not required (or available) for that purpose. One can in the proper sense of the term prophesy by understanding the written word. The Bible is a complete record and provides in the words of Paul:

“the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest” (Rom. 16:25).

No additional prophecies have been made since “the Revelation” that was given to John on the isle of Patmos.

³ e.g. Jer. 28:2-3; Jer. 14:13-14.

THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

“to another discerning of Spirits” (1 Cor. 12:10)

A. By this gift, the brethren in an ecclesia could unmask all false claimants to the preaching of “the Truth”. The very fact that this gift was necessary shows how easy it was to imitate one of the other gifts. Like “healing”, this was a multiple gift as indicated by the plural text “discernings of Spirits”.

B. This gift enabled the true prophets to distinguish from the false. Jeremiah was able to detect that “the prophets prophesy falsely” (5:31).

1 Kings 22 provides an example of the true prophet Micaiah demonstrating that 400 other prophets were false, including the ringleader Zedekiah.

Jeremiah determined that Hananiah was a false prophet (Jer. 28:15).

C. “And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves.” (Mark 2:8).

D. The following four scriptures illustrate how this gift was used:

“And let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern (discriminate).”
(1 Cor. 14:29 RV).

“Despise not prophesyings. But¹ prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”
(1 Thess. 5:19-21).

The Thessalonians had a tendency to despise the gift of prophecy, so as a result, they tried to quench this Spirit gift. Paul instructs them not to quench it altogether but only that which is not “good”. They could make this test by employing the gift of discerning of Spirits.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit², but try the spirits² whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1-3).

This instruction by John is similar to that given by Paul to the Thessalonians.

“Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:2).

Here the Lord commends the ecclesia at Ephesus for having followed the injunction given by John.

The need to exercise this gift is evident in the following scripture.

Be not “quickly shaken from your composure or disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us” (2 Thess. 2:2).

Paul used the gift as is evident in Acts 16:16-18 and 13:8-10.

¹ R.V. footnote adds “Many ancient authorities insert But”.

² Clearly this refers to Spirit gifted brethren or those claiming to be such.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

“*diversities of tongues*” 1 Cor. 12:28
 “*kinds of tongues*” v.10

This manifestation of the Spirit was the capability to speak in foreign languages and dialects without prior knowledge of that language. It was transmitted by the sovereign act of God or through the laying on of hands. It was one of the least important gifts¹ but because of its spectacular nature, soon became abused and threatened to wreck the ecclesial services by confusion.

One of the primary differences between the Apostolic age and the Mosaic age was the ability to speak in tongues. This is to be expected because the Mosaic order was only concerned with one nation, which spoke Hebrew. Christianity embraced a much larger area and included the many languages of the Gentiles.

Purpose

It was to partially reverse the incident of the tower of Babel, so that foreigners could hear the gospel message spoken in their mother tongue. Along with the other more spectacular gifts, “Tongues” was a sign to “them that believe not².”

Regulations concerning this gift (1 Cor. 14)

- Women were not to speak publicly in tongues, v.34
- Only 2 or 3 were to speak at any one ecclesial meeting and then in order (v.27). The reason for this was that if more than 2 or 3 spoke there would not be time for anything else.
- Someone must interpret so that those ungifted in interpretation could understand and add “Amen” (v.28, 16).
- They must speak clearly and logically so that all could understand, especially the one who had to interpret (v.7-11).
- They were to pray that they may interpret (v. 13).

Occurrences

- Christ mentions this ability in his instructions just before his ascension into heaven (Mark 16:17).
- The twelve spoke in tongues at Pentecost (Acts 2:4).
- The first Gentile converts spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44-46).
- The Ephesians spoke in tongues (Acts 19:6).
- The Apostle Paul spoke “with tongues more than ye all”. (1 Cor. 14:18).

An analysis of these occurrences seems to indicate that the content of the message was from God rather than from the person’s general knowledge. The gift had a wide distribution. The NASB makes it quite clear, however, that *not* all believers had this gift: “*All do not speak in tongues, do they?*” (1 Cor. 12:30).

This rhetorical question expects ‘no’ to be understood as the answer.

¹ See the order of the gifts and the relative importance attached to them by Paul in 1 Cor. 12:10 & 28.

² (i.e. the Jews. Acts 2, 10, 19; 1 Cor. 14:21 all prove this point.)

Modern Claims to Speaking in “Glossolalia¹”.

There is no lack of examples within Pentecostal groups that some special vocal phenomena occur during their services.

Their strategy in argumentation is that since something occurs during their religious services, it must be “speaking in tongues”. However, a claim to have spoken in “tongues” is not in itself proof of the *source* of the event. Even Pentecostals recognize that tongue speaking is easily simulated. A prominent American Pentecostal, A. A. Allen, comments:

“I wouldn’t give you two cents for what you call a Holy Ghost experience, if the only action you got was a few minutes of stammering lips: ‘Bla, bla, bib, gah, gah, goo!’. My children said that when they were six months old! I have seen people do that when they were drunk... I have seen many people whom I believe were merely ‘trained’ by those who prayed for them, to seemingly receive the Holy Ghost... I believe Pentecostal denominations are full of people who have never had the baptism in the Holy Ghost experience. They have just been patted on the back and shook on the chin, and told what to say, until they couldn’t say anything, but, ‘Bla, bla, gag, gag, goo!’ and then somebody said, ‘You’ve got it!’ The only action they got was when somebody shook them under the chin.”³

The validity of their claim must, of course, depend on whether or not it can be proved by Scripture⁴. The word of God is the basis for us to distinguish between the false and the true.

Three fundamental points would have to be scripturally established before such a claim would have any validity.

- I. that the miraculous gifts were promised to the true church at the present time.
- II. that those who claim to “speak in tongues” preach the gospel and are indeed the true church.
- III. that modern “speaking in tongues” is the same as that defined in the Scripture.

We will analyze these in order.

- I. As has been established elsewhere in this publication, there is no scriptural evidence that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were promised to anyone today. It bears repeating that they fulfilled their purpose in the first century and will not be manifested again until *after* the return of Christ.

¹ “Glossolalia” a modern Latin word derived from (Grk.) GLOSSA (tongue) and LALIA (to speak) of echoic origin (Webster’s unabridged).

In Christian cultures today it is characterized by unintelligible gibberish uttered in an emotional state. In Public meetings it is usually accompanied with tears, heavy breathings, groans, and utterances of joy and rapture.

² see The Modern Glossolalia Utterance Analyzed which identifies that true source of modern “tongues”.

³ The Book of Acts is Holy Ghost in Action quoted from MIRACLE MAGAZINE, Vol. 14, No. 9, June 1969, P. 20).

⁴ cf. (Matt. 7:21,22).

- II. If anyone is a bit doubtful or undecided about the evidence for points 1 and 3, then they must surely be swayed to the correct position by the overwhelming evidence against point 2 being true. Christ stated that:

“straight is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Those who claim to speak in tongues may be found both within Catholicism and Protestantism and this rules them out from being the true church because these two branches form the vast majority within Christendom. Not only are they the largest but are diametrically opposed in their views. “God is not the author of confusion”. There is only one faith, not many. Since both claim the spirit gifts and both belong to the largest segment of Christendom neither is correct.

It is hardly necessary to point out that those who claim to “speak in tongues” simply do not preach the gospel⁵. On the basis of scripture

“thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that... dreamer of dreams”
(Deut. 13 :1-3).

The regulations which Paul laid down (as previously stated) show that today’s tongues movement ignores almost all the Biblical principles. Often there is praying without interpretation and with lack of order and control. Women invariably take precedence.

- III. Since the gifts were not promised for today, and those who claim “tongues” are not the true church because they do not preach the gospel; it is reasonable to say that what they do manifest bears no relationship to the gift of “kinds of tongues” mentioned in the New Testament. This is demonstrated in what follows. First of all we must discover if “tongues” in the context of the first century ecclesia was:

- (a) unintelligible ecstatic utterances in an unknown language generally uttered in a highly emotional state, or
- (b) the ability to speak foreign languages and dialects in common use in the Roman world without having to learn them or
- (c) the ability to speak Hebrew (Aramaic).

Once this is determined it will be possible to see how God originally intended the gift to be used.

If the so-called glossolalia does not perform this function or is not the same ability, then it must have its explanation outside Christianity⁶ and in a field such as psychology⁷

Background

While it is true that Greek was the most widely known language in the first century, it is also true that many other languages and dialects were spoken⁸ in the

⁵ see Christendom Astray (available from TCM or LOGOS).

⁶ see Glossolalia in Non Christian Religions.

⁷ see The Modern Glossolalia Utterance Analyzed.

⁸ 15 tongues (Grk. dialectos v.8) (languages v.6) were spoken at Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. The Lycaonian language also was spoken in the first century (Acts 14:11).

“oikoumene” (the then known world) and indeed even in Jerusalem⁹ Jesus lapsed into his native Aramaic in moments of stress (e.g. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.) From this we understand that some knew their native language much better than they knew Greek (if in fact they knew it at all).

2 Corinthians 10:13 (“within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us” NASB) is quite clear evidence that Paul had been given a distinct sphere within which he was to preach the gospel. His sphere was “from Jerusalem and round about Illyricum¹⁰” and westward to Rome and Spain¹¹. He was forbidden to speak in Asia and Bithyma¹². Paul even hoped to speak to the “regions beyond”¹³ (which in this context referred to the barbaric tribes to the north, probably as far north as the Danube). Greek certainly was not spoken in that area. Nor was it spoken in Spain, where a pre-Latin dialect would have been the language. Paul’s comments in Col. 3:11 about the “barbarian and Scythian” demonstrate the many languages that would have been a requirement for preaching in the first century. The ability to give a message in a foreign language would therefore be a tremendous asset in preaching the truth.

Examples of speaking with “Other Tongues”

Acts 2:1-33

On the day of Pentecost a mighty miracle occurred in which the twelve apostles¹⁴ collectively spoke in at least fifteen foreign languages (Gk. *dialectos*: v. 6, 8). Some have supposed that the Apostles spoke one language and those who heard them did so in their own language. This theory disagrees with the record, which states

“they... began to *speak* with other tongues” (v. 4).

At least part of those present accused the disciples of drunkenness (Acts 2:13) indicating that a corresponding miracle did not overtake them. If it had done so then the accusers would not have attributed the disciples’ action to drunkenness. Therefore, the miracle was one of speech - not of hearing.

It is important to carefully analyze the reactions to these “tongues” because several invalid theories are held by Pentecostals because they have not done so. There were many “Jews” “from every nation” gathered at Jerusalem for Pentecost. They heard the Apostles speaking in their “own language”.

A few¹⁵, however, did not understand any of the languages spoken; possibly because they were native Jews who only understood Greek or Aramaic.

“Only by disturbing the text is it possible to draw the conclusion that the gift of tongues at Pentecost was either the ability to speak in classical Hebrew (how then could the tongues be many as the text suggests?) Or the ecstatic glossolalia of modern Pentecostalists (how then could they be immediately understood?). The recorded

⁹ If all in Jerusalem had understood Greek perfectly it would seem unnecessary to record the superscription also in Latin and Hebrew (unless it was a legal requirement) (cf. Luke 23:38).

¹⁰ Rom. 15:19

¹¹ v. 24.

¹² Acts 16:6,7

¹³ 2 Cor. 10:16

¹⁴ Eleven plus Matthias (1:26), who were all Galilaeans (v. 7) cf. 1:11)

¹⁵ An overall view of the context suggests that there were only a few who mocked in contrast to the many who were amazed.

facts clearly point to a miracle of speaking known foreign languages and/or dialects¹⁶.”

Acts 10:44-47; (cf. Acts 11:15)

“Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band.” (RV)

From this verse we learn that Cornelius was a Roman. He would be bilingual and possibly some of his house would be also. Therefore the setting was not unlike the first Pentecost. Again we see the accuracy of Paul’s statement:

“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not”. (1 Cor. 14:22)

Those that “came with Peter” “were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit”. “They of the circumcision” did not believe that God had “also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” so tongues here was a sign to the Jews that he had done so.

Acts 11:15-17 states that the gift in chap. 10 was identical with that in Acts 2. This fact demonstrates that the gift was the ability to speak in foreign languages.

Acts 19:6

There is nothing in this context to suggest or even imply that tongues here was anything other than that which occurred on Pentecost in Acts 2. The method of imparting the Spirit was indirect by the laying on of hands in contrast to directly as in the other two examples.

1 Corinthians 14¹⁷

The word ecstasy does not appear in this chapter. The adjoining of the word “unknown” by the AV translators to the word “tongue” in this chapter is often misleading to the reader. The word is not found in the Greek text and this is indicated of course by italics. The implication is there, of course, because Paul was using the word “glossa” (tongue) to refer to languages that were unknown to the natives of Corinth. The glossa was an unknown tongue to them but was not unknown in an absolute sense.

One of the purposes of the gift of tongues was that it was to be a sign to unbelievers¹⁸. This is illustrated, as we have already mentioned, at Pentecost and in Acts 10. However if the tongue spoken in an ecclesia was not one which the “unlearned” understood, it would be of no use to him because:

- a) he would not be able to say “Amen” (v.16);
- b) he would say the ecclesia was mad (v.23) (especially if they were all speaking in tongues at once as the verse states).

¹⁶ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 300.

¹⁷ see the verse by verse exposition on this chapter.

¹⁸ The context implies that this refers to the Jews.

This chapter shows that the tongues were not to be used unless someone interpreted¹⁹ the message for the benefit of the congregation.

If tongues was not the ability to speak foreign languages, then v.18 and 19 loses all significance. Of what use would ecstatic utterances be to Paul if he could not use them in the ecclesia? Very little; and therefore there would be no point in thanking God especially for something which was of very limited use. If, however, tongues was the ability to speak in foreign languages, it would have been of immense value on his missionary journeys.

Verses 7-11 are devastating evidence against the view that tongues were incoherent ecstatic utterances. The whole argument of these verses is to show that unless the speaker spoke clearly in a language that the audience understood he would be a barbarian (foreigner) to his audience. Not only must the words be clear and in a known “language” (RSV) but they must be arranged in such a way that everyone knows the meaning of the message.

This analysis has shown that “tongues” was the God given ability to speak in foreign languages²⁰. Since Pentecostals can not do this, then an explanation to their utterances lies in the field of psychology and not with the scriptures.

A survey of glossolalia in non-Christian religions

The following quotation is of immense value in proving that the modern tongues movement within Christianity is from men and not from God. Since pagan religions claim and perform the same phenomena, as do Pentecostals, it is obvious that the source is non-Christian.

‘Glossolalia’ and similar speech-phenomena occur in various forms during shamanistic rites of the New, and especially of the Old World.

It is entirely probable, moreover, that sorcerers of India and China contemporaneous to the Samaritans, spoke incoherently while divining, curing and communing with the spirits. Glossolalia in the Later Han Dynasty indicated the antiquity of the phenomenon in China.

Among nonreligious examples of glossolalia is the famous case of Helene Smith (pseudonym). In 1892 this woman became acquainted with a group of spiritualists in Geneva and thereafter had frequent trances that gave rise to verboauditive, vocal, verbovisual, and graphic automatisms. A second case is that of Albert LeBaron, (pseudonym), an American. Like Helene Smith he came in contact with spiritualists. During a meeting at a summer resort he had a vision followed by automatic movements and speech. Sometime later he involuntarily spoke an unknown language that he was unable to identify after extensive research. Other nonreligious instances of glossolalia have been reported.

¹⁹ If the person speaking in tongues was the one who interpreted (cf. except he interpret. v. 5) it would seem that he would not have to actually interpret, but only restate in the language of the congregation what he had already said in a tongue.

²⁰ see notes at Acts 2; 1 Cor. 13:1; 14:21.

Speaking in tongues has been analyzed in psychological terms by Lombard, Cutten, Mosiman, and others. The following represents a resume of their more outstanding findings. The glossolalist speaks in tongues while in a state of ecstasy or emotional exaltation and shows symptoms, depending upon the individual and his social environment, associated with one or more of the following: somnambulism, hypnotism catalepsy, or hysteria.

The Language of Spirits

Speaking the language of supernatural beings while entranced or religiously exalted occurs frequently in divinatory and curing ceremonies. Rasmussen reports that among the Hudson Bay Eskimos a shamaness spoke to the spirits in their language amid sounds of trickling water, rushing wind, snuffing of a walrus, and the growling of a bear. A spirit language is also present in the shamanistic complexes of the Chukchee, Northwest and Southwest Koryak, and Asiatic Eskimo... Bogoras states that many words of the spirit language employed by Asiatic Eskimos are analogous to the spirit language of Eskimos in Alaska and in the Atlantic area. According to Lehtisalo the Tungus shaman is supposed to learn the entire language of nature during his trance. Batchelor, in his description of Ainu religion, reports that the self-hypnotized shaman becomes the mouthpiece of his inspired gods but, as they "do not speak to him, but only through him, he often does not know that he had spoken."

The hala, or shaman, of the Semang pygmies speaks to the celestial spirits in their own language, and, among the Papar, Putatan, and Tuaran groups of North Borneo, the priestesses of the Gusi cult offer incantations to a gusi (sacred jar) in a language known only to the spirits and themselves. In the Mortlock Islands of Micronesia Wallis asserts that following convulsive twitching of the hands, nodding of the head, and other dynamic stigmata frequently accompanying glossolalia, spirits open the priest's mouth and speak through him in a language very different from ordinary speech. In the Solomon Islands, the male or female religious medium falls into a trance and speaks with a voice of a ghost which declares itself in possession of the medium. The Tshi-speaking priests of the Gold Coast, during a religious performance frequently utter words or sentences spoken in a croaking or guttural voice. The words and the person's unnatural voice were said to be those of a god.

The Language of Animals

Eliade and Lehtisalo have described the use of animal language by religiomedical functionaries and state that this medium of expression is widely adopted, especially among Siberian shamans. The practitioner imitates the cries and sounds of animals, birds, and natural phenomena as a sign that he can transform himself at will into a non-human embodiment and circulate freely among the three cosmic zones: hell, earth, and heaven.

Phonations Frustes

The occurrence of this in non-christian religions is often accompanied by sounds ranging from animal cries and ventriloquism to whistling and shrieking. The Chaco magical rites described by Metraux consist of a monotonous repetition of a melodious theme interspersed with meaningless words or syllables. On occasion the priest's

conjunction includes a short sentence requesting the evil to go away. Among the modern Quillancinga and Pasto groups of the Andean region studied by Ortiz, the curanderos or tribal doctors intermittently recite unintelligible prayers as they chew drugs and suck the area of the patient's affliction. No description of the prayer itself is given, but it was ostensibly delivered while the priest was in a semi- or unconscious state. In North America we may note Espinosa's description of a Caddo harvest ceremony, during which an old man delivered a harangue of pure jargon in a hasty, high-pitched voice without saying an intelligible word... Ethnography of the Wintu tribe also contains illustrations of glossolalia. The shaman, Albert Thomas, who was half Wintu and half Achomawi, sang in Wintu in the middle of the night but was said to be ignorant of this language when he was awake. DuBois tells of another Indian glossolalist, Nels Charles, who attended a white school. Charles is quoted as saying, "I can't even talk Wintu well, but when a spirit enters me the spirit talks and they say I talk Wintu perfectly well. It is just like talking with unknown tongues and getting the spirit in the Pentecostal church."

According to Corlett, the Warraus medicine man of Guinana, after hours of shaking his rattle and addressing the spirits, finally converses with them in a language unintelligible to the Indians present. Furthermore, because of the Zapotecan illustration of rudimentary glossolalia, it is conceivable that speaking-in-tongues... were part of the elaborate ceremonial life of the Mayans, Incans, Toltecs, and Aztecs. In African religions xenoglossia has a wide geographical distribution and is a rather frequent occurrence.

Speaking in tongues and similar behaviour have been seen to be highly variegated and widespread in their incidence, but with few exceptions they appear to be mainly Old World phenomena. Ecstatic vocalization is reported in Moslem Malaya and in many areas of the East Indies. China and Japan enter into the picture with examples of spirit language... Korean sorcerers are known to utter incoherent sounds...

Religious explanations (of glossolalia) include that of Buddhism and that of the Dancing Religion of Japan, the former being based on the idea of transmigration of souls, and the latter upon specific spirits possessing the glossolalist.

This survey has shown that speaking in tongues is widespread and very ancient. Indeed, it is probable that as long as man has had divination, cursing, sorcery, and propitiation of spirits he has had glossolalia. Almost all forms of vocalization presented appear to be largely derived from learning...¹

¹ L. Carlyle May (American Anthropologist, 1956), P. 75-96.

- a) “Glossolalia is not productive. Once an audio signal has been internalised, it becomes stereotyped”...
- b) “The stereotyped utterance mirrors that of the person who guided the glossolalist into the behaviour”...
- c) “Glossolalia is lexically noncommunicative. The utterer... and his listener do not share a linguistic code”...

“Such agreement of pattern despite linguistic and cultural differences, to my mind, can be explained only if we assume that the glossolalia is not simply uttered while in dissociation but is an artefact of the mental state... It is thought... that in epilepsy the cortex is driven by discharges from subcortical structures. I am proposing that something similar is happening during glossolalia...”¹

Goodman has shown that kinetic behaviour associated with “tongues” can be conveniently arranged by intensity:

- trembling and shaking
- twitching (face and thorax)
- fingers cramping and stretching
- head shaking
- hand manipulation
- throwing trunk from side to side
- jumping
- rocking, bowing, arm lifting while standing or lifting”².

In this light the glossolalia utterance is seen as an artefact of a hyperaroused mental state.

Modern Pentecostal practice

In 1 Cor. 14, the following differences from Pentecostal practice are noteworthy:

- a) Pentecostal women usually predominate in unintelligible utterances and even preach during public assemblies. But Paul says, “Let your women keep silent in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” v.34
- b) Pentecostal meetings frequently have more than one person uttering sounds at the same time, but Paul instructs that all should be done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40), and that “if any man speak in an tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that by course” (1 Cor. 14:27).
Pentecostals seldom have an interpreter of the unintelligible speech, yet Paul says, “let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church...” (1 Cor. 14:27,28).
Many tongue speakers consider themselves compelled by the Holy Spirit to ‘speak in tongues’ yet Paul says, “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” (1 Cor. 14:32).

¹ F. D. Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), P. 123. She also states that glossolalia was spoken by a chronic schizophrenic and also can be induced by L.S.D.

² IBID., P. 127.

Tongues were to cease¹

In the middle of his instructions concerning spiritual gifts, Paul digresses in Chapter 13 to “shew unto you a more excellent way”. This way was the acquisition of agape, the highest of spiritual virtues (as people soon discover when they attempt to emulate it in their lives). The miraculous gifts were to pass away because they were fragmentary or “in part”. They were specifically designed to establish Christianity. Once this was achieved, the gifts (including of course tongues) were to “vanish away”.

“When that which is perfect (complete or mature. cf. 14:20) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” (v.10) By contrast the spiritual virtues of faith, hope and agape would abide.

It is invalid to say that the “perfect” refers to the coming of Christ as some do. Since faith and hope will be realized at that time, their abiding can only refer to the present time. The “perfect” refers to the completed scriptures.² This occurred when Christ gave John the Revelation. As that record shows the truth became apostate after that and as the early “fathers” testify, the gifts did cease at that time.

Objections stated

Farrar in his *Life and Work of Paul* (P. 96, 97) lists several objections to “tongues” being foreign languages.

1. In Mark 16:17... the word “new”... points to strange utterances, not to foreign languages.
2. In the other places of the Acts where the gift of the Spirit is alluded to, no hint is given of the use of unknown languages.
3. The Passage of Joel of which he (Peter) sees the fulfillment in the outpouring of Pentecost, does not contain the remotest hint of foreign languages.
4. The fancy that this (foreign languages) was the immediate result of Pentecost is unknown to the first two centuries.
5. Such a gift would be quite alien to that law of God’s Providence which never bestows on man that which man can acquire by his own unaided efforts.
6. Owing to the universal dissemination at that time of Greek and Latin, there never was a period in which such a gift would have been more absolutely needless. For instance, the whole multitude from fifteen countries which heard the Apostles speak “in their own tongues” the wonderful works of God, yet all understood the speech which Peter addressed to them in Greek.
7. Although Paul “spoke in a tongue” more than all his converts, it is clear from the narrative of what occurred at Lycaonia, that at a most crucial moment he did not understand the Lycaonian dialect.
8. Early Christian tradition asserts that the Apostles did not possess a supernatural knowledge of foreign tongues.

¹ See Spirit Gifts are not available today.

² See notes on 1 Cor. 12:10 - 12.

Another problem

9. Those who argue that “tongues” was unintelligible ecstatic praise say that ‘had the gift of tongues been the ability to speak in foreign languages its use in apostolic missionary work would surely have been recorded and encouraged; nor would tongues have ranked with Paul as low as it did.’

ANSWERED

1. The word “new” is omitted in several ancient authorities but even if retained, only refers to tongues (glossa = language (Y)) that they were not familiar with. “New” agrees with “other” tongues of Acts 2:4.
2. Since tongues were so clearly defined in Acts 2 by Luke, there would be no need for him to define his terms each time he used them. Farrar’s argument is “from silence” and is therefore dangerous.
3. Again this is an argument from silence. It would have been no use Peter saying that the gift was the ability to speak in foreign languages because a multitude of people, who spoke 15 different languages, had just finished stating this

“We do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God”
(Acts 2:11).

The only ones who needed convincing were the few local Jews who did not understand any of the tongues spoken. Peter then refers to the words of Joel to show them that the signs, which they saw and heard, were prophesied by Joel. There is no direct mention (in the Passage of Joel cited) of:

- a) the word of wisdom
- b) the word of knowledge
- c) faith
- d) gifts of healings
- e) discerning of spirits
- f) interpretation of tongues

but they were an essential part of the outpouring at Pentecost. To say therefore that Joel does not mention foreign languages is to say nothing, because he does not mention directly any of the six gifts mentioned above.

4. This statement, however learned it may appear, contradicts the inspired record of Acts 2:6, 9-11.
5. Anyone who has learned a foreign language knows how difficult it was to learn. Any person who has served a few apprenticeship courses could have built the tabernacle but God gave Bezaleel the wisdom so that he could commence the work without having to acquire the wisdom.

The work of preaching the Gospel could not wait for the preachers to learn each language they may need before commencing duty, so God bestowed this ability so the work could proceed immediately. Not only that, but tongues were a sign that God was with them and that they possessed the Spirit.

- 6 The words of Peter (possibly spoken in Greek or possibly in Aramaic) were not directed to those from the fifteen different countries but to the few “men of Judea” who mocked and supposed that the disciples were drunken (see v.14, 15). The example which Farrar has chosen perhaps shows that the gift was needless for ordinary¹ communication at that moment but it can be safely said that if that particular form of communication had not been employed then they would not have been “amazed” nor would many have been convinced of the need for baptism. Remember that one of the purposes of the Holy Spirit was to “convict the world of sin” (John 16:8). It accomplished its purpose at Pentecost and therefore cannot be said to be “absolutely needless”.
7. This only points to the fact that the gifts were “in part” (1 Cor. 13:10). The fact that Paul could not remove his “thorn in the flesh” was not evidence that he did not have the “gift of miracles”. Then too the ability to speak in tongues did not mean the person understood when that tongue was in turn spoken to him.
8. We would rather stick with the Scripture than with “early Christian tradition” because the truth fast became apostate in the first century as the Spirit prophesied. (1 John 4:1). Acts 2 clearly states that a group of Galileans spoke in 15 different languages on the day of Pentecost.
9. The gift of tongues was used in apostolic missionary work. Christ encouraged them to use this gift when he said:
“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).
 Mark records that they had spread the truth in foreign parts:
“And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them” Mark 16:20).

The very fact that no mention is made of the Apostles having to learn foreign languages is evidence that they did not have to. The “tongues” provided the ability. Paul said:

“I speak in tongues more than you all” (1 Cor. 14:18).

He used this gift to speak foreign languages during his missionary work when he travelled extensively so that he was able to say “the gospel... was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which¹, Paul, was made a minister.” (Col. 1:23).

The gift would not be required in most ecclesias but all the other gifts would be. This is probably why tongues rank low.

¹ See Background on Tongues.

Facts about tongues

It is impossible to deny that the miracle recorded in Acts 2 consisted of enabling the Apostles to speak in foreign languages they had never learned. The interchange of the expressions, *new tongues* (Mark 16:17), *other tongues* (Acts 2:4), and *tongues* (Acts 10:46, 19:6) in reference to the same event demonstrate that the last mentioned has the same sense as the former expressions which can only mean to speak new languages. Only the above interpretation satisfies all the facts of the subject. These are:

1. “Tongues” were intelligible to those who understood foreign languages (Acts 2:11). Therefore the speaking was not incoherent, unintelligible gibberish.
2. What was uttered were articulate sounds, the vehicle of prayer, praise and thanksgiving. (1 Cor. 12:14-17).
3. They were edifying, and therefore intelligible to the speaker (1 Cor. 14:4,16).
4. They were capable of being interpreted, which supposes them to be intelligible.
5. Though intelligible in themselves and to the speaker, they were unintelligible to those not acquainted with the language used, and therefore not profitable to them. (1 Cor. 14:2, 19).
6. Ecstatic uncontrolled speech does not accord with Scripture. The Apostles, when they employed tongues, were self-controlled, calm and rational and easily understood.

Conclusion

In conclusion we see that the current tongues movement is an epidemic which rages over disturbed humanity. A clear indication of this is that heathens and Christians, possessed people and tribal dancers, witch doctors and spiritists all claim to speak in “tongues”. However, the tongues movement is only an expression of a delirious condition and must not be equated with the “gift of tongues” found in the Scripture which was the God given ability to speak foreign languages.

THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

“to another the interpretation of tongues” 1 Cor. 12:10

A. This was the God given ability to interpret languages that he had not previously learned. By doing this he was able to edify the ecclesia (1 Cor. 14:5). The very designation given to this gift shows that it was manifested only in conjunction with “tongues”.

A person could have both gifts or only one. There could be no interpretation if there were no tongues and Paul commands that no one was to speak in tongues unless the utterance was interpreted. (1 Cor. 14:28).

- Was an interpretation of tongues necessarily an exact translation - word for word? No. The interpreter may only give the sense.
- Those that could speak in tongues were to pray for the gift of interpretation of tongues. 1 Cor. 14:13. This instruction is logical as tongues was of no use to anyone (except himself) (14:2) if there was no one who spoke that language in the assembly.

Purpose

Obviously the purpose was to repeat the message (that was given by the tongue speaker) in the language of the ecclesia, so that the general audience would understand and be edified (1 Cor. 14:5). e.g. If the Assembly were mainly Greek and a tongue speaker spoke in Egyptian, the interpreter would speak in Greek not some other language.

Instructions for use of the Gift

- Only one person to interpret (14:27) in a particular meeting otherwise two may try to interpret and so “things would not be done decently and in order”.
 - women must not interpret (14:34,35).
- B. The gift was not available or necessary in the O.T. as salvation was limited to Israel that spoke either Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic.
- C. Christ’s mission was to the lost sheep of Israel, so there is no record of him using the gift.
- D. A person who spoke in tongues on a missionary journey could be understood by his audience, but unless he had the gift of interpretation he would not know what the audience said to him.

EXAMPLES of VARIOUS GIFTS used together

Here we see several manifestations of the Spirit through ELISHA in a single context all operating to save Israel (2 Kings 6:8-7:1).

1. The Word of Knowledge.

When “the king of Syria warred against Israel”, Elisha, through something very close to the word of knowledge, was able to detect the movements of the Syrians and in turn warn the king of Israel so that he “saved himself... twice.”

“Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou (King of Syria) speakest in thy bedchamber” (v.12).

2. Miracles. When the Syrians came to take Elisha,

“Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.” (v.18).

Here we see a miracle being performed so that the Syrian army became powerless.

3. The gift of Healing.

This blinded army was then led to the city of Samaria where Israel were.

“Elisha said, ‘LORD, open the eyes of these men that they may see’ And the LORD opened their eyes.”

Here was a vast healing.

4. The Word of Wisdom.

The king wanted to smite his captives but Elisha revealed a very wise plan. Let them go! The reason is recorded. They were grateful for their lives;

“So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel” (v.23).

5. The gift of Faith.

Such a daring handling of a great army reveals that more than ordinary faith was involved.

6. The gift of Prophecy.

Elisha who was a prophet, made a short-term prophecy:

“Thus saith the LORD, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.” (7:1)

This revelation was given so that Elisha could avert disaster (6:31).

It can be seen by these examples that the various manifestations of the Spirit merged and complemented each other in their operations.

A New Testament example is evident in the gift of tongues, which required the gift of interpretation before it could be exercised (when the tongue was “unknown”).

SECTION E

INTER-ECCLESIAL OFFICES

It is evident that there was a distinction between ecclesial offices (overseers, elders, servants) and inter-ecclesial¹ offices such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. So also is it evident that these offices (1 Cor. 12:28) were distinguished from the gifts of v. 8-11. The Apostles, for example, were not members of the ecclesia at Corinth.

Apostles

“God hath set some in the ecclesia, first Apostles” (1 Cor. 12:28).

The whole tenor of the New Testament points to the Apostles as the leading figures in the early ecclesia. Originally Christ had chosen twelve apostles

“He called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:13).

Also, others besides the original twelve came to be properly called apostles.² Barnabas and Paul are examples (Acts 14:14).

The basis of the work of the Apostles is presented in the last ten verses of Mark, and also in the Lord’s words in Acts

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

To these scriptures it is well to add Peter’s testimony:

“And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew... Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; not unto all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:39-43).

¹ Conybeare and Howson support this by adding an interpolation: “God has set the members in the church, some in one place, and some in another” because of “omission of the answering clause in the Greek.”

² Some versions imply that Andronicus and Junia were Apostles (Rom. 16:7) but the following suggest only that they were held in high esteem by the Apostles: NEST, DIAG, KNOX, ROTH.

These supreme qualifications of the Apostles inevitably involved their exercising authority in the early ecclesias.

There was another sanction for the authority of the Apostles equal to that of their being witnesses of the risen Lord and of His commission to them. God by His Spirit spoke through them. (Eph. 3:3,5).

The Spirit not only confirmed and strengthened their hands as Apostles, but enabled them to serve their brethren as prophets, teachers, evangelists and healers.

“I am appointed a preacher and an Apostle and a teacher” (2 Tim. 1:11)

The one main difference between the office of Apostles and other offices was that they could and did impart various gifts of the Spirit to others. (Acts 8:17, 14). This was their exclusive right. The Apostles must have had all the gifts otherwise how could they have passed them on to others?

The Apostles were given the power to “bind” and “loose” sin¹ (Matt. 16:19).

The following attempts to illustrate that the Apostles had all the gifts.

- “The signs of a true Apostle” were “signs and wonders and miracles” (2 Cor. 12:12).
- the gift of miracles - to strike terror into the adversaries of the truth and to win attention of closed minds. Paul struck Elymas the magician with blindness (Acts 13:8; cf. Rom. 15:18-19).
- gift of prophecy - It was their special commission to reveal the truth of God to man. (Eph. 3:3, 5) They were consoled in the midst of their labours by heavenly visions (2 Cor. 12:4). Paul was a prophet (Acts 20:29; 28:28).
- gift of tongues - Necessary in their travels (cf. Paul, 1 Cor. 14:18).
- gift of wisdom - the daily care of all the ecclesias (2 Cor. 11:28). They employed this gift when imparting gifts to others (cf. Acts 6:3).

In the pressing problem of whether circumcision was necessary to salvation the correct course was indicated by the Holy Spirit², probably through the “word of wisdom”.

“The gift would serve to handle problems of administration and conduct, and would no doubt include the giving of practical advice based on guidance received through other gifts.”³

- gift of knowledge - They must build up their converts in the faith (Eph. 4:11-14)
- discerning of Spirits (Acts 5:3).
- interpretation of tongues - No specific mention is given.
- gifts of healings - Paul was able to perform extraordinary acts of healing while in Ephesus. Handkerchiefs and aprons carried away from Paul cured the sick (Acts 19:12). Paul “raised” Eutychus (Acts 20:9), cured the father of Publius (Acts 28:8).

¹ see Section D - “Miracles of judgement”.

² Acts 15:1-28.

³ TEST, Vol. 43, P. 258.

Prophets

When we speak of prophets, we think of the major (and perhaps minor) prophets of the O.T. However, we must realize that there were other prophets other than these the Christian prophets. These prophets wrote the books that became our New Testament, and they had an important standing and function within the first century ecclesial organization.

Despite the historical discontinuity between the prophets of the Old Testament and the prophets of the New, they were all, in the mind of God, part of one and the same order; they were all alike in authority, in character and in function. The Christian prophets merely took up their work where the Old Testament prophets had left off. The vocabulary, the idiom, and all the fiery eloquence of the Old Testament prophets were revived, and the Old Testament itself became both text-book and dictionary for the terms of redemption used by the prophet-teachers of the early Church.

Consistently, the New Testament writers recognize no distinction between Old Testament and New Testament prophets; all are regarded as speaking with Divine authority. Thus Paul, for example, can say, “The Scripture with”, and can then quote Deuteronomy and Luke in the same verse without any qualifying comment (1 Tim.5: 18). Paul again, this time in his address to the Jews in the synagogue at Corinth, shows that the duties attached to his own prophetic mission were identical to those laid on an Old Testament prophet like Ezekiel (cf. Ezek. 3:18-19 and Acts 18:6; cf. also 1 Tim. 4:16).

All this is diametrically opposed to the widely-accepted view that the quality of the message of the prophets, and the degree of their authority and relevance, somehow increased the nearer they were in time to the one who was “full of grace and truth”. The revelation of the truth was certainly progressive, but the truth itself never altered. It could be revealed in simple or complex forms, but never did it contradict or invalidate what God had previously revealed.

Status of Prophets

Prophets in Old Testament times were men who stood out amongst their contemporaries. As a mouthpiece of God, a prophet was always noticed and heard, if not always obeyed. And so it was in New Testament times. Prophecy was said to be the “best gift” (1 Cor.14:1,39), and New Testament prophets were second only to Apostles in importance and standing in the ecclesias (1 Cor. 12:28,29). The early Church was being built “upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20), and the context of Ephesians 3:5 makes it unquestionably clear that these prophets were contemporary Christians, through whom, in conjunction with the Apostles, the “mystery of Christ” was being progressively revealed (cf. also Eph. 4:11-12).

These prophets formed a ministry in the Ecclesia that was much more widespread and active than has generally recognized. Later evidence will show that rather than being largely restricted to the writing of the books of the New Testament, their ministry was actually more oral than written.

The means by which messages from Heaven were conveyed to a prophet varied according to the content and degree of importance of the message concerned. Most came in direct speech through the prophet’s lips; some were given to be put on record as a witness to be quoted against the people of God later; others came to the prophet in vision or dreams.

Exhortation was one of the functions of the prophets (1 Cor. 14:3,31, see RVm). “Judas and Silas being themselves prophets also exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed” the message they had brought from Jerusalem (Acts 15:32).

After Paul’s conversion the ecclesias throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria felt an immense sense of relief and “had peace, being edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of (lit. “the exhortation of”, i.e. supplied by) the Holy Spirit, were multiplied” (Acts 9:31)¹. “The word of exhortation” by itinerant Apostles, to which The Acts frequently refers, must always be understood as part of the prophetic ministry. The encouragement came from the exalted Lord as he inspired his words to the ecclesias.

Psalms

Psalms, which were a type of prophetic utterance (1 Cor. 14:26) were probably hymns of praise. It appears that some were embodied or quoted in the epistles; Phil. 2:6-11, for example, is in poetic form in the Greek, and some modern versions, like the NAB and the Jerusalem Bible, set the text out in blank verse. The “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” which Paul said should overflow in melody out of the joy of Christian life were not necessarily excerpts from the Old Testament.

Interpretation

Interpretation was another aspect of the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:26). This gift of infallible spiritual enlightenment was no doubt one of the most fascinating and enthralling aspects of Divine revelation for those first-century believers who were privileged to witness the gift in operation. Obviously the only Spirit-guided interpretations available to us are those recorded in the New Testament, from which our examples must be taken.

Four verses about Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-20) are taken up by the Christian prophet in Hebrews chapter 7, and are made the basis of a 28 verse “interpretation”.

More surprisingly, the student discovers that each stage of the argument in Hebrews 7 is based on one word or phrase from Psalm 110:4, which is itself David’s comment (as a prophet) on Melchizedek, at a point midway in time between the original king-priest and his eternal Antitype; so that when the end of Chapter 7 is reached, every phrase and every word of Psalm 110:4 has been expounded, as the following tabulation shows

w. 1 - 3:	“Melchi...”: King of
w. 4 -10:	“order of”
w. 11-13:	“Thou art”
w. 14-19:	“Priest”
w. 20-22:	“hath sworn and will not repent”
w. 23-25:	“for ever”
w. 26-28:	“Zedek...”: of righteousness

Added Revelation

Throughout their ministry, the prophets, both Christian and pre-Christian, miraculously distributed throughout their writings, in an apparently artless and coincidental way, many

¹ See Weymouth’s translation of Acts 9:31.

details of earlier events in the history of redemption that had not been included in the original inspired records. Examples could be cited sufficient to fill a book, but a few selected at random from the Christian prophets must suffice to introduce the readers to this fascinating field of study.

Elijah said there would “be neither dew nor rain these (three) years” (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1). The Lord Jesus (Luke 4:25) and the Epistle of James (5:17) say “three years and six months”. The apparent discrepancy is in fact an added detail of revelation, which explains that the three years drought began after the usual six months dry season.

Again, the speech of Stephen, in his survey of Jewish history, is a mine of significant additional details made all the more remarkable in that he spoke under the stress of interrogation and under the threat of imminent death. A double miracle of revelation was involved here also, in that these additional details were later put on record by Luke, who could hardly have been an eyewitness.

A further example is Jude’s revelation (v. 14) that the Enoch of Genesis 5 was himself a prophet; and the astonishing amount of extra information to be gleaned about Moses from the New Testament has already been the subject of a separate study². If all this, and much more, can be found in the preserved written records of the Christian prophets, then we can only begin to imagine the frequency of such added revelations in their day-to-day oral ministry in the ecclesial assemblies.

Mysteries

The word ‘mystery’ in the N.T. is transliterated from its Greek source-word, and commonly means a “secret”. It is widely used in the N.T. about the secret purposes of God’s redemption which was part of the function of the Christian prophets to disclose (1 Cor. 13:2). Wherever, therefore, a prophet, including Christ himself, says “I show you a mystery”, he intends his hearers or readers to understand that he is declaring some aspect of the Gospel that hitherto has been kept secret in the mind of God. The following are a few of the more striking instances that serve to illustrate this aspect of the ministry of the Christian prophets

“It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 13 :11):

New truths of an astonishing nature were being taught by Jesus through the veiled teaching of parables, to disciples who had only a vague understanding of what was implicit but not clearly revealed in the Law and the Prophets.

The participation of the Gentiles in the benefits of the Gospel had only been hinted at in the prophets of the Old Testament; but now the time had come for Christ’s prophets to open up this great truth in detail.

“This mystery... that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”(Rom. 11:25)

Never before had the purpose of God been explained in all its dispensational breadth: that “through their (the Jews’) fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles”.

² See Moses in Later Revelation: The Testimony Oct. 1968.

“Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep...” (1 Cor. 15:51):

New truths were unfolded by Paul about the relation of the living and the dead believers to the resurrection at Christ’s coming.

“When ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known... that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs (with the Jews), and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph. 3:4-6).

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church “ (Eph. 5:32).

Christ’s love for his Ecclesia, in giving himself for it, is the prototype for all true Christian marriages. That wonderful truth had been locked away in the oracle of Genesis 2:24 until the Christian prophet released and expounded it in all its spiritual beauty.

Visions

“Your young men shall see visions and your old men dream dreams” (Acts 2:17) was a further part of God’s promise through Joel fulfilled at Pentecost.

It would seem that these visual forms of revelation were used on occasions of great moment, as for example, at the death of Stephen, at the conversion of the first Gentiles, at the conversion of Saul, and at Paul’s later call to be an Apostle with the twelve (Acts 22:17,21). The subject, with all its mystery, is not only fascinating, but also has a vital bearing on the overall principles of Divine revelation in its various forms.

When discussing “visions and revelations of the Lord” Paul says he was “caught up to the third heaven and heard things” beyond the capacity for words (2 Cor. 12:1-4). Ezekiel had a similar experience in what he described as “the visions of God”. The Lord lifted him, as he said, “by a lock of mine head”, and transported him in vision to the Temple in Jerusalem, while he remained bodily in Chaldea within his house, with the elders of Judah sitting before him (Ezek. 8:1-3; cf. 11:24-25). The vision was in vivid technicolour, and came to the prophet with all the reality of “live outside broadcast”. He could clearly see a group of 25 men who were worshipping in the Temple courts, with their backs towards God and their faces towards the rising sun. And as Ezekiel in Spirit uttered his burden over the Temple and the city, one of the 25 men dropped dead. The vision was so “large as life”, that Ezekiel was able to identify this one out of the 25 as Pelatiah the son of Benaiah (Ezek. 11:13). Finally, the prophet was brought back to his house in Chaldea and the vision closed: “So the vision that I had seen went up from me” (11:24). Having come out of this visionary trance in which he had been permitted to see distant events with Divine omniscience, Ezekiel was able to communicate the substance of it, by the gift of prophecy, to the elders who had gathered to listen to “the Word of the Lord” (Ezek. 11:25).

That Paul was privileged to experience such an astonishing visionary trance is clear from the similarity of much of the language of 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 and Ezekiel 8:1-4; Paul’s own amazement is even communicated by his repetition: “Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell” (2 Cor. 12:2-3). “The third heaven” to which Paul was “caught up” was no doubt comparable to the heavenly scene in Revelation 4 about which similar phrasing is used, and which the Apostle John was invited to see with the words: “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (4:1).

The visionary trances of the O.T. and N.T. prophets are strikingly similar, not only in form but also often in content. A grasp of the mechanics of prophetic visions as a N.T. Spirit-gift is greatly facilitated by a consideration of parallel manifestations in O.T. times. The visions of Daniel and John, for example, have much to contribute in this respect. Not only are they parallel in the form which they take, but also even what they reveal is complementary. As Bro. Thomas put it, “The Apocalypse is an exhibition in detail of all Daniel saw that remained unfulfilled when John was in exile” (Preface to Exposition of Daniel). Separate analyses of Daniel’s visions (ch. 7) and of the Revelation to John cast much light on a relatively obscure aspect of the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Inspiration

In this study it is presumed that the usual definitions of inspiration understood and believed amongst us do not need to be defined. In 2 Samuel 23:1-3, David says four times that he was speaking his own words, and yet four times equally explicitly that God’s “word was in his tongue”. Whilst it would be unwise to dogmatise about the “mechanics” of inspiration, it is proper that we should go as far as The Word itself will take us toward resolving the problem of the fusion of the Divine and the human within the miracle of revelation.

Many prophets introduce their message from God with words such as “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz did see” (Isa. 2:1; 13:1), as if it had come to them in a vision, although nothing of a pictorial nature was necessarily involved. Similar expressions were used by Obadiah (v. 1), Amos (1:1), Micah (1:1), Habakkuk (1:1 mg.; 2:1f.), Jeremiah (38:21; Lam. 2:14), and Ezekiel (13:3). With the earlier study of Visions fresh in the mind it is perhaps possible to grasp the significance of these unusual introductions. If God could flash on a prophet’s mind such live visions as Ezekiel “saw” of the Temple in Jerusalem, might He not reveal His Words no less clearly on the screen of the prophet’s mind? In communicating these words to others, the individuality and vocabulary of the prophet, guided by the Spirit of prophecy, would be evident in what was still the “Word of the Lord”.

The marvel passes human understanding, however, on the occasions when God speaks to man through the medium of man’s own words to God. Psalm 16, for example, was David’s anguished plea to God to save Jerusalem from a bloodbath through Absalom’s foolhardy rebellion. And yet David’s own words of faith were at the same time God’s revelation to David, so that Peter could say of verses within the Psalm “He (David), seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ” (Acts 2:25-31). The whole situation of Ahithophel’s treachery, David’s flight over Kidron after being rejected by his people, and his final recovery of the throne, was a pattern of the greater crisis of the rejection and ultimate triumph of Christ. How such a miracle of revelation could be possible is altogether beyond our understanding. Faith must be content to probe no further and to accept that the individuality of a prophet in no way affects the inspired authority of the words revealed through him.³

Some examples of Prophets

Philip the evangelist was a prophet and also performed miracles of healing (Acts 8:6, 13, 14), but he could not transmit these gifts to others. It is suggested that when a brother received a

³ The foregoing is largely verbatim from “The Christian Prophets”, TEST, Vol. 43, P.335-340.

by the laying on of hands, it would be necessary for a prophet in the assembly to announce the Lord's intention as to how and in what field of the Truth's work the gift was to be used. (cf. 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14). Thus Timothy received his gift "by prophecy".

Judas and Silas (Acts 5:32) and Agabus (Acts 11:27) were prophets. Also there were prophetesses - the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) and those mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:4. The importance of this office is indicated by such verses as Eph. 2:20; 3:5.

This subject would be incomplete without some reference to the prophets which bridged the gap between the Old Testament prophets and Christ. Both Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-45) and Zacharias (Luke 1:67-80) were filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. Of their son, John the Baptist, Christ said that "there is not a greater prophet" (Luke 7:28). Simeon and Mary, the Lord's mother, both gave prophecies (Luke 1:46-55; Luke 2:25-32). "Anna a prophetess,... which departed not from the temple... gave thanks unto God and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:36,38).

We see, therefore, that God gave revelations by His prophets and by angels whenever the occasion arose. It was obviously a miraculous ability and all hearing them would recognize this.

Teachers

e.g. Philip (Acts 21:8).
Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5).

This inter-ecclesial office was third in importance. (1 Cor. 12:28).

When Steven, one of the seven, emerged as one of the great teachers and leaders of the early ecclesia, it is recorded that his adversaries "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10). As well as having the office of "teacher" he also had the gift of wisdom. It seems very probable that teachers also had the "word of knowledge". The ecclesia at Antioch had an abundance of prophets and teachers. (Acts 13:1). Therefore the Holy Spirit indicated (probably through one of the prophets) that Barnabas and Saul were to go to other areas to teach the gospel. (v. 2-5).

According to Eph. 4:11 the office of teacher and pastor¹ were closely related. Also an evangelist² was just a teacher that went away from his home ecclesia.

The example of Christ illustrates that proper use of the office. He is addressed as "teacher" 40 times and "Rabbi" 6 times. There was ample need and scope for first century brethren to follow their Lord in a teaching capacity. It is no surprise therefore, to read that the apostles were themselves notable teachers (Acts 15:35; 28:30).

¹ "Poimen" (pastors) fed (*poimaino*) the ecclesia of God. (cf. Acts 20:28).

² Hastings Bible Dictionary = "teachers abroad".

But the Apostles could not do all the teaching. In the ecclesias they established or visited, they would impart much invaluable knowledge, but this work had to be carried on when they left to resume their journeys. Therefore the gift of knowledge would be one of the gifts imparted by the Apostles so that the flock could be fed in their absence (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

Miracles - (1 Cor. 12:10,28)

Here and in what follows, abstract terms are used for concrete - "Miracles" means men endowed with the gift of miracles.

Gifts of healings - (1 Cor. 12:9) i.e. a person having these gifts who travelled from ecclesia to ecclesia.

Helps or ministrations - Possibly the seven in Acts 6 who were chosen to "serve tables" had this office. They would possibly minister to the wants of their brethren, distribute relief and tend the sick. These seven had the intermittent gift of the "word of wisdom"⁴.

Some suggest they were Apostles' helpers who accompanied them and assisted in teaching and baptizing the converts. (Acts 13:5).

Governments (*administrations*)

Greek *kubernesis* from a root meaning to steer or pilot a ship and by implication a captain (S). ("wise counsels" RV mg). Those who had this office were specially endowed to preside over the ecclesia and regulate it. They possibly had the following gifts:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| gift of knowledge | - instruct the ignorant (1 Tim. 3:2). |
| gift of wisdom | - confute the gainsayers (Tit. 1:9). feed the flock (Acts 20:28). |
| gift of healings | - warn the unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, to be patient towards all (1 Thess. 5:14). |

Tongues i.e. Persons having this gift.

Interpreters i.e. Persons who had the gift of interpretation.

³ see Section D "Gifts of Healings"

⁴ See notes at Acts 6:3.

Section F

WORD STUDIES

GIFT

There are nine words in the Greek which are translated in the AV by the word 'gift':
anathema, doron, dorea, dorema, doma, dosis, charisma, merismos and charis.

Anathema is a votive offering and should be translated as "offerings" at Luke 21:5. *Charis* (2 Cor. 8:4) should be translated "grace" (V) or "favour" NASB.

Dorema occurs in Rom. 5:16 and James 1:17 and means the thing given rather than the act of giving (V).

Doron - 18 times gift, 1 as offering (Y) - has several meanings but none of which refer to the Holy Spirit.

Dosis denotes the act of giving and is translated as "thing bestowed" in James 1:17 (NASB). This leaves four words that concern us.

Merismos is no problem, as it is only used twice: once as "dividing asunder" and by the AV as "gift" in Heb. 2:4. The word should be translated as "distributions" (Y, NASB mg).

Doma is used 4 times - 3 times of men's gifts and once as God's gifts to man. (Eph. 4:8) i.e. the Holy Spirit gifts.

Dorea occurs 11 times and always of a divine gift. *Dorea* is used in Acts 2:38 and in all places throughout Acts for the Holy Spirit gifts. A gift is that which is given or transferred to another's possession, without price or any equivalent value being received in exchange.

Charisma is the gift of God involving grace *charis* and occurs 17 times.

- It refers to the Holy Spirit gifts in these verses:
 - "I may impart unto you some spiritual gift" (Rom. 1:11).
 - "For the gifts and calling of God" (Rom. 11:29).
 - "Having then gifts differing" (Rom. 12:6).
 - "So that ye come behind in no gift" (1 Cor. 1:7).
 - "There are diversities of gifts" (1 Cor. 12:4).
 - "to another the gifts of healing" (1 Cor. 12:9).
 - "gifts of healings" (1 Cor. 12:28).
 - "Have all the gifts of healing" (1 Cor. 12:30).
 - "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31).
 - "neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Tim. 4:14).
 - "Stir up the gift of God" (2 Tim. 1:6).
 - "as every man has received a special gift, employ it in serving" (1 Pet. 4:10).

2. It is used of God's mercy and forgiveness in Rom. 5:15,16 and of eternal life in Rom. 6:23.
3. The exact meaning of its use in 1 Cor. 7:7 and 2 Cor. 1:11 is uncertain¹.

The basic idea of the word is that of a free and undeserved gift, of something given to a man unearned and unmerited, something which comes from God's grace and which could never have been achieved or attained or possessed by a man's own effort. Romans 6:23 gives us this essential meaning.

HOLY

It is advisable to clarify as much as possible the meaning of the adjective "Holy" that so often qualifies the word "Spirit". Some claim that it has, in biblical usage, moral and ethical qualities associated with it. But the basic meaning of "Holy" (Heb. qodesh pronounced Ko-desh) is "separation or an object set apart" (Y). The basic meaning of the Greek hagios (translated holy (ones), saints) is also "separate, set apart" (Y). It is used of all baptized believers regardless of their moral² standing. This word only indicated that they had been "separated" to God through the redeeming work of Christ. The title "Holy Spirit" therefore, seems to be used to emphasize that it is God's power separated, focalised and specially directed towards redemption whether in His relations with Israel (in the O.T.) or through His work in Christ (in the N.T.).

¹ see Vines' suggestion P. 147 (V).

² e.g. in 1 Cor. 3:3 Paul said "Ye are carnal" yet only 13 verses later:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you... the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (v.16 and 17).

PARAKLETOS

We have already considered this subject¹ in sufficient detail to establish the fact that all the functions of the Parakletos were entirely miraculous in character and that it continued only as long as the Apostles lived. To do a detailed word study on the cognate forms of the word is perhaps profitable but hardly necessary as it does not alter the above facts. It is felt, however, that the following paragraphs² may help to round out the points already established.

Many theories which claim we have the Spirit lean heavily on the modern sense of the English word “Comforter” and on the many cognate forms of the Greek *Parakletos* that are often translated “comfort” by the AV. It is interesting to note, however, that most of the modern translations, recognising that a process of weakening of the meaning of the 17th century English “comfort” has taken place, largely abandon the word as a translation of the verb *parakaleo* or the noun *paraklesis*, and use instead phrases like “encourage” (Weymouth, NEB, and MOFF), “stimulating courage” (Phillips) and “reassure” (Jerusalem Bible). In many cases, even in the AV, the translators have recognised that these cognate Greek forms have an even stronger and more specific meaning, and the words are rendered “beseech” (2 Cor. 5:20 AV - in connection with Paul’s Spirit-guided ministry as an “ambassador for Christ”), “intreaty” (2 Cor. 8:4 AV) or, significantly, “appeal” (Rom. 12:1 MOFF) and “plead” (Matt. 8:5 Jerusalem Bible).

As for the word *parakletos* itself, though scholars are notoriously ‘brittle reeds’, and often disagree with one another, yet one of them writes: ‘It must be remembered without fail that the Hebrew word *nicham* (translated *parakaleo* in the LXX) does not by any means signify “console”; it signifies “comfort out of sorrow”, not “comfort in sorrow”. The essential meaning of the Hebrew word is “relief, change”, and the translation “comfort” is misleading. The true meaning of the word is seen in John 16:7,8’. Confirmation of this categorical pronouncement, and justification of the rendering “Advocate” in the NEB, comes in fuller detail from Harvey’s NEB *Companion to the New Testament*, the following extracts from which are worth quoting here concerning John 14:16: ‘To borrow a technical term from Jewish legal procedure: they would find that they had a *paraclete*, an advocate (the original word *parakletos* was Greek, but it had been taken over into Jesus’ own language, Aramaic, in the form *paraclete*). In a Jewish court, a plaintiff or a defendant was entitled to enlist the help, not only of witnesses to the facts, but of a person of high standing who might give him personal support... and... make the case appear in a more favourable light... The paraclete influenced the judge’s decision...by the weight of his personal authority... When they found themselves on trial for their faith, the Spirit would prompt them with the right words for their defence (Mark 13:11): in this sense, the Spirit was already their Advocate. Moreover, John is about to make Jesus depict the present confrontation between Christianity and the world as a trial, in the course of which the Spirit plays its part as the Christians’ Advocate’.

¹ See John 14 - 16 and additional notes thereafter.

² from TEST, Vol. 45, P. 163.

SPIRIT

The Spirit of God

We know, for example that the Spirit of God was the means by which things were created:

“And the Spirit of God moved...” (Gen. 1:2).

“Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created...” (Psa. 104:30).

We know that by His Spirit all living things have the breath of life: “If He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish” (Job 34:14).

We know also that by His Spirit God is omnipresent:

“Whether shall I go from Thy Spirit?” (Psa. 139:7)

“I fill heaven and earth” (Jer. 23:24).

While these truths are too profound for our finite minds to understand fully, we can accept these statements and they cause us no real problems.

Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God gathered up and focalized for the work of salvation.

The Angels and the Holy Spirit

The angels, which are “spirits”, (Psa. 104:4) are God’s agents in the use and control of the Holy Spirit as far as His dealings with man is concerned. These ministering spirits are sent forth to do service for them that shall inherit salvation.

Spirit₁ - some uses and meanings

- I. Passages where “Spirit” stands for God.
 - a) “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the later times some shall depart from the faith.” (1 Tim. 4:1).
 - b) “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who... hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).
 - c) “The Holy Spirit also is a witness to us” (Heb. 10:15). This has reference to the inspiration of Jeremiah.
- II. Passages where “Spirit” has reference to Jesus: a) “Yea, saith the Spirit” (Rev. 14:13) refers to the Lord’s words communicated by the Spirit. b) Paul uses the words “quickening spirit” to describe Christ the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45).
- III. Passages where “spirit” refers to angels. (Acts 8:26,29; 10:3, 19-20). “Who maketh his angels spirits” (Heb. 1:7, 10, 14).
 Passages where Spirit has reference to “one like the Son of Man”. A consideration of Rev. 1:1 indicates this was *the* angel₂ of Jesus Christ. Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 14:13; 22:17.

¹ These occurrences of pneuma, together with Section C, cover every occurrence of the word in the New Testament.

² See Section C - “John 14-16 Additional Notes ‘Jesus’ Angel”.

- IV. Passages where “spirit” stands for a person, disposition, state of mind¹ will, feeling, heart, character.
- a) “blessed are the poor in spirit”(lowly disposition) (Matt. 5:3).
 - b) “and sighing deeply in His spirit (heart)” (Mark 8:12).
 - c) “My spirit₂ hath rejoiced in God” (Luke 1:47).
 - d) “Now while Paul waited ... his spirit (mind) was stirred in him” Acts 17:16.
 - e) “ - in zeal not slothful
in spirit burning₃”. (state of mind)
 - f) “They have refreshed my Spirit (mind)”. Paul was refreshed mentally and spiritually. (1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 7:13,1).
 - g) “spirit (attitude) of meekness” (1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1).
 - h) “I had no rest in my spirit” (mind) (2 Cor. 2:13).
cf. Matt. 26:41; Luke 10:21; John 11:33; 13:21; Mark 14:38;
Acts 18:25; 19:21; Gal. 6:18; Col. 2:5;
 - i) “the spirit (feeling) of faith” (2 Cor. 4:13).
 - j) “spirit of your mind” (disposition) (Eph. 4:23).
 - k) “spirit (attitude) of fear” (2 Tim. 1:7).
 - l) “Your beauty should, rather, be from within - it should be the inner loveliness of the heart, the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit.” (NOR. 1 Pet.3:4) (disposition).
 - m) “Beloved, believe not every spirit” (Person who claims to have the Spirit). (1 John 4:1,2,3).
- V. Passages where “spirit” refers to Fleshly Thinking.
- “spirit of man” (1 Cor. 2:11).
“spirit of the world” (1 Cor. 2:12).
“spirit... of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).
- VI. Passages where “spirit” refers to Breath of LIFE (Power) received from God.
- Matt. 27:50 (NASB).
John 19:30; Acts 7:59; James 2:26;
(From EKPNEO) Luke 23:46; Luke 8:55; Rev. 11:11.
- VII. Passages where “Spirit” refers to False Teachers:
- a) “giving heed to seducing spirits”. (1 Tim. 4:1).
 - b) “believe not every spirit”. (1 John 4:1).
 - c) “spiritual wickedness”. (Eph. 6:12).
 - d) “Spirit of error”. (1 John 4:6).

¹ see notes on Romans. The usage where spirit = the new nature in the child of God, because “begotten” in us by God’s word, is quite common, especially in Paul’s writings.

² A figure of speech by which a part (the new inner man) is put for the whole (i.e. Synecdoche).

- VIII. Passages where “Spirit” refers to disease in Persons (mentally ill):
- a) “Unclean spirits”. (Mark 3:11; 6:7; Matt. 10:1; Luke 6:18).
 - b) “an unclean spirit”. (Mark 1:23,26; 3:30; 5:2; 7:25; 9:17,20,25,26; Luke 4:33,36; 8:29; 9:39,42; 13:11; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12, 13,15,16).
 - c) “spirits” (Matt. 8:16; Luke 10:20).
 - d) evil spirits (Luke 7:21; 8:2).
- IX. Passages where Holy Spirit and Spirit are synonymous.
- “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit... was led about by the spirit”... (Luke 4 :1)
- John 1:33; Acts 2:4
 Luke 3:22 and John 1:32; Mark 1:10
 Matt. 22:43 and Mark 12:36
 Matt. 10:20 and Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12
 Acts 5:3 and verse 9.
 Acts 8:17 and verse 18.
 Acts 16:6 and verse 7.
 Acts 21:11 and verse 4.
- X. Passages where “spirit” refers to an apparition of phantom (Grk. phantasma) Luke 24:37,39; Matt. 14:26; Mark 6:49.
- XI. Passages where “spirit” refers to power.
- “power of the Highest”. (Luke 1:35) see also Matt. 1:18,20; 4:1; 12:18,28,32; Mark 1:12; 3:29; Luke 1:41; 2:25,26; 4:1,14,18; 12:10; John 1:33; 3:34; Acts 1:2,5,8,16; 8:39; 10:38; 28:25; 1 Cor. 2:4.
- XII. Passages where “Spirit” refers to the ‘word of God’:
- “the words I speak unto you are spirit” (John 6:63).
 “the spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17).
- XIII. Examples of two different meanings of “Spirit” within the same verse.
- a) “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit” (Rom. 8:16).
 - the first refers to the new life in Christ.
 - the second to man’s spirit or disposition.
 - b) “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.”
 - the first refers to God’s revelation through the Spirit. The figure of speech metonymy is employed.
 - the second refers to persons claiming to possess the spirit but who teach false doctrine concerning demons (thought to be departed human spirits by those who know not the truth).

‘ “Spirit” - *ruach* in Hebrew, and *pneuma* in Greek –

is one of those plastic words which depend for their significance upon the context. It cannot be kept in the groove of a precise definition. This may appear a little confounding at first sight, but in reality it is the inevitable state of the case with regard to a word of such primitive origin. All its meanings are cognate. Both originals translated “Spirit” have the same radical significance. *Ruach* (Heb.) is from the verb *ruach*, to breathe or blow; *pneuma* (Greek) from *pneo*, to breathe or blow;

Every use of the word “Spirit” must, therefore, be traceable in some way to this primitive idea of breathing or blowing and we find this is so. It is used for breath in such passages as “All flesh wherein is the breath (*ruach*) of life” (Gen. 6:17);

“In whose hand is every living thing and the breath (ruach) of all mankind”

(Job 12:10).

“Thou takest away their breath” (ruacham) (Psa. 104:29).

Pneuma is translated “life” in Rev. 13:15. But of course the most common translation of the word is “Spirit”. In considering the meaning of this form of the word it is well to observe that “Spirit” itself comes from a Latin verb of precisely the same derivation as *ruach*, and *pneu*, viz., *spiro*, “to breath”. “Spirit” is therefore etymologically the correct equivalent of *pneuma*. But theology has spoiled the etymology of the word by fixing upon it a meaning not etymologically derived. This has created all the difficulty. The only certain way to determine the significance of “Spirit” is to collate its applications. When we read that the Israelites “hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit” (Exod. 6:9), we naturally understand the word differently from what we do in 1 Sam. 30:12, “And when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him”. In the one case it refers to a state of mind, and in another to the life energy of the body. In Daniel was found an excellent “spirit” (Dan. 5:12). This refers to intelligence and disposition; but when we read “No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit ... in the day of death” (Ecc. 8:8) we naturally understand it as in Ecc. 12:7,

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; but the spirit (that is, the life) return to God who gave it”;

in both of which the word has a very different meaning from what it has in Josh. 5:1; “And it came to pass when all the kings of the Amorites... heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel their heart melted, neither was there any spirit (i.e., courage or heart) in them any more”.¹

¹ Robert Roberts, “The Declaration”, (London, The Dawn Book Supply), P. 10.

WORD

PROBLEM:

Some people say that sanctification by the word of God does not necessarily mean the operation of the written (or spoken) word upon our minds. Jesus Christ is seen as the “living word of God¹” (Heb. 4:12; cf. 1 Pet. 1:23) and it is claimed that He can by the Spirit cause the word to dwell in us by a more direct process than the conscious study and application of ourselves to the Bible. This verse is linked with John 1:1, 14 and Rev. 19:13 in an attempt to bolster the theory.

SOLUTION:

1. In the past God did give revelations but these did not replace study². However, we do not receive revelations today³.
2. “Word” in Hebrews 4:12 does not refer to Christ any more than it does in v.2. It refers to the written word. Those who see a problem in personification of “word” in v.12 are referred to John 12:48

“He that receiveth not my words *rhema* hath one that judgeth him: the *word* (*logos*)⁴ that I have spoken, the same shall judge him”...

This is plain enough for us to see that it is the written word that will be the basis of our judgement, not *any* word that we claim to have received by the Spirit. It is a matter of men listening to, and receiving, what came from God through Christ. There is no Spirit putting the mind of God, the “Word” into us directly. That is the philosophy of Plato.
3. John uses *logos* in a technical sense which is profound, but that does not alter the fact that our knowledge of this Word has come through the spoken and written words of the prophets, of Jesus and of the Apostles.
4. It should be noted that “word” in 1 Pet. 1:25 (both times) is not *logos* but *rhema*, and refers to the Gospel preached (not specifically but including Christ). We are, therefore, born again by the imperishable word of God which abides forever, and not by a mystical influence.

In the English N.T. “Word” is mainly a translation of two Greek words -*Logos* and *rhema*. Both these words are translated in other ways but mostly⁵ by “word”. *Rhema* has been defined in the following ways

- “that which is spoken, a sentence; saying, speech, discourse...” (B)
- “... matter, thing” (Y)
- “an utterance” (S)
- “what is uttered in speech or writing (V)”.

This “word” *Rhema* is important to our understanding of the subject under consideration.

- (i) The words of Jesus will be the basis of *judgement*:

“If any man hear my words, and believe not... the same shall judge him” (John 12:47, 48).

¹ presumably because of v.13.

² See Section D - “The Gift of the Word of Knowledge” Part A.

³ See Section B - “Divine Assistance”, “Enlightenment”, “Guidance and Prayer”.

⁴ Note the close connection between *logos* and *rhema*.

⁵ *Logos* = word 219 times out of 318

Rhema = word 56 times out of 69.

- (ii) The word gives life:
 “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word⁶ that proceeds out of the mouth⁷ of God.” (Matt. 4:4).
 This is a quote from the Law of Moses. That law was revealed to God’s earthly representative who in turn spoke and wrote the message.
- (iii) The words Christ spoke were “*Spirit and life...*” (John 6:63, 68). They were Spirit in that they were revealed by the Spirit and recorded under inspiration that we might have life.
- (iv) The words of Christ in us is the basis of *fellowship*.
 “If you keep my commandments (= words v. 7), you will abide in my love” (John 15:7).
- (v) The word becomes an idiomatic expression for the *gospel* which was spoken by preaching:
 “That word, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea” (Acts 10:37).
 “Their words (have gone) to the ends of the world.” (Rom. 10:18).
- (iv) The word produces *faith*:
 “The word of faith which we are preaching” (Rom. 10:8). This faith is the basis of righteousness.
 Those who believe in righteousness based on spirit illumination are joined to the pagans who say in their heart “Bring Christ down from heaven.” (cf. v. 6). Both Paul and Moses had to combat this language of the Apostasy, because this is a quote from Deut. 30:11-15. Let those who believe in Spirit illumination consider carefully where their views place them.
 “Faith comes from *hearing the word of Christ*” (Rom. 10:17).
- (vii) The word is the basis of *sanctification* and *cleansing*.
 “That He (Christ) might sanctify her (the ecclesia as a wife), having cleansed her by the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26).
 So the Bible is living and active if its message falls on receptive ears. It does not need the Spirit to interpret it for us, nor is that available even if we ask for it.

LOGOS - the spoken Gospel

“Over the years Platonic mysticism has so corrupted Bible truth that the very words in which God’s truth was once set out have become altered in meaning and carry Platonic overtones⁸.” Logos is one of these words. The primary meaning of Logos is something spoken⁹ but through the efforts of the Neo-Platonic philosophers it has acquired the characteristic of thought rather than speech.

⁶ *Rhema* translates the Hebrew “*dabar*” here (Deut. 8:3).

⁷ This suggests a **Spoken** revelation.

⁸ TBSM - “The Language of Apostasy - Logos”, Vol. 3, P. 10.

⁹ In the LXX, the frequently recurring phrase ‘the word of the LORD’ is almost invariably translated by ‘logos Kuriou’. When the early Christians read John’s gospel, they would connect his first words with the spoken ‘word of the LORD’ in their Greek Old Testaments. In 279 out of 318 occurrences LOGOS means “word” or “that which is spoken”. Only once in the AV is it translated reason and there it should be translated “to give an account” (i.e. a verbal defence) NASB.

We remember, for example, that God always *speaks* before He acts (Amos 3:7). When there are people there, they hear that declaration. (Psa. 33:9)

i.e. “That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*” (1 John 1:1).

Note how the first words which describe the Word of life include the idea that the Word was heard.

“There is a vast difference between a spoken or written word, which is presented to men and offers them a choice of obeying or disobeying, and an ‘Experience’ which influences man’s morals and behaviour by some unseen and mystical means. The Scriptures bear abundant record to the fact that God chose to approach men by the first method. The other is the invention of men, originating in distant pagan thought.”¹⁰

As ‘*ho logos*’ in the LXX means “the spoken word of the LORD”¹¹ so also “*Ho logos*”, the word becomes almost a synonym for the gospel message in the New Testament. Mark tells us that Jesus preached the word to the crowds (2:2). In the parable the seed that the sower sowed was *the word* (Mark 4:14). It was the work of Paul and his friends to preach *the word* (Acts 14:25). Most often this word is said to be *the word of God* (Luke 5:1; 11:28; John 10:35; Acts 4:31; 6:7; 13:44; 1 Cor. 14: 36; Heb. 13:7). Sometimes it is *the word of the Lord* (1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Thess. 3:1), and once it is *the word of Christ* (Col. 3:16). Barclay suggests that these genitives are both subjective (the word which God gave) and objective (the word tells about God). Therefore logos is something which came from God and tells about God.

CHRIST THE WORD

With the preceding notes as a background we can easily see how The Word can refer to Christ. Christ came from God as a result of a spoken word and he taught about God. He was the means through which that logos (spoken revelation) was made. Not only that but his words carried the power of God to produce action.

Expression in word and action

Logos is more than a sound expressing a meaning. A word actually did things. In the creation God’s word *created*.

“God said, ‘Let there be light, *and there was light*’”. (Gen. 1:3)

“By the *word* of the Lord the heavens were made... for he spake and it was done.” (Psa. 33:6,9).

“He sent his *word* and healed them”. (Psa. 107:20).

Functions of Logos - the gospel message (written for us).

- (i) The word *judges* (John 12:48).
- (ii) The word *purifies* (John 15:3; 1 Tim. 4:5).
- (iii) Through the word *belief* comes (Acts 4:4).
- (iv) The word is *the agent of rebirth* (1 Peter 1:23).

¹⁰ see footnote 8.

¹¹ see footnote 9.

Our responsibility to Logos.

- | | | |
|--------|--|---|
| (i) | The logos must be <i>heard</i> | (Matt. 13:20; Acts 13:7). |
| (ii) | The logos must be <i>received</i> | (Acts 8:14; 11:1; James 1:21). |
| (iii) | The logos must be <i>held on to</i> | (Luke 8:13). |
| (iv) | The logos must be <i>kept</i> | (John 8:51; 14:32; 1 John 2:5; Rev. 3:8). |
| (v) | The logos must be <i>witnessed to</i> | (Acts 8:25; Rev. 1:2). |
| (vi) | The logos must be <i>served</i> | (Acts 6:4). |
| (vii) | The logos must be <i>announced</i> | (2 Tim. 4:2). |
| (viii) | The logos must be <i>spoken with boldness</i> | (Phil 1:14). |
| (ix) | The logos must be <i>taught</i> | (Acts 18:11). |
| (x) | The logos must be <i>acted upon</i> | (James 1:22). |
| (xi) | The logos may involve <i>suffering</i> | (Rev. 1:9). |
| (xii) | The logos may be <i>disbelieved</i>
and <i>choked</i> | (1 Peter 2:8).
(Matt. 13:22). |
| (xiii) | The logos can be <i>corrupted</i>
and <i>rendered ineffective</i> | (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2)
(Mark 7:13). |

The Gospel is:

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) | a <i>word of good news</i> | (Acts 15:7). |
| (ii) | a <i>word of truth</i> | (John 17:7; Eph. 1:13). |
| (iii) | a <i>word of life</i> | (Phil. 2:16). |
| (iv) | a <i>word of righteousness</i> | (Heb. 5:13). |
| (v) | a <i>word of reconciliation</i> | (2 Cor. 5:19). |
| (vi) | a <i>word of salvation</i> | (Acts 13:26). |
| (vii) | a <i>word of the stake (cross)</i> | (1 Cor. 1:18). |

CONCLUSION

This word study clearly demonstrates that the theory expressed in the problem is false. The 'word' can only become part of us by our absorbing it from the written page or spoken word (from our platforms). There is *no* other way. Those who claim otherwise are "falsifying the word of God" (2 Cor. 4:2 DIAG).

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 * Author's name may be had on request. This is so that this book does not appear biased.

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EPILOGUE

“It is by the sacred Scriptures that God convinces men of sin, righteousness, and judgement to come in these times, and indeed, in all the times subsequent to the Apostolic age. God is simple in all His plans. He never appears to use intricate means, when the end to be effected can be produced by simple ones. Simplicity is the characteristic of all that He performs. He rules the heavens, He regulates the seasons, and He saves men upon few, but powerful principles. If one means is able to make men wise, we need not expect to find any other institution than that one to effect the same end. Now Paul says that *the sacred Scriptures are able to make us wise to salvation, by the faith (or gospel) which is through Jesus Christ*. What more do we want than wisdom in relation to this matter? If the sacred Scriptures are able to make us wise, we need no other instrumentality. The Holy Spirit *by the word*, . . . teaches us all wisdom and knowledge that is necessary; It instructs man concerning his origin, his constitution, his sinful state, and how he may, though *mortal, absolutely and unqualifiedly mortal*, yet attain to life and incorruptibility; it informs him concerning the attributes of God, the creation, and the destiny of the earth and the race by which it is inhabited. Why, then, my friends, can we not be content with the means within the grasp of everyone who owns the *volume of inspiration*? If the ecclesiastical world were content to learn the truth from the Bible alone, and it honestly desired to obey the Messiah, there would soon be an end to Presbyterian and every other ism, by which ‘Christendom’ as it is called or ‘anti-Christendom,’ as it should be termed, has been for ages desolated. But the world loves not the truth; because, therefore, they have ‘not embraced the *love* of the truth that they might be saved, God has sent them a strong delusion that they might believe a lie; that all might be condemned who have not obeyed the truth.’ The **sacred Scriptures are not a dead letter**, as the clergy teach you; they are ‘living and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword:’ this is Paul’s testimony, and ought, therefore to be received as true by all believers.”¹

¹ *The Apostasy Unveiled* - Brother John Thomas.