

### CHAPTER III

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION

The doctrine of regeneration may be variously defined depending upon the limits set. Strictly speaking, the word itself as derived from the Latin regenero means to form again. The New Testament word itself, παλιγγενεσία < πάλλω and γένεσις, occurs twice in the New Testament (Titus 3:5 and Mt. 19:28) and has the same meaning as the Latin, "new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation," hence "moral renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better."<sup>1</sup> The dictionary gives these definitions which indicate what the term may include:

- (1) The radical and permanent moral change wrought in the spiritual nature of a man by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ, when he becomes a Christian; the gracious divine impartation of spiritual life; the new birth; strictly distinguished from conversion, but in the broad sense including it. (2) The renovation of the world at and after the second coming of Christ by the establishment of the kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup>

This same process is called by many other terms in the

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889) p. 474.

<sup>2</sup> Funk & Wagnalls, New Standard Dictionary of the English Language. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1935)

Bible, but regeneration seems to be the most suitable theological term.

Kuyper gives good definitions of regeneration in the limited and extended senses:

It is used in the limited sense when it denotes exclusively God's act of quickening, which is the first divine act whereby God translates us from death into life, from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. In this sense regeneration is the starting-point. God comes to one born in iniquity and dead<sup>in</sup> trespasses and sins, and plants the principle of a new spiritual life in his soul. Hence he is born again.

...the word regeneration, used in its wider sense, denotes the entire change by grace effected in our persons, ending in our dying to sin in death and our being born for heaven.<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of this paper we will take the more limited sense of the term, i.e., regeneration as the change brought about when a person comes from darkness into light, from death into life--the process of rebirth up to and including conversion. Admittedly we are dealing with a Divine process which is one act so far as God is concerned and hence cannot be separated from the continual process of sanctification in the regenerated individual. But we must draw some limita-

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<sup>3</sup> Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1946) p. 293.



tions in order to systematize our thinking. And while we cannot probe into mysteries of which God only has knowledge, we are also obligated to examine what the Scriptures tell us in an effort to understand and appreciate more fully. There is abundant New Testament material on this subject, all of which we cannot examine here.

Since our object is to discuss the work of the Holy Spirit with reference to the doctrine of regeneration, we further narrow our source material to those New Testament passages which mention Him (or by definite inference refer to the Holy Spirit) as having part in the work of regeneration. It becomes apparent immediately that certain passages treat regeneration and sanctification as one subject. Although scattered about the New Testament, these references may be grouped as follows: Those in the writings of John (Jn. 3:1-15; 16:7-11; I Jn. 4); those in the epistles of Paul (I Cor. 6:11; 12:3; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Gal. 3:1-5, 4:6; Eph. 1:13; II Thess. 2:13; Titus 3:4-7); and those in Acts, where we find illustrated time and again the work of the Holy Spirit. Of course outside the texts where the Holy Spirit is actually named there is abundant material which could also be cited as filling out the details of this doctrine.

In order to systematize our thoughts, the approach here is to take an accepted doctrine of regeneration and show, from the Scripture passages how these point to the Holy Spirit's work in changing the nature of men from "death" to "life." Nearly every theologian outlines the steps in this work in a different way, and in a different order--indicating that it is all one process in which the logical or temporal sequence may not necessarily be the same in every case. For our purposes here we take our order of study from the underlined portions of the following statement:

The Holy Spirit, whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who ask him, is the only efficient agent in the application of redemption. He regenerates men by his grace, convicts them of sin, moves them to repentance, and persuades and enables them to embrace Christ by faith.<sup>4</sup>

The outline we propose to follow is:

- A. The Holy Spirit and the New Birth.
- B. The Holy Spirit and conviction of sin.
- C. The Holy Spirit and repentance.
- D. The Holy Spirit and faith.

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<sup>4</sup> James B. Green, A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1951) Confession of Faith, Chap. IX, # 3. p. 70.



#### A. The Holy Spirit and the New Birth

The heart of the doctrine of Regeneration is expressed by the concept of the New Birth. The salvation of men rests upon the eternal decrees of God who has elected some to eternal life, upon the justification of the sinner in the sight of God because of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, and upon the New Birth through the work of the Holy Spirit--a three-fold work of the Holy Trinity. Of the need for the New Birth we have full explanation in the fact of human sin. Of the necessity for this New Birth Jesus gave adequate expression in his words to Nicodemus: "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Jn. 1:3)

The reasons for this necessity are partly in man, and partly in God. The reason in man is the blindness, the deadness, the depravity, the enmity of his heart. The Bible represents the sinner as blind, as dead; it represents his heart as deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; it represents the unregenerate as enmity against God, as hostility itself. The blind are disqualified for vision; the dead are disqualified for action; the corrupt are disqualified for goodness; hearts of enmity and hate are disqualified for love and friendship.<sup>5</sup>

To the Christian who seeks to analyze his own spiritual experience, conviction and repentance of sin

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<sup>5</sup> James B. Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1936) p. 105.

may seem to come first, followed by the change of direction in regard to sin which is called "rebirth." Actually such is not the case. The Holy Spirit must take the first step in granting the new life. The new life is first of all given to us by God through His Spirit and then comes conviction of sin and repentance for that sin.

...the first conscious and comparatively cooperative act of man is always preceded by the original act of God, planting in him the first principle of a new life, under which act man is wholly passive and unconscious.<sup>6</sup>

For a description and proof of these words we turn to John 3:1-15. In this story of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus lies much of the Scriptural teaching about the New Birth. The visit of Nicodemus, his

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<sup>6</sup> Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. co., 1946) p. 294. Kuyper points out the following "successive stages or milestones" in the work of grace: (1) The implanting of the new life-principle, commonly called regeneration in the limited sense, or the implanting of the faith-faculty. (2) The keeping of the implanted principle of life, while the sinner still continues in sin, so far as his consciousness is concerned. (3) The call by the Word and the Spirit, internal and external. (4) This call of God produces conviction of sin and justification. (5) This exercise of faith results in conversion. (6) Hence conversion merges itself in sanctification. (7) Sanctification is finished and closed in the complete redemption at the time of death. (8) Our glorification at the last day. See also: John Owen, A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit (abridged by George Butler), (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education) pp. 185-195.



comments and his questions, furnished the occasion of Jesus' remarks about the New Birth.

1. The Source of the New Birth. Most commentators agree that ἀνωθεν is best rendered "from above" rather than "again," "anew," or "from the beginning." This word is used again in verse 7. In other connections we find its use several times in this Gospel. Referring to His own origin, Jesus said, "He that cometh from above (ἀνωθεν) is above all." Speaking to Pilate of the source of his authority, Jesus said, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above (ἀνωθεν): therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin." (Jn. 19:11). The same word appears in the description of the seamless coat worn by Jesus "woven from the top (ἀνωθεν) to the bottom." Hence both as a translation and as a point of doctrine the idea "born from above" seems to be the best rendition,

...the point being not so much that spiritual birth is a repetition, but that it is being born into a higher life. To be begotten ἀνωθεν means to be begotten from heaven "of the Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to John (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons) p. 102. For defense of the translation "anew" see R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1931) p. 226. The point has been debated between numerous

The significant feature of this statement of Jesus is that man must experience a change (rebirth) which has its source outside of and above himself. This in itself (a) overthrows any human attempt at salvation through works or any other humanly engineered plan, (b) puts the "new birth" in the category of Divine acts, and (c) involves a supernatural or miraculous element. No wonder Nicodemus, with his Jewish legalistic thinking and his natural human limitations of understanding, was puzzled and confused! And no wonder that Jesus repeated this same expression and the same idea several times for emphasis.

2. The Object of the New Birth. "Except one be born of water from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:3). "Except one be born of water and the

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scholars. "The usage of New Testament writers, and of John in particular, is obviously and strongly in favour of the rending from above, which is also in accord with the characteristic teaching of the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John, that the New Birth is of God. But New Testament usage is not uniform and yields some support, though slight, to anew. See J. Ritchie Smith, The Holy Spirit in the Gospels (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1926) p. 260. Smith also points out that Nicodemus apparently understood Jesus to mean "anew" or he would not have asked the question about entering his mother's womb in order to be born a second time (δεύτερον). But to Nicodemus it might also have been an ambiguous term. With either meaning apparently preposterous, his question simply reflected the result of one of the two possibilities which came into his mind.



Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (v. 5).

The new birth is essential for entrance into a new life--a life which Jesus called the Kingdom of God.

To See (v. 3, ὁρᾶν) and to enter (v. 5, εἰσέλθαι) this realm means the same things in John's thought, for only those who "enter" are able to "see" the Kingdom. Doubtless these two ideas of "seeing" and "entering" were suggested by the language of physical birth which is ~~is~~ the event which marks the beginning of a new existence with reference not only to location but also to the senses of perception. At this particular point Jesus does not elaborate upon this object or result of the New Birth as He does elsewhere. Here there is a simple affirmation in response to Nicodemus' unspoken (or at least unrecorded) question: A New Birth is necessary in order to attain entrance into the kingdom of God, a statement which here at least sums up the chief end of man so far as the salvation of his soul is concerned.

3. The Sign of the New Birth. It is generally accepted that the reference to water in John 3:5 is to Christian baptism. This verse is an explanation of the birth from above.

The outward sign and inward grace of Christian baptism are here clearly given, and an unbiased

mind can scarcely avoid seeing this plain fact...John assumes without stating the primary elements of Christianity... To a well-instructed Christian there was no need to explain what was meant by being born of water and the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

Baptism was already definitely associated with repentance for sin, especially because of the ministry of John the Baptist. Hence the fact that Baptism was a sign of an inner work of the Holy Spirit in bringing repentance made it also the sign of the birth from above taking place in the regenerated heart.

The place here accorded to baptism is in harmony with the general teaching of the New Testament. It must be borne in mind, of course, that the term regeneration is used in a narrower and wider sense. It may signify the immediate and instantaneous act of the Spirit, or it may denote the whole complex process that we are accustomed to call conversion, including on the part of man, repentance and faith; on the part of God, the forgiveness of sin and the imparting of the new life in Christ. If born of the water and the Spirit be understood in the larger sense of the term, there is no difficulty in conceiving that the Spirit imparts renewing grace in baptism as he imparts sanctifying grace in the Lord's Supper. We find therefore that baptism is associated with repentance, and

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<sup>8</sup> A. Plummer, The Gospel According to John, (Cambridge: University Press, 1891) p. 95. Smith points out that pre-Reformation scholars and the ablest modern expositors hold this view but that Calvin "recoiling from the doctrine of baptismal regeneration as maintained by the Church of Rome, taught that water is merely the symbol of the Spirit's work..." Smith, Op. cit., p. 262. See here, pp. 261-271 for an exhaustive study of this whole matter.



faith; and with the washing away of sin and spiritual cleansing and renewing.<sup>9</sup>

There is here no suggestion of baptismal regeneration, as is indicated by (1) the joint phrase "water and Spirit"--not merely a birth "of water" alone, and (2) the fact that the succeeding verses go on to explain and describe the activity of the Spirit in more detail, leaving behind the reference to baptism with the assumption that all should recognize it as merely the outward symbol of the inner birth "of the Spirit" which had deserved further explanation to all readers, and (3) the omission of reference to water in verse 8 -- "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." "The grace which is the real efficient is 'Spirit' --evidently the power of the Spirit of God, since the birth is 'from above.'"<sup>10</sup>

(4) The Nature of the New Birth. Jesus wasted no time answering the question of Nicodemus who could only imagine the problem involved in a second physical birth. The essential and important lesson He wanted to teach was that the "new birth" is not characterized by the physical and material and natural, but by the spiritual.

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<sup>9</sup> Smith, Op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>10</sup> H. B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (London: MacMillan & Co., 1921) p. 133.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (3:6). Nicodemus had alluded to natural generation, and although he probably did not realize it, Jewish pride in their "election" to positions of favor as children of God rested solely on their inheritance from father to son of the covenant promise of God with His people--this pride was exactly what Jesus had to strike at. Jesus clearly says that the New Birth is not something inherited--only flesh is born of flesh. The New Birth is imparted to every individual by a spiritual birth ("that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.")

...like produces like... Human nature cannot rise above itself; to mount up to God and to things above men must receive a new principle of life from above, from God.<sup>11</sup>

Flesh and spirit represent different spheres of existence; the two may greatly influence and affect each other (see on Sanctification) but one cannot produce the other.

What a man inherits from his parents is a body with animal life and passions; what he receives from above is a spiritual nature with heavenly aspirations and capabilities. What is born of sinful, human nature is sinful and human, what is born of the Holy Spirit is spiritual and divine.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>12</sup> Plummer, Op. cit., p. 95. See John 6:63



Those who are regenerate are born "not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (Jn. 1:13) Perhaps Jesus had in mind an Old Testament prophecy: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes..." (Exekiel 36:26-27). The nature of this New Birth is, then, entirely spiritual for it is "of the Spirit." In spite of the admonition of our Lord that we "Marvel not!" we are bound to exclaim with Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" This brings us to a consideration of

5. The Mystery of the New Birth. "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (Jn. 3:8) In this one statement Jesus tells us what we all discover as we study the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to every phase of His activity (not just the New Birth). After all our study, and even more profoundly, after all our personal Christian experience, we may see and feel the work of the Spirit, but we cannot describe how He does it. We know what He does but the how re-

mains a mystery.

It is possible in this verse to translate πνεῦμα as Spirit in every instance rather than as wind, and the scholars debate this at length. This would read: "The Spirit breathes where He wills, and thou hearest His voice." But the whole phrasing here, and especially the οὕτως at the end, denotes a comparison ~~here~~ between the wind we observe in nature and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

If the wind did not affect our senses, we would never know its blowing; if the Spirit did not produce reborn men, we would never know his presence and activity. Thus the fact and reality of the wind we hear in its activity and effect illustrates the Spirit whom we observe in his activity and effect (the regenerated man).<sup>13</sup>

We are up against a mystery here which is true in the natural and in the spiritual world. We do not deny the existence, the power, and the effectiveness of the wind simply because we do not know its origin or its destination, or when and where it will blow. Neither can we deny the reality and the fact which are known only by the effect of the Spirit's work in regenerating human nature.

Such is the manner of the Spirit's working in him who has been born from above; there is the

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<sup>13</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel (Columbus: Lutheran Book Co., 1931) p. 234.



same mystery surrounding it, the same ignorance on man's part of the laws by which it is governed, the same certainty that its existence and its presence are matters of fact, since its effects fall within our range of observation, even within the cognizance of the senses; the Spirit's voice is heard in human utterances and the Spirit's power felt in human actions, though the Spirit itself is inaudible and invisible.<sup>14</sup>

6. Conclusion. It would be foolish to assume that Jesus would limit His teaching on so important a subject to a brief conversation in the middle of the night with a ruler of the Jews. In the very next chapter He adapts the same concept in more familiar terms to the Samaritan woman at the well who of course lacked the training and culture and therefore the capacity to understand which Nicodemus should have had.

With the untaught woman the conversation turns on the familiar well; the Spirit is not mentioned by name; yet it is impossible not to recognize in the living water of which He speaks to her the same inflow of new life of which Nicodemus had heard.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus' discourse (John 6) on the bread of life again points to the means whereby a new life would be imparted to man through partaking of a spiritual life obtainable in Christ Jesus. While John 6:63 does not refer to the

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<sup>14</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

Holy Spirit directly, it does refer to the means (i.e., the Word) employed by the Spirit. In all this figurative language of eating and drinking, the work of the Holy Spirit in providing the means for and actually effecting the New Birth is taught. Man must be changed through Divine intervention in his life. "Except one be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Elsewhere in the New Testament there is of course mention of the New Birth, but seldom is it ever as clearly expressed as in John 3. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." (I Cor. 6:11). He has just spoken of the sinful self from which they must turn when they received Christ. Now he affirms the complete and the marvelous character of the moral revolution (the New Birth) brought about in them by the name of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Again: "Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (II Cor. 1:21-22, cf. 5:53 and Eph. 1:13). This initial spiritual experience of the Corinthian Christians in regeneration is but the first payment of the Spirit.



Further spiritual "payments" were sure to follow, now that the "bargain" had been officially entered upon.

Paul's greatest statement of this whole work of regeneration is probably in Titus 3:4-7, "...but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here is a clear statement of regeneration not by merit but by grace, a redemption applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

No context in the New Testament exhibits more clearly the place of the Spirit in the economy of human salvation; its relation to the justifying grace of God, the redeeming work of our Lord, the sacramental life of the baptized, the eternal life of the saved.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

## B. The Holy Spirit and Conviction of Sin

Regeneration is necessary because of sin. Unless something were wrong with a man there would be no necessity for being born again. Man, created in the image of God, has, through disobedience, a thoroughly corrupt nature. Instead of being dedicated to God, he is dedicated to the world. Instead of having his life empowered by God, which is the corruption of our nature, we have guilt, the permanent scar left on our soul long after the act of sin is past, because a relationship with God has been broken. The act of breaking God's law is a sin; but by breaking the law we incur guilt because we have defied God's claim upon our acts.

Sin creates guilt, because God has a claim upon all our acts. If it were possible to act independently of God, such acts, though deviating from the moral ideal, would not create guilt. Yet they are not identical. Sin always lies in us and leaves our relation to God untouched; but guilt does not lie in us, but always refers to our relation to God.<sup>17</sup>

Because of this God must judge and punish our sin which is "encroachment upon His rights." This punishment is death. As long as a man is in harmony with God, his soul is invigorated by the Holy Spirit, but when the relationship is broken the man is dead. Like

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<sup>17</sup> Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 272.



a corpse which may still be a complete body but lacks life-giving breath, so the man who is in sin is dead, He has lost contact with God. "The wages of sin is death." Hence the Biblical reference to death as the condition of all men, "for all have sinned." But God possesses the power to infuse life into the dead soul again. Christ came to do this, to make it possible. The Holy Spirit's mission presupposes that this is done and proceeds to carry it out in the hearts of men.<sup>18</sup>

...the soul is...susceptible of new quickening and animation; dead in trespasses and sin, severed from the life-principle, its organism motionless, incapable, and unprofitable, corrupt and undone, but--still a human soul. And God, who is merciful and gracious, can re-establish the broken bond. The interrupted communion with the Holy Spirit can be restored, like the broken fellowship of body and soul. And this quickening of the dead soul is regeneration.<sup>19</sup>

No matter what takes precedence in the order of things, regeneration does involve a changed attitude toward sin by the man who thereby has been separated from God. Even the pagan may realize the presence of sin, may even sense that it is wrong. But regeneration involves a new look at sin. Only a man who is "born from above" has the new sense of vision capable of doing

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<sup>18</sup> Green, Op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 281.

this. This involves the conviction of sin, the direct result of a new look at sin. Our clearest Scriptural statement on this comes from the last discourse of Jesus before His crucifixion (John 14-17).

It may be said with truth that they (John, chapters 13-17) explicitly assert or clearly imply all that is taught in the New Testament upon this theme (the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit).<sup>20</sup>

Here Jesus is preparing the minds of His disciples for his approaching death. He has promised the παράκλητος who will provide companionship and guidance and truth for them as they seek to grow in the fellowship of love with God and fellow-believers even in times of difficulty and persecution. But the παράκλητος will not only act as their "lawyer for defense" but will also play the part of "prosecuting lawyer" convicting the world of its true status before God. In John 16:8-11, immediately following the fourth time Jesus had promised to send the Comforter, we have this clear-cut statement of the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting the world.

And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father,

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<sup>20</sup> Smith, Op. cit., p. 288.



and ye behold me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world hath been judged.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world.

ἐλεγχεν means to cross-examine for the purpose of convincing or refuting an opponent. "Convict" is a better rendition than "convince" and still better than "reprove" as some of the other translations have it. It is one thing to reprove a man for telling a lie, another thing to convince him that telling a lie was wrong, but still another to convict him in the sense of cause<sup>n</sup> him to condemn himself after close scrutiny before the bar of his own conscience--especially if this is done in the light of God's truth and law.

This rendering gives additional point to the rendering "Advocate" for Paraclete. To convince and convict is a large part of the duty of an advocate. He must vindicate and prove the truth; and whoever, after such proof, rejects the truth, does so with responsibility in proportion to the interests involved.<sup>21</sup>

The meaning of ἐλεγχεν reveals the immense power and influence of the Holy Spirit upon our consciousness. He can "bring to light the true character of a man or his conduct" or "bring home a truth which has been rejected or ignored."<sup>22</sup> The world of Jesus' day (and

<sup>21</sup> A. Plummer, The Gospel According to John (Cambridge: University Press, 1913) p. 292.

<sup>22</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 158, footnote 1.

ours, no less) has to be "forced" by the outside influence of the Spirit of God to perceive its own condition as a violation of God's will for it.

Evidently Jesus here used the word "world" not in a physical but in an ethical sense; he referred, indeed, to mankind, but to mankind as alienated from God, as opposed to God and in need of the saving grace of God. This "world" of which the Spirit of Evil is pictured as "the prince," is the world which is to be convicted by the Spirit of God.<sup>23</sup>

In "bringing the world back to its senses" the Holy Spirit must convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In each explanatory verse (John 16: 9, 10, and 11) ὅτι occurs. "

Each of the three clauses introduced by ὅτι is in apposition with the foregoing substantive, and is explanatory of the ground of the conviction.<sup>24</sup>

"Because" does not explain "sin" but "will convict."<sup>25</sup> Perhaps Lenski's translation, "inasmuch as" or "seeing that" brings out the idea best.<sup>26</sup>

1. The Holy Spirit convicts the world "of sin inasmuch as they believe not on me." (John 16:9). Jesus puts his finger on the source of all sin which is unbe-

<sup>23</sup> Charles R. Erdman, The Spirit of Christ (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926) p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> Marcus Dods, The Gospel of St. John (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1897) p. 835.

<sup>25</sup> Plummer, Op. cit., p. 292.

<sup>26</sup> Lenski, Op. cit., p. 1061.



lief. For centuries it had been the sin of unbelief in God, but from now on men could and would be guilty of the greatest of all sin, unbelief in God's Ambassador, Jesus Christ. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15:22). All other sin pales into insignificance before this one of which all are guilty until they confess Him as the Son of God and Saviour of the world. The experience of every disciple of Christ has been the conviction of the sin of unbelief.

The Spirit was to reveal the sinfulness of refusing to believe on Jesus; the men who had witnessed His signs and heard His words unmoved, who had shouted Crucify him and without remorse reviled Him as He hung on the cross, the same men, when the light of the Spirit was turned upon their conduct, would discover in it the most damning of all sins, a rejection of the Only begotten Son of God, and cry out in their distress, What shall we do?<sup>27</sup>

Just as to believe in Jesus is to be saved from sin, to have sin forgiven, as the New Testament often asserts, so also not to believe in Him is to remain in sin and to remain forever in the punishment for sin which is death. The Holy Spirit causes a man to see his own soul condemned for this sin of all sins: unbelief.

## 2. The Holy Spirit convicts the world "of

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<sup>27</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 158.

righteousness, inasmuch as I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more." Not only will the Holy Spirit convict the world of its sin of unbelief but also of failure to measure itself by the standard of God's righteousness now supremely revealed in the Person of Christ.

The world's estimate of sin is false because it takes no account of unbelief as the root and origin of sin; the world's conception of righteousness is false because it does not know him who alone is righteous. Jesus thus presents himself as the example, the norm, of righteousness. He is the Righteous One, as the Apostles delighted to call him.<sup>28</sup>

Although the physical presence of Jesus is about to be removed, the Holy Spirit will continue to show its nature to the world.

Here Συγκαταβύνη is used not in the lower sense of keeping prescribed ordinances (Mt. 3:15) but in the highest and widest sense of keeping the law of God; internal as well as external obedience. The lower sense was almost the only one both to Jew and Gentile (Mt. 5:20). The Spirit, having convinced man that sin is much more than a breaking of certain ordinances, viz., a rejection of God and His Church, goes on to convince him that righteousness is much more than a keeping of certain ordinances.<sup>29</sup>

But there is more here than the idea that the Holy Spirit would now take the place of Jesus, who was going away, in holding up before the world a true standard of right-

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<sup>28</sup> Smith, Op. cit., p. 363.

<sup>29</sup> Plummer, Op. cit., p. 292.



eousness which would cause us to be conscience stricken as we compare our own unrighteousness with it. For in the very act of His going away, the circumstances which would make this departure necessary, an aspect of righteousness never before witnessed by the world would be revealed, and it would be the work of the Holy Spirit to impress this upon men. For in Christ's passion righteousness was supremely revealed, when "e passed through the severest suffering and agony and through death itself and yet displayed a sinless life. The Cross then became the supreme spectacle of the cost of sin which supreme righteousness was willing to pay. And the Holy Spirit has always appealed to this One whose perfect righteousness was vindicated by His resurrection and return to the Father, to convict "the world of righteousness."

For here, it was recognized at last, is the one perfect model of human righteousness, which God has accepted and crowned by admitting it into His presence; this is the Righteous One who is with the Father, and through whom men may attain to the righteousness of God.<sup>30</sup>

3. The Holy Spirit convicts the world "of judgment because the prince of this world hath been judged." A false view of sin and of righteousness on

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<sup>30</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 159.

the part of the world cannot but issue in a false view of judgment, and the Holy Spirit convicts the world of error in this respect too.

The world might think that "the power of darkness" conquered at Gethsemane and Calvary, but the Resurrection and Ascension proved that what looked like victory was a most signal defeat: instead of conquering Satan was judged. This result is so certain that from the point of view of the Spirit's coming it is spoken of as already accomplished.<sup>31</sup>

The inevitable outcome of the conflict between sin and righteousness, between evil and good, between God and Satan, is judgment--and the issue is already settled so far as Jesus was concerned although its final completion might take some time. κρίσις means separation, or judgment. The Holy Spirit will convince the world at once of the justice and the inevitableness of God's judgments.<sup>32</sup>

A crisis is at hand, and even now is going forward in human history; it began with the judgment which was passed on the ruler of this world by the life and death of Jesus, a judgment which is still in force and fruitful in results. The Spirit brings this fact home to the minds of men, and they live henceforth as those who know that since the Resurrection the issues of the great struggle are determined, and every day is bringing nearer the final victory of righteousness and the final doom of sin.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Plummer, Op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>32</sup> Bernard, Op. cit., p. 508.

<sup>33</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 160.



Thus Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit would come into the mind of a man convicting him of the utter insecurity and falsehood of his present position. Until a man has his heart opened by the Spirit with respect to sin, righteousness, and judgment he is living under condemnation. When Paul reasoned with Felix "of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified." Little wonder--for there is terror and fear in these things. But conversely when the Spirit does convict a sinner of these things, peace is possible through the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. Wherever and whenever under the influence of the Holy Spirit a man is convicted of sin and righteousness and judgment then "the world is convicted, Jesus is glorified, and Satan is condemned."<sup>34</sup>

Not all of us can look into our religious experience and see each of these processes by which the Spirit convicts us of sin.

We are not to suppose that all men are required to pass through a conscious and clearly defined conviction of sin, of righteousness and of judgment in explicit terms. The language of Jesus simply interprets the meaning of the experience of conviction. Many who have it could not state their own experience in very clear or coherent language. But this does not

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<sup>34</sup> Smith, Op. cit., p. 366.

alter the fact itself. Again, we must recognize varying degrees of intensity in the conviction for sin. With some no doubt it is a deep tragedy of the soul. With others it is rather a sense simply of being out of adjustment with God... We must make due allowance for the differences in men and for the variety in the manifestations of the Spirit of God.<sup>35</sup>

In Paul's Epistles he strives to get Christians to forsake completely any sin in their lives but there is very little said about how the Spirit operates to convict us of sin. In the main, the New Testament does not seek to convict human hearts of sin by pointing out those specific sins and the horrible consequence thereof so much as by exalting the purity and innocence and righteousness of Christ, in the light of whose character we all stand with our sins casting deep shadows. It is this which pricks our consciences and convicts us of sin. The greatest sin laid to the charge of men is that of causing the death of Christ (Acts 3:14-19). The only messages to the "unconverted" which we find in the New Testament are in Acts, and they invariably seek to convict their hearers of sin by exalting Christ before them. (Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-36; 7:2-53; 10:34-43; 13:16-41; 17:22-31). The response to such sermons are is

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<sup>35</sup> E. Y. Mullins, The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1917) p. 368.



significant: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart" (Acts 2:37). One of the main functions of the Holy Spirit according to Jesus was to bear witness of Him (Christ). And this is the most effective way to bring men to a consciousness of their sins, as the Holy Spirit through the Word or by a Witness reminds the sinner to "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

### C. The Holy Spirit Moves to Repentance

Separated only by the processes of logical thought, repentance follows immediately upon the conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit convicts a man of sin and then drives him to his knees in repentance. It would be of no value to convict of sin and stop at that. Dejection and remorse would lead only to self-destruction as the only way to escape the terrors of a stricken conscience.

There are two New Testament words for "repentance," μετάνοια, and μετάνοιαν (μετάνοια). The first means literally "to care afterwards," i.e., "regret." The second, and by far the more frequently used of the two (both as a verb and as a noun) means to "think differently" or "afterwards," i.e., "reconsider" (morally feel compunction). The first word may be a godly kind of regret leading to a real repentance or it may be a regret which produces no moral change at all. But the second words mean a complete change of mind and thought. It is more than a mere intellectual change of view for it carries with it the idea of a change of the will and of the whole direction of living. It is in a very real sense, "conversion," which may often popularly



be confused with regeneration which is an act of God which precedes a man's conversion.

The distinction so often laid down between these words, to the effect that the former expresses a merely emotional change the latter a change of choice, the former has reference to particulars the latter to the entire life, the former signifies nothing but regret even though amounting to remorse, the latter that reversal of moral purpose known as repentance--seem hardly to be sustained by usage. But that μετάνοιᾶ is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral action and issues, is indicated not only by its derivation but by the greater frequency of its use, by the fact that it is often employed in the impv. (μεταμένοιτε never), and by its construction with ἀπὸ, ἐκ.<sup>36</sup>

The call of the Holy Spirit has ever been to make the inner conviction of sin the occasion for repentance. Again and again God has issued the call, "Repent and turn to the Lord your God." The call of John the Baptist was "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." There are times when it is easy to assume that repentance is wholly an act of man and hence has no Divine impules behind it. "It is a remarkable fact that the Sacred Scripture refers to conversion almost one hundred and forty times as being an act of man, and only six times as an act of the Holy Ghost."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Thayer, Op. cit., p. 405.

<sup>37</sup> Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 349.

This means that repenting of sin, turning away from it (conversion) does involve a voluntary and spontaneous act of the individual concerned. The sinner may be called, but he must respond to the call. Nevertheless when the Holy Spirit has convicted a man of sin and issues the call to repentance, He also supports, incites and animates the sinner to respond. On the one hand there is what the Confession of Faith calls "Effectual Calling" and on the other "Repentance unto life." and the two are simply two sides of the same act.

Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel.<sup>38</sup>

Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavor after, new obedience.<sup>39</sup>

There is a mystery here which has puzzled and divided Christians, but both aspects are taught in Scripture, i.e., that in a very real sense man must convert himself, must voluntarily repent of sin, and yet, on the

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<sup>38</sup> James B. Green, A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1951) p. 96 (Shorter Catechism).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 96.



other hand, he cannot move an inch in this respect without the Holy Spirit. It is the purpose of this chapter to show the Holy Spirit's part in man's repentance.

We again face the problem raised by the limitations of our human processes of thought, in that our subjects overlap that of sanctification. The initial repentance of the sinner, if it is a true "turning of one's back" upon the life of sin, is per se an entrance upon the process of sanctification. And the fact that repentance is repeatedly necessary (while under the influence of the Holy Spirit our lives become sanctified in the likeness of Christ) gives further evidence of the overlapping of subjects. Nevertheless we can proceed by restricting ourselves to the initial conversion experience when man responds to the confrontation of sin and the call to repentance. While the doctrinal expression that "the Holy Spirit moves men to repentance" states a truth underlying many passages in the New Testament, no where do we find a specific statement of this.

We rely for our knowledge of this <sup>upon</sup> ~~from~~ experiences recorded in the historical books, especially Acts, and inferences drawn from the statements in the Epistles. Let us examine them in this order. All through the New

Testament we notice the close linking of the terms "repentance," "faith," "baptism," and the "Holy Spirit." Sometimes all appear together, sometimes only 2 or 3 of the terms. Yet the repeated mention of the Holy Spirit along with these other terms is evidence that New Testament Christians found His activity in all these spiritual experiences.

1. John the Baptist pointed to this experience as he preached: "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." (Mt. 3:11). The parallelism here is significant. John realizes that what he does with water in a limited preparatory way, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit will do in a complete and final way. The two baptisms were in no way opposed to each other.

The former symbolized repentance. But repentance anticipates the gift of righteousness. Baptism with the Holy Spirit conveys this righteousness. The former is preparatory, the latter final.<sup>40</sup>

2. On the day of Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Spirit preached the Gospel so that his hear<sup>er</sup>s "were

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<sup>40</sup> W. C. Allen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907) p. 25.



pricked in their hearts" and were convicted of sin.

In response to their cry of "What shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). This verse does not specifically state that "The Holy Spirit moved upon these people to bring them to repentance" but the inference is justified by His presence and activity on this occasion. Perhaps here we have one of our best insights into how the Spirit operates (a mystery seldom revealed in Scripture). He calls to repentance through (a) a messenger and (b) the Word--both of which were used on the day of Pentecost to bring 3000 to repentance.

3. That the early "preachers" so regarded their own ministry (as the means used by the Spirit to bring men to repentance) is evident from Stephen's words to the Jews who were about to stone him: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit." (Acts 7:51).

4. Again Peter's experience in the home of Cornelius where, while he was still speaking, "the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word." (Acts 10:

44). In Acts 11:18, the "apostles and the brethren," who had put Peter on the carpet to defend his association with Gentiles, were forced to admit, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" because of the evidence of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius. Peter's constant demand of new converts was the profession of repentance as well as faith. This passage shows again that the preaching of the Word is accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit to make the necessary effect upon the hearer's heart. And to the Church at large, the fact that these Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit was testimony to the fact that they too had repented and were now "born again" Christians.

5. The conversion of Paul is perhaps the most dramatic event of its type on record. Paul forever after boasted that it was the Lord Jesus Christ who spoke to him and drove him to the dust of the road in humble submission and repentance. Yet Paul knew that his own case was unique and that it was the normal function of the third Person of the Trinity to lead men to repentance. "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him." (Jn. 6:44). While the Holy Spirit is the Person of the Trinity who "moves men to repentance," we know that the whole God-head is at



work in effecting the regeneration of mankind.

6. The eighth chapter of Romans furnishes a rich source of material on the Holy Spirit. Not all of this chapter is confined to the matters relating to the Spirit-filled (sanctified) Christian life (See pp. 185 ff). In this great discussion of the life in the Spirit, Paul cannot but include mention of the spiritual principle of a new orientation toward the old life of sin, a change which is at the very heart of the idea of repentance. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." (Rom. 8:2). Paul looks upon the whole experience as an abrupt change from the life of the flesh (a life where sin and the world and flesh are things to be enjoyed) to the life of the Spirit. God who raised Christ from the dead can through His Spirit resurrect our mortal bodies (now dead in sin), giving us the new life in Christ.

7. A further source of material on the Holy Spirit is in Galatians. Although much of the teaching here rightly falls under the subject of Sanctification, the fact is stated that the Spirit (a) Initiates the Christian life ("Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" Gal. 3:3), and, (b) Makes our sonship real and effective in our hearts ("And

because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:6). Furthermore the necessity for living the Christian life in the Spirit is rooted in the fact that our conversion from the deadness of sin is due to the life-giving power of the Spirit. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."

8. Paul, rejoicing over the Christian life of the Thessalonians, points out that their reception and response to the call of the Gospel came with the aid of the Holy Spirit. "We give thanks...knowing...how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." (I Thess. 1:5).

The work of the Holy Spirit is found from the very origin of the Christian life--from the moment the old man of sin is given up for the new life in the Spirit.

...repentance is considered more as an experience than as an act, and this experience is described in a manner peculiar to the apostle as a death and resurrection with Christ, or as a putting off of the old man and a putting on of the new. The believer is buried with Christ in baptism, and raised with Him into a new life in the Spirit (Ro. 6:2ff, Col. 2:12). The result of this new creation is a new walk and conversation, sin is in its principle destroyed.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> W. Morgan, "Repentance," A Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905) James Hastings, editor. Vol. IV, p. 226.



#### D. The Holy Spirit and Faith

The appeal of Scripture to faith as the basis for justification and salvation sometimes exposes us to the danger of regarding faith as an attitude of mind and heart for which the individual alone is responsible. But such is not actually the case. Saving Faith would be impossible in one who was not already being swept along in the current of Divine control which is the sphere of the Spirit's absolute control over that person beginning from his rebirth. No act of faith is possible except in the Spirit, --under the impulse of the Spirit, and through insight given by the Spirit.

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit does not use means to work faith in the human heart. He uses the Word and the preaching thereof. He is the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:17 etc.) who "teaches all things" and "bears witness of" Jesus and "guides into all truth." He develops and confirms this faith through Christian experience and the several means of grace.

The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe in the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Green, A Harmony of the West. Presb. Standards, p. 93.

Yet whatever the means, whatever the manner of spiritual experience the Spirit may employ, the fact remains that all the evidence points to the great mystery of the work of God through His Spirit in developing the faculty for and initiating the experience of faith in the human heart. Whether faith comes before, after, or simultaneously with the conviction of sin and the knowledge of our justification is a debatable point--perhaps it is not always the same, or perhaps it is because faith has its stages as suggested by Kuyper:

You have only to discriminate between the organ of the faculty of faith, the power to exercise faith, and the working of faith. The first of these, viz., the faculty of faith, is implanted in the first stage of regeneration--i.e., in quickening; the power of faith is imparted in the second stage of regeneration--i.e., in conversion; and the working of faith is wrought in the third stage--i.e., in sanctification.<sup>43</sup>

Not all of us may want to go along with the fine points of such an analysis as this, but it does serve to indicate that faith is not necessarily a factor we do not have at one moment but possess the very next moment. Nor is it absolutely confined to one aspect of our Christian experience. The testimony of the Scripture points to a deep interdependence of all these phases.

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<sup>43</sup> Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 320.



1. Acts. Possession of the Holy Spirit is regarded as a proof that an individual is saved by his faith. Perhaps this point is "putting the cart before the horse" so far as logical arrangement is concerned. But it does serve as a step in our thinking to note how closely the two are associated in the thought of New Testament Christians. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his family was accepted as evidence of their faith (Acts 10:44). In Acts 11:17, where Peter is defending himself in the matter of Cornelius, he says, "If then God gave unto them the like gift (of the Holy Spirit) as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" Again, faith and the Holy Spirit are often mentioned as jointly existing in a person. Stephen was a man "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5). Barnabas was "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). This point also rests upon the logical deductions from two well established facts in Acts:

- (a) The Apostles insisted upon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the minimum requirement for salvation prior to baptism ("What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:30-31)
- (b) The Apostles regarded possession of the Spirit as

evidence of inner saving faith. Hence the two (Spirit possession and real faith) were definitely linked in their thought. Visible evidence pointed to the fact that saving faith in Christ was always accompanied by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup>

2. John. Yet it is clear too that not only was faith evidenced by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit actually produced this faith. Now faith, regardless of how it is planted in the human heart, is, of course, a response to and grasping of the benefits of grace offered through Christ. But such faith is impossible without the work of the Spirit, who (as Kuyper calls it) plants in us the faculty of faith and gives us the power to experience it.

Nobody in the New Testament grasps more firmly than does John the principle that it is only in and through the divine Spirit that we know Christ and his saving work. In fact, the central principle of John's doctrine of

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<sup>44</sup> Acts 18:24-19:7 would seem to argue against this. But these "disciples" whom Paul found at Ephesus were really followers of John the Baptist, as a result of the preaching of Apollos. As such they had experienced the repentance and faith necessary for his baptism but lacked the fuller revelation made manifest since Pentecost. Therefore they were re-baptized "on the ground that a man who does not know the Holy Spirit does not in any vital way know Jesus as Lord and Savior." Walter Thomas Conner, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Nashville: The Broadman Press, 1949) p. 83.



nesses were necessary to prove a point in Jewish courts. God also bears witness to Christ by three witnesses (1) the Spirit who interprets the evidence of the historical facts of the life of Christ, (2) the Baptism of Christ where He was identified as the Lamb of God and consecrated to His mission, (3) the death of Christ in which His sinlessness and deity are supremely set forth. Thus the presence of the Holy Spirit is not merely a sign of inner faith, but it is His witness to Christ in our hearts which produces that saving faith. John says that the Holy Spirit has one great mission: to bear witness to Christ and to make Christ real to men.

3. Paul makes this position even stronger by saying that no one can have faith without the work of the Spirit. "Wherefore I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 12:3; cf. I Jn. 4:2). He was talking about spiritual things (πνευματικά) and gifts (χαρίσματα) but he asserts that the main gift of the Spirit is to enable the sinner to confess his faith in Christ.

The Jewish adversary who anathematized Jesus in the synagogue or before the heathen, had no part in the Spirit of God; the humblest

Christian who uttered with conviction the shortest confession of his faith did so in the power of the Divine Spirit, though he might not possess the charismata.<sup>46</sup>

It is clear from these scattered references from John and Paul that the Spirit who convicts of sin and persuades us to repent, also plants faith in our hearts. This faith is not merely the initial surrender of self and acceptance of Christ but is a continuing and growing power in the Christian life. That which is "begun in the Spirit" cannot be "perfected in the flesh" but only in the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-3). The Spirit continues to open up hidden mines of truth to enrich our faith that we might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And here our thinking easily slips into the work of the Holy Spirit in Sanctification, which we consider in the next chapter.

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<sup>46</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 184.



## E. Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is God-at-work in bringing about the New Birth. In ways we cannot understand and may know only by their effect, the Spirit effects this change, at the same time bringing conviction of sin and impelling us to repent, and planting faith in Christ in our hearts. Just when and in what order these things are done we know not. The Spirit knows our needs and our capabilities. He does not convict of sin without exciting sorrow. Nor does he excite the "godly sorrow" that "worketh repentance" without holding before us the One who by our faith in Him can forgive sin and restore our broken fellowship with God.

It is the Spirit which regenerates; which as living water, issuing from the Christ, allays the thirst of men and becomes in them a perennial fountain of life which overflows for the quickening or the refreshment of all that it can reach. So the Lord foreshadowed, or the Evangelist interpreting His words by the event expressed, the effect of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit: the new life which sprang up in the hearts of believers, its freshness, its brightness and joy, its unfailing supply, the law of self-expression which it invariably follows.<sup>47</sup>

The first fruit of regeneration is the joy and satisfaction of knowing that we are now the Sons of God

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<sup>47</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 350.

in a new and blessed way. It is the Spirit which reveals this to us, making us conscious of sonship in the household of faith. Jesus redeemed sinful men "that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal. 4:6-7). How great the change and how priceless the new life achieved by the Holy Spirit! There is a complete change of direction from the life of sin to the life of righteousness, from being sons of the wicked one to being sons of God. This is conversion: the turning away from sin in repentance and the turning toward Christ in faith. This transfer of direction is brought about not by the spirit or will of man, but by the Spirit of God. This whole activity of the Spirit in setting in order the state of our lives is the work of regeneration.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit, p. 107.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit's work in effecting the New Birth is most clearly set forth in John's Gospel, and illustrated in the book of Acts. This was natural, because the Gospel writer was concerned with winning believers to Christ, and Acts is the account of how the Holy Spirit worked through the ancient Church to evangelize large areas of the Roman world. But it is Paul who sets forth most clearly the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.

Paul's letters are not written to non-believers but to Christians, mostly "new" Christians. He wanted to build them up in their Christian experience. He was in complete agreement with the teaching of the Church as to the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration, sometimes briefly discussing it, often pointing to this experience as the basis from which the Christian life stems. But always he sought to purify and strengthen the character of individual Christians and churches. He depended upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish this work of sanctification. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit enables a man not only to transfer his allegiance from

the world to a recognition of the Lordship of Christ in the "conversion" experience but also gives the power to continue to recognize the lordship of Christ in his living as a citizen in the Kingdom of God.

The word translated as sanctification seems to please all the theologians, something not always true with theological terms. It has its roots in the Hebrew kādash and the Greek ἁγιάζω.

The noun sanctification does not occur in the Old Testament and is found but 10 times in the New Testament, but the roots...appear in a group of important words which are of very frequent occurrence. These words are "holy," "hallow," "hallowed," "holiness," "consecrate," "saint," "sanctify," "sanctification."<sup>1</sup>

The term is used in two senses. It means to separate from the world and consecrate to God, especially in worship ceremonies, as when offerings were consecrated, or special days hallowed. But the ordinary meaning is that with which we are concerned here, the making holy of a Christian believer, the process by which he is turned from sin and is renewed in the likeness of Christ. It is largely this ethical sense, rooted of course in the formal sense of the Old Testament, that we find in the New Testament. Just as, for instance, in the

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<sup>1</sup> H. F. Rall, "Sanctification," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: Howard Severance Co., 1930) Vol. IV, p. 2681.



Old Testament, special purification was necessary before participation in temple services because a holy God's presence could not be defiled ("Be ye holy as I am holy"), so in the New Testament, because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in the believer, his whole being was continually being sanctified--cut off from the world and grafted into the life of God. Hence,

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

The consequences of sin are numerous, and God has taken the steps to meet them all. By the atonement, He at one stroke frees us from the penalty of sin. By justifying us through faith, He imputes the righteousness of Christ to us, freeing us from the guilt of sin. By sanctification, He removes the stain and mark and disfigurement sin has caused. Sanctification rests upon the atonement purchased by Christ, and the justification declared by God. It is not the province of this paper to study these two doctrines. But we must make clear the distinguishing features, especially between justification and sanctification.

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<sup>2</sup> James B. Green, A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards (Richmond: John Knox Press) p. 89.

1. Justification works for man; sanctification in man. 2. Justification removes the guilt; sanctification the stain. 3. Justification imputes to us an extraneous righteousness; sanctification works a righteousness inherent as our own. 4. Justification is at once completed; sanctification increases gradually; hence remains imperfect.<sup>3</sup>

In the moment when we stand before God repenting for sin and looking to Christ as our atonement by which we may claim justification, then (by that faith) the sinner is instantly and completely justified. But this is only a mere beginning of the Christian life, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit from this moment on to begin the work of sanctification, a work which is never completed in this life, but is finally made perfect in the life to come. A knowledge and understanding of the necessity of this process may help to keep us from the two extremes of error: antinomianism, whereby men count too heavily upon their complete justification before God and hence ignore the importance of moral and spiritual growth and purification, and perfectionism, whereby men assume that the process of sanctification can be, and is, complete in this life. While these two extremes of thought are not the object of study in these chapters on sanctification,

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<sup>3</sup> Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1946) p. 440.



fication of the Spirit" (ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι). In addition it is used in a rather loose construction in I Cor. 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." In Rom. 15:16, Paul is speaking of his own qualifications to minister, being sanctified by the Spirit just as the priest before the altar was sanctified to perform a ministry in the presence of Holy God. In II Thess. 2:13, Paul sets forth a summary of his religious convictions which included ἁγίασμός πνεύματος, "the total consecration of the individual, soul and body, to God, a consecration which is inspired by the indwelling Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup> Peter uses the same expression (in I Pet. 1:2) in a similar way in describing the total spiritual process.

Holiness is the attribute of God in whom is no stain of evil, either in thought or in deed: the Spirit, by the act of sanctification or hallowing, imparts this divine attribute to the Christian society, consecrating it, setting it apart, calling it out of the world, devoting it to God, and furnishing it with divine gifts and powers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> J. E. Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1912) p. 281.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Bigg, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905) p. 92.

But for every one of the passages where the word sanctification is used as a work of the Holy Spirit we may also find several where this same mission is apparently the work of the Father or the Son. We are led more and more, by such observations, to the realization of the essential unity of the three, and must confess that the work of One is the work of All. Yet it is the peculiar function of the Spirit to perform this function for the Father and the Son in the human being.

In working out this study of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of sanctification, we will follow the plan suggested by the following Scriptural phrases:

- A. "Filled with the Spirit."
- B. "The Spirit of life."
- C. "Walk by the Spirit."
- D. "Power of the Spirit."



### A. Filled with the Spirit

Although expressed in many ways, the New Testament gives abundant testimony to the fact that all Christians are, or should be, filled with the Holy Spirit. "Be filled with the Spirit" καὶ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι) is the admonition of Paul (Eph. 5:18). Perhaps the illustration may seem crude but it is almost as if a great reservoir is available, the flood gates of which may be thrown open to fill our own lives, though what some lives receive is more like the drip of a faucet. Man is somewhat like a "container" of some sort. He may be full of wine (as in the reference just cited) or of other worldly interests and occupations, or he may be filled with the Spirit.

...the Spirit-filled life is the normal condition of the believer... There are many who do not enter into the realization of that blessedness at conversion. In the purpose of God, however, the normal condition of Christian life is that of being baptized by the Spirit into life, and filled with the Spirit for life.<sup>6</sup>

1. Perhaps it is well to look first at the examples of this "filling" given in Acts. John the Baptist had been "filled with the Holy Spirit" but never to the

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<sup>6</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, The Spirit of God (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900) p. 185. (Underscoring mine.)

remarkable degree evidenced from Pentecost onwards. At Pentecost the disciples were all "filled with the Holy Spirit," ἐμπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου (Acts 2:4). This expression occurs eight times in Acts, with reference to individuals and to groups, usually at a moment when they were called upon to exercise spiritual powers in a special way, but also as the normal condition of the believer. In addition there is frequent mention of the "gift of the Spirit," of "receiving the Spirit" and so on. Always Christians seemed to have access to the Spirit who gave strength and guidance and wisdom. Always the verb is passive--God fills us with the Spirit, in no sense may we "acquire" Him.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be under his dominance, guidance, power, and control; and to be thus "filled" is a normal condition for every follower of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

2. In the Epistles there are further expressions which show that the Spirit can "fill" a man. We are tempted from some of these passages to regard the Spirit as a quantity which can be transferred from one place to another. For instance: "He therefore that

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<sup>7</sup> Charles R. Erdman, The Spirit of Christ (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926) p. 39.



supplieth to you the Spirit and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:5). "That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us" (II Tim. 1:14). "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you" (I Pet. 4:14). "These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19). These writers were including all believers. They knew that the Holy Spirit "filled" or "dwelt in" every believer--for no one could confess Christ except in the Spirit. Yet some either had more of the Spirit or were more conscious of Him, hence at certain times special mention is made that a certain person was "filled with the Spirit."

Doubtless at times, in addition to the normal indwelling of the Spirit, He exerted His power in a "super-normal" way to enable a man to perform certain special tasks. We use the same sort of expression today to describe what we sometimes see in a fellow Christian: "Mr. X is a deeply spiritual man," or, "Mr. Y is filled with the Spirit." Undoubtedly what we mean by such expressions is to describe what the New Testament writers

saw and sought to describe: the idea that, though all believers are Spirit-filled, some are more conscious of the Spirit's presence, or give Him larger place in their lives.

And here we have the doctrine of Sanctification. Other forms of the Spirit's work may be called "acts" and seem to be the influence of the Spirit upon man from the outside. But the Spirit also works upon man from the inside in a continuous, never ceasing process. Hence the idea of being filled with the Spirit is not just a single act, but a condition. It is possible for a man to suppress or ignore the Spirit ("Quench not the Spirit" I Thess. 5:19), or, on the other hand, to give it full expression ("Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). It is God's design that men should be sanctified into a new being in Christ, and He gives us the Spirit for this purpose. "For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you." (I Thess. 4:7-8). The "infilling" of the Spirit demands moral purity according to this statement by Paul.

These points are evident in this appended characterization of God, each of them intimating a motive for obedience. (1) Not only



is God the one who calls and judges, He is also the one who graciously puts into their hearts his Spirit whose presence insures their blamelessness in holiness when the Lord comes. In gratitude for this divine gift, they should be loyally obedient.

(2) This indwelling Spirit is a power unto holiness, a consecrating Spirit. Devotion to God must consequently be ethical. (3) The Spirit is put not ἐς ἡμᾶς "into us Christians" collectively, but ἐς ὑμᾶς "unto you" Thessalonians, specifically. Hence each of them is individually responsible to God who by the Spirit is resident in them.<sup>8</sup>

The same idea is found twice in I Corinthians.

"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." (I Cor. 3:16-17).

"Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (I Cor. 7:19-20).

It is possible that many early Christians (like many modern) looked upon the privilege and powers of the Spirit-possession without seeing fully the responsibilities. Their bodies, in sheltering the Spirit of God, were structures which, like the Temple were divinely consecrated, set apart, purified. Hence all impur-

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<sup>8</sup> Frame, Op. cit., p. 156.

ity was a desecration of the presence of God. Every Christian then is duty bound to look upon sanctification as the basis and ruling condition of the Christian life, the assumption on which God's dealings with Christian men rest.<sup>9</sup>

We shall have more to say about the character of this sanctified life later, but here we are concerned with pointing out that the fact that we are "filled with the Spirit" automatically sets us apart from all non-Christian life. The trouble with the Church and with Christians is that we refuse to recognize the prerogatives of the Spirit in our lives even though He is there. Hence we are often rightly accused of not being sanctified in any way over and above non-Christian society. We are "grieving," "resisting" and "quenching" that with which God intends us to be full. It is when the converse is true that we have full satisfaction in Christian living. Consciousness that as Christians we are filled with the Holy Spirit is the first step in the sanctified life. When properly realized, it can be the means of enjoying the fullness of Christian life.

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<sup>9</sup> G. C. Findlay, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians (Cambridge University Press, 1925) p. 89.



What is needed for life is the perpetual filling of the Spirit which is the normal condition of those who are living in the way of God, and the specific fillings to overflowing which may always be counted on when special service demands.<sup>10</sup>

Holy Spirit! all-divine  
Dwell within this heart of mine;  
Cast down every idol throne  
Reign supreme and reign alone.

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<sup>10</sup> Morgan, Op. cit., p. 194.

## B. The Spirit of Life

Rom. 8:1-17.

The eighth chapter of Romans (especially vs. 1-17) is a great treatise on the Holy Spirit. We have just pointed out that the indwelling of the Spirit is the primary basis of the sanctified life. In this chapter Paul points out that the Spirit brings a new kind of life into us. The kind of life man tried to live under the law and could not, he now can live because of the Spirit of God in his life. Hence Paul can set up the total contrast between the two systems. They can be viewed side by side as follows:

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|--|--|
| v. 2. The law of sin and of <u>death</u> .   | The law of the Spirit of <u>life</u> in Christ Jesus.                              |
| v. 4. Walk after the <u>flesh</u>  | (Walk) after the * <u>Spirit</u> .   |
| v. 5. They that are after the <u>flesh</u> mind the things of the <u>flesh</u>   | They that are after the * <u>Spirit</u> (mind) the things of the * <u>Spirit</u> . |
| v. 6. The mind of the <u>flesh</u> is <u>death</u>   | The mind of the * <u>Spirit</u> is <u>life</u> .                                   |
| v. 7. The mind of the <u>flesh</u> is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be; | and <u>peace</u> .   |
| v. 8. and they that are in the <u>flesh</u> cannot please  |  |
| v. 9. God. Ye are not in the <u>flesh</u>  | (Ye) are in the * <u>Spirit</u> , if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. |



If any man hath not  
the Spirit of Christ,  
v. 10 he is none of his.  
the body is dead be-  
cause of sin.

v. 11

v. 12 We are debtors, not to  
the flesh, to live af-  
v. 13 ter the flesh: for if  
ye live after the flesh,  
ye must die;

v. 14

v. 15 Ye received not the  
spirit of bondage  
again unto fear;

v. 16

v. 17

And if Christ is in you...  
but the \*Spirit is life  
because of righteousness  
But if the Spirit of him  
that raised up Jesus from  
the dead dwelleth in you,  
he that raised up Christ  
Jesus from the dead shall  
give life also to your  
mortal bodies through his  
Spirit that dwelleth in  
you.

but if by the \*Spirit ye  
put to death the deeds of  
the body, ye shall live.  
For as many as are led  
by the Spirit of God, these  
are sons of God.  
but ye received the spirit  
of adoption, whereby we  
cry Abba, Father.  
The Spirit himself bear-  
eth witness with our spirit,  
that we are children of  
God: and if children, then  
heirs with Christ; if so  
be that we suffer with  
him, that we may be also  
glorified with him.

The contrasting words are significant: death and life,  
flesh and Spirit, sin and righteousness, enmity and  
peace, fear and freedom, bondage and adoption. Paul puts  
the life in the Spirit over against life under the law,  
or life in the flesh (the two latter are almost indis-  
tinguishable); both are infinitely inferior to the life  
in the Spirit. Many commentators render κνενδυν, indi-

cated by a star (\*) above, as the human regenerated spirit which is the Holy Spirit's point of contact with us. However the American Standard Version and the Revised Standard Version capitalize it, and so refer it <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ the Spirit of God. It seems to me that v. 2 at the beginning of the chapter sets Paul's thought pattern. It is hard to see how the human spirit could put to death the deeds of the body (v. 13). The whole passage shows that those who enter the new life by faith in Christ now possess:

1. A New Controlling Authority. Verse 2 sets the language pattern for most of the chapter: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." Paul has spoken much of sin and its effects in this Epistle. But the idea of death sums all this up most completely in his thinking. He uses the word law, νόμος, rather loosely, to mean not merely a code but the whole authority which would make a code effective. The "law of sin and of death" is the authority exercised by Sin and ending in "death." The "law of the Spirit" is the authority exercised by the Spirit. τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς expresses the idea that the Spirit is life-imparting, He brings life because He is life. Like the well of living water of which Jesus spoke, it has life-giving qual-



ities such that if a man drink of this he will never thirst again.

The Spirit of life is "in Christ Jesus," that is, as we are united with Christ, His Spirit works in us to grant freedom from the law of sin and death. Jesus had broken the power of sin and death by the Atonement; now the Spirit of Christ in human lives brings into dead hearts the life which can conquer sin.<sup>11</sup> Sanctification under the law was sought by ceremonialism but now through the Spirit real sanctification of the heart has freed us from that which was impossible to perform. All the old weaknesses of the legal system are removed by the all-powerful Spirit of life in Christ Jesus now residing in our hearts. This does not mean that the flesh and its temptations, the sufferings of this world, the weaknesses of mind and body--"tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword"--that all these do not continue to harass our lives. It does mean that these things cannot conquer us for whom God has done all--even to the extent of sparing not His own Son. Through the Spirit in whom we walk we are sharers in a new life which the life of the flesh cannot touch. We are in a new sphere of free-

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<sup>11</sup> William Sanday, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922) p. 190ff.

dom. The law of the Spirit brings life and adoption and freedom and righteousness and peace, supplanting the death and enmity and fear--overcoming the flesh and sin. Our lives in the Spirit are drawn under a new controlling authority.

2. A New Center of Interest. Beginning with verse 4, Paul shows how the Spirit-filled life is oriented in a new direction. He uses an expression not in too common English usage today but which is a most revealing idea. It is the word "mind" as a verb and as a noun. As a verb (προνοῦν) it means to "set their minds, or their hearts upon."

προνοεῖν denotes the whole action of the φρόνις, i.e., of the affections and will as well as of the reason; cf. Matt. 16:23, Rom. 12:16, Phil. 3:19, Co. 3:2.<sup>12</sup>

The noun φρόνημα refers to the content of προνοεῖν.

Paul is here saying that the life in the Spirit involves an entirely new center of interest. Without the Spirit, Man's mind, his center of interest, is in things of the flesh which result in death and enmity against God. To Paul flesh is the symbol of man's weak mortality which continually is bent toward sin and is powerless to please God and hence incurs enmity with God.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 195.



It is "that element of man's nature which is opposed to goodness, and makes for evil."

In contrast is the life in the Spirit in which the focal point of interest is "the things of the Spirit" and hence leads to life and peace. In this sphere every activity and thought is on a plane which seeks harmony with God. The unaided human being cannot attain this; only the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the human life can make anything he does acceptable to God. But "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The argument is not easy to grasp, but it seems to be as follows. "I spoke of the attainment of righteousness by those who walk after the Spirit and not after flesh. For these are two opposite conditions of mind, that in which men's thoughts and affections are centered on the life of sense, and that in which they find their satisfaction in things that are spiritual and eternal. And these two states cannot lead to the same end; for the one is life and peace, the life of the Spirit and the peace of God, which comes from union with Christ. The mind which is dominated by the flesh cannot please God or fulfill the law of righteousness, for it habitually resists the Divine Will and is, openly or secretly, consciously or unconsciously, the enemy of God.<sup>13</sup>

When we are "in Christ" our bodies are still dead because of sin but our spirits have life because

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<sup>13</sup> H. B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (London: MacMillan & Co., 1921) p. 217.

of the righteousness we have through the indwelling Spirit (v. 10). πνεῦμα here is not capitalized in the American Standard Version. I think this is correct, for Paul is trying to show that the highest nature of man, his spirit, is that which is in closest touch with the Holy Spirit and therefore attains a righteousness not of its own but of Him who knew no sin. Life in the Spirit brings into our lives an entirely new center of interest from what the "natural" man has.

3. A New Conviction of Eventual Complete Sanctification. Paul's words about the Spirit's power to displace death with life remind him of one of his favorite themes, i.e., that the resurrection of Christ is a proof of our own resurrection. But here there is the further idea of our eventual complete sanctification before we enter heaven. For the Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead will eventually "give life also to your mortal bodies," which Paul has just said (v. 10) are dead because of sin. No matter how "sanctified" we become in this life we can never overcome this weakness, the frailty, the bent to sin, the death in our mortal bodies--although the life of righteousness has begun in our human spirit. Just as Jesus was raised according to the spirit of holiness, so ~~will~~ the Spirit of God



which dwells in us will bring about the same result. The body, too, must eventually yield to the law of the Spirit of life. Life in the Spirit brings a new conviction of eventual complete sanctification.

Conclusion. When we are possessed by the Holy Spirit, He brings into our lives His life with its authority to condemn sin in the flesh and with its "mind" centering our interest on life and peace and with its conviction of ultimate complete sanctification of spirit and body. In vs. 12-17, Paul assumes a hortatory style based upon the argument he has just presented.

The Christian has escaped from that ruler, death. But the intention is that he is actually to live. If death has been deposed, we are to let it be deposed in our lives, and no longer shape our lives according to its demand.<sup>14</sup>

Our freedom from sin and new life in Christ still means we have a fight on our hands. We still are obligated to put to death the deeds of the body. Our new life in the Spirit is adoption into sonship of God. The Spirit not only makes this a possibility by imparting to us the quality of life necessary for such a sonship, but makes

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<sup>14</sup> Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949) p. 325.

us conscious of this new relationship. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." (3: 16-17). See also Gal. 4:6.

The purpose of the Son's mission was to give the rights of sonship; the purpose of the Spirit's mission, to give the power of using them.<sup>15</sup>

No longer is there fear under the law; but peace in the knowledge of a new filial relationship to the Father which we share with the only begotten Son.

As the only begotten Son is the Heir, the adopted and regenerated children are also heirs, but on the condition that they share the sufferings of the Son. Present suffering, if borne in fellowship with Christ, is so far from casting a doubt upon the reality of our sonship that it lies on the direct road to its realization in the glory of the children of God.<sup>16</sup>

In a supreme way, the Spirit of life, draws us into the life of the family of God. By being "filled with the Spirit" not only are we enabled and compelled to destroy the old "carnal" life of sin but also we are "inspired" for a righteous life after the pattern of

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<sup>15</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 219.



Christ. Like Him we are called upon to endure sufferings and hardships before being glorified with him.

Sanctification of the believer is, says Paul, possible in spite of human weakness and the natural inclination to the life of sin. For the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives us the new nature, making it both imperative and possible to live as sons rather than as slaves.

### C. Walk by the Spirit

Gal. 5:13-25

"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." (Gal. 5:25). "Filled with the Spirit," "Life in the Spirit," --then "Walk by the Spirit."

Paul liked to refer to the Christian life as a walk. In the passage just considered, he had stated that the death of Christ for us made it possible to walk "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4). In his letter to the Ephesians he exhorts his readers to "walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called" (Eph. 4:1).

Paul uses two words for "walk" in this passage. In Gal. 5:16 his word for "walk" is περιπατέω. It is used frequently "in the metaphorical sense for habitual conduct. See Mk. 7:5; Jn. 8:12; Acts 21:21; Rom. 6:4, 8:4; I Cor. 3:3; Phil. 3:18. Never by Paul in the literal sense."<sup>17</sup> In common Greek usage it amounted to "conduct of life" or simply "live."<sup>18</sup> But

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<sup>17</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914) Vol. IV, p. 164.

<sup>18</sup> J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1914) p. 507.



in verse 25, Paul uses another word for "walk" (στοι-  
χέω). This word comes from στοίχος a row, rank,  
series, and means to proceed in a row, go in order.<sup>19</sup>  
It reminds us of soldiers marching in a battle order,  
or of following directly in someone's footsteps (Rom.  
4:12). Elsewhere it seems to have also the idea of  
conforming to a standard of conduct (Gal. 6:16, Phil.  
3:16).

For the present passage this meaning, "to  
walk (in a straight line)," "to conduct one's  
self (rightly)," is distinctly more appro-  
priate; the apostle in that case exhorting  
his readers who desire to live by the Spirit  
to give evidence of the fact by conduct con-  
trolled by the Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

The meaning of each of these two words are full of ideas  
as to the character of the life in the Spirit.

Paul's words here must be understood against  
the background of his whole letter. The Galatian Churches  
were in the throes of the great conflict aroused by the  
Judaizing movement. Paul insists that our new life in  
the Spirit has set us free from the law. He insists that

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<sup>19</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon  
of New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1886)  
p. 589.

<sup>20</sup> Ernest DeWitt Burton, A Critical and Exegetical  
Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (New York:  
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920) p. 322.

a life begun in the Spirit is to be perfected in the Spirit and cannot be a return to the bondage of the old legal system (3:2-3). Christians are adopted as sons of God (4:6) and are no longer bondservants under the law. It is foolish to give up the freedom so purchased by Christ. A return to circumcision and the old legal system would not only be a return to bondage but a rejection of Christ. All this teaching is summed up in the first part of 5:13, "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom."

Now he suddenly qualifies and limits this teaching with the word only, μόνον. "Only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh." The word μόνον is used

to call attention not to an exception to a preceding statement, but to an important addition to it... On this word, as on a hinge, the thought of the epistle turns from freedom to a sharply contrasted aspect of the matter, the danger of abusing freedom.<sup>21</sup>

This was a very real danger in the Apostolic Church and was the occasion of warnings by more than this one Apostle. The modern Church may not need the warning always for exactly the same reason but the application of that warning is just as needed because of the break-

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 291.



down of our consciousness that there is a difference between life in the Spirit and life according to the flesh. We live in an age of compromise, and Paul is telling us in this passage that no compromise is possible whether it be because we are "free" from the law, or because we are "enlightened" as the modern man seeks to divorce his conduct from having anything to do with spirituality. Paul's plea here is for consistence: "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."

The all pervading characteristic of such a life is to be loving service one to another. They are free from the old legal system but that does not mean freedom from the principles involved and from the high moral type of life which they are now enabled to observe through the power of the Holy Spirit. "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (5:14). This is the heart of the sanctified life in the Spirit, involving every activity of mind and action. Paul gives his statement of the nature of the Christian life in the paragraph which follows (vs. 16-24) where he points out (1) the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit (vs. 17-18) because of (2) the "works of the flesh" (vs. 19-

21) which are unalterably opposed to (3) the "fruit of the Spirit" (vs. 22-23). The conflict results in (4) the triumph of those in Christ Jesus who are walking by the Spirit (v. 24).

1. The conflict between Flesh and Spirit. The life in the Spirit and the life of the flesh are mutually exclusive. They are "contrary the one to the other." If our whole conduct (πνευματικῶς) is by the Spirit there will be no room for the "lust of the flesh." Ἐπιθυμία, here translated "lust" had in the Greek none of the moral and sensual qualities now associated with the English term. Rather it meant the "desire" and "yearning" of the heart. The fact that in verse 7 the flesh and the Spirit both "lust" against each other shows that the word in itself does not necessarily refer to any immoral desire. The two (flesh and Spirit) are simply antithetical in character. They invariably clash, "for these are contrary (ἐναντία) the one to the other."

...the first part of the verse...having spoken of Spirit and flesh as mutually antagonistic forces, there is at (the second clause of the verse) a change in point of view, these and the following words referring to the conflict which takes place between these two in the soul of which neither is in full possession, as proof of their mutual antagonisms.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 300.



As a result man is hindered whichever way he turns. If he wants to do good the flesh hinders him; if he wants to do what is not good, the Spirit opposes him. Both strive "that ye may not do the things that ye would." There is unceasing conflict between the two.

In Romans 7, Paul wrestles with the impulses of the two natures striving against each other in his own life. "For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice." (Rom. 7:19). "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." (Rom. 7:22-23). Just as the Apostle resolved his dilemma in Romans, so here he reasserts the only escape: "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (v. 18). To be "led" (ἡγεομαι) may simply be another way of stating the "walk by the Spirit" but it indicates more strongly the voluntary subjection of the will to the Spirit. There is the way of the law, the way of the flesh, and the way of the Spirit--the last of these frees us from legal restraints but replaces it with the higher law of love. But in order to walk in that way there will be conflict between the old and the new, between the lower and the higher.

## 2. The works of the flesh. The life "of the

flesh" has many obvious manifestations, some of which Paul lists here: "Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousys, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like."<sup>13</sup> This is a comprehensive list. It includes those matters associated with sexual immorality, pagan religious practices, social disorders, and private misdemeanors.<sup>24</sup> Each of the fleshly desires ("works of the flesh") Paul mentions would quickly conjure up a whole category of vices of which his readers in Galatia were aware (and the modern reader no less).

These are the things with which the Holy Spirit of God can have no part. "They which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (v. 21b). These words are equally emphatic whether Paul regarded the kingdom of God as the sphere of God's reign now as men give him their allegiance through

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<sup>23</sup> A recent translation renders this passage: "The activities of the lower nature are obvious. Here is a list: sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worship of false gods, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, jealousy, bad temper, rivalry, factions, party-spirit, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like that." J. B. Phillips, Letters to Young Churches (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950) p. 101

<sup>24</sup> For a full exposition of the meaning of all these terms see Burton, Op. cit., pp. 304-310.



Christ, or as a future kingdom to be realized at the "last day." In either case the moral life of a man does reflect his status with respect to the kingdom of God. No one was ever more insistent that man is saved by faith and not by works than Paul was--but this in no way toned down his insistence upon right living. Here he says that he had already foretold (προέλεω) and now again predicts this solemn fact. These vices are characteristics of the flesh and not of the Spirit; hence they can have no part in the kingdom of God. In I Cor. 6:9-11 Paul makes a similar statement: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" After listing numerous vices he points out that such would be the life of his readers had they not been justified in the name of Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God (I Cor. 6:11). See also Rom. 13:12-14; Eph. 5:30<sup>14</sup> for similar expressions on the part of Paul.

3. The fruit of the Spirit. In sharp contrast to the works of the flesh just enumerated, is the fruit of the Spirit. Paul mixes his metaphors generously, probably because he rushed along in the flow of his thought without thinking of the literary aspects of what he said, but the effect is striking. Fruit,

καρπός, is an excellent choice of expression. By it the Apostle can convey the thought that the Christian virtues here listed are not products of the man himself but of the life of the Spirit dwelling in the man. The point is significant in showing that sanctification is not merely man "readjusting his own personality" or "being a perfect gentleman" but is the product of a life not his own operating within him.

Every one of the nine virtues listed by Paul can be, and often are, evident in non-Christians. They were encouraged under the old legal system. With an effective understatement he adds that there is, in fact, no law against such virtues (v. 23). But the Christian exhibits these virtues as the characteristic nature of his life just as truly and naturally as a fig tree bears figs. If there is no fruit at all, or if some other fruit appears, the natural assumption is valid, i.e., either the tree is diseased, or its genuine character is to be questioned. Jesus had expressed a similar thought (possibly the basis of Paul's words here) in Mt. 7:16-20: "therefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

The virtues listed by Paul are in every respect "contrary" to the works of the flesh: "love, joy,



peace, longsuffering kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Paul often mentions the extraordinary effects or gifts of the Spirit, τὰ χαρίσματα with which some Christians were endowed (see especially I Cor. 12:8-11). They did not always reflect moral character, but were external evidence of the work of the Spirit. Paul was inclined to discount the lasting value of some of the χαρίσματα, especially the speaking with tongues, in favor of the true worth of Christian virtues, especially the all-inclusive one of love: "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." (See I Cor. 12:14).

Thus we see how Paul refuses to connect the Spirit only with the miraculous and the extraordinary. The spiritual covers man's common life and daily duty. It embraces his plainest virtues, and dignifies them by connecting them with God and with God's presence and power in human life. When the religious ideas of the apostolic age are considered, this correlation of the Spirit with man's ethical and practical life seems to be Paul's greatest contribution to the doctrine under consideration. In Judaism and in primitive Christianity the work of the Spirit was viewed as sporadic and special; with Paul it is constant and general. Popularly, the Spirit was correlated with extraordinary deeds and experiences; by Paul it is correlated with the whole religious and ethical life.<sup>25</sup>

The nine words descriptive of the fruit of

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<sup>25</sup> George Barker Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899) p. 439.

the Spirit are as inclusive of the whole sanctified character of the Christian life as the fifteen vices listed above were of the life of the flesh. They are

best divided into three groups describing first, the soul in relation to God; secondly, the attitude of the character towards others; thirdly, the principles of conduct in daily life.<sup>26</sup>

See also Rom. 12; 14:17; 15:13; II Cor. 6:3-10; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:6-11; James 3:17-18. In all these passages the Holy Spirit within the human heart works to counteract the vices of the flesh and to produce in their stead those qualities which are attributes of God himself and are possible when His Spirit is sanctifying the human heart.

4. The triumph of the Spirit. In v. 24 Paul asserts the triumph of those who live by the Spirit over the works of the flesh. Those that are in Christ Jesus "have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof." They have put to death the power of sin as the controlling factor in their lives. There cannot be two masters in control of a man's life, although there may be times of violent struggle for supremacy.

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<sup>26</sup> A. L. Williams, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians (Cambridge: University Press, 1914) p. 126.



...they who are of Christ Jesus, who live by the Spirit, will not fail morally or come under condemnation, since the fruits of the Spirit fulfill the requirements of law, and the deeds of the flesh, which shut one out of the kingdom of God, they will not do, the flesh and its desires being put to death.<sup>27</sup>

Paul sums up his words by saying, "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us walk." Assuming that his readers are genuinely determined to <sup>live</sup> the life in the Spirit, Paul exhorts them to give evidence by "staying in line" (στοιχεῖν). Verse 26 is an admonition, doubtless reflecting the local situation in the Galatian churches, which points out that these "church squabbles" are not indicative of "life in the Spirit." The next chapter further shows that Paul is under no illusions of the power of sin and of the lusts of the flesh to continue to harass, and sometimes to win occasional victories, even over one who is dedicated to live the life of the Spirit. In the language of modern warfare: the main army of the enemy may have suffered defeat so that he can never stage a comeback, but he continues "guerrilla activity" behind our lines, sometimes with near disastrous effects. Paul says that the Christian's attitude towards his brothers who may be "overtaken (or overpowered, surprised) in any

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<sup>27</sup> Burton, Op. cit., p. 319.

tresspass" is a test of his own spiritual nature--his willingness to be longsuffering and helpful, realizing his own weaknesses and liability to succumb to temptation. Paul's words are likewise a warning against a false sense of security even for those who live in the Spirit, for the forces represented by "flesh" do not yield us up without a fight--and a running fight at that (Eph. 6:10ff). Victory belongs to the Spirit-filled Christian but he still needs the Paraclete, "the helper" who perfects the work of sanctification in our hearts. The next chapter shows more fully how this is possible.



#### D. The Power of the Spirit

Among the many expressions recurring in the New Testament is the one "power of the Holy Spirit," or usage of the word "power" in connection with the Holy Spirit.

In the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13).  
In the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:19).  
Strengthened with power through his Spirit  
(Eph. 3:16).

In demonstration of the Spirit and of power  
(I Cor. 2:4).

Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit  
is come upon you. (Acts 1:8).

By what power...? Peter filled with the Holy  
Spirit... (Acts 4:7-8).

God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and  
with power. (Acts 10:38).

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and  
the power of the Most High shall over-  
shadow thee. (Luke 1:35).

In all these passages δυναμις is the word for "power."  
Simon the Sorcerer used the word ἐξουσία, once with  
reference to the Holy Spirit: "Give me this power"  
(Acts 8:19) but this word has more the idea of "per-  
mission."

The Holy Spirit is often associated with power  
in the New Testament. During the first stages of  
Christian witnessing it was power to perform miracles  
and power to perform an effective Christian ministry.  
As opposition and persecution developed, the Holy Spirit

brought power to resist and power to endure. As Christians grew in their new sphere of life, the Holy Spirit was the inner "dynamo" supplying power to live a sanctified life. These Christians discovered that the Spirit of power was also the Spirit of holiness. The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence which causes a man to respond with a life characterized by the "fruits of the Spirit;" the Holy Spirit is the source of power itself, and, dwelling within the human being, is the strength by which the Christian lives.

...the Spirit is not merely in St. Paul's view an aggressive force leading the human spirit against the flesh, or a defensive power shielding it from attack.... His indwelling Spirit is also a constructive power which builds up a new life within, cooperating with the spirit of man in the work of restoring human life to the image of God.<sup>28</sup>

This word for power, δύναμις, used so often in the New Testament wherever men observed the unusual in a Christian, as when they tried to describe the effect of the Spirit's presence, means "power," "strength," "might" and especially "power in operation, in action; not merely power capable of action, but power in action. "It is a power showing itself as power (not passive)

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<sup>28</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 344.



power in action--might."<sup>29</sup> With this definition in mind, it is not surprising to us to find that it is frequently used in connection with the Holy Spirit who is God in action. Surely when Omnipotent God is in action, there is bound to be a display of power!

Power was evident in the preaching of the disciples, in their ability to work miracles and perform other great works. But the power which, though not always quite so spectacular ~~was the most~~ far-reaching was the power evidenced by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. Here was the power to change men's hearts in the act of regeneration. Here was the power enabling them to live the holy life, a factor not so spectacular but an evidence of real strength superior to the ability to work miracles or speak with tongues.

Man had been a slave of his own carnality, dominated by the evil forces within him. Henceforth he is to be free from this power; in union with Jesus Christ he is to be master of the things that have mastered him.<sup>30</sup>

In preceding sections we have considered how the believer in Christ is filled with the Holy Spirit (A), how the life of the Holy Spirit actually is infused into the Christian's life, setting it upon a new direction (B),

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<sup>30</sup> Morgan, Op. cit., p. 201

and how this results in a new kind of life in which both outwardly and inwardly virtue of the highest type is the fruit of the Spirit (C). All of this, which is essentially one and the same process, is possible because the Holy Spirit is power to accomplish that in our lives which we could never accomplish by our own power. If we Christians are lacking in power it is because we fail to "walk by the Spirit." In the fierce conflict which rages continually in our souls we may allow the "flesh" to win, or we meekly surrender when the fight has but begun.<sup>31</sup> There is a "chain reaction" here: The Holy Spirit gives us power to walk the Christian way; walking in this way makes it possible for the Spirit to exhibit His power in our lives. He represents the risen glorified Christ and applies in our lives all the power which He evidenced while on the earth.

Sanctification then is the name we give to what the power of God through His Spirit does in our lives.

Sanctification is a great word! More than any other term in Scriptural lore it covers the effects upon human nature of the work of the Holy Spirit, a work which cleanses and sancti-

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<sup>31</sup> Erdman, Op. cit., p. 48.



fies and physical body as it enables the human mind and spirit to grow into the mind of God... As Gore once said in another connection, it (Sanctification) represents "not an uprush from the subconscious, but a downrush from the super-conscious." Omnipotence coming to the rescue of our impotence!<sup>32</sup>

The work of the Holy Spirit is grand and glorious and powerful no matter what phase of the Christian experience He touches, but to me the most marvelous effect is His power to enable men to live the Christian life. Not that this is always a complete success--it never is; but that He puts within man the desire for righteousness, the faith and hope and courage to strive to overcome the desires of the flesh and strive to conform to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This is evidence of real power, because it is carrying out the design of God for His creatures; just as real power is not evidenced so much when the dam breaks and the flood rages down the valley as when the water flows evenly and surely through the great turbines creating a steady and effective source of usable power.

The most urgent and critical questions which you and I have to face is not any question

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<sup>32</sup> Eric Montizambert, The Thought of St. Paul (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1941) p. 107. (Under-scoring mine.)

of biblical criticism or Christian philosophy, but can a man on Manhattan Island in the first decade of the twentieth century live the Christ life? and can a man here and now do the work which God would have him do? All other questions sink into insignificance compared with this one. Oh, Christian religion, what have you to say? Is it possible for a man at all times and in all circumstances to live a life which shall be well pleasing to God? But before the question has left our lips, the Christian religion throws back the full-toned, jubilant answer, "Yes." And if we ask, How is this good thing possible? she immediately replies, "By the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Charles E. Jefferson, Things Fundamental (London: Brown, Langham & Co., 1904) p. 350.



## CHAPTER V

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

What the Holy Spirit does for the individual He also does for the Church in a larger sense. It is clear that Paul considers that the Spirit dwells in believers both individually and collectively. He calls members of the Church out of the world, forms them into a united fellowship, purifies it, and inspires it to carry the Gospel of Christ to the world. Actually we need look no further than the book of Acts to see how the whole development of the Church was under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It has often been pointed out, most appropriately, that "the Acts of the Apostles" might better be named "the Acts of the Holy Spirit." But the Epistles, which are largely "Letters to Young Churches" are also full of the record of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Basic to the whole consideration of this subject is, of course, the fact, after all, that the formation of the Church depended upon the "conversion" of certain members of society by the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost and at the home of Cornelius in Caesarea the Spirit came simultaneously upon a whole group of converts but

In all other cases the Spirit came to new converts when they were added to the body of the Church by baptism and its complementary rite, the laying on of hands on the baptized. The Spirit was the corporate possession of the Body of Christ, and it became the property of the individual convert when he was made a member of the Ecclesia. No man could be Christ's who had not Christ's Spirit, and ordinarily no man could have Christ's Spirit but by being "added" to the brotherhood of Christ's disciples.<sup>1</sup>

These believers who lived a new life in the Holy Spirit were naturally bound together by a common interest and viewpoint and purpose, just as citizens of the United States who live in a foreign land often seek each other out and find mutual support and satisfaction in the company of their own kind. It was this common life in the Holy Spirit which caused the formation of the Church, for it broke down the usual prejudices and antagonism between racial and social and economic groups, and bound them by a new tie. The family of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, was acceptable to the Jewish Church for only one reason: they were living the life of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44ff). The hated Samaritans were welcomed without question into the rapidly forming Church because they too received the Holy Spirit. Had it not been for this function of the

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<sup>1</sup> H. B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (London: MacMillan & Co., 1921) p. 307.



Holy Spirit in the formation of the Church it is conceivable that separate congregations might have developed at Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea, Antioch, etc. but never would there have come into being a Church, in the sense of the whole body of believers who recognized their spiritual unity despite varied backgrounds.

The Church was the ἐκκλησία, "the called out." And everywhere it was the Holy Spirit who did the calling out; it was the Holy Spirit who by His presence in the convert identified him as a true believer; and it was the Holy Spirit who became the "common denominator" drawing together these believers into the formation of The Church. Then He went on to establish and guide the Church in its development and mission which we here consider topically under the following heads:

- A. The Holy Spirit and the Government of the Church.
- B. The Holy Spirit and the Fellowship of the Church.
- C. The Holy Spirit and the Worship of the Church.
- D. The Holy Spirit and the Mission of the Church.

A. The Holy Spirit and the Government of the Church

Jesus set up no government for the Church.<sup>2</sup> He appointed no officers, authorized no "ranks," wrote no constitution, established no rules of discipline. He left this to the Holy Spirit. Again, the disciples seem to have made no immediate attempt to set up a Church organization. Following the ascension of Jesus they did try to select a successor to Judas, an affair which some feel was unnecessary in the light of God's appointment of Paul as an Apostle shortly afterward. Later, when the necessity arose "the seven" were selected to relieve the Apostles of routine handling of "relief." But the emphasis in the only record we have of the first church is not upon organization as such but upon evangelization.

The Church seems to have left matters of Church

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<sup>2</sup> The Confession of Faith says that Christ "as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate." James B. Green, A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1951) p. 220. This is both misleading and true. It is misleading in that it gives the impression that Christ set up a government, with certain appointed officers while He was on earth--something which He did not do. It is true in that Christ as the Head of the Church has, ever since, through His Spirit directed and ordained in the establishment of Church Government.



Government up to the leadership of the Spirit as circumstances arose which demanded organization. "Expediency" seemed to be the basis of creating church officials and rules; and at these moments of need the Church recognized the leading and authority of the voice of the Holy Spirit. There was a very definite conviction among early Christians that Christ is the Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit is His agent in establishing the Church. This was a strong incentive to de-emphasize the importance of human officials as such. Probably modern differences of opinion about Apostolic Church Government stems from a real lack of consistence and uniformity in the early Church, which may not always have felt the guidance of the Spirit in exactly the same way in different localities and under differing circumstances.

1. The Holy Spirit and the government of the Church as a whole. This is immediately evident in reading the Book of Acts. For a brief period the Jerusalem Church, as the mother Church, seems to have been regarded as the center and head of Christian activity. It set the standards, sent out representatives to supervise growing churches in other places, appointed "investigating committees" to examine problems or determine

policy with respect to affairs in Samaria, Caesarea, Antioch, and (doubtless) scores of other places of which we have no record. These outlying places in turn passed their questions of doctrine and polity up to Jerusalem for review and approval. The story of Peter defending his conduct at Caesarea before the "apostles and the brethren that were in Judea" was typical. And for our study here the significant point is that when the Jerusalem brethren heard that the Holy Spirit had been present at the conversion of Cornelius, that ended the argument. The direction of the Spirit was recognized as sufficient. As a result the Jerusalem Church set the standard by giving their approval to similar missionary enterprises--because the Spirit had acted, and they recognized His leadership.

Again, when the first great dissention in the Church at large was threatening to disrupt the Church, a "general conference" at Jerusalem to settle the affair<sup>r</sup> was the means adopted. There is no record of how the representation of this meeting was established. Probably there was no fixed pattern, the Gentile churches simply sending up to Jerusalem these "roving evangelists" and "certain others" to meet with the Apostles and brethren in Jerusalem, the latter group's approval of a course of



procedure being what was necessary. The result was:

(a) Peter's witness of how the Holy Spirit was given to uncircumcised Gentiles carried the day. (b) The decision reached was considered to be a decision of the Holy Spirit: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." (Acts 15:28). (c) This opinion was considered valid and authoritative for all other churches "in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia," and was sent out in the name of the conference at Jerusalem as a unit ("the apostles, and the elders, with the whole church.") Yet the Jerusalem Council did not address the Gentile Christians as superiors but as "brethren"--as though the outlying churches were, after all, an integral part of the same "world-wide" church. Some years later Paul returned to Jerusalem and reported how this policy had worked out in his experience (Acts 21:18).

These accounts show the loose, yet authoritative, character of Church Government at the "top level" during this stage of the history of the young Church. It particularly points to their willingness and desire to follow as the Holy Spirit led, whether directly in their debates, or indirectly by approving a course of action which had been a subject of debate. With this

stamp of the Spirit's approval the Church felt that both their organization and its directives were Divinely appointed.

2. The Holy Spirit and the officers of the Church. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, help, governments, divers kinds of tongues" (I Cor. 12:28). "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). These verses indicate the various officers in the early Church. The context in these passages is an emphasis upon the unity of the Spirit--the Church as a body in which, under the Spirit, all members (those with special gifts and callings as well as others) had their place and function. This did not entitle any to feelings of pride and superiority, for all these gifts and functions were bestowed by the Spirit for special purposes in building up the body of the Church. Paul seems to have been forced to contend with the natural temptation of some to seek special privileges and positions of power. This is most clearly set forth in I Cor. 12:8-11:

For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit: and to another gifts



of healings, in one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.

(See also, Rom. 12:6-8). Amid all these functions and officers there is no room or place given to a human head of the Church, (James, rather than Peter, seems to have been the leader in Jerusalem, if anybody was) or for a hierarchy. Christ is the head and directs the activities of the Church through the Spirit. All members of the Church, says Paul, are component parts of a body (see next section of this paper).

In I Corinthians it is (Paul's) aim to check "the excess of individuality" and the "diminished sense of corporate responsibilities" which were due to the temperament of Greek thought and life... But no diversities could shake the fundamental unity which comes from the indwelling Spirit, and the multiplicity of the members and the manifoldness of their functions and gifts can no more prevent a Christian Church from being one than the unity of the human body is destroyed by the complexity of its structure.

The Epistle to the Ephesians carries this argument into a larger field. Here it is not the disparity of gifts or temperaments in a local society that threatens unity, but the strife between Jew and Gentile which affected all Christian societies in the first century.<sup>3</sup>

Evidently a prominent governing position in the

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<sup>3</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 308-309.

early Church was that of elder and bishop. How much organization there was of elders into a Presbytery we do not know but there was some such collective work of elders (I Tim. 4:14) who, in the case of Timothy at least, took part in the ordination ceremony. The laying on of the hands in the early Church was always the occasion for the coming of the Holy Spirit and the ordination of a young pastor was the natural occasion for such a function by those who were in a special way full of the Spirit.

In some cases at least these elders were appointed by Paul himself (Acts 14:23; see also Titus 1:5) but he himself looked upon them as ordained of the Spirit: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 2:28). Certainly the qualifications which he demanded of these officers were those which only a man fully possessed by the Spirit could have (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5ff). Similar were the requirements for deacons (I Tim. 3:8, 12), another class of Church officers to which only incidental reference is made (See Phil. 1:1). Elders or bishops and deacons seem to have been the standard organization set up by



Paul and other missionary evangelists in the local congregations; whereas Apostles, prophets, and teachers, etc. seemed to have exercised a general function throughout the Church at large. But in all cases they were required to be Spirit-filled men, their special talents were bestowed by the Spirit, and their appointment to office was under the supervision of the Spirit.

Paul himself took great stock in the fact that he was an apostle. But his pride is justified in that it did not center in the office itself but in the fact that he was divinely appointed by the Holy Spirit to that office. Rom. 15:16, 17 and I Cor. 2:4 all testify to this. His epistles begin with his identification of himself as an apostle divinely appointed. His own high sense of calling was doubtless shared by the other apostles and evangelists. The ministry of the Church was, to them, something sacred, for it was by appointment and power of the Spirit of God.

In conclusion, we point out again that matters of organization, government, and officers, did not hold a major place in the early Church, but were set up when needs arose by the Christians who looked to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

The church, then, is not primarily an organization, but a spiritual fellowship. Organization is distinctly secondary. I doubt if Paul or anybody else in New Testament times ever "organized" a church in anything like the modern sense of an organized church. What took place, it would seem from the record, is that Paul and the others went into communities and preached. People were converted and just naturally got together and functioned as a spiritual fellowship or church. So far as there was organization, it was simple and subordinate. The extent and form of church organization should be determined by the nature of the church as a fellowship. Organization should be had only as the organization can be used to promote the ends of fellowship.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Thomas Conner, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949) p. 136.



## B. The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (II Cor. 13:14). The Greek word translated as "communion" is κοινωνία. It means "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse." The root idea is of a common element shared jointly by all in the group.<sup>5</sup> In Acts 2:42 we get a picture of the primitive church. Basic is the idea of a fellowship where a common spiritual experience was reflected in the holding of material things in a common spirit of sharing. Paul has had much to say to the Corinthian church about evidence of disunity and friction.

He closes with exhortations to unity and peace. ...Then his final salutation runs first in its accustomed form, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;" but it is expanded to meet the occasion and its needs: "the God of love" suggests the addition "the love of God;" and the true sense of membership which the one Spirit gives to the one Body is prayed for in the words "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." It is clear, then, that the genitive here is subjective and not objective; and this is confirmed by the parallel clauses. "The grace" which is "of the Lord Jesus," and "the love"

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1886) p. 352.

which is "of God," are parallel with the "fellowship" which is of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

Paul's benediction is a prayer that Corinthian Christians may enjoy the kind of mutual fellowship which the Spirit can impart. He expresses the same desire against the background of a similar context in Phil. 2:1 where "εἰ τις κοινῶν ἡμετέρων" may mean, 'if there be any Spirit-given sense of fellowship.'<sup>7</sup> This idea of fellowship includes our fellowship with Christ (I Jn. 1:6), our fellowship in the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 10:16), and our fellowship in His sufferings (Phil. 3:10). It is Christ who is at the center of this Spirit-created and Spirit-nurtured fellowship.

Somehow, in a way not easily expressed in words, the Holy Spirit is able to create a new life in the hearts of believers, a life which seeks out kindred lives also living in the Spirit for the purpose of sharing and fellowship with one another, delighting in this

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<sup>6</sup> J. A. Robinson, "Communion" A Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905) James Hastings, editor. Vol. I, p. 460.

<sup>7</sup> A. Plummer, The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (Cambridge, University Press, 1903) p. 233.



association, and growing because of the mutual contact. Even more than this, such believers are attracted and drawn into an intimate communion with Christ, symbolized in the Lord's Supper. And this fellowship of men with each other in Christ is the Church in essence.

The more Christians grow and are united in this fellowship the less are they drawn to fellowship with the world and the unfruitful works of darkness. Just as a major task of the Spirit is to sanctify the individual Christian, so He also strives to purify the Church. Just as the life in the Spirit enables us to destroy the desires that war in our members, integrating our lives into one living organism, building it as one structure, the temple of the Spirit, so the Spirit operates in the Church to bring unity of thought and desire and purpose under the Lordship of Christ.

We hear much about the "unity of the Church" these days and surely we should allow the Spirit to make real the true fellowship of believers in Christ. But we do not hear much of the "purity of the Church" which must be established along with the unity. Conceivably any human organization may have complete unity; but without the Holy Spirit no organization can have purity. The fellowship in the Spirit which we call the Church de-

mands moral purity on every level. The unity of the fellowship is marred and sometimes destroyed when one member through impurity excludes himself from the life of the Spirit which flows through the whole body.

There are at least three figures used in the Bible to describe the purity and unity of this fellowship: "the vine" (John 15), "the temple," and "the body."<sup>8</sup> Jesus (in John 15) saw believers as branches of the true vine. But even this unity was quickly destroyed when branches failed to fulfill their function. In Ephesians there is a great doctrine of the Church set forth, but Paul is especially anxious to set the moral life of the Ephesian Christians on the very highest level, knowing that this was necessary to the maintenance of the fellowship of the Church. To "study the peace and purity of the Church" is to strive to achieve in the fullest sense the true fellowship of the saints, a communion of kindred hearts which share the life of the Spirit with one another and with their Lord.

Perhaps our greatest source of Scriptural material on the Church is in Ephesians, and always in

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<sup>8</sup> Dr. Green points out that Paul views the Church under four figures: (1) Body, (2) Building, (3) Bride, (4) Brotherhood. See James B. Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1934) p. 20ff.



this letter Paul points to the Holy Spirit as the One who establishes and maintains this fellowship. As mentioned above, he refers to the church as a body and as a building.

1. The Church is a body. "God gave him (our Lord Jesus Christ) to the head (κεφαλὴ = Head or Chief) over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). "I therefore...beseech you to walk worthily...giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all... And he gave some to be apostles (etc)...for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we may be no longer children ...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things unto him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, through

that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." (Eph. 4:1-16). This is a magnificent concept, and Paul is lifted to a tremendous pinnacle of verbal expression as he describe this Body. There are several points which can be emphasized from these passages.

a. Christ is the Lord of the Church, the head of the body. (Eph. 1:22; 4:14; see also Col. 1:18--"And he is the head of the body, the church" and Col. 2:19). Whatever Paul's ideas about the science of the human anatomy were, he definitely regarded the head as the source of life and power and energy and guidance. The Church is a fellowship which, like a body, has a vital organic relation to the head and is in subjection to that head.

b. The Spirit works to maintain the unity of the body by invigorating the whole with Divine life. "There is one body and one Spirit." Just as there is a something (which we call spirit or soul) which gives life to the otherwise perfect (but lifeless) human body, so the Spirit supplies life to the body of Christ.



c. This body grows. Paul's figures of speech waver between growth as a collective body and growth as individual members. Since his idea is not here the growth by addition of members to the Church but growth in "the knowledge of the Son of God" "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," there is no difference between growth of individual members and growth of the Body as a whole. In Eph. 3:16 Paul points to the Spirit as the One who causes this growth as he prays "that he (the Father) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." Significantly Paul, the missionary, keenly interested in the growth of the Church by additions, never prays for that in his epistles, but he does pray for the growth of spiritual life in those already members of the church. This is something for the Body of Christ today to think about. Paul knew that if there is "internal" growth in the Body of Christ there would be little worry as to "external growth."

d. The body is a unit. Unity is a necessary consequence of being a body in the first place. And every phase of growth Paul is concerned with builds up the unity of the fellowship. The binding element in

the body is love (4:15, 16). This is accomplished through each separate member contributing to the "increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Paul's concept of the members of the body of Christ working together in oneness, each member fulfilling a function, each complementing the other, each serving the other, and all under the "same Spirit" is clearly and fully set forth in I Cor. 12, especially verses 12-27, all of which is too lengthy to quote here. His emphasis is upon oneness in spite of diversity of functions on the part of the members, the very fact of diversity being necessary to the life of the whole. Paul was talking about a local situation where certain rivalry in the use and possession of spiritual gifts had developed into a scandalous situation. But what Paul says is applicable to every member of any congregation, and to all members of the complete Body of Christ. All, because they are controlled and filled by the same Spirit, are baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free.<sup>9</sup>

2. The Church is a building. Just as Paul speaks of the Spirit in the body of the individual and

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<sup>9</sup> Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit, p. 92.



in the Body of Christ, the Church, so also he speaks of the Spirit dwelling in us as individual temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:16) and collectively as "a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21). Paul may have borrowed his figure from Jesus' words to Peter (Mt. 16:18). It has been pointed out that there are two New Testament words for "temple," ἱερόν and ναός.

ἱερόν denoted the whole Temple enclosure, including the court of the Gentiles. (John 2:14, Mt. 21:12, Mark 11:15-17; 19:45). There was another word, ναός, that was used only for the inner sanctuary, composed of only the Holy Place where only the priest could enter and the Most Holy Place, where only the high priest could enter once a year on the great day of atonement... This second word, ναός, is used in the New Testament in a figurative sense for both Christ and the Church... Jesus applies it to his own person as the place where God and man meet; Paul applies it to believers as the place where God dwells with his people.<sup>10</sup>

The whole paragraph (Eph. 2:11-22) must be considered as the background of Paul's words about the Church as a holy Temple. He begins by reminding believers of their varied backgrounds, with the marvelous transformation wrought in them by Christ who removed the barriers between sinners and God, the barriers between races and classes, and the inner barriers de-

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<sup>10</sup> Connor, Op. cit., p. 132. Underscoring mine.

stroying the peace of a man's soul. In verse 14, he refers to Christ as our peace "who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition." Through Christ who broke down the barriers set up by Jewish legalism, the racial barrier between Jew and Gentile was abrogated. The middle wall of partition is τὸ μεσότηλον, referring to the barrier in the Temple at Jerusalem. This barrier

which it was death for the uncircumcised to pass, aptly symbolized the division (between Jewish and Gentile systems). The reference further prepares the way for the thought of the one true Spiritual Temple with which the paragraph concludes.<sup>11</sup>

Beginning with verse 19 he refers to his readers collectively as a "household of God" (οἰκὸς τοῦ θεοῦ)--the intimate fellowship of those who had been "strangers and sojourners" now united in a family.

This new revelation is "in the Spirit," that is, by his influence and power, as of persons who have been born of the Spirit, who are led by the Spirit, who are filled by the Spirit, and who realize the unity of the Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

From this it is easy for Paul to slip into the figure of

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<sup>11</sup> J. O. F. Murray, Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, (Cambridge: University Press, 1914) p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Charles R. Erdman, The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1931) p. 54.



a building (suggested by the household). He points out that the result is a perfect structure, with the following parts:<sup>13</sup>

a. Foundation. "Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." The order here indicates that the ministers of the New Dispensation are here intended--those who preached the Gospel of Christ <sup>id</sup> ~~lay~~ the foundation of the Church.

By their witness in life and word and deed to Jesus and the Resurrection men were led to believe in Jesus as Christ and Lord and to take their place in the Temple of His Body, so that in a real sense each fresh "living stone" added to the structure rested upon them.<sup>14</sup>

b. Corner stone. "Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone."

The corner stone is not to be understood literally as the stone in the corner which unites and sustains two walls, but as the main subfoundation which gives stability and permanence to the foundation of apostles and prophets imposed upon it.<sup>15</sup>

See Isaiah 28:16; I Cor. 3:10-11.

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Erdman points out that in this passage Paul says that Gentiles "are united with Jewish believers to form 'one new man,' one body, one city, one family, one spiritual temple." Erdman, Op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Murray, Op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> Green, Op. cit., p. 91. See also Murray, Op. cit., p. 49.

c. Construction. "...in whom each several building, fitly framed together." Individual Christians are the stones fitted together on this solid foundation. The idea is of expert masonry and carpentry to effect a neat, solid, enduring structure, of a great structure composed of lesser parts, all together giving a beautiful and harmonious structure. πλῆθος means not "all the building" nor "every building" but "each course of the building," or even every stone in itself.<sup>16</sup>

d. Finished Temple. "...groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are building together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." This structure is holy because of its foundation and character and also because of the indwelling presence of God in the Spirit.

<sup>†</sup>  
It requires two words to express the Spirit's relation to the edifice of the Church; He is the Architect and the Occupant.<sup>17</sup>

The word ναός might be better rendered "sanctuary" (as in the margin) for this is the place of meeting between God and man.

...the Apostle sees before him the vision of an Ecclesia which is not limited to a single city or a single province but includes all the

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<sup>16</sup> Murray, Op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>17</sup> Green, Op. cit., p. 92.



baptized in all the provinces of the Roman world. Perhaps this greater Ecclesia was suggested, as Dr. Hort inclines to think, by the sense of the vastness of the Roman Empire which grew upon the Apostle during his residence in Rome... As Dr. Hort acutely remarks, this universal Church is not regarded by St. Paul as the sum of all the local churches, but as the sum of all the baptized; "the members which make up the One Ecclesia are not communities but individual men."<sup>18</sup>

Far more could be said about the fellowship in the Spirit which we call the Church. But these remarks are sufficient to show that in the Spirit, who imparts life to all who believe in Christ, there is unity and fellowship comparable to the relationship between parts of a body or a building. And where this unity is only partial the work of the Spirit continues to purify individually and collectively that the whole may "grow" and be "built up." For the body is yet immature; the building is still unfinished; but the Spirit works to accomplish the end.

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<sup>18</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 310.

### C. The Holy Spirit and Worship

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

With this expression John indicates how he was prepared to receive the revelation he recorded for our benefit. His was the condition and attitude of mind and heart for true worship. Paul tells us that the true children of God are not the circumcised in the flesh but those "who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. 3:3).

Such are Israelites indeed, who with circumcised hearts render the spiritual service which only the Divine Spirit can inspire. The thought is the same as in Jn. 4:23f., Rom. 1:9, where the human spirit is in view; but in Philippians, if we accept the reading which has best support, the Spirit of God is specifically mentioned as the power by which the human spirit is enabled to worship in spirit and in truth.<sup>19</sup>

The basic idea in "worship" as a term is that of prostrating oneself to render homage to a superior. However the term came to include a wider sense.

The New Testament idea of worship is a combination of the reverential attitude of mind and body, the general ceremonial and religious service of God, the feeling of awe, veneration,

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<sup>19</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 230.



adoration; with the outward and ceremonial aspects approaching, but not reaching, the vanishing point. The total idea of worship, however, both in the Old Testament and New Testament, must be built up, not from the words specifically so translated, but also, and chiefly, from the whole body of the description of worshipful feeling and action, whether of individuals singly and privately, or of larger bodies engaged in the public services of sanctuary, tabernacle, temple, synagogue, upper room, or meeting place.<sup>20</sup>

Now that the Spirit dwells in men as in a temple the hour has come and now is "when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." Nevertheless, just because the Christian may worship in the temple of his own heart in no way cancels the necessity for worship in a group with fellow Christians; and the fact that worship is no longer restricted to one place by no means is to be interpreted that he is now exempt from formal worship some place.

The Acts and the Epistles give abundant testimony to the place given to public group worship in the early Church. In such gatherings the Spirit's presence was often especially felt, and those who worshipped claimed the promise of Jesus to send a Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, to guide them into all truth,

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<sup>20</sup> Philip Wendell Cranell, "Worship," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: The Howard Severance Co., 1930) Vol. 5, p. 3110.

to declare the things that are to come, and to glorify Christ by declaring the things pertaining unto Him.

(Jn. 13-15). The work of the Spirit in our worship is apparent in (1) The Sacraments; (2) Prayer; (3) Singing; (4) Preaching the Word.

1. Sacraments. From the days when John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan River forward, the work of the Holy Spirit in baptism is often mentioned in the New Testament, and the early Christians all claimed the baptism of the Holy Spirit along with baptism with water. Baptism with water as a ritual seems from the very start to have been performed "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In some cases, in Acts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit preceded the baptism with water, at other times the experience was simultaneous, others (like the disciples) may have been baptized with water first. But always baptism with water is a symbol of the real baptism of the Spirit. (Acts 1:5; I Cor. 6:11; 12:13; I Jn. 5:8). Participation in the Lord's Supper has always been regarded as the very height of worship. While there is no specific passage of Scripture which can be quoted to show that the Holy Spirit has any work in this connection the whole tenor of its teaching shows that this is a deeply spirit-



ual experience in which, by physical symbols, the meaning and values and witness to our Lord's death are applied to our hearts by the "oly Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.<sup>21</sup>

The sacraments are a definite part of Christian worship and the presence and work of the Holy Spirit has always been most apparent to those who, filled with the Spirit, worship in spirit and in truth around the Lord's table.

We are physical beings, living in a material universe, encompassed about by the things of sense, yet conscious of a "presence that disturbs" us "with the joy of elevated thoughts;" and through the things of sense, the things we see and handle, God by His Holy Spirit ministers to us of his grace. He may speak to us through the glory of the sunset and the murmur of the wind, but in the sacrament, through the water, through the bread and the wine, which are the symbols of spiritual realities, he "seals" to us "Christ and the benefits of the new covenant." Through the indwelling and blessing of the Holy Spirit the things of sense become sacramental. The sacramental value is, however, not in the symbolism, not in the water "set apart," not in the bread or the wine consecrated upon the holy

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<sup>20</sup> "...the Eucharist, if not expressly associated in the New Testament with the Holy Spirit, is represented as a series of spiritual acts which are inconceivable apart from the Spirit's presence and operation." Swete, Op. cit., p. 326.

<sup>21</sup> Green, Op. cit., (Harmony) p. 202. (Westminster Shorter Catechism).

table, not in the words of the institution, not in the person who administers the sacraments, but in the complete sacramental act, which is one and through which the Holy Spirit, and he alone, seals to believing recipients the blessings of the new covenant.<sup>23</sup>

2. Prayer. The Epistles of Paul have much to say about the Holy Spirit's superintendence of and assistance in our prayer. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8:26-27). "For through him (Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile) have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). Paul exhorts the Christian warrior: "with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18). "But ye, beloved...praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20,21).

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<sup>23</sup> Hugh Thomson Kerr, The Christian Sacraments (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944) p. 24. See pp. 24-25, 56ff.



From these passages the following points are evident: (a) The Holy Spirit in our hearts gives the impulse and desire to pray. (b) He shows us how to pray--"according to the will of God." (c) He assists in our weakness and inability to pray properly. (d) He takes even the inward emotions of our hearts, too deep for verbal expression, and makes them known to God. (e) He too makes intercession for us. The Holy Spirit not only reveals God's will to us but takes our prayers before God's throne of grace.

3. Singing. Music was an important part of the Temple worship of the Old Dispensation. It seems also to have always been a part of the worship in Christian groups, beginning in the circle of Jesus and his disciples. Twice Paul refers to the spiritual value of music: "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly: in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God" (Col. 2:16). There can be no spirituality without the Spirit. He who fills our hearts with the joy and peace of a new life is bound to

cause the lips to burst forth in a joyful expression of these inward blessings.

4. Preaching the word. Jesus himself did not preach without knowing that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him (Lk. 4:18); He assured His followers that even when they are on trial for their faith the Holy Spirit will speak in and for them (Mt. 10:20); Acts tells us that the early preachers all spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, also I Cor. 2:4; I Thess. 1:5; I Pet. 1:12).

The Christian prophets were the mouthpiece of the Spirit, insomuch that when they spoke under His influence the Spirit is said to have spoken ... so far as they were effective instruments for the building up of the Church or the conversion of unbelievers, this was due to the Spirit of prophecy--a gift entrusted to the prophetic order and not common to the whole body of believers.<sup>24</sup>

Many of the early Christians misplaced the emphasis and stressed speaking with tongues when under the influence of the Spirit. But Paul sought to direct their attention to preaching the Word which could be understood and accepted by all (I Cor. 14). Both the preaching and the hearing of the Word could be under the control of the Spirit. Every talent is a gift of the Spirit, especially the ability to preach the Word.

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<sup>24</sup> Swete, Op. cit., p. 320.



In addition to and underlying the whole work of the Spirit in assisting us in worship, whether it be in the sacraments, prayer, singing, or preaching and hearing of the Word, is the fact that the Spirit dwells in Christians individually and in the Church as a group of believers, and this indwelling finds its greatest expression in the unity of such kindred hearts in the Spirit when they worship together. The Church has failed to meet the longings of common yet spiritually hungry people when its worship has become cold and formal, removed from the people by a clergy with whom they feel no spiritual unity and a ritual whose spiritual significance they cannot understand. The Church succeeds when its worship lifts the hearts of all worshippers up in the Spirit above and beyond the sin and suffering and hopelessness of the world to the throne of God's grace.

Let us, therefore, listen to A. J. Gordon when he exhorts: "Honour the Holy Spirit as Master of Assemblies; study much the secret of surrender to Him; be submissive to keep silence when He forbids, as well as to speak when He commands, and we shall learn how much better is God's way of conducting the worship of His house than man's way."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Green, Op. cit., (Studies in the Holy Spirit) p. 86.

#### D. The Holy Spirit and the Mission of the Church

The individual Christian or a congregation of Christians maintains two relations or relations in two directions. One direction is perpendicular, the relation to God. The other is horizontal, the relation with fellow men. The relation with God is primary... Worship will keep this relation intact... Worship will lead to service. Contact with God in worship, prayer, and praise will lead to service in evangelism and social activity of all kinds.<sup>26</sup>

Probably the most evident work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is that of leading the Church out to accomplish its mission in the world. This is the special teaching in Acts about the Spirit. Jesus pointed to the way and to the power and to the guide when He told His disciples, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). He gave approval to missionary labors by filling the lives of non-Jewish converts (Acts 8:17, 10:44). He actually directed the physical motions of Philip, causing him to preach the Gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29), and of Paul in baring the way to Asia and Mysia and Bithynia that he might be called into Macedonia

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<sup>26</sup> Connor, Op. cit., p. 139.



(Acts 16:6ff). He revealed to the church at Antioch the need for sending famine relief to Judaea (Acts 11:28). He led the congregation of Antioch to commission the first real foreign missionaries (Acts 13:2). All of these references to the work of the Holy Spirit are but a fulfillment of Acts 1:8 and an elaboration upon its outline. The Spirit thrusts the Church forth on its world-wide mission, using many approaches and channels but always with the end of witnessing to Christ.

The Holy Spirit led the Church out into its mission in the world. Sometimes He had to drive the Church out by persecution to accomplish her mission. The main function of the Church in the New Testament, once it has set up the right relationship to God, is to witness to the invisible Christ. The Spirit witnesses to the Body of Christ which in turn witnesses to the world. This is the mission of the Church until Christ comes to receive His Bride (to change the figure), his Church. The Spirit labors to prepare the Church for that day. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come; he that will let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17). The Mission of the Church to the world is to witness. The Holy Spirit enables the Church

to witness. He adds His own witness to that of the Church. That the witness will be honored with success we have ample promise in Scripture, and historical evidence past and present. That it will be successful to the extent that every one will respond to the call of the Gospel the Bible does not say.

While St. Paul must have been familiar with the terms of "the Great Commission," it is difficult to believe he was obsessed by the idea that the Empire of the Caesars could be transformed into a Kingdom of God within a generation. The most he could hope for was the establishment of a little company of believers so scattered throughout the Imperial domain that the Gospel might be "preached to all people" even though but a handful be converted.<sup>27</sup>

The Church is, after all, the Ecclesia, the called out. The Mission of the Church under the Holy Spirit is to witness "unto the uttermost part of the earth that the "called out" may respond. Jesus' final words to His disciples as recorded by Matthew leave no doubt as to this mission He bequeathed to them. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you

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<sup>27</sup> Eric Motizambert, The Thought of St. Paul (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1921) p. 112.



always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:19-20). There can be no note of discouragement, for the Church under the Spirit is slowly but surely accomplishing this mission. The power for this task comes from the Spirit of Christ to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth. "We must not expect the power of Christ if we reject the program of Christ."

### Conclusion

The nature of the Church is best described by the word fellowship; its function is worship; its mission is witnessing. The New Testament clearly points out the work of the Holy Spirit binding us into fellowship, enabling us to worship, and spurring us to witness. The Church since the New Testament was written may sometimes give little evidence of all this, yet history proves that the Holy Spirit is neither idle nor puny, but continually moves upon the whole earth working in and with and through the Body of Christ that it may grow up in all things unto Him who is the head, even Christ.

Spirit of truth and love,  
Life-giving, holy Dove,  
Speed forth thy flight;  
Move on the water's face,  
Bearing the lamp of grace,  
And in earth's darkest place  
Let there be light.

--J. Marriott.

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## ABSTRACT

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, who had always worked in the world, "came" fully upon Christians in order to continue the work of Christ. The Spirit is ever God-in-Action, bringing to completion the Divine purpose. Our thesis shows this work of the Spirit in relation to five New Testament doctrines.

1. The Holy Spirit revealed the mind and will of God to New Testament writers, who were conscious of His inspiration, of the Divine authority, and of the purposeful character of their work to make readers "wise unto salvation."

2. At the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Spirit controlled and prepared the setting and characters. He, and no other, caused the conception of Christ, thus initiating a life-long companionship with the Incarnate Christ.

3. The Holy Spirit causes the "New Birth" accompanying it with conviction of sin and the planting of repentance and faith in men's hearts in fulfillment of the decrees of God and by the atonement of Christ.

4. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer, filling him, re-orienting his whole life, enabling him to forsake the works of the flesh and bear the fruit of the Spirit, providing power for victory of the "Spirit" over the "flesh."

5. The Spirit governs, unites, purifies and guides the Church, inspiring every form of true worship and world-wide



witness. He binds us into fellowship, enables us to  
worship, and spurs us to witness.