

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2)

"Feed the Flock." (I Peter 5:2)

The POWER of God's Spirit IN and THROUGH Us



By Donald G. Hunt

R. R. # 3

Ottumwa, Iowa 52501

WE HAVE so often felt that the Holy Spirit part of our lives is not really emphasized as it can and as it ought to be. There is a multitude of Scriptures upon it (as we shall see), and yet there are so few sermons preached upon it. In fact, it seems much easier for preachers to preach on the Spirit's part in the inspiration of the Bible and the Spirit's part in the miracles of the apostolic age than it is the Spirit's part in our very lives. Should it be this way?

It is therefore with this existing condition in mind that we are desirous of sharing with you the great Biblical truth set forth and explained below. Read these lines with a desire to know, with a desire to believe, and with a desire to allow God's Spirit to work in you and through you as God has willed that He do.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ONE OF THE TWO SPIRITS CONSTANTLY AT WORK IN HUMAN LIVES.

There are two spirits constantly at work in our world—the Holy Spirit of God and the unholy spirit of the devil. After studying the Bible for many years and having observed the lives of many people, I know of no better way to designate these two spirits than the above. God's Spirit is holy; the devil is unholy. God's Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (John 16:13); the devil is a liar and the father of lies, having no truth in him (John 8:44). God's Spirit has revealed the law of life (that life is in Christ Jesus) (Romans 8:2); the devil is out to bring destruction to men (I Peter 5:8; John 8:44).

Both spirits are mighty, especially when compared to men. The devil, having no principles or virtue but only seeking man's destruction, moves right in and actually overpowers the sinner (sinners are taken captive by him at his will—not theirs, at least originally) (II Tim. 2:26). The Holy Spirit, though even more powerful than the devil, does not destroy man's power of

choices, realizing that man is an accountable being and that whatever righteousness he attains must represent his will in order for it to be righteous and holy.

All of our lives, whether we are Christians or sinners, are involved with these two spirits.

Speaking of man's condition before conversion to Christ, Ephesians 2:2 states, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." But in conversion, the devil is replaced by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), which we will discuss later. The Scriptures show that the place of the Holy Spirit is IN the Christian. Note that fact in these passages: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" (I Cor. 6:19); "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

As additional proof that the Spirit of God is IN us, and that we might know more about the results of His presence, let us notice two passages in the book of John. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). What a wonderful promise! Think of it—we drink of the water that Christ gives, and that partaking causes a flowing well of water to spring up within us into eternal life. But what is that "water"? Does the Bible ever say? Yes, turn to John 7:37-39 where the matter is explained: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, so the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)." The Spirit that we believers now

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THE SWORD AND STAFF
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NOTICE

Because of mechanical problems relating to our printing, a full summer schedule, and the moving of the editor, it is deemed expedient that we combine the June and July issues of The Sword and Staff.

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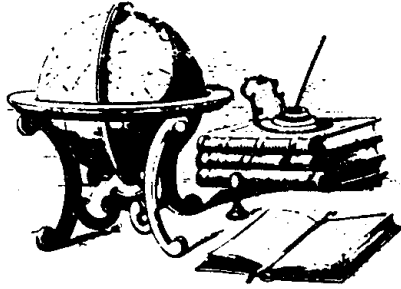
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EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

QUESTIONS FROM LAST MONTH

1. What is your opinion about (1) "Board" meetings, (2) "organized" class meetings, and (3) "missionary" meetings?

(1) Any "opinion" pertaining to "Board" meetings will be determined by what is meant by "Board." Some churches put the elders and deacons together, calling them the "Board." There is no distinction made between the offices and responsibilities, the elders and deacons meeting together and equally "voting" on all matters, etc. Since in this set-up the deacons always outnumber the elders, the deacons are in essence "ruling" the church. The office of deacon is not one of "ruling" (i.e., supervising, governing, etc.)—that is the job of the elders (I Tim. 3:1,4,5; 5:17; Heb. 13:17)—and this "Board" arrangement is at variance with the Scriptures.

The "Board" situation becomes even more involved and distorted when the church has all kinds of unscriptural organizations. The Sunday school "superintendent," president of the Ladies' Aid, and so on, many times are included in the "Board." One can see (and we will as we endeavor to answer some of the other questions) how this violates other N. T. teachings.

The nearest thing to a board in the N. T. is a "Board" of elders, and it is proper that they have their meetings to plan and promote the church. At times it is conceivable that it may be needful to invite other members (certain members) to "sit in" on specific meetings, but this does not make them part of the "Board," nor should they seek to usurp the duly ordained elders governing prerogatives (as the ultimate responsibility of decision is with them). But the elders should maintain a good working relationship with the church, keep the membership informed, and be open to worthwhile suggestions.

(2) Why have "organized" classes? We have never seen the Scripturalness, necessity, or expediency of this. It becomes a situation where we have a church within a church, the class taking offerings and planning projects. God has given us the plan and laid out the responsibilities of the ones who are to take the initiative in this. Let us respect God's way of doing things. Also, we are to lay by in store on the first day of the week as God has prospered us (I Cor. 16:2), even as we take the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). The class exists merely for the expediency of communicating to certain age groups, etc., in teaching—not for "running" the church. The class can carry on and do what it needs to do through and in relationship with its teacher without forming a distinct organization from the church.

(3) The same can be said for "missionary" meetings. The church itself is the "missionary" society. Yes, there may be certain study groups in reference to world evangelism—but let the church unit take care of the "business" as God has laid out.

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SYSTEMATIC

Scriptural Studies

THE SUBJECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MADE SIMPLE. A STUDY

(Continued from April Issue)

Introductory Summary:

The measures of the Holy Spirit manifested in reference to the age of the New Testament.

- The SUPERORDINARY measure as seen in Christ (Jn. 3:34; Colossians 2:9).
- The EXTRAORDINARY measure as evident in the apostles and those on whom they laid their hands (Hebrews 2:1-4; also household of Cornelius).
- The ORDINARY measure, which is for every Christian (Acts 2:38, 39).
- All measures of the Holy Spirit given to man are alike called the "gift of the Holy Spirit" (Baptism of the Spirit—Acts 10:45; 11:15, 17; Laying on of apostolic hands—Acts 8:18-20; Measure common to all Christians—Acts 2:38).

I. THE EXTRAORDINARY GIFT OF THE SPECIAL BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A. To whom was the special baptism of the Holy Spirit originally promised?

1. It is well for us to consider this because of denominational claims of a universal baptism of the Holy Spirit today.
 - (1) The general Protestant view seems to be that the baptism of the Holy Spirit and being saved are the same thing, occurring at the same time (the moment you believe in your heart).
 - (2) Those of the so-called Pentecostal view claim that one is saved, then at some future date the baptism of the Holy Spirit will take place (usually they say accompanied by what they call "tongues").
2. John the Baptist announced that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33).
 - (1) From the announcement it is vague as to the ones who would receive this baptism (John 1:33; Matthew 3:11).
 - (2) In the same breath he mentions the baptism of fire, HELL fire, which will be for the wicked (Matthew 3:11, 12)—NOTE: This is commonly misunderstood and applied to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
3. Christ told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) He said: "I send the promise of my Father upon you (the apostles)" (Luke 24:46-53).
 - (2) Before his ascension Jesus told the apostles they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts 1:1-9).
4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not a command, but a promise (in this case to the apostles)—MEN CANNOT OBEY PROMISES, only receive them.

B. Who was baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost?

1. It was originally promised to the apostles, so they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-5).
2. The apostles were the ones with one accord in one place when the day of Pentecost came (Acts 1:26-2:1-4).
3. ALL who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit were speaking in other tongues (Acts 2:4)—if we can identify the ones speaking we will know who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) All who were speaking were Galileans, and the apostles were strictly Galileans (Acts 2:7; 1:11).
 - (2) In the 120 there were people other than Galileans, such as Mary, Martha and Lazarus (all from Bethany just outside of Jerusalem, John 11:1) and Mary mother of John Mark (from Jerusalem, Acts 12:12).
 - (3) It is clear from the account that the apostles were the ones doing the speaking (Acts 2:13-14, 37).
4. Therefore, we honestly conclude that ONLY the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit when the day of Pentecost was fully come (NOTE: This is significant because most people, it seems, believe the 120 were the ones).

C. What was the purpose of the baptism of the apostles in the Holy Spirit?

1. What the purpose could not have been.
 - (1) Not to save them because they already were disciples of Christ and saved—this cannot be questioned.
 - (2) Not to give them the Holy Spirit, as such, because they already had the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23).
2. The purpose as evident in the promise.
 - (1) It endowed them with power to be the official witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8; 2:31; 4:33).
 - (2) It directed them into all truth as they spoke and wrote the Scriptures, as well as bringing all things to their remembrance (John 14:26; 16:13).
3. The purpose as evident in the benefits conferred.
 - (1) It enabled them to do special signs and wonders, confirming the truth they preached (Acts 2:42; 5:12; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
 - (2) It made it possible for them to speak in languages they had not learned before, greatly helping these unlearned men carry out the great commission (Acts 2:4-11; Matthew 28:19).
 - (3) It enabled them, it seems, to confer the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-18; Hebrews 2:3, 4).
 - (4) If we consider the special baptism of the Holy Spirit as a prerequisite to the apostles entering their work, we must conclude that Paul was baptized with the Holy Spirit—although entering belatedly on the scene, he was fully an apostle like the others (I Cor. 15:7-9; II Cor. 11:5; 12:12; Galatians 1:1).

D. Why was the household of Cornelius baptized with the Holy Spirit?

1. The household of the Gentile Cornelius was baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46; 11:13-15).
 - (1) As pointed out, the evidence indicates that only

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SYSTEMATIC SCRIPTURAL STUDIES...

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the apostles were originally promised this special baptism (Acts 1:1-5).

- (2) The baptism of the Holy Spirit had not occurred since the day of Pentecost, about 10 years before (Acts 11:15), to Peter's knowledge.
 - (3) Why say, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, AS ON US AT THE BEGINNING" if this were an everyday happening?
 - (4) The happening reminded the apostle Peter of the original promise of the baptism of the Spirit made to the apostles (Acts 11:15-17; 1:1-5).
2. What the purpose of the baptism of Cornelius' household in the Holy Spirit could not have been.
- (1) Not to endue them with power to be apostles (official witnesses)—others had been selected for this purpose (Acts 1:21,22; I Cor. 15:7).
 - (2) Not to save them as some teach—Peter would tell them what they must DO to be saved (Acts 11:14; 10:6,33,48; I Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38)—NOTE: As he BEGAN to speak and before he had a chance fully to tell them what to DO to be saved, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit took place (Acts 11:14,15; 10:44).
 - (3) Not to sanctify them from the sin of Adam as some teach—we do not inherit the sin of Adam (infants come into this world sinless, Matthew 19:14; 18:3; Romans 14:12).
 - (4) Not to make believers out of them as some teach—faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 8:12).
 - (5) Not to forgive their sins as some teach—sins are taken away by the blood of Christ when we repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38; 10:6,48; 11:18; 22:16).
 - (6) Therefore, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit before they were told what to do to be saved, and while they were in an unsaved condition (the other record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was just the opposite—the apostles were saved men).
3. The purpose of the baptism of the household of Cornelius in the Holy Spirit.
- (1) Christ said that he had other sheep to bring into the one fold (John 10:16; Ephesians 2:11-16).
 - (2) Christ died for "whosoever will" of all nations, as the great commission implied, but, being bound by Jewish prejudice, for about 10 years the church had preached only to the Jews.
 - (3) Peter's vision proved to him that he was to call no man common or unclean (Acts 10:9-16, 28, 34, 35).
 - (4) Now this special out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on these unsaved Gentiles proved beyond doubt to Peter and to the church that they were proper recipients of the gospel and should be baptized—the gospel should hereafter be preached to the Gentiles (Acts 10:45-47; 11:17,18).
 - (5) The Holy Spirit was to be poured out on all flesh, Jewish and Gentile (Acts 2:17; 10:45; 11:15,17)—we are not discounting the possibility that this may also include the measure of the Spirit resulting from the laying on of apostles' hands.

E. Is the special baptism of the Holy Spirit promised to man today?

1. Some today claim to have the special baptism of the Spirit, but evidently they don't realize the import of what they are saying.
 - (1) In the N. T. they could HEAR the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the sound of a mighty rushing wind (Acts 2:2,33).
 - (2) They could SEE the cloven tongues as of fire upon those who received the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:3,33).
 - (3) People today don't manifest the same miraculous works that accompanied and followed the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4-11,43; 9:32-41; 10:46).
2. No where in the N. T. can we find that it is promised for today.
 - (1) It served its extraordinary purpose in endueing the apostles with power in establishing the church (Mark 9:1) and proving that the Gentiles were accepted of God.
 - (2) The special baptism of the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with saving a man: the apostles received it, already being saved; Cornelius' household received it yet unsaved: it was not universally experienced in the early church (Acts 11:15).
 - (3) It originally was a promise to certain individuals, and not a command—promises cannot be obeyed.
3. There is now only one baptism common to the religion of Christ (Ephesians 4:5).
 - (1) There was a time when there were many baptisms: Jewish baptisms, John's baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, the baptism of the great commission, etc., but now there is only ONE baptism permanently peculiar to the religion of Christ.
 - (2) The baptism in the great commission would continue unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:19,20).
 - (3) The ONE BAPTISM is the immersion of a repentant sinner in water for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).
 - (4) Christ did the baptizing with the Holy Spirit from heaven (John 1:33; Acts 2:33)—the one in the great commission is to be administered by man.

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THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT...

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receive (since Jesus has returned to glory) was the "water" of which Jesus was speaking. And notice that in John 4, this "water" is a well from which we ourselves drink so that we never thirst for other "waters," and notice also that in John 7, the "well" has become "rivers of living water" flowing out from us to others. Notice how these two thoughts fit the title of the message: "The Power of God's Spirit in (the well) and through (rivers) us."

In summary then the unregenerate sinner has the unholy spirit of the devil working in him while the born-of-the-spirit Christian (John 3:3-7) has the Holy Spirit of God working in him.

But this does not mean that the devil has given up on the Christian nor that the Holy Spirit has given up on the sinner. The Holy Spirit works ON the sinner to get him converted if he will, and the devil works ON the Christian to get him to backslide if he is not care-

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Post Office Box 681
Galax, Virginia 24333
June 9, 1969

Dr. Medford Jones
Department of Church Growth
Emmanuel School of Religion
Milligan College, Tennessee 37682

Dear brother Jones:

I have been intending to write ever since the material came in the mail concerning the "CHURCH GROWTH COLLOQUIM" scheduled for June 16-20 at Milligan College. Your form letter stated: "The enclosed information should answer most of your questions. If not, let me hear from you." The above name and address was given.

Several things in your enclosed material got my attention. For example: (1) "THE COLLOQUIM IS: An honest effort to assemble America's most informed churchmen to discuss and study domestic church growth with the widest possible religious participation. Twenty top men from fifteen denominations are on the program. Attendance is expected from 25 denominations." (2) The primary speaker is described as "Research Associate at the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis. He is an ordained Methodist minister..."

This honestly brings some provoking questions to my mind, which I will now humbly express.

What is the position of the "School of Religion" at Milligan College? *Does the school profess to be denominational, interdenominational, or undenominational?* I have been told that the school was "undenominational" and allegedly allied with the "New Testament" church. But, having had no personal association with the college, I can only ask.

I am a former Methodist. I left the Methodist denomination for several reasons (but none of them for a lack of love for the people). Their traditional Protestant doctrine of "faith only" (excluding immersion in water for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38), I found to be at variance with the Scriptures (James 2:24)—plus other things. Also, liberal destructive criticism of the Bible has great sway with the leadership of the Methodist denomination (and it is commonly found in their literature). When in the process of leaving this denomination, I informed the minister that I had searched the Scriptures and I just couldn't find sprinkling taught there. Whereupon, to my amazement, he asked, "Would you put your life between

the covers of a book?" (!!!).

Now I notice that a "Methodist minister" will be "the primary resource person and lecturer for the CHURCH GROWTH COLLOQUIM." Somehow it doesn't make sense to me. Here is one whose denomination traditionally advocates "faith only" (thus not preaching the full "plan of salvation") being the key speaker with his ideas of how to make the church grow. It seems very inappropriate.

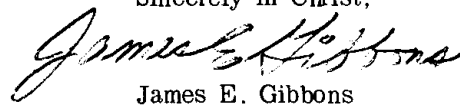
I have another question. *Did I make a mistake in leaving the Methodist denomination?* Your "CHURCH GROWTH COLLOQUIM" leaves the implication that I would have been just as well off to remain in the said denomination (as well as many members of the local church here).

I am under the impression that the New Testament condemns denominationalism as sinful. That being the case, we must repent of sin, forsake it, and not be entangled again therein. We must take the undenominational stand, discarding the traditions of men and following the Bible alone as our guide. Yes, to be the Lord's church, and that alone.

Again, these questions reoccur in my mind: (1) Does the school there profess to be denominational, interdenominational, or undenominational? (2) Did I make a mistake in leaving the Methodist denomination?

These questions are asked in all sincerity, love, and humility by one who loves the Lord and His church. Please receive them in that light. I would be pleased to hear from you.

Sincerely in Christ,



James E. Gibbons

Emmanuel School of Religion
Milligan College, Tenn. 37682
June 11, 1969

Mr. James E. Gibbons
Box 681
Galax, Virginia 24333

Dear Brother Gibbons:

Thank you for your kind and forthright letter of June 9th.

I can assure you that Emmanuel School of Religion is totally committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the authority and authenticity of the Scriptures, and the concept of the New Testament Church being put forward in this generation. I am sending a catalog under separate cover so that you may read our purpose and other statements.

It should be understood first of all that we are not bringing any denominational people in here to interpret the plan of salvation or the scriptures in general for us. I, myself, am delivering four messages on Biblical content. One of my students is delivering the four morning devotional messages. The other effort being made in the COLLOQUIM is one of searching into methods and the relationships that the church finds itself in current so-

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THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT . . .

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Does the Holy Spirit work on the sinner? If He didn't the sinner could never be regenerated; he could never be born again; he could never be converted, for the power does not reside with man himself to regenerate himself, to create a spiritual life, to convert himself. That is the work of God's Spirit (John 3:5,6). Jesus promised, "When he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). In other words, He was to work on the world with reference to spiritual matters. The Word of God is spoken of as His "words" (Eph. 6:17), and He uses the truth of God's Word implanted in human hearts to bring about his desired ends. Those who resist the preaching of God's Word resist the Holy Spirit: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:51). The Spirit of God who strove with men's wicked hearts in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:3) through the preaching Noah (II Pet. 2:5) still strives with sinner men through our preaching today. Yes, the Holy Spirit works ON the sinner.

But the devil also works ON the Christian. He wants to get every Christian to backslide, to be like a dog returning to his vomit (II Pet. 2:20-22) or like a sow returning to her mire (same scripture), to be a fruitless branch through not abiding in Christ, to be hypocritical like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3), and to be weary in well doing. The devil is out to seek our destruction (I Pet. 5:8), and I fear at times that there are two thoughts that do not enter into Christians' thoughts enough—the fact that Jesus may come today and the fact that the devil is still seeking their destruction. And remember that if he cannot accomplish this all at once in your life, he will be pleased to accomplish it by a slow, unnoticed process that will bring about the same end.

This struggle of spirits within and upon us is vividly set forth in Gal. 5:17: "The flesh (devil-inflamed) lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." But good news, Christian! "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). If it were not so, there could be no salvation for us, but our Saviour is greater than our would-be destroyer.

II. GOD WANTS EVERY ONE OF HIS CHILDREN TO HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Since anyone not having the Spirit is none of Christ's, everyone who is Christ's has the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). As we shall see later, every one of God's children needs—must have—the help of His Spirit, or he will be overcome by the devil and the flesh. But before taking up that thought, let us notice the truth of this proposition; namely, that each child of God is not only born of the Spirit but is given the Spirit at the time of conversion.

Acts 2:38 has been quoted and used many, many times. Sermons have been preached upon it. But there are possibly great truths in it (and the verse following it) that yet need to be brought out and emphasized. Notice the promise that if man will repent and be baptized, he will receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and verse 39 shows that the promise is for us even today.

Would you notice that Peter urged them to repent and be baptized for two reasons, not for just one. They would receive the remission of their past sins, and they would also receive the Holy Spirit. Many emphasize the importance of remission but say little about the need of the Holy Spirit. Let us emphasize both, for men need both. They need remission of sins because of their guiltiness before God. No matter how good they may be in time to come, the guilt of their past sins must be forgiven, or they are still lost. But what good would it do to get the past taken care of if one is not going to be able to live the Christian life thereafter?

Ananias of Damascus, who baptized Saul of Tarsus, emphasized both. He emphasized remission of sins when he said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). But he also emphasized the Holy Spirit whom he would receive as a result of his baptism when he said, "Jesus...hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17). Ananias explained that he came for two purposes: to restore Saul's sight and that he might be filled with God's Spirit. What two things did Ananias do to Saul? He laid his hands upon him, and he baptized him. When he laid his hands upon him, Saul received his sight, and when he baptized him, he received the Holy Spirit just as any other convert to Christ does.

Let us believe that both remission of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit are important. Let us teach and preach them both. And let us who perform baptisms get both into the words that we say in conjunction with people's baptisms. When I baptize people, I say, "Upon the confession of your faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, having repented of your sins, I now baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Why not? One is just as important as the other.

These two gifts that people are to receive at conversion are both tied in with the commands of repentance and baptism. Why must men repent before they are forgiven and before they receive the Holy Spirit? Why must men be baptized before they are forgiven and before they receive the Holy Spirit? In these two commands, the Holy Spirit is working ON the sinner with the view of moving INTO him so that thereafter He will be able to work WITHIN him and THROUGH him upon others. We know that before God will forgive a person of his life of sin, the man must turn loose of his sins (repentance) and must submit to the cleansing blood of Christ (applied in baptism). We know also that before the Holy Spirit would be at home in a person's life, the life must be cleansed. This cleansing is accomplished when the sinner repents and when God washes away his sins at baptism. If you were going to move into an apartment formerly occupied by these, you would want the apartment thoroughly washed and scrubbed and likely painted or papered. You would want every vestige of their dirt removed before you moved in. And the Holy Spirit is the same way. He would be grieved and would be unwelcome in a life that is filled with the sinful acts and sinful attitudes that characterized the former life. How would you like

SPEAKING OUT. . .

ciety. Dr. Richard Myers whose position on the program you challenge, has not served as a Methodist resident minister for twenty years. For these past twenty years he has been doing research on a scientific basis into the issues of why churches grow and do not grow. He is a man that has much information and who is able to test ideas about why churches grow and do not grow. He is a fine person. I have known him personally for a long time and have never had him attempt in any way to subvert my mind on theology.

Other than what I have said so far, I think I will leave the position of the School up to the statements in the catalog. If after you have read these and my letter you have other questions, certainly I will be most pleased to have you write.

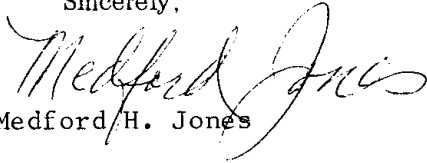
You asked if you made a mistake in leaving the Methodist denomination. I certainly would not say that you did. However, there is the possibility that you can make a mistake in what you do with the new freedom that you have. There are many ways in which denominational status can be established. It would be possible for you to establish a denominational stance from a "undenominational" position. This would be my only suggestion. If we are going genuinely New Testament in our outlook, there is some question as to whether we should define our position in terms of the word "denomination."

Brother Gibbons, please let me assure you of our commitment to the New Testament position. This is accepted across the country. Presidents or officers from at least four of our Bible colleges will be in attendance. I wish it would be possible for you to attend and judge for yourself.

Registration has reached 92 graduate students this year. It will be larger next year. God is richly blessing. Please do not hesitate to write or visit any time.

God bless you in your continued ministry.

Sincerely,


Medford H. Jones

to move into an apartment when the former people are still living in it? There is their furniture, and then comes yours. They want to use the kitchen at mealtime, and so do you. They want to sit down to the table to eat, and so do you folks. No, you wouldn't move in and fight it out to see which family is going to stay. And neither will the Holy Spirit try to take up his abode in anybody's life who still allows the devil to live in him. You MUST repent, and you MUST be cleansed in the blood of Christ by being baptized, or you will never have the Holy Spirit nor the remission of your sins.

III. THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT IN AND THROUGH A CHRISTIAN IS A REALITY.

As free moral agents, God has given us the privilege of choosing whether the devil or the Holy Spirit will prevail in our lives. But while we make the choice, and that choice must be continued throughout the Christian life, it is easy for a Christian to make the mistake of

taking the credit for his Christian life and Christian character unto himself. But this he should not do. While our say-so (decision) is important, for God will not overrule our wills, yet the lesser credit for our victorious life belongs to us, and the greater credit belongs to the power of God's Spirit. Let us notice this in the following ways.

The Holy Spirit is given credit for reproving or convicting us (John 16:8) and for converting us (John 3:5, 6). We were the ones converted, but He was the One who did the converting. Titus 3:5 could be properly translated, "By regeneration's washing and by the Holy Spirit's renewing," for in Greek both are in the genitive case. The Holy Spirit has His own "renewal" program, and He begins it in conversion. Just as old houses are destroyed and new buildings rise in their places, so does the Holy Spirit destroy the wicked works of the past and construct a spiritual life in their place.

Let us look again. The same Holy Spirit who converted us ("Ye are washed...sanctified...justified...by the Spirit of our God"—I Cor. 6:11) continues the work of sanctification thereafter: "We...are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). We will never become Christ-like by our own power. We must seek to be transformed by the power of God, and the power that He grants unto our lives for this is the indwelling Spirit from baptism onward. If you are progressing in spiritual ways, rejoice, but don't take the credit unto yourself. Realize that if you did not have the help of God that you do, you could not be a saint, but you would be nothing but a wicked sinner.

Let us look again. When the Spirit comes into our lives, He comes in to work. With Him in our hearts, our lives bear the fruit of the Spirit. What is the Spirit working to produce in our lives? "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22, 23). If your life is not marked by love, is the Spirit getting to work? If it is not marked by joy, what about the Spirit? If not by peace, then what? and so on. Either you were not converted, or you have not been walking according to the Spirit as we are commanded to do (Gal. 5:25). If these wonderful virtues and blessings are yours, give credit where credit is due—to the indwelling Spirit who enables you to be and live this way.

But not only does He work IN us, but He comes into us that HE might also work THROUGH us. Revelation 22:17 says, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." When we speak the Word of God to the lost, bidding them to come, the Spirit uses that Word to bring Heaven's call to bear upon them. Oh how the Spirit wants to see people turn to Christ! Brethren, why haven't more people heard? more people believed? more people been converted? Well, it is some of their fault, for not heeding and it is some of our fault for not pressing but it is in no way the Holy Spirit's fault! Let us speak that He may speak. Let us work that He may work.

When we turn our lives over to God, what a difference it makes because of the Spirit who comes in. We were once sinful—now we are pure (we THROUGH THE SPIRIT mortify the deeds of the body—Rom. 8:13). We

(Continued Next Page)

THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT . . .

were once lustful—now we have victory (the only way to this victory is by WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT—Gal. 5:16). We were once weak—now we are strong. Notice these passages that show we can be strong through God's abiding Spirit: "That he would grant you...to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:17); "The Spirit...helpeth our infirmities" (Rom. 8:26); "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10); "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

We once lived our own lives ("we have turned every one to his own way"—Isa. 53:6), but now God is at work in our lives. Yes, we are told to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), but when we do, the following verse reminds us that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (verse 13). Oh how thrilling to know that God is at work in our lives by His Spirit that dwelleth in us! "We are his workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). He is the Potter; we are the clay.

We were once children of the devil ("Ye are of your father the devil," John 8:44; "Thou child of the devil," Acts 13:10); now we are children of God: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). People who are not allowing the Spirit of God to lead them are not God's children, for all of God's children are being led by His Spirit.

We were once without hope of anything better than the sinful, selfish life, but now we have wonderful hope, and notice the Spirit's connection with that hope: "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13); "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (II Cor. 5:5). "Earnest" is a downpayment, assuring us that more is to come, and that is what we hope for.

Yes, the power of God's Spirit in our Christian lives is a divine reality. It is not just a theological thought but a real, actual, everyday experience, and we need to be more aware of it.

What we have said in no way sets aside anything we are to do. We are to do all that is commanded us. But it does give the credit where the main credit is due. Friend, do you realize that God loved us, not we Him: "Herein is love, not that we loved God (we didn't), but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). God chose us, originally we didn't Him: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). God cleansed us, not we ourselves: "Though you wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me" (Jer. 2:22); "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

The above thoughts remind us of the story of the flea and elephant crossing the bridge. When they got across, the flea said to the elephant, "Didn't we make that bridge shake?" Or it reminds us of the father helping the child build a house for his dog—the boy works at it, but the father is the one who really makes it a proper looking house. Or it is like a small boy saving from small jobs to buy the sled. The snow begins to

fall, and he doesn't have enough money for the purchase. The father tells him to get his money, and they go to the store and buy the sled. (Don't overlook the father's important part in the purchase!).

In conclusion, let me ask you some important questions.

Do you want to be one of Christ's? Then have His Spirit (Rom. 8:9): "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his".

Do you want to have life in you? Then have the Spirit: "To be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). James 2:26 is just as true spiritually as it is physically: "The body without the Spirit is dead."

Do you want to lose out with God like Samson did? You will if you lose the Spirit, for that is what happened to Samson: "He wist not that the Lord was departed from him" (Judges 16:20).

Do you want to lose out with God like King Saul did? You too may become an unreliable, miserable maniac of a person just like Saul if you lose God's Spirit, for that is what happened to him because of disobedience: "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul" (I Sam. 16:14). The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul because the Spirit can be grieved (Eph. 4:30: "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God") and can be quenched or put out (I Thess. 5:19), "Quench not the Spirit," and that is what Saul did. When David sinned, is it any wonder he prayed that God would not withdraw his Spirit from him as He had done from Saul? Notice David's pleading prayer: "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Psalms 51:11).

Reader, have you been trusting yourself? Trusting your own strength to overcome for you? Trusting your own wisdom to guide you and protect you? Trusting your own righteousness to assure you of a perfect standing with God?

Reader, have you been taking the credit that rightfully or mainly belongs to another? To God's Spirit within you? To God's Spirit through you? And when you say, "To God be the glory," do you really mean it that way, or are you just talking religious talk when you really are taking the main credit to yourself?

And, reader, have you been failing when such great power is available? If so, fail no longer. Be an overcomer! Live the Spirit-filled life! Be strong in faith, strong in the Lord, and strong for the Lord.

May you take these Biblical thoughts to heart and find in them a greater power, a truer concept of things, than you have ever had before.

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