



TRUE
Spirituality

C. R. STAM

TRUE SPIRITUALITY

by

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BEREAN LITERATURE FOUNDATION
7609 W. Belmont Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60635

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the generous assistance of typists, proofreaders and others who have helped in various ways to bring this volume to completion.

Fourth Printing

BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
N112 W17761 Mequon Road
Germantown, WI 53022

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PREFACE

"He that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things, yet he himself is judged [discerned] of no man" (I Cor. 2:15).

The truly spiritual man is so far above the wisest sages of this world, yes, so far above the mass of *Christians* with whom he comes into contact, that he can understand them, but they can never quite understand him.

We should all long to be truly spiritual, but what *is* true spirituality? This is the question we seek to answer in this book *by the Scriptures* - and the Scriptures *rightly divided*.

Our libraries contain many books on this subject, written by able men of God. The reason for the appearance of this, still another, however, is quite simple.

The professing church has so long built upon the false premise that the present dispensation began at Pentecost with the "pouring out" of the Holy Spirit, that the vast majority of the books written on spirituality take their readers back to Pentecostal days to find the pattern for true spirituality. Most of these necessarily do this with reservations and qualifications, since the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost was accompanied by tongues, healing and other miraculous demonstrations, along with a communal way of life which is incompatible with God's program for today, as revealed through the Apostle Paul.

We "believe, and are sure," however, that the present dispensation began, not with Peter and the eleven at Pentecost, but with Paul, to whom the risen, glorified Lord later revealed His will and program for our day. We therefore believe, further, that the truth about the Spirit's operation today is to be found in Paul's epistles and such other Scriptures as are compatible with them.

True Spirituality first appeared as a series of articles in *Truth* magazine, the official organ of *Milwaukee Bible College*. With a few minor changes and corrections we now send it forth in book form, praying that God will graciously use it to lead many into a sane, balanced and truly *spiritual* Christian experience.

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Chicago, Illinois
February 15, 1959

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit..."

I Cor. 2:9,10.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

I Cor. 2:12.

"... TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED IS LIFE AND PEACE."

Rom. 8:6.

Chapter I

THE NATURE OF MAN

Years ago we entertained at our home a wonderful little man of about four years of age. And what a question box! His inquiries knew no end. We tried to give him as much light as we could on everything from "Why do ducks waddle so when they walk?" to "What kind of a throne does Jesus sit on?" but there were, after all, some questions to which we had to reply: "*I don't know!*" One such time he sighed and said: "*You don't know a lot of things, don't you,*" and then, rather wistfully: "*My daddy knows everything.*"

We believers should be thankful that our heavenly Father knows everything and that by His grace there are many things - the most important things - which He has given *us* to know most assuredly. Yet we still "don't know a lot of things," and this is particularly so with regard to *our own nature and make-up*. This question is so complex that we will never complete the study of it here on earth. Well did David say, regarding this subject:

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa. 139:14).

There are, however, some things which God *has* told us with respect to our nature and being, and of these we must have a basic knowledge if we would learn what it is to be truly spiritual - spiritual in the *Scriptural* sense of the term. Let us begin, then, by considering briefly *the nature of man*.

BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

Man is, or has, a body, with eyes, ears, a nose, a tongue, fingers and other members. But he is more than a body. There is within him that which gives life to these members and causes them to see, hear, smell, taste and feel. This is called the *soul* (Heb., *nephesh*, Gr., *psuche*). Lexicons define it as the breath of life; the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing; that by which the body lives and feels. Man's body was made of the dust of the ground, but to impart life to the body it was necessary for God to breathe into it the breath of life.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).

Thus there are at least two parts to man's make-up, the one material and the other immaterial. But there is still another part, also immaterial, called the spirit (Heb., *ruach*, Gr., *pneuma*).

The soul and the spirit both being immaterial, have *some* of the same functions ascribed to them in the Scriptures and are sometimes spoken of interchangeably, but it does not follow from this that they are one and the same, for we find definite distinctions made between them in many passages of Scripture.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read:

"For the Word of God is quick [living] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF THE SOUL AND SPIRIT. . ." (Heb 4:12).

To the Corinthians Paul wrote concerning the believer's body:

"It is sown a natural body [Lit., a soulish body]; it is raised a spiritual body . . ." (I Cor. 15:44).

From the Epistle of Jude, also, it is clear that *soul* and *spirit* are not the same, for there we read:

"These be they who separate themselves, sensual [Gr., psuchikoi, soulish] having NOT the Spirit [Gr., pneuma]" (Jude 19).

Lexicons define the *pneuma* as the rational part of man and that by which he perceives and grasps divine and eternal things, and upon which the Spirit of God exerts His influence.

The above passages also disprove the contention that the spirit in the body makes a soul, or that the spirit and the body joined together make a soul; that man is a soul, but does not *have* a soul; that when the spirit leaves the body *there is no soul*.

Indeed, though man "became a living soul," the soul is nevertheless spoken of in Scripture as distinct from the body, as well as from the spirit, for not only does the Word of God pierce even to "the dividing asunder of *soul* and *spirit*" (Heb. 4:12), but it divides also between the soul and the body, for in Matt. 10:28 we have the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And fear not them which kill the BODY, but are not able to kill the SOUL; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy BOTH SOUL AND BODY in hell."

As we shall see, the soul is the seat of man's conscious being and he is therefore called a *soul* (Gen. 2:7; Acts 2:41; et al) but since he is *more* than soul, since he is body and spirit as well, we also read in Scripture that he *has* a soul:

Job 14:22 "But his flesh upon him shall have pain and HIS SOUL WITHIN HIM shall mourn."

Isa. 53:12, "... He hath Poured out His Soul unto death. . ."

Acts 2:31, "... His Soul WAS NOT LEFT IN HELL, neither did His flesh see corruption."

Thus the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

"...I pray God YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 5:23).

We would subscribe, then, to the well-known position that *world-consciousness* belongs to the body (Matt. 6:22; I Cor. 12:14-17) *self-consciousness* to the soul (Matt. 16:26; I Pet. 1:9) and *God-consciousness* to the spirit (Rom. 1:9; 8:16) if only it be recognized that these three are closely inter-related, so that the body, for example, is world-conscious only as the soul gives it consciousness, and that the soul and the spirit are similarly related. Surely it is true that the *body*, being physical, is most closely related to the earth and to material things (Gen. 3:19) that the spirit, before the fall, stood most closely related to God and is still that upon which the Holy Spirit exerts His influence (Eph. 1:17; 4:23) while the *soul* is the medium between the two; the seat of the feelings, emotions, decisions; linking the body and the spirit together (Cf. Gen. 2:7; John 11:33; Mark 14:34).

THE SOUL THE SEAT OF MAN'S BEING

While it seems evident from Gen. 2:7 that the soul has been the seat and center of man's being ever since creation, it is also evident that before the fall man's soul was subject to his spirit which, in turn, was in complete harmony with the Spirit of God. With the fall, however, this was changed. The Deceiver persuaded man that if he assumed his own "rights" he could be "as God." Man believed the lie and as a result was dominated by it. Self-consciousness developed into self-importance, self-will and self-interest. Every human being became by nature a god to himself. With the fall man became a fallen *soulish* being, his fallen soul, his self-importance and self-interest, influencing and dominating both his body and his spirit. This, of course, spelled *enmity against God and alienation from God* - in a word, *death*.

It is our purpose in this book to show how God, by grace, offers deliverance from this condition, so that dead and dying sinners may become living and spiritual saints.

SCRIPTURAL SPIRITUALITY

What is meant by such terms as "*he that is spiritual*" and "*ye which are spiritual*" in the Scriptures? What is true spirituality in the Bible sense of the word?

In proceeding to answer this question we must first observe that true spirituality does *not* consist merely in the domination of a man's life by his spirit, rather than by his soul or his body, for with the entrance of sin man's *whole* being was "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:17-19) and he became, spirit, soul and body, a fallen creature. Moreover, as we have seen, man's perverted soul now, rather than being the seat of simple self-consciousness, became that of self-importance and self-interest, and this had a devastating effect upon his spirit, setting the whole inner man at enmity against God (Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21).

An examination of the Bible usage of the word *pneuma* will soon dispel the notion that the quality of spirit is in itself necessarily good. Again and again we read in the Scriptures of "unclean" and "evil" spirits (Mark 1:23; Luke 7:21, etc.) In I Pet. 3:19,20 we read of "spirits in prison," who were cast there for their disobedience to God in the days of Noah. Satan himself is, as we know, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) and believers are explicitly warned that their warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12). Indeed, the fact that we are called upon to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of "the flesh¹ and spirit" (II Cor. 7:1) and that some do seek to be "holy both in body and in spirit" (I Cor. 7:34) indicates clearly that man's spirit did not remain undefiled in the fall.

Hence it is not enough that our lives be dominated by our spirits. The *whole* man, spirit, soul and body, must be dominated by *the Spirit of God*. Spiritual men, in the Bible sense of the term, are those who possess "the Spirit which is of God" (I Cor. 2:12) appreciate and respond to "the things of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:14) are "led by the Spirit of God" (Rom. 8:14) and thus bear "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22).

That Scriptural spirituality has to do with the work of *the Spirit of God* in the believer, is clear from I Cor. 2:11, where the Apostle Paul points out that just as no one could understand "*the things of a man*" if it were not for "*the spirit of man which is in him,*" so no one can understand "*the things of God*" except by "*the Spirit of God*."

The mere fact that fallen man himself is, or has, a spirit does not help him to understand God or to be more like Him. This fact should be care fully noted by those who seek to please God by constantly - and vainly - attempting to attain to their "higher" selves.

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

In this connection the Pauline epistles have much to say about the *flesh* (Gr., *Sarx*) in an *ethical* sense, as signifying, not merely the physical body, nor

¹ Referring to the physical man when thus linked with the spirit.

even the body and the soul, but the fallen, Adamic nature in man, as it affects his *whole* being, including even his spirit.

In the flesh, says the apostle, "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). He calls it "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). He tells us that "the flesh lusteth against *the spirit*" (Gal. 5:17) that it seeks "occasion" to do wrong (Gal. 5:13) and that "the works of the flesh" are *all* bad (Gal. 5:19-21).

It is important that we understand that more than the physical body, or even the body and the soul, is meant by the term "flesh" in such passages as these. The apostle refers to the old nature as it operates in the *whole* man.

Often, to be sure, man's fallen nature expresses itself in the abandoned gratification of sensual passions, but on the other hand it may express itself in an attempt to control those passions. The "old man" may be outwardly moral and upright and, indeed, quite religious. He may faithfully observe fasts and feasts and holy days. He may strive to keep his body under control, disciplining himself by participation in ascetic practices in "a voluntary humility," while actually he is all the more *displeasing* to God because he is "puffed up by his fleshly mind," supposing that he is making something of *himself*. And meanwhile the "ordinances" to which he "subjects" himself and even his "neglecting of the body" fail to prove "of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (Col. 2:18-23; cf. R. V.) for the simple reason that all these efforts merely represent an attempt by the flesh *to improve himself*.

Little wonder that we read not only that "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8) but that even "*the mind* of the flesh is death . . . because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be" (Rom. 8:6,7, R.V.).

"So then, they that are in the flesh² *cannot* please God" (Rom. 8:8). This is important to remember. No matter how educated or cultured or religious the natural man may be, he CANNOT PLEASE GOD.

We have dealt with this subject at some length in order that the reader may not be misled into supposing that if only his spirit could somehow get control over his body he would be a better man, for his *spirit, soul and body* are from infancy controlled by the fallen Adamic nature - the *flesh*.

What the sinner needs is a *new* nature, begotten of the Spirit of God, so that God Himself may have control.

PREVALENT FORMS OF PSEUDO-SPIRITUALITY

² I.e., live in the realm of the old nature.

Before explaining from the Scriptures how sinners may become "partakers of the divine nature," something further must be said about what spirituality is *not*.

In addition to sincere, though vain, attempts by the unsaved to improve the old nature, there are various forms of pseudo-spirituality which many, even among God's people, have mistaken for the real thing, supposing that they evidence a working of the Spirit of God within.

With some, pure *emotionalism* is taken for spirituality. Natural emotional reactions to touching stories, impassioned appeals or beautiful sacred music is thought to be the working of the Spirit within, and those who react readily to these things are thought to be quite spiritual.

With others *solemnity* is taken for spirituality. They feel that true believers should be always grave and so they go about with bowed head, a long face and a general sober bearing or, perhaps, try to *affect* deeper spirituality by so doing, while others - who do not know them well - remark on their piety.

With others again it is the very opposite. They mistake *cheerfulness* for spirituality and look upon those who are quickest to shout "praise the Lord," or who seem always happy, as being most spiritual.

Very often, of course, mere *ceremonialism* is confused with spirituality. Observing a "sacrament," gazing at a "sacred" picture or statue, kneeling at an altar; such things may be, and often are, mistaken for spirituality.

Perhaps the most prevalent counterfeit of true spirituality is that which believers are least apt to suppose they would ever be deceived by: *superstition*, which plays so largely upon the imagination. A young man seeks to determine the Lord's will for his life by flipping his Bible open and letting his finger alight at random upon some passage which is supposed to indicate the leading of the Lord. A housewife seeks guidance for the day by taking a promise at random from a "promise box" - a promise which may not at all apply to her and which she will have to "spiritualize" in some way to make it fit. Another says: "I talked with the Lord about it and He said" Often the most unscriptural practices or courses of action are justified in this way. When people tell us this we generally inquire further into the matter. We ask: "*Just what* did the Lord say to you?" "*How* did He say it?" "Did you hear His voice?"

We believe that God does indeed speak to His children directly in His Word and indirectly through circumstances, but even in Bible times it was comparatively seldom that man ever heard the voice of God. Generally what "the Lord said," in such cases as the above, was nothing more than some wholly human emotion felt or opinion arrived at - and as wholly unreliable. If what "the Lord said" was a genuine *conviction*, based on the revealed will of God, then it may be said that God spoke to the individual *through His Word*, doubtless in *answer* to prayer, but the impression should not be given that the Lord "said" or "whispered" something,

while the individual was engaged in prayer. Those who imagine that they have such experiences and suppose that this reflects some degree of spirituality on their part should search the Scriptures and learn that in the days when God did speak to men by word of mouth, or by angelic appearances, He did so to the wicked and ungodly as well as to His saints. Doubtless our adversary would gladly have us occupied with imaginary "voices" and "revelations" and so displace the now completed revelation in the Holy Scriptures.

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not say that emotional reactions or sincere solemnity or cheerfulness are wrong. We simply say that they should not be confused with true *spirituality*. The unsaved can experience similar emotional reactions to those which are felt by the saved. The unsaved too may be cheerful or grave. Certainly ceremonialism and superstition have a large place among the unsaved. Yet the unsaved, whatever their emotional experiences, however solemn or cheerful, however given over to ceremonialism or superstition, are far from spiritual.

Chapter II

THE FIRST STEP TO TRUE SPIRITUALITY

THE NEED OF A NEW NATURE

What man needs first of all, to become truly spiritual, then, is *a new nature, begotten of the Spirit of God*. Our Lord put it very plainly when He said to Nicodemus:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

In this passage again the term *flesh* cannot refer merely to the physical body, for at birth a spirit and a soul, as well as a body, are brought forth. Thus *the flesh* here refers to the fallen Adamic *nature*.

Similarly, the *spirit* which is born of the Spirit, here, cannot be man's own spirit, for we have already seen that the whole natural man, body, soul and spirit, is "born of the flesh," and the very point of this passage in John 3 is that *therefore* men need to be born, or begotten, again -- this time "of the Spirit," i.e., the Spirit of God (Vers. 6-8).

So much is involved, however, in the impartation of spiritual life to the believer -- especially as related to the present dispensation -- that God uses *three* metaphors to describe it: *birth, resurrection and creation*. No one of these could adequately set it forth; all three are necessary.

Let us begin, then, with the elementary figure of the new birth.

THE NEW BIRTH

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN [ANEW] HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (John 3:3).

It is not surprising that the unsaved do not see their need of the new birth apart from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Even among those who have themselves been born anew, however, there are those who hold that the figure of the new birth applies only to Israel, not to those who live under the present dispensation. They base this conclusion on the premise that our Lord spoke to a Jew about the Jews, regarding the new birth and that Paul does not mention the

subject in his epistles. This premise is wrong, however, and so are the conclusions drawn from it.

First, it should be noted that our Lord spoke to Nicodemus in *broad terms* about seeing and entering into the "*kingdom of God*." He did not use the narrower phrase "*kingdom of heaven*," which has to do with the establishment of the kingdom of God *on earth* (See [Dan. 2:44](#); [Matt. 5:3-5](#); [6:10](#)). This is because He was referring to something which involved more than entrance into the millennial kingdom.

That believers today enter into the kingdom of God as surely as do believers in any other age is made abundantly clear in the Pauline epistles (See [Rom. 14:17](#); [I Cor. 4:20](#); [6:9,10](#); [15:50](#); [Gal. 5:21](#); [Eph. 5:5](#); [Col. 4:11](#); [I Thes. 2:12](#); [II Thes. 1:5](#)).

It should further be noted that our Lord also spoke in broad terms when He said that it was necessary for "*a man*" to be born anew to enter into the kingdom of God.

We have no right to assume that our Lord *meant* that it was necessary only for a *Jew* to be born anew to enter into the *kingdom of heaven*, when He said it was necessary for a *man* to be born anew to enter into *the kingdom of God*.

Does a reader object that our Lord must have had only Jews in mind since He was at that time ministering only to Jews and was here addressing a Jew? Then we must insist that our Lord's discussion with this prominent Jew is here recorded especially to show that *all men in every age* need to be born anew to enter into the kingdom of God.

An unfortunate chapter division has obscured this important fact, for the story of Nicodemus in John 3 is but a demonstration of an important assertion made at the close of chapter 2. We link the two together here to show the connection.

"Now when [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.

"But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them; because HE KNEW ALL MEN,

"AND NEEDED NOT THAT ANY SHOULD TESTIFY OF MAN; FOR HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN.

"THERE WAS A MAN of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

"The same came to Jesus by night . . ." (John 2:23-3:2).

To demonstrate the universal need of regeneration, God chooses this outstanding character: a ruler of the Jews, highly intellectual, rigidly moral, profoundly religious and utterly sincere in his inquiry concerning Christ.

It must have been an impressive sight: a venerable Pharisee coming to a young man (as it appeared) of thirty, respectfully addressing Him: "Rabbi," and acknowledging Him at the outset as "*a teacher come from God.*"

Yet this was one of those to whom the Lord would not commit Himself; one of those who had "believed" on Him because of His miracles. As Nicodemus himself put it: "*We know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him*" ([John 3:2](#)).

But this does not, nor did it ever, save a man.. Thus, sweeping the ground from under Nicodemus' feet, the Lord replies that what he needs -- what any man needs -- is a *new life*. Regardless of all his intellect, morality and religion, he must be born again -- *of God*.

But what about the argument that the phrase "born anew" is not found in the Pauline epistles?

The answer is, first, that arguments from silence are often treacherous and, standing alone, prove nothing. Even if the Pauline epistles did not refer to the new birth, the new birth would still be a basic necessity for entrance into the kingdom of God according to the words of our Lord. But, secondly, while the *exact phrase* "born anew" does not occur in the Pauline epistles, the *doctrine* of the new birth is taught there as clearly as in any other part of the Bible.

First, it is taught by clear implication. Referring to believers, the apostle uses the words *nepios*: a babe, or small child, and *huios*: a fullgrown son. Moreover, he looks for spiritual *growth* in believers.

Positionally, to be sure, *all* believers are recognized as fullgrown sons of God from the moment they are saved, with all the rights and privileges of sonship (See [Gal. 4:1-7](#)). But in these studies we are not dealing basically with position; we are dealing with *experience* -- the impartation of spiritual life to the sinner, and the enjoyment of it by the saint.

The righteous standing before God, which Christ purchased for all men, is of no avail to the sinner until it is accepted by faith. In the same way, the position of sonship which is ours in Christ, and the blessings that go with it, are *appropriated* and *enjoyed* only by faith. Hence the apostle rebuked the Corinthians for their carnality, calling them babes, who had to be fed with milk because they could not yet digest solid food ([I Cor. 3:1,2](#)). The Hebrew believers, too, were reprovved because they were still spiritual babes, when, for the length of time they had been saved, they should have been teachers of the Word ([Heb. 5:12-14](#)).

Similarly, we are told in Eph. 4:12-15 that God gave to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints . . .

"THAT WE HENCEFORTH BE NO MORE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE . . .

"BUT SPEAKING [HOLDING] THE TRUTH IN LOVE, MAY GROW UP "

Further, Paul writes in I Cor. 16:13:

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith; quit you [conduct yourselves] like MEN [i.e., seasoned men] be strong."

Surely the apostle does not refer, in these passages, to the infancy, growth and maturity of the *natural* man. He refers to the *new life* which was, to begin with, begotten of the Spirit.

The words *men, sons, babes*, used of the spiritual life, clearly imply spiritual *birth*. The seasoned man had at some time in his experience come to a place of spiritual maturity. Before that he was a babe. And this, in turn, implies that he was *born*, for there was a specific time when the babe came into being.

In addition to all this there are two passages in Paul's epistles which teach the new birth in a most positive manner. The first is Rom. 8:16,17, where the apostle employs the word *teknon: born-one*.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the CHILDREN [BORN-ONES] of God:

"And if CHILDREN [BORN-ONES] then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ"

Could anything bear clearer testimony to the fact that believers under the dispensation of grace are born anew? Surely we did not become born ones of God by *natural* birth.

The other passage is Tit. 3:5, where we read:

"Not, by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of REGENERATION [Gr., palingenesia] and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Out of the twenty-four versions of the New Testament which we have at hand, this word *palingenesia* is rendered *regeneration* by twenty, *new birth* by three and *renaissance* by one. Not one of them departs from the basic idea of new birth.

Finally, we would emphasize the fact that *in the nature of the case* men born of Adam must be born or begotten again to be saved. A new and different life must be imparted and begun. It is true that the life which the believer receives is *Christ's* life -- *eternal* life -- which has no beginning; that in Christ the believer is immediately considered an adult. But this is a deeper truth which must be considered later. Spiritual life *does* have a beginning in the *experience* of every believer, and the need for this is given as much emphasis in the epistles of Paul as it is in the recorded words of Christ on earth.

As our Lord impressed upon Nicodemus the fact that man at his best cannot enter into the kingdom of God, since "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," so Paul, by the Spirit, also insists:

"NOW THIS I SAY, BRETHREN, THAT FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; NEITHER DOETH CORRUPTION INHERIT INCORRUPTION" (I Cor. 15:50).³

Thus, while it is true that our Lord taught the new birth during His earthly ministry to Israel, it does not follow from this that this subject concerns only the nation Israel. What our Lord said concerned *mankind*, as such, without respect to race or time.

HOW THE SINNER MAY BE BORN ANEW

The question of *how* the life of the Spirit is begotten in, and received by, the believer is, of course, of primary importance to every son of Adam. And here again, while the great mystery revealed by the glorified Lord through Paul is an *advance* upon the elementary teachings of the earthly Christ and His twelve apostles on the subject, it by no means contradicts it or departs from it.

The sinner is born anew and receives the life of the Spirit as the Spirit implants the Word in his heart, so that he accepts it by faith:

James 1:18: "OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH"

I Pet. 1:23: "BEING BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE; BY THE WORD OF GOD WHICH LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOREVER."

Gal. 3:2: "THIS ONLY WOULD I LEARN OF YOU: RECEIVED YE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH?"

³ It is true that the apostle here contends particularly for the necessity of a new body for physical entrance into God's presence, but does not this strengthen the argument that man in his natural state is unfit for the presence of God?

Rom 10:17: "SO THEN FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."

More specifically, the sinner is born anew and receives the life of the Spirit as he believes God's Word as to His Son and trusts in Him for salvation:

John 1:1.2: "BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM [CHRIST] TO THEM GAVE HE POWER [RIGHT] TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, EVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME."

The Apostle Paul, indeed, designates "life in Christ" as a "law of the Spirit" when he says:

"FOR THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT, [THAT] OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS, HATH MADE ME FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH" (Rom. 8:2).

Thus the believer in Christ is not only justified before God, but receives *life* as well, for it is an inflexible, unchangeable *law* that the Spirit gives life to those who trust in Christ for salvation.

Thus we are born anew *through faith in the Word*. As we believe the Word, the Spirit imparts life. Moreover, as we increase in knowledge and faith in the Word we grow to spiritual maturity. This is what I Pet. 2:2 refers to:

"AS NEWBORN BABES, DESIRE THE SINCERE [PURE] MILK OF THE WORD, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY."

This is also what Paul refers to in Eph. 4:14,15, where he exhorts,

"THAT WE HENCEFORTH BE NO MORE; CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE...

"BUT SPEAKING [HOLDING] THE TRUTH IN LOVE, MAY GROW UP "

THE NEW BIRTH AND THE PAULINE REVELATION

As we have said, the Pauline revelation leads us into higher, more glorious truths respecting both our position and experience as believers. Indeed, the new birth itself, as it takes place in the believer today, is directly related to the divine baptism by which Christ and the believer are made one.

How was Christ made one with mankind? He was *baptized* into the human race. He did not merely come to *dwell with* men. He *became man*. How? By being *born into* the race. Was this by natural birth? No, by *supernatural* birth. He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. But His baptism into the human race did not end with His birth and life on earth. So fully did He become one with man, that He even died man's

death on the accursed tree. He was *baptized* into death ([Luke 12: 50](#)) and, as we now know, into *our* death.

And it is there, at the Cross, that we become one with Him. The moment one looks in faith to Calvary, acknowledging: "*I am the sinner. Christ is dying my death*"; that moment he becomes *one with Christ*, baptized into the crucified, risen Lord Himself ([Rom. 6:3](#); [Gal. 3:26,27](#)) not only positionally, in the reckonings of God, but *experientially, by the Spirit*. And thus a new life is begotten. By natural birth? No, by *supernatural* birth.

Here the figure of *birth* merges into that of *resurrection*, for the life which the Spirit imparts is *the life of the resurrected Christ in us*.

Chapter III

NEWNESS OF LIFE

RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

THE NEW BIRTH AND NEWNESS OF LIFE COMPARED

While the Old Testament Scriptures do employ the figure of resurrection in connection with Israel's conversion and future blessing in the land (e.g., [Ezek. 37: 1-14](#)) this figure like that of the new birth, is used with fuller, deeper significance in the great Pauline revelation regarding Christ and the members of His Body.

Also, the doctrine of our resurrection with Christ to a new life is an advance on what even Paul, by the Spirit, has to say with reference to the new birth.

Birth speaks only of a *beginning*; it does not contemplate the past. When Nicodemus asked: "Can [a man] enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" our Lord was quick to explain that in using the phrase "born anew"⁴ He did not mean being born again in the same way, but being born again in a *different* way. God does not undertake to improve the old nature or to induce the "old man" to begin all over again for, as we have seen, "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh*" and "*they that are in the flesh cannot please God*" (John 3:6; Rom. 8:8). No matter how intellectual or cultured or religious, "the flesh" is still that which has been generated by a fallen begetter and therefore *cannot please God*. Hence, "that which is born of the flesh" needs, not merely to be born over again and given another start; a *new* and *different* nature must be imparted; an entirely new life, begotten of the Spirit of God. This new life is separate and distinct from that which was generated at natural birth; in fact, is "contrary" to it. The conflict resulting from this will be discussed in a later chapter. Here we emphasize simply that the new birth speaks only of a new beginning and does not contemplate the past.

The new birth is the spiritual counterpart of natural birth. We do not speak of a new-born infant's "past." As an individual it has no past. It has barely begun to open its eyes and look about, unable even to focus its vision upon any particular object. Thus the new birth speaks simply of the *beginning* of a new life.

But now we go a step further and find that we receive this new life by *identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection*, and the doctrine of

⁴ Lit., "from above," but used to express: from the top, from the start, from the very beginning.

our resurrection with Christ does contemplate the past. Resurrection presupposes a former life and death.⁵ The identity of the individual is preserved throughout. The individual who lived a certain kind of life, and died, is now raised to live a new life. Now, raised from the dead, he is the same person, yet not the same. Thus the Apostle Paul could say: "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ...*" (Gal. 2:20).

It is true that Eph. 2:1 teaches that we were already "dead in trespasses and sins" before ever having become identified with Christ in His death, but this does not change the picture, for even in that passage we go on to read that "*in time past*" we "*walked according to the course of this world,*" etc. Like the woman described in I Tim. 5:6, unbelievers are dead while they live, and can be quickened from their death in trespasses and sins only by identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, for the simple reason that *He* came to identify Himself with us in *our* death to bring us through with Him to resurrection life.

THE BELIEVER'S RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST

But how can one become thus identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection? How can one die to the old life and be raised to walk in newness of life?

The answer is: by grace through faith. What Christ has done for us by grace, we must accept and appropriate by faith. He, by an act of infinite grace, identified Himself with us, dying our death. We, by an act of simple faith, must identify ourselves with Him, confessing: "*I am the sinner. It is my death He is dying. I will accept His grace and commit myself to Him for salvation.*" The moment this is done we become one with the once-crucified, ever-living Christ.

Mark well, Calvary is the meeting place, the place where the identification is effected. No man was ever made one with Christ without being made one with Him *in His death*. "*Know ye not,*" asks the apostle, "*that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?*" (Rom. 6:3). And it is for this reason that we are *buried* with Christ, by that same baptism, and raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Ver. 4).

What a tragedy that the sublime truth of this passage has been obscured by the injection of a water baptism ceremony into it! As though *water* baptism could ever

⁵ We are aware of the fact that the Greek word for actual resurrection (*anastasis*. lit., standing up) is used almost exclusively of bodily resurrection. The words, *zoopoleo*, to quicken or reanimate, and *egeiro*, to awaken or rouse up, are the ones mainly used in connection with our present subject. This does not mean, however, that resurrection is not here contemplated, any more than that quickening or awakening are not contemplated where bodily resurrection is concerned. It is simply a matter of emphasis, for in the doctrine we are here considering, the impartation of resurrection life is mainly in view. All three words: *zoopoieo*, *egeiro* and *anastasis* are used in I Cor. 15 with reference to the resurrection of Christ.

bring the believer today into any relationship to Christ! As though it could really bury the old man and help us to put on the new! Those who have fallen into this error have taken a ceremony which never did speak of burial but only of washing ([Acts 22:16](#), etc.) and have confused it with our actual baptism by the Spirit into the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Little wonder the apostle cries, with reference to this very subject: *"Beware lest any man spoil [rob] you.. . Ye are complete in Him.. . In whom also ye are circumcised.. . Buried with Him . . . risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead"* ([Col. 2:8-12](#)).

How perfect and wonderful is the divine plan! In grace Christ died our death. In faith we acknowledge it was our death He died, and trust in that death to save us. And there at the Cross we become one. The response of faith to grace has united us inseparably and eternally together.

THE REALITY OF OUR RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST

The judicial, or positional aspect of this truth is, of course, most important. We read that our Lord was *"delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for [on account of] our justification"* (Rom. 4:25). In other words, His death paid the whole penalty for our sins and procured for us full justification. Therefore He was *raised* from the dead. And since His death was *ours*, the penalty for *our* sins, and we have appropriated this by faith, therefore the justification and resurrection life is ours also. As we recognize Christ's death as ours, God reckons us one with Him, as having already died for and to sin, and having been raised to walk in newness of life.

Now this judicial, positional aspect of our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection is far from mere theory. It is fact. It is vitally real. God's just condemnation of us for sin was real. Christ's suffering and death for us was real. And we had to exercise real faith in Christ's finished work before God justified us and pronounced us righteous, counting us as having already died for and to sin.

It is on the basis of this judicial transaction that the apostle argues that we have no *right* to continue in sin. The sins we are so prone to commit after having been justified belong to the old life, not to the new which we have in Christ. Therefore we have no right to go on in sin. *"How,"* he asks, *"shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom. 6:2). And pointing to the fact that Christ *"died unto sin once,"* but now *"liveth unto God,"* he goes on to say:

"Likewise RECKON ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"LET NOT SIN THEREFORE REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY, THAT YE SHOULD OBEY IT IN THE LUSTS THEREOF.

"NEITHER YIELD YE YOUR MEMBERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO SIN: BUT YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD, AS THOSE THAT ARE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD, AND YOUR MEMBERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO GOD.

"FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER YOU: FOR YE ARE NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE" (Rom. 6:11-14).

But the judicial or positional truths we have been considering are only part of the whole doctrine of our baptism into Christ, for while these positional realities *affect* our experience as we appropriate them by faith, our baptism into Christ is also in itself a *practical* and *experiential* matter.

When the sinner acknowledges Christ's death as his own and trusts Christ for salvation, not only does he receive a *standing* before God as having been crucified, buried and raised with Christ, but the Spirit seals the transaction, uniting him in a *vital, living relationship* with Christ. Thus the believer actually becomes a *partaker of Christ's resurrection LIFE*. There is more than justice in view here; there is the need and the impartation of *life* and this life, while spiritual in its nature, is none the less real.

Once more we ask: Was not Christ's death real? Was not His death really *our death*? Then just so real is our resurrection life! In the first place, when we accept Christ's death as our own and become identified with Him, we actually die to the old life in the sense that we can never again go back to our lost estate. That condition is past forever. Furthermore, we now become partakers of the resurrection life of Christ, which we can never lose (Rom. 6:9) since it is *His* life. As the Father has raised us from the dead *judicially*, so the Spirit has raised us *spiritually*, in the sense that He has actually imparted spiritual *life*. It is now ours to appropriate and enjoy the fulness of that life by faith.

In Rom. 8:2 Paul speaks of this impartation of life by the Spirit as a law which operates in every believer:

"For the law of the Spirit, [that] of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

And then the apostle proceeds to show that what the law of Moses "could not do" because of the character of "the flesh," God sent His own Son to accomplish:

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).

Thus, besides the *moral* reason why we should not continue in sin, there is also a very *practical* reason: the new *life* which the Spirit has begotten within us. This the apostle emphasizes in Romans 8, as he goes on to say:

"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 [GIVE LIFE TO] YOUR MORTAL BODIES BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU.

"THEREFORE, BRETHREN, WE ARE DEBTORS, NOT TO THE FLESH, TO LIVE AFTER THE FLESH" (Verses 11, 12).

This passage is sometimes supposed to refer to the future bodily resurrection of the dead, but note that the Spirit, who dwells in us, energizes our *mortal* (not *dead*) bodies. Thus we are *debtors* --not to sin, but to God. We cannot excuse ourselves by saying, "I am only human after all," or "the flesh is weak," for we have the Holy Spirit within to strengthen our mortal bodies and help us to walk in newness of life.

The judicial and practical aspects of our resurrection with Christ are, however, closely intertwined. Eph. 2:4-6 seems to refer to both at the same time:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Thus the believer's *position* is already in heaven, and by faith, through the power of the Spirit, he may *occupy* that position and enjoy its blessings experientially. This is why the apostle opens the Ephesian epistle with the doxology:

"BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN .CHRIST" (Eph. 1:3).

And this is why he challenges the Colossians:

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

"SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH.

"FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD" (Col. 3:1-3).

Chapter IV

THE NEW CREATION

ALL THINGS BECOME NEW

"So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (II Cor. 5:17, New Tr.).

An appreciation of the truth contained in the above passage will prove to be one of the greatest possible helps to the believer who desires to live a truly spiritual life.

We have thus far considered birth and resurrection as descriptive of the impartation of life to believers by the Spirit, but even these two terms fail to tell the whole story. A third, that of *creation*, must be added to complete the description.

As with new birth and resurrection, the term *creation* is also used in more than one connection. It is used, for example, in connection with the new heaven and the new earth ([Isa. 65:17](#)). There is a general sense, too, in which the saved in any age may be considered a new creation, and even a more particular sense in which redeemed Israel of the future is called a new creation ([Psa. 102:16-18](#); [Isa. 65:18](#)) but as with the other two terms we have considered, this term is given unique significance in the great Pauline revelation concerning Christ and the members of His Body. Indeed, it is Paul alone who, by the Spirit, uses the exact phrase *new creation*, and exclusively in this connection.

THE NEW CREATION IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

The above rendering of II Cor. 5:17 by [J. N. Darby](#), in his *New Translation*, is doubtless more accurate than that of the *Authorized Version*. The idea in this passage is not merely that believers in Christ have individually become new creations (though this is also true) but that they now *belong* to a glorious new creation which God has brought into being in Christ. Likewise, the latter part of the verse does not mean merely that the old sinful habits have passed away from the life of the individual believer, to be replaced by a new manner of life (however this may, or should, be true) but that with the forming of the new creation an entirely new *order* or *program* has been ushered in.

That this is the correct meaning of this passage is evident from Paul's remarks in general with reference to the new creation, as well as from the context here in II Cor. 5. Especially is it evident from the preceding verse, which reads:

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (Ver. 16).

The whole passage in II Cor. 5 has to do with knowing Christ henceforth in a new and different way, no longer after the flesh, but as the Head of a new creation, and with knowing men too, no longer after the flesh, but as belonging either to the old creation or to the new creation in Christ.

The Ephesians Epistle has a great deal to say about this important truth. After reminding us, in Eph. 2:11,12, that as Gentiles we were aliens from God and from His covenant people, the apostle goes on to say:

"BUT NOW in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

"For He is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us:

". . . TO MAKE [Gr., CREATE] IN HIMSELF OF TWAIN ONE NEW MAN, so making peace" (Eph. 2:13-15).

In the third chapter the apostle, proclaiming the revelation "which in other ages was not made known," declares that believing Gentiles now are:

"... Joint heirs, and a Joint body, and joint partakers of [God's] promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings" (Eph. 3:6, New Tr.).

This "*new creation*," this "*one new man*," this "*joint body*," formed of Jews and Gentiles made one in Christ, is called "*His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all*" (Eph. 1:23).

THE NEW CREATION THE COUNTERPART OF THE OLD

God's new creation in Christ is the counterpart of the creation of the Adam of Gen. 5:2. Before God gave the woman to the man, his name was called *Adam* (Gen. 2:18-20). Then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, took a part out of his side, formed the woman from it and gave her back to the man to become "one flesh" with him. "And He called *their* name Adam" (Gen. 5:2).

In like manner the Church which is Christ's Body was brought into being through His death and taken out of His wounded side, so to speak, to be made one with Him in His resurrection life. And, as in the case of Eve, we are given *His* name. Speaking of the members of the Body, the apostle says:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members . . . SO ALSO IS CHRIST" (I Cor. 12:12).

We repeat, however, that the "new creation," the "new man," is the counterpart of *the Adam of Gen. 5:2*. Christ Himself was not created, as Adam was, for we read in I Cor. 15:45,47:

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was⁶... A QUICKENING [LIFE-GIVING] SPIRIT."

"The first man is of the earth earthy; the second Man is THE LORD FROM HEAVEN."

ITS BEGINNING IN HISTORY

When the utter failure of both Jew and Gentile had been demonstrated, God concluded both in unbelief that He might show mercy to all (Ron. 11:32):

"And THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE BOTH UNTO GOD IN ONE. BODY by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).

Thus the new creation, the Body of Christ, had a definite beginning in human history. It was brought into being, historically, with the fall of Israel and the dispensation of the grace of God through Paul.

The "old things" which "passed away" at that time (II Cor. 5:17) were the conditions and requirements of the Old Covenant. So completely have these "old things" of the "Old Covenant" passed away that God takes the basic requirement of them all, circumcision, and says concerning it:

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 6:15).

God no longer says: "IF ye will obey My voice indeed . . . THEN ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me ..." (Ex. 19:5). "All things have become new" (Ver. 17) and in this new order "*All things are of God,⁷ Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ*" (Ver. 18). With us there is no continual "if." We, the members of "Christ's Body," are assured that we *are* the treasure of God's heart because we have been made one with Christ, His beloved Son (Eph. 1:6). Immediately upon believing we are given the position of *fullgrown sons* (Gal. 4:1-7; Eph. 1:5,6)⁸ with our standing based on grace, not law (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 3:23-25; 4:6,7). This is a truth which the figure of the new birth does not convey.

⁶ Not "was made."

⁷ I.e., *declared* to be of God. Essentially "all things" necessary to salvation were always "of God," but this was not yet revealed to be so. Under the Old Covenant and right on through until Paul, men were always instructed to do something to find acceptance with *God*. Now God declares that *He Himself* has accomplished all that is necessary and offers salvation "to Him that worketh not, but believeth" (Rom. 4:5).

⁸ The terms "adoption of sons" and "adoption of children" (Gr., *Huiiothesia*) in these passages should have been rendered "placing as sons." The word *Huiiothesia* alludes to the ceremony by which the lad, having come to years, was officially declared to be a *fullgrown son*.

ITS ORIGIN IN THE PURPOSES OF GOD

But while the new creation had its beginning *in human history* with the fall of Israel and the dispensation of the grace of God through Paul, it was planned by God long before this.

As we have seen, the doctrine of the new birth contemplates only a new beginning. The doctrine of our resurrection with Christ goes farther, reckoning with the past unregenerate state of the individual as well as with the new life which he receives upon believing, for resurrection presupposes a former life and death. But the doctrine of the new creation in Christ reaches back far beyond our unregenerate state, back beyond the creation of Adam, who brought sin into the world, back even beyond the creation of the old universe, which was ruined by sin, to *the eternal purpose of God*.

It was in eternity past that God purposed that when the sin of Adam's children had risen to its height. when Israel had joined the Gentiles in rebellion and both had "set themselves against the Lord and against His Anointed," He would form a new creation of *reconciled* Jews and Gentiles, joined to each other and to Christ, the Second Man, the Last Adam. That this was His eternal purpose is clearly taught in the epistles of Paul, as we shall presently see in connection with --

THE NEW CREATION AND CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

God's eternal purpose in the new creation was, among other things, that sinners, made in the image of fallen Adam, might be conformed to the image of Christ, God's sinless Son; that they might bring forth good works instead of evil, and live to the glory of His grace. The accomplishment of this purpose will be *consummated*, of course, after this life is over, but it is evident from those passages which deal with it, that *God* would have us enter into the joy and power of our union with Christ *now* by faith. This will readily be seen from the following representative passages:

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON . . ." (Rom. 8:29).

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM,"⁹

"In love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:4,5).

⁹ The words "in love" probably belong to the next verse. There is no punctuation to determine this in the original.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM" (Eph. 2:10).

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it;

"THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,

"THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF, A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING; BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH" (Eph. 5:25-27).

". . . [ye have] put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

"And [are being] renewed in the spirit of your mind;

"And . . . [ye have] PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH AFTER GOD IS CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS" (Eph. 4:22-24).

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

"AND HAVE PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH IS RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM THAT CREATED HIM:

"Where there is the neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:9-11).

Perhaps the reader has already noticed that believers *have* "put on" the new man and are exhorted to depart from evil *in the light of this fact*. God would have us put on the new man *experientially* in the light of the fact that *positionally* we have already put him on by faith in Christ. It will be noticed that in the latter passage quoted above our *position in the Body* is unquestionably referred to, for the passage goes on to say: "*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew,*" etc.

THE NEW CREATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

How helpful the knowledge of these things should prove in the lives of those who truly desire to live pleasing to God! To think that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world! To think that God has fully accepted us in His beloved Son! To think that He has already -- and eternally -- united us with Christ! To think that our oneness with Christ has also made us one with one another! To think that God has given us a place at His right hand in Christ--a position we may *now* occupy by faith! To think that He deals with us as fullgrown sons, on the basis of grace, rather than law! To think that He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ -- blessings we may *now* appropriate by faith! What could serve as a greater incentive to "walk worthy of the Lord" than the knowledge of these things?

We do not mean to imply that a mere *intellectual* knowledge of these facts will afford us any help to live truly spiritual lives, any more than mere intellectual knowledge could save us. It must be a knowledge based on *faith* in the Word of God, inwrought by the Spirit, Who wrote the Word.

We must not forget, to begin with, that the Body of Christ, the new creation, is formed of believing Jews and Gentiles *by the work of the Spirit*.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles ..." (I Cor. 12:13).

Furthermore, we can understand and enjoy the glorious truths concerning our position in Christ only by faith, as the Spirit opens our eyes to understand the Scriptures. This is why the apostle prays so earnestly:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe . . ." (Eph. 1:17-19).

Surely the apostle speaks here of "knowing" these things *experientially*, not merely intellectually. Thus we must ever look to God to make these truths real to us by His Spirit, that the knowledge of faith may become the knowledge of blessed experience.

Chapter V

THE TWO NATURES IN THE BELIEVER

THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW

The believer who would be truly spiritual must recognize the fact that within him there are now *two* natures; that *in addition* to the fallen nature of Adam there is also the perfect nature of Christ, begotten of God through the Holy Spirit.

So real is the presence of *both* these natures in every child of God, that in Paul's references to the believer's experience, his personal pronouns refer sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other.

A good example of this is found in Rom. 7, where the apostle says on the one hand: "*I am carnal, sold under sin*" (Ver. 14) and on the other: "*I serve the law of God*" (Ver. 25). Again he says, on the one hand: "*In me... dwelleth no good thing*" (Ver. 18) and on the other: "*I delight in the law of God ...*" (Ver. 22) referring on the one hand to the old nature, and on the other to the new. Surely the "I" who delights in the law of God is not the same "I" who is "carnal, sold under sin" (Ver. 14). Yet in both cases the apostle uses the first person pronoun, associating both conditions with himself.

That the apostle here refers to *two* natures in *one* person is clear from the qualifying clauses he employs. On the one hand he says: "*In me (THAT IS IN MY FLESH) dwelleth no good thing*" (Ver. 18) while on the other, he says: "*I delight in the law of God AFTER THE INWARD MAN*" (Ver. 22). Thus the "me" in Ver. 18 refers to the old nature, while the "I" in Ver. 22 refers to the new. In the former dwells no good thing, while the latter delights in the law of God.

THE OLD NATURE IN THE BELIEVER

The believer who would be truly spiritual *must* recognize the presence of the old nature within. It would be dangerous *not* to recognize a foe so near.

The old nature in the believer is that which is "begotten of the flesh." It is called, "the flesh," "the old man," "the natural man," "the carnal mind."

Just as "they that are *in* the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8) so that which is *of* the flesh, in the believer, cannot please God. "The flesh," as we have already seen, is totally depraved. God calls it "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3)¹⁰ warns that it seeks

¹⁰ Even though, as we have shown, it may express itself in an attempt at self-betterment, seeking to control the baser passions, and revelling in religious rites and ceremonies, in ascetic practices or in other substitutes for true spirituality.

"occasion" to do wrong (Gal. 5:13) and declares that "the works of the flesh" are all bad (Gal. 5:19-21).

Nor is the old nature in the believer one which improves by its contact with the new. It is with respect to "the flesh" *in the believer, even in himself*, That the apostle declares that in it "*dwelleth no good thing*" (Rom. 7:18) that it is "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14) that it is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22) that it is at "*enmity against God*," and is "*not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE*" (Rom. 8:7).

"The flesh," even as it remains in the believer after salvation, is that which was generated by a fallen begetter. It is the old Adamic nature. It is sinful in itself. It cannot be improved. It cannot be changed. "*That which is born [begotten] of the flesh is flesh*," said our Lord (John 3:6) and it is as impossible to improve the "old man" in the believer as it was to make him acceptable to God in the first place.

The "old man" was condemned and dealt with judicially at the Cross. Never once is the believer instructed to try to do anything with him or to make anything of him, but always to *reckon him dead*, and so "put him off." But more of this later.

THE OLD NATURE NOT ERADICATED IN THIS LIFE

There are those who, with good motive, to be sure, strive to achieve the eradication of the old nature in this life. Such do not help, but hinder, the attainment of true spirituality.

First, the doctrine of eradication, far from taking a truly serious view of sin, takes a very shallow, superficial view of it. Those who teach it suppose that if we could get rid of the sins *we recognize* we should be perfect, not realizing that *at our very best* we all, having fallen into sin in Adam, *constantly "come [present tense]"¹¹ short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23) and will continue to come short of it until we are changed to be "like Him." Thus "*We, through the Spirit, WAIT for the hope of [perfect, personal] righteousness by faith*" (Gal. 5:5).

Concerning those who feel that they *have* achieved the eradication of the old nature, the fact is that *others* can invariably testify that they have *not!* And generally those who claim to be without sin are guilty of one of the greatest of all sins - spiritual pride.

Certainly the doctrine of eradication is a fiat contradiction of Scripture. The first epistle of John emphatically declares:

¹¹ The idea in Rom. 3:23 is not, as might appear from the Authorized rendering: "All have sinned and have come short of the glory of God" but "All have sinned and *do* come short of the glory of God."

"IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US" (I John 1:8).

"IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT SINNED, WE MAKE HIM A LIAR, AND HIS WORD IS NOT IN US" (I John 1:10).

Paul also speaks of *"the law of sin which is in my members"* (Rom. 7:23) and urges constant reliance upon the Holy Spirit for overcoming power (Rom. 8:11-13; Gal. 5:16,25). Indeed, if the doctrine of eradication were Scripturally sound there would be no reason for Paul to instruct *all* believers to deal with the old nature, in such terms as: "reckon," "yield not," "put off," "mortify," etc.

But let us suppose for the moment that it *were* possible to achieve the eradication of the flesh; would that also dispose of our other two enemies, the world and the devil? Surely not, and having gotten rid only of the fallen nature of Adam, we would, like Adam before the fall, be as subject to temptation from without as he, and would as surely fall. But the Scriptures clearly teach that we all *fell once* in Adam:

".. . by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

THE NEW NATURE IN THE BELIEVER

It has been well said that if there is anything good in any man it is because it was *put* there by God. And something good -- a new, sinless nature -- has been imparted by God to every believer.

While there is still within us "that which is begotten of the flesh," there is also "that which is begotten of the Spirit," and just as the one is totally depraved and "cannot please God," so the other is absolutely perfect and *always* pleases Him.

Adam was originally created in the image and likeness of God, but he fell into sin and later "*begat a son in HIS OWN likeness, after HIS image*" (Gen. 5:3). It could not be otherwise. Fallen Adam could generate and beget only fallen, sinful offspring, whom even the law could not change. But "*what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son IN THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH, and for sin,*" accomplished, "*that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" (Rom. 8:3,4).

As Adam was made in the likeness of God, but fell, so Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, to redeem us from the fall, that by grace, through the operation of the Spirit, a new creation might be brought into being, a "*new man . . . renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*" (Col. 3:10) a "*new man, which, after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*" (Eph. 4:24).

John, who does not go as far as the symbol of the new creation in this connection, nevertheless refers to the impartation of the new nature to believers, when he says:

"Whosoever is born [begotten] of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and HE CANNOT SIN, BECAUSE HE IS BORN [BEGOTTEN] OF GOD" (I John 3:9).

"WE KNOW THAT WHOSOEVER IS BORN [BEGOTTEN] OF GOD SINNETH NOT . . ." (I John 5:18).

It is evident that the "whosoever," here, does not refer to the individual as such, but to that part of the individual which Paul calls the "new man," for we have already seen that John, in this same epistle, declares that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and make God a liar. It is the *new nature* in the believer that cannot sin, for it is the new nature, not the old, that was begotten of God.

Thus *in addition* to our fallen Adamic nature we, through faith, have also become "partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). This is the "inner man" of which Paul speaks in Eph. 3:16, and this "inward man" delights to do God's will (Rom. 7:22).

Let us thank God that the old nature is under the condemnation of death. Judicially it has already been dealt with. It was put to death representatively in Christ. Practically it will come to its end when our "earthly house . . . is dissolved" (II Cor. 5:1) or when we are "changed" (I Cor. 15:52) and "caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thes. 4:17) but the new nature -- that which is begotten of God -- will never die. In the first place it does not come under the condemnation of sin. In the second, it is that which is begotten, *"not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"* (I Pet. 1:23).

Paul, by the Spirit, gives particular emphasis to this fact as it affects believers in this present dispensation, for we are not only "begotten" of the Spirit and given the resurrection life of Christ, but we belong to the "new creation" (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10) which God will glorify "in the ages to come," in order to *"show the exceeding riches of His grace"* (Eph. 2:7).

We have now cleared the way for a consideration of the conflict between the old nature and the new, and of the means placed at our disposal to overcome the old.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW NATURES

The epistles of Paul have much to say about the conflict continually going on between the old and new natures in the believer. God has a gracious purpose in permitting this conflict and it has its real advantages to the believer; also, abundant

provision has been made for spiritual victory in any given case, but before considering all this, let us deal first with the *fact* of the conflict itself.

Concerning this conflict, the Apostle Paul writes, by inspiration:

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

Regarding this conflict in his own personal experience, he writes:

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:19, 22, 23).

It has been taught by some that we need not experience this continual strife between the old nature and the new. They say: "Get out of the 7th of Romans into the 8th."

We would remind such that the Apostle Paul wrote Romans 7 and Romans 8 *at the same sitting*; that in the original the letter goes right on without interruption -- without even a chapter division. Thus the same apostle who exclaims: "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1) refers in the *same letter*, only a few sentences before, using the *present tense*, to "*the law of sin which IS in my members,*" and freely acknowledges the *present* operation of that law in his members, as we have seen above. How then shall we get out of the 7th of Romans into the 8th? Paul experienced *both* at the same time, and so do we, for while we are free from the *condemnation* of sin, sin itself nevertheless continues to work within us.

It is true indeed that no amount of striving can *improve the old Adamic nature*, but it is *not* true that there should be no strife between the old and new natures, otherwise the exhortations not to "*yield*" to the dictates of the old nature, but to "*put off*" the deeds of the old man and "*mortify,*" or *put to death*, our earthward inclinations, would all be meaningless.

It is a simple *fact* that the conflict described in Romans 7 is experienced in the life of every believer. Else let those who contend that we should get out of Romans 7 deny it. If they have come to the place where they *can* consistently do the things

that they would;¹² where "the law of sin" no longer operates in their members; if in their experience they have been wholly delivered from its captivity; if they need not-up to this very day in their experience -- acknowledge: "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do"; if they need not cry with Paul: "O wretched man that I am!" if they need not "*wait*" with Paul "for the hope of [perfect, personal] righteousness by faith," they should take their stand with those who teach sinless perfection and the eradication of the old nature. If, however, they are *not* prepared to make these claims, they should acknowledge the naked truth of Gal. 5:17 and Rom. 7:22,23.

Should it be asked how we are to be blamed if we "*cannot*" do the things that we would, we reply that Gal. 5:17 was not written to teach us our *helplessness*, but rather our *utter depravity*. The Spirit is always present and willing to bestow needed help, but we are so inherently *bad* by nature that we never consistently succeed in doing the things that we would. Indeed, the flesh wages constant, relentless war to prevent us from doing them.

It is true that the believer has been made "free from sin" by grace (Rom. 6:14,18) that is, he *need* not, yea, *should* not, yield to sin in any given case (Rom. 6:12,13). It is also true that the believer is "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2) for Christ bore the death penalty for him. But no believer is free from the presence of what Paul calls "*the law of sin which is in my members;*" that is, from the old nature, with its inherent tendency to do wrong. Nor is he free from the conflict with the *new* nature, which this involves. If we would be truly spiritual and deal in a Scriptural way with the sin that indwells us, we must clearly recognize its presence; we must face the fact that while, praise God, we are no longer "*in sin,*" sin is still in us, and that though the "old man" is *counted* as having died with Christ, he is still alive and very active as far as our *experience* is concerned.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE CONFLICT

But this conflict should not discourage us, for it is one of the sure signs of true salvation. It is unknown to the unbeliever, for only the *additional* presence of the new nature, along with the old, causes this conflict, for "these are contrary the one to the other."

If we did not experience this conflict at all it could only mean that we were not saved, for with *two* natures so utterly incompatible dwelling within, conflict would be inevitable. If we know *little* of this conflict it can only mean that the old nature, in any of its subtle, deceitful forms, has attained the upper hand, for when the new nature asserts itself, as it should, the old nature is sure to "war" against it all the more fiercely.

¹² Granting that Gal. 5:17 might be rendered: "to prevent you from doing what you would," as in R.S.V., the fact still remains that "the *law* of sin" operates in our members and does hinder us from doing (consistently) what we would.

But not only is the conflict within us a sure sign of salvation; it also creates within us a deep and necessary sense of our inward corruption and of the infinite grace of a holy God in saving us and ministering to us daily in helping us to overcome sin. And in turn this again gives us a more understanding approach as we proclaim to the lost the gospel of the grace of God.

POWER TO OVERCOME

And now a word as to the means which God has provided to help us to overcome sin and live normal spiritual lives:

From what has already been said, it is evident that the Holy Spirit does not, upon saving us, take possession of us and thenceforth supernaturally *cause* us to live lives pleasing to God. Rather, as with salvation, so with the Christian life, He operates in the believer "by grace, through faith." Powerful assistance to overcome sin is freely provided by grace, but this help must be appropriated by *faith in each individual case*. There is no blanket provision for continuous victory throughout the whole war of life. We must look to Him in faith for the help we need in each separate battle. Thus the Scripture teaching with regard to victory over sin is not that it is not possible for us to sin, but rather that in any given case it is possible for us *not* to sin. Thus too, the question in times of temptation is generally whether we truly *desire* to overcome, for deliverance is freely provided by grace, if we will appropriate it by faith.

But just how is deliverance provided? The answer is: by the Spirit.

No longer need the believer remain enslaved to sin, for the Holy Spirit within, Who imparted life to begin with, will also impart strength to overcome sin. When tried and unable even to pray as we ought, "*the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities*" and "*maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*" (Rom. 8:26). When weak and ill, we may be "*strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man*" (Eph. 3:16). Indeed, the Spirit even strengthens us physically to overcome sin, for we read:

"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 MORTAL¹³ BODIES BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU" (Rom. 8:11).

This is not to be confused with miraculous healing. It has entirely to do with strengthening against temptation. Hence the apostle goes on to say:

"THEREFORE, BRETHREN, WE ARE DEBTORS, NOT TO THE FLESH, TO LIVE AFTER THE FLESH" (Rom. 8:12).

¹³ Not "your dead bodies." This verse does not apply to the future resurrection of our dead bodies. Note the context.

We are debtors, then, to the Spirit, who indwells us, and *not* to the flesh. With the Spirit so near to help, there is no justification for complaining about our weakness, or for excusing our sins on the grounds that "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," or "I am human after all."

But the Spirit uses one medium above all to strengthen us against temptation: *His own Word*. There we learn what *God* has done with the old nature and what our position is in Christ; facts *we* must understand and appreciate if we would know how to deal with the old nature and *enjoy* our position in Christ.

In the first place God counts the old nature in us as having been already put to death for sin, in Christ at Calvary. We should never cease to thank God for this, for it means that as far as our relationship with Him is concerned (and that is what matters most) the sin question has already been settled. But this implies also that the old nature has no longer any right to live or to assert itself. Thus the apostle argues:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Rom 6:3).

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin . . ." (Rom 6:11).

But there is more, for not only has the "old man" now been put to death in Christ; a "*new man*" has now emerged with Christ from the grave:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

This, in turn, we must also "reckon" to be true indeed, and must appropriate by faith, for the apostle says:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3).

Thus there is a positive as well as a negative reason for living pleasing to God, as we find further in Romans 6:

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be aaaa in. deed binto sin, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: BUT YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD, AS THOSE THAT ARE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD, AND YOUR MEMBERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO GOD" (Rom. 6:11-13).

The later epistles of Paul develop further our glorious position in Christ and also show clearly that *there is nothing which will so help us to live pleasing to God as an understanding and an appreciation o] our position and our blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.*

It is as we are occupied with these "things of the Spirit," that we find ourselves "walking in the Spirit," and: *"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"* (Gal. 5:16). Indeed, as we thus walk in the Spirit we shall bear

". . . the fruit of the Spirit . . . love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

"Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

How much better to have our lives *transformed* by occupation with Christ (II Cor. 3:18) and our position and blessings in the heavenlies with Him (Col. 3:1-3) than to assume the hopeless task of trying to improve the old nature; always engaged in introspection; always occupied with the flesh!

Briefly, our responsibilities with respect to the "old man" are: Reckon him *dead indeed*; don't try to improve him (Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3). Make no provision for him (Rom. 13:14). "Put him off" *practically*, as he has been "put off" *positionally* (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:8,9). Our responsibilities with respect to the "new man": "Reckon ye yourselves to be . . . alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. 6:13). Nourish the new man (Col. 3:16; I Pet. 2:2). "Walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). "Put on the new man" *practically* as he has been "put on" *positionally* (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). "Seek those things which are above" (Col. 3: 1). Be constantly occupied with the things of God; with what He has *done* for you in Christ, with what He has *made* you in Christ and with what He has *given* you in Christ.

**"THIS I SAY THEN, WALK IN THE SPIRIT, AND YE SHALL NOT FULFIL
THE LUST OF THE FLESH" (Gal. 5:16).**

Chapter VI

SANCTIFICATION

A PRECIOUS TRUTH TOO LITTLE APPRECIATED

It is regrettable that so many Bible commentaries take so shallow a view of the subject of *sanctification*.

Most Bible students know that in the *Authorized Version* of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures the words "holiness" and "sanctification," with scarcely any exceptions have the same meaning. In the Old Testament both words come from the single Hebrew root *qodesh*, while in the New both come from the single Greek root *hagiazo*.

According to most commentaries *qodesh* and its Greek equivalent *hagiazo*, simply mean "to set apart" or "to separate." Now it is true that this is the organic meaning in both cases, but very often the organic meaning of a word falls far short of expressing its true significance in actual usage. Such is the case with the Hebrew and Greek words for *sanctification*. Organically they mean a separating or setting apart, but *as used in the Scriptures* they mean much more than this.

CONSECRATION

In Bible usage, both in Old and New Testaments to make holy, or to sanctify, means "to set apart as *sacred*," "to *consecrate*," "to *dedicate*." The following passages are but a few that bear out this fact:

Gen. 2:3: "And God blessed the seventh day and **SANCTIFIED** it."

Ex. 3:5: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is **HOLY** ground."

Matt. 6:9: "HALLOWED be Thy name."

II Cor. 11:2: ". . . I have **ESPOUSED** you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

In the above passages the Hebrew and Greek words in question are variously rendered "sanctified," "holy," "hallowed" and "espoused," but in each case the meaning is, "set apart as *sacred*," "*consecrated*," "*dedicated*." Thus Jerusalem is called "the *holy* city" ([Matt. 4:5](#)) and the sanctuary of the tabernacle, "the *holiest of all*" ([Heb. 9:3,8](#)); the Bible is called "the *holy* Scriptures" ([Rom. 1:2](#)) and the Spirit of God, "the *holy* Spirit" ([Eph. 4:30](#)).

THE BELIEVER'S SANCTIFICATION

How it would touch the hearts of many believers if they realized that both in our salvation and in our walk it has been God's purpose, not merely to set us apart *from the world*, but to set us apart *as sacred to Himself!* Sanctification speaks of God's love to us more than of ours to Him. This truth, to many, would cast an entirely new light on the doctrine of sanctification.

Sanctification is not a negative matter, but a *positive* one. God wants us for Himself. He considers us His hallowed possession much as a bridegroom considers his bride his very own, sacred to himself. This shows how precious the believer is to the heart of God and makes our separation from the world and sin the natural *result* of our consecration to Him. "Ye turned *to God from idols*," says the apostle, not "from idols to God" (See [I Thes. 1:9](#)). True Scriptural sanctification, or holiness, then, does not consist in "dos" and "don'ts," nor is it to be confused with sinless perfection. It is rather a consecration to God which *results* in a closer walk with Him.

POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION

In a very real sense every true believer has already been sanctified, or consecrated, to God. Some view sanctification as a second work of grace, after salvation. Actually it is the very first work of grace. Sanctification begins with God as He chooses us and sets us apart for Himself through the work of the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of sin and leads us to faith in Christ. Thus we read:

". . . God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT and belief of the truth" (II Thes. 2:13).

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:2).

Nor is this phase of our sanctification affected by our conduct. In Eph. 5:2,3 the apostle declares that believers *should "walk... as becometh saints [sanctified ones]"* but this in itself implies that some who *are* saints do *not* walk so.

Even the carnal Corinthians are addressed as "*saints*" -- "*sanctified in Christ Jesus*" ([I Cor. 1:2](#)). Naming sins which some of them were even then committing, he goes on to say:

"AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU, BUT YE ARE WASHED, BUT YE ARE SANCTIFIED, BUT YE ARE JUSTIFIED, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, AND BY THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD" (I Cor. 6:11).

Thus believers, whatever their *state*, are called:

". . . them which ARE sanctified" (Acts 20: 32;26:18).

". . . the elect of God, HOLY AND BELOVED . . ." (Col. 3:12).

All this, of course, pertains to our position and standing before God. It was *He* who, in infinite love and grace, set us apart as His own, declaring us righteous before all. But how can a righteous God justify a sinner? How can a holy God embrace a fallen son of Adam? The answer is, through the glorious, all-sufficient work of Christ on the sinner's behalf.

"YE ARE SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL" (Heb. 10:10).

"FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED" (Heb. 10:14).

Positionally, then, *every* believer *has been sanctified*, or set apart, *by God* for Himself through the operation of the Holy Spirit and on the basis of the shed blood of Christ. Little wonder the Spirit thunders forth the challenge:

"WHO SHALL LAY ANYTHING TO THE CHARGE OF GOD'S ELECT? IT IS GOD THAT JUSTIFIETH. WHO IS HE THAT CONDEMNETH?..." (Rom. 8:33,34).

How precious are these truths! Yet, the apostle never teaches positional truth without applying it in a practical way. If *God* in love set us apart *as His own*, should not *our* love respond to His? Should it not also be our heart's desire to be His, wholly His, in experience and conduct? Should not our hearts be touched with gratitude and wonder at His condescending love and result in spontaneous and eager consecration to Him?

PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION

It is this that the apostle has in mind as, by the Spirit, he writes that God -

". . . hath chosen us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM,

"In love¹⁴ having predestinated us unto the adoption of children . . ." (Eph. 1:4,5).

"FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION . . ." (I Thes. 4:3).

¹⁴ While there is no punctuation in the original, it appears from the context that the words "in love" belong with Verse 5.

But here a word of caution is needed, lest in seeking to be wholly sanctified to God, we leave ourselves open to discouragement and disillusionment.

Nowhere in Scripture are we instructed to sanctify the "flesh" to God. The Scriptures teach that the "flesh," the old Adamic nature, is *totally* bad and experience bears witness that this is so. The "flesh" cannot be improved, or reformed, or converted, and "they that are in the flesh** *cannot* please God" (Rom. 8:8). It is for this reason that God sent His own Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh" to "condemn sin in the flesh" at Calvary (See Rom. 8:3).

We are not, then, to seek to improve the old nature or dedicate it to God, but to recognize it as condemned by God and crucified with Christ.

"KNOWING THIS, THAT OUR OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM . . ." Rom. 6:6).

"LIKEWISE RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD" (Rom. 6:11).

But while the believer's "flesh" cannot be sanctified to God, his body can and should be. The Apostle Paul has much to say about this:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE" (Rom. 12:1).

"WHAT? KNOW YE NOT THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS IN YOU, WHICH YE HAVE OF GOD, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN?"

"FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S" (I Cor. 6:19,20).

Thus the apostle writes to the Thessalonians:

"That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor" (I Thes. 4:4).

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thes. 4:7).

And thus he concludes:

"AND THE VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY; AND I PRAY GOD YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED

BLAMELESS UNTO THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" (1 Thes. 5:23).

In his very last epistle he declares that while "the Lord knoweth them that are His," all who name the name of Christ should "depart from iniquity," and goes on to explain that -

". . . in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, SANCTIFIED, AND MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:20,21).

The Church is indeed "a great house," and in it there are all sorts of vessels. Most of these, it is to be feared, are *dishonoring* to the Lord and *unfit* for the Master's use. God grant that we may not belong to this number, but may rather be vessels which will bring honor to God, "*sanctified, and meet [fit] for the Master's use.*"

THE "HOW" OF PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION

As we consider *how* to be sanctified to God in walk and experience we must again place the emphasis where God has placed it: upon His blessed Word.

No one will deny that prayer is an important element in practical sanctification, yet the Word places the supreme emphasis upon itself in this matter,

Our Lord prayed for His disciples:

"SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH" (John 17:17).

The Apostle Paul declares that our Lord "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it,

"THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSB IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD" (Eph. 5:25,26).

Many dear Christians have said to the writer: "If only I could remember these Bible truths better, but I have a mind like a sieve." But pour water through a seive and it will at least have a cleansing effect. And so does the blessed Word of God have a cleansing effect upon those who prayerfully read it and meditate upon it. It is the Word which its Author, the Holy Spirit, uses to cleanse and sanctify us more and more to God, and those who are not deeply and sincerely interested in the

study of the Word will never enjoy true, practical sanctification no matter how much they pray.

Chapter VII

THE FILLING WITH THE SPIRIT

THE BELIEVER'S SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVE

The majority of believers are very much confused with regard to the Holy Spirit's work in their lives and the exact extent to which they may expect His help in overcoming sin. This confusion has been brought about mainly by the unscriptural tradition that the present dispensation began with the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost. A further word in this connection will therefore be necessary.

Those who hold that Pentecost marks the beginning of the present dispensation should examine carefully those Scriptures which deal with the Holy Spirit and His work. A simple comparison, for example, of His operation at Pentecost with His operation today, as outlined in the Pauline epistles, can lead to but one conclusion: that the baptism with, or in, the Spirit at Pentecost has been superseded by another baptism altogether -- that by which believers are baptized into one body -- and that the Body of Christ did not exist (except in the mind of God) when the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. If our Fundamentalist leaders will verify and accept this fact, they will have the answer to the "Pentecostal" fanaticism that is sweeping the country today.

THE SPIRIT'S OPERATION AT PENTECOST

Concerning the one hundred twenty believers gathered in the upper room at Pentecost, we read:

"AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT" (Acts 2:4, R.V.).

This, of course, is another way of saying that the Holy Spirit took complete possession of them.¹⁵ Those who have come to appreciate the meaning of the Bible word *baptism*, will see at once the connection with the Lord's promise that His own should be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). Indeed, they were "filled" with the Spirit (Acts 2:4) in fulfillment of the promise that they should be "*baptized*" with the Spirit.¹⁶

¹⁵ Much as whatever takes possession of the mind is said to fill it.

¹⁶ Dr. Bullinger, in his theory regarding "the Giver and His gifts," argues that the Pentecostal believers were filled merely with "holy spirit," not the Holy Spirit, since the article is not found in the original in these two verses. We reject this as unscriptural. The "gift" referred to in Acts 2:38, 8:20, etc., is not said to be given by the Spirit. The "gift" is the Holy Spirit Himself, given by the Father and the Son (John 14:16,17). Thus in Acts 19, when the apostle found that the disciples there had not received *pneuma hagion*, he "laid his hands upon them" and "*to pneuma to hagion* [Gr., *the Spirit, the holy*] came on them" (Vers. 2,6; see also Luke 2:25,26; cf. II Pet. 1:21; John 7:39; Acts 11:15,16; Eph. 1:13 in the original).

And the result of this baptism, this filling, with the Spirit, was not only that they possessed miraculous powers, but also that they lived the kind of lives which God's people prior to that time had failed to live, and this is the particular matter with which we are here concerned.

Mark well: in Acts 2:4 we do not have an *exhortation* to be filled with the Spirit, as we have later in the Pauline epistles. Rather, we have a simple statement of fact: "*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*"

The one hundred twenty had, of course, been much like any other group of believers in history. They had not all been equally spiritual or devoted or faithful. Some had been more so than others, and where some had excelled in one virtue, others had excelled in another. Yet now they were *all FILLED* with the Spirit, from the least to the greatest of them.

The thoughtful student of Scripture will, of course, ask why all these believers were now filled with the Holy Spirit. Was it, perhaps, because they, as a group, had been more godly than those before them? The gospel records prove that this is not so. Peter boasted, Thomas doubted, James and John sought personal gain, and when our Lord was taken prisoner, "they all forsook Him and fled." Was it then because they had *prayed* long enough or earnestly enough for the Spirit to come upon them and take control? No; they had been instructed to go to Jerusalem, not to *pray* for the Holy Spirit to come, as some suppose, but to "*wait* for the [fulfillment of the] *promise*" regarding the Spirit (Acts 1:4,5) -- and right here is the answer to our question. The believers at Pentecost were filled with the Holy Spirit, not because they had prayed long or earnestly enough for the Spirit to come, but because *the time had arrived for the fulfillment¹⁷ of the divine promise*. The Old Testament prophets and the Lord Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit should some day come to take control of God's people, and *that day had come*. They were *filled* with the Spirit because God, according to His promise, had *baptized* them with the Spirit.

THE SPIRIT'S OPERATION TODAY

The Apostle Paul never anywhere says that all the members of the Body of Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is surely clear from the record that the Corinthians and the Galatians, for example, were not filled with the Spirit, for Paul's letters to these churches contain much of rebuke and correction. And it is also evident that believers today are not -- even the best of them -- wholly filled with the Spirit. The filling with the Spirit is now a goal, an attainment, which the apostle, by inspiration, sets before us. We are not all filled with the Spirit as a matter of fact, as

¹⁷Some look upon Pentecost merely as a foreshadowing of the promised Millennial blessing. We believe it was the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise, but that the complete fulfillment was interrupted by the dispensation of grace. Note: "This is that . . ." (Acts 2:16).

were the Pentecostal believers. While the Spirit does indeed dwell within us by God's grace, we must *daily* appropriate His help and blessing *by faith*.

Hence the apostle now *exhorts* believers: "*Be filled with the Spirit*" (Eph. 5:18) just as he exhorts them and prays for them, that they may be "*filled with the fruits of righteousness*" (Phil. 1:11); "*filled with the knowledge of His will*" (Col. 1:9); "*filled with all the fulness of God*" (Eph. 3:19).

But *why* are not we automatically filled with the Spirit as the believers were at Pentecost? We will proceed to answer this question, but let the reader not fail to first recognize the *fact* that while the believers gathered in the upper room at Pentecost were *all filled* with the Spirit, the believers under Paul, since that time, have *not* all been filled with the Spirit. Moreover, while it is distinctly stated, again and again, that the Pentecostal believers were, or were to be, *baptized* with the Spirit, not once does Paul in his epistles teach that members of the Body of Christ are *baptized* with the Spirit.¹⁸ Instead he *exhorts* them to appropriate God's grace by faith so that they may be filled with the Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR

The prophesied work of the Holy Spirit in connection with His people Israel should be clearly understood if we would understand His work today, in connection with the members of the Body of Christ. In Joel 2:28,29 God promised to supernaturally cause them to prophesy, etc., but in Ezek. 36:26,27, He also promised to supernaturally *cause* them to do His will:

"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 an heart of flesh.

"AND I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU, AND CAUSE YOU TO WALK IN MY STATUTES, AND YE SHALL KEEP MY JUDGMENTS, AND DO THEM."

Thus God would show that the only way in which even His own people can perfectly obey Him is when He takes *possession* of them and *causes* them to do His will. Indeed, He is still demonstrating this. Though we today have all the advantages and blessings of the dispensation of grace, and though we desire most earnestly to obey and serve God as we ought, we still continually fall short. This is because, contrary to popular opinion, *none* of us has been baptized with the Spirit.

¹⁸ Not even in I Cor. 12:13.

THE CONDUCT OF THE BELIEVERS AT PENTECOST

At Pentecost the time had come, so far as prophecy was concerned, for the fulfillment of the promise concerning the Holy Spirit. *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:1, 4).

We must be careful to notice the immediate change that took place in the behavior of these believers, now that the Holy Spirit had come to take possession of them. Not only did they speak with tongues and prophesy and work miracles. but *they all began living for one another.*

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:44, 45).

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

"And laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:32, 34, 35).

Never before had the disciples of Christ even approached such a spirit of utter selflessness and love for one another. In spite of the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount and our Lord's repeated exhortations to sell and distribute their earthly goods and live for one another, they -- even the twelve -- had heretofore been fully as human and selfish as those who had gone before them.

One day James and John came to ask a special favor of Christ: that *they* might occupy the first places in the kingdom, sitting, the one at Christ's right hand and the other at His left! ([Mark 10:37](#)). Modest fellows! And the other ten were really no different at heart, for we read: *"When the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John"* (Ver. 41). We can almost hear them exclaim to each other: "Who do James and John think they are!" Nor was this the first time the apostles had *"disputed among themselves who should be the greatest"* ([Mark 9:34](#)).

But now, suddenly, all this was changed! Now each one put self aside and placed others first. And, as Jeremiah had predicted, *this came from the heart.* Mark well: it was of a multitude numbering more than five thousand ([Acts 4:4](#)) that we read that they were all of one heart and of one soul, and sold their lands and

houses and brought the proceeds to the apostles for distribution among the needy. Imagine the freedom and joy and blessedness that must have prevailed among the disciples under these conditions! These were indeed "the days of heaven upon earth"!

God's children in this present dispensation-the so-called Pentecostalists included -- have never lived together as the believers at Pentecost did. Imagine even suggesting having all things common among believers today! Those who cry "*Back to Pentecost*" would not, we fear, be the first to step up and hand over their hard-earned investments as Barnabas and *all* the believing property owners did at Pentecost. Indeed, it would be *wrong* if we did this today, for the Spirit's instruction for this present evil age is:

"If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8).

PENTECOST RELATED TO THE KINGDOM, NOT TO THE BODY

Pentecost was an earnest of the kingdom reign of Christ, when peace and prosperity will prevail on earth and men will not need to lay up store for the future. But as Israel stubbornly rejected the King and His kingdom and judgment seemed imminent, God graciously intervened and ushered in the dispensation of grace, under which we now live.

During this present dispensation God is doing a thing never once mentioned in Old Testament prophecy: forming a body of believers composed of Jews and Gentiles, reconciled to Himself by the Cross ([Eph. 2:16](#)). This body is called "the body of Christ," since its members are eternally and inseparably united to Christ by one divine baptism. This baptism, in turn, is something altogether separate and distinct from the baptism with the Spirit at Pentecost, and has superseded it. This is evident from the following facts:

At Pentecost *the Lord Jesus Christ was the Baptizer*, and He baptized the believers with, or in, the Holy Spirit.

Matt: 3:11: "HE [CHRIST] SHALL BAPTIZE; YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST.. ." (Cf. [Luke 3:16](#)).

John 15:26: "THE COMFORTER... WHOM I WILL SEND UNTO YOU FROM THE FATHER, EVEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH . . . SHALL TESTIFY OF ME:."

John 16:7: "IF I DEPART, I WILL SEND HIM UNTO YOU."

Today, under the dispensation of grace, however, the *Holy Spirit is the Baptizer*, baptizing believers into Christ and His Body.

I Cor. 12:13: "FOR BY ONE SPIRIT ARE WE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY"

GaL 3:27,28: "FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST."

"THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK, THERE IS NEITHER BOND NOR FREE, THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE: FOR YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS."

To those who would trace the Body of Christ back to Pentecost, we ask: Where in early Acts do we read of the Holy Spirit baptizing Jews and Gentiles into one joint body, the Body of Christ? Until Cornelius, the disciples preached the Word *"to none but unto the Jews only"* (Acts 11:19) and surely the *reconciliation* of Jews and Gentiles to God in one body could not be preached until the Jews as well as the Gentiles had been alienated from God. This is why we read of "the casting away of them [Israel]" in connection with *"the reconciling of the world"* (Rom. 11:15).

"For God hath concluded them ALL in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32).

Certainly God had not yet cast Israel away or concluded her in unbelief at Pentecost, for at Pentecost, and for some time thereafter, God still dealt with Israel as a nation, pleading with her to repent, so that her Messiah might return and bring the long-promised times of refreshing (Acts 3:19-21).

To those, on the other hand, who would bring Pentecost into the present dispensation, we ask: Where is the Scriptural warrant for the continuance of a Pentecostal experience in this dispensation? It is clear from Acts and from Paul's epistles that the Pentecostal program has been suspended because of the rejection of Christ, and His kingdom. Certainly the gifts of prophecy, tongues and (supernatural) knowledge have passed away (I Cor. 13:8). And so with the gifts of healing (Rom. 8:22, 23; II Cor. 4:16-5:4; I Tim. 5:23; II Tim. 4:20, etc.). Paul himself, who had been saved during the Pentecostal era and had possessed miraculous powers at least as great as those of the twelve, writes concerning his own illness:

"FOR THIS THING I BESOUGHT THE LORD THRICE, THAT IT MIGHT DEPART FROM ME."

"AND HE SAID UNTO ME, MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE: FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS . . ." (II Cor. 12:8, 9).

And as to Pentecostal *conduct* in this dispensation: where, even among the "Pentecostalists," do we find it? The early chapters of Acts record neither sin nor

blunder in the lives of the believers at Pentecost,¹⁹ but there is plenty of both, not only among the "Pentecostalists" as a group, but in each individual "Pentecostalist." And as to selling all and living for one another, many of their leaders are rich and increased in goods while those under them suffer need, both rich and poor bearing witness that the Pentecostal program has broken down and passed away. Indeed, it passed away during Paul's lifetime, for whereas in Acts 4:34 we read: "*Neither was there any among them that lacked,*" we later find Paul taking up collections for "*the poor saints at Jerusalem*" (Rom. 15:26). This is because the King and His kingdom were refused, but "*where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*" (Rom. 5:20) and today we enjoy even greater blessings, the blessings of "*the dispensation of the grace of God*" (Eph. 3:2). The Pentecostal believers lived pleasing to God because the Spirit *took control* of them. For us there are moral and spiritual *victories* to be gained, as we appropriate by faith, what God provides by grace.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER TODAY

Grace and *faith* are the characteristic features of the present dispensation. Not only is *salvation* now declared to be by grace, through faith, but the Spirit also operates in the believer by grace, through faith. He does not take possession of us and *cause* us to do what is right, but dwells within each believer (I Cor. 6:19) to provide needed guidance and the strength to withstand temptation, and we may avail ourselves of this provision by faith.

We have already seen how the Spirit, Who first imparted life to us will also impart strength to withstand temptation and overcome sin. In our inability to even pray as we ought, "*the Spirit . . . helpeth our infirmities*" and "*maketh intercession for us*" (Rom. 8:26). In our weakness we are "*strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man*" (Eph. 3:16) and God even stoops to "*quicken [our] mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us*" (Rom. 8:11).

"THEREFORE, BRETHREN, WE ARE DEBTORS, NOT TO THE FLESH, TO LIVE AFTER THE FLESH" (Ver. 12).

The implication from the above passage is that though sorely tempted we are debtors to the *Spirit* who dwells within and provides overcoming power.

The question, in times of temptation, is generally whether we truly *desire* to overcome, for we *may* overcome in any given case by grace, through faith. In the present dispensation it is *not* true that it is *not possible* for the believer to sin, but it is blessedly true that in any situation it is *possible* for him *not* to sin, for the Spirit is always there to help.

If we go to the Scriptures and claim, by faith, the Spirit's help in overcoming our sins, we enter into the enjoyment of the fulness of spiritual life and blessing. If we

¹⁹ Ananias and Sapphira tried to Join the company by deceit, but were stricken dead.

fail to do so, we wither and die -- as far as our spiritual experience is concerned. We can never lose our *salvation*, of course, for "everlasting life" was obtained by faith in Christ, not by walking in the Spirit. This is confirmed by the fact that the same apostle who pleads: "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,*" hastens to add: "WHEREBY YE ARE SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION" (Eph. 4:30).

But failure to appropriate God's gracious provision for victory over sin does result in death as far as our Christian experience is concerned. This is what the apostle means, when he says, by the Spirit:

"FOR TO BE CARNALLY MINDED IS DEATH; BUT TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED IS LIFE AND PEACE" (Rom. 8:6).

"FOR IF YE LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, YE SHALL DIE: BUT IF YE THROUGH THE SPIRIT DO MORTIFY [PUT TO DEATH] THE DEEDS OF THE, BODY, YE SHALL LIVE" (Rom. 8:13).

To the careless Corinthians, the Apostle Paul exclaimed:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify, God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19,20).

This passage perhaps describes our relationship to the Holy Spirit better than any other. God, by His Spirit, dwells within us, and our bodies are meant to be shrines, temples, where He is worshipped. In the measure that He is given His rightful place and is truly worshipped within -- in the measure that our bodies are given over to His glory -- in that measure sin will be overcome, God exalted, and we blessed. True, the world, the flesh and the devil all clamor for a place too, but we should thank God for the testings that arise from this. We praise God for the privilege of toiling, suffering and sacrificing for Him now, since that privilege will forever be gone when we are caught up to be with Him. Let us then also praise Him for the temptations that daily beset us, for each temptation overcome will gain for us a rich reward.

God does not -- He cannot -- say of us: "*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,*" but He does set before us the glorious objective: "*Be filled with the Spirit*" (Eph. 5:18). And as we seek, by faith, to realize this objective, rich, deep blessings are already ours, to say nothing of the rewards to come. What a challenge to faith!

It was no particular victory for the Pentecostal believers to be filled with the Spirit, for the Spirit simply took possession of them according to His own sovereign will and promise. But great spiritual victories are ours as we, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh in order that our bodies may be the temples of God indeed. May God grant us many such victories as we take Him at His Word!

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4:30).

"Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16).

"Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

Chapter VIII

THE RELATION OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY TO THE WORD OF GOD

PAUL'S FOURFOLD CLASSIFICATION OF THE HUMAN RACE

In the Pauline Epistles the human race is divided, by the Spirit, into four classes:

The *natural* man.

The *babe* in Christ.

The *carnal* Christian.

The *spiritual* Christian.

All four of these are referred to in one passage of Scripture ([1 Cor. 2:14-3:4](#)) and it should be noted that they are classified according to their ability to appreciate and assimilate "the things of God" as revealed in His Word. We quote the passage here in full:

"But the NATURAL man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

"But he that is SPIRITUAL judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto CARNAL, even as unto BABES in Christ.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

THE NATURAL MAN

The "natural," or *soulish* man is the man we have described in the first chapter of this book; the fallen son of fallen Adam, as he is, without God; his fallen soul dominating his entire being. God says with regard to him, that *he "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,"* that *"they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them"* (I Cor. 2:14). This is so even where the simple "preaching of the cross" is concerned, for we read that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (I Cor. 1:18).

This is not intended as a rebuke. It is a simple statement of fact. Man, by nature, does not receive the things of the Spirit, "neither can he know them." By worldly standards he may be generous and kind, gifted, cultured and refined; he may be possessed of superior intellectual powers, yes, and even be quite religious, but with all this he still remains utterly helpless to comprehend "the things of God." Why? *"Because they are spiritually discerned"* (I Cor. 2:14).

"The things of God" must remain completely incomprehensible to the wisest, most religious man on earth until God *reveals* them to him by His Spirit (I Cor. 2:10) and this is effected only as God *imparts* the Spirit to him:

"For what man [or, who] knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:11).

An animal cannot appreciate "the things of a man," for the simple reason that he possesses an animal nature, rather than human nature. In the same way man, as he is, cannot understand "the things of God," unless God imparts to him *His* nature. Indeed, man cannot even truly understand the animal world, which is beneath him; how could he understand God, who is above him, unless the *Spirit* of God be imparted to Him?

This explains why otherwise intelligent men fail, no matter how they try, to take in spiritual truths which seem so simple to the child of God; it explains why great intellectual leaders can make such fools of themselves when they begin to discuss "the things of God"; indeed, it explains why even *religious* leaders can display such abysmal ignorance of spiritual truths so clearly revealed in the Word, for neither intellectual acumen nor religious zeal qualify or enable the natural man to understand the things of God. Man, by nature, can know only "the things of a man" because he has only "the spirit of man" within him (I Cor. 2:11).

In this connection the apostle does not divide the unsaved into classes, for *all* are *equally*, because *totally*, in darkness as to "the things of the Spirit of God." They may observe and recognize certain facts which give them to feel that they are

on the "right track," but actually they are in such spiritual darkness that they fail utterly to comprehend the things which the Word reveals about God, or to understand and have fellowship with God Himself.

But the apostle *does* classify the *saved* into three groups, of which the first to be considered is:

THE BABE IN CHRIST

It will be observed that when Paul first came to the Corinthians in their unsaved condition, he proclaimed to them "*Christ crucified*":

"And I, brethren, when I came to you . . . determined not to know anything among you. save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:1, 2).

The reason for this is not difficult to determine. It was by "*the death of the cross*" that our blessed Lord procured salvation for us, hence it is by "*the preaching of the cross*" that the Spirit works in men's hearts to save them. On the cross our Lord paid the just penalty for sin, and the Spirit uses the proclamation of this fact to convict and convert the lost; thus, for a twofold reason the preaching of the cross is said to be the *power* of God unto salvation.

"For THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is THE POWER OF GOD" (I Cor 1:18).²⁰

"But WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED . . . unto them which are called, both Jews: and Greeks, CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD, AND THE WISDOM OF GOD" (I Cor. 1:23,24).

"Moreover, brethren, I DECLARE UNTO YOU THE GOSPEL WHICH I PREACHED UNTO YOU . . . BY WHICH ALSO YE ARE SAVED . . . HOW THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS . . . that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day . . ." (I Cor. 15:14).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION to every one that believeth . . . FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED . . ." (Rom. 1:16,17).

The "preaching of the cross" then, is what the Holy Spirit uses to save men. Even this message, to be sure, is "foolishness" to them until the Spirit operates within them and causes them to see, but He uses no other. No man in the present dispensation is saved apart from the preaching of the cross. It is only as that message is preached, and the Holy Spirit reveals it to the heart that the child of

²⁰ In preaching the cross as *good news*, we do not, however, know Christ "after the flesh" (Cf. II Cor. 5:16; Heb. 2:9. and see the wrtler's booklet: *The Preaching of the Cross*).

Adam is begotten anew and becomes a babe in the family of God; a "*babe in Christ.*"

The "babe in Christ" is not, of course, ready immediately for the "strong meat," the *solid food*, of the Word. He could not yet digest these "*deep things of God*" (Heb. 5:13,14, cf., I Cor. 2:10) but must first be fed on the "*milk of the Word*" (I Pet. 2:2) the elementary truths of the gospel, by which he was saved and wherein he must learn to stand (I Cor. 15:1,2).

Babes in Christ can hardly be called either "carnal" or "spiritual," since the things they do and say may be attributed so largely to the fact that they have not yet grown up. They may, however, be "carnally *minded*" or "spiritually *minded*" (Rom. 8:6). If "carnally minded," they will wither and shrivel up, rather than grow, and will become carnal Christians, no longer possessing even the bloom and freshness of youth. If "spiritually minded," they will blossom and grow from the freshness of spiritual childhood to the vigor of spiritual manhood,

"For to be carnally minded is death;²¹ but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

What is it to be "spiritually minded"? Simply to be vitally interested in the things of God, as revealed in the Word of God. Let man's criterion of spirituality be what it may; God's is simply this: How interested is this child of Mine in what I have to say and wish him to do? How much has he grown in the knowledge of it? Thus it is a sincere effort to know and obey God's Word, that produces true spirituality. The Word is the food on which we grow. This is why babes in Christ are exhorted:

"AS NEWBORN BABES, DESIRE THE' SINCERE [PURE] MILK OF THE WORD, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY" (I Pet. 2:2).

"TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT [FULLGROWN] MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST:

"THAT WE HENCEFORTH BE NO MORE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE SLEIGHT OF MEN, AND CUNNING CRAFTINESS, WHEREBY THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE;

"BUT SPEAKING [HOLDING] THE; TRUTH IN LOVE, MAY GROW UP INTO HIM IN ALL THINGS, WHICH IS THE HEAD, EVEN CHRIST" (Eph. 4:13-15).

²¹ This, of course, has to do with the believer's experience. It does not mean that the saved may be lost again, but that as far as Christian experience is concerned, carnal mindedness brings death.

THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN

How often have we all been reminded of the exhortation of the Apostle Peter: "*Desire the sincere [pure] milk of the Word!*" But how seldom have these words been emphasized *in their relation to the rest of the verse*:

"AS NEWBORN BABES, desire the sincere milk of the Word, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY" (I Pet. 2:2).

How often have preachers of the gospel used as their motto the words of Paul to the Corinthians: "*For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified!*" (I Cor. 2:2). "Christ crucified," they think, is the very acme of Christian truth, when in fact it is but the very beginning, the foundation, for the apostle goes on to write in this same passage:

"HOWBEIT, WE SPEAK WISDOM AMONG THEM THAT ARE PERFECT [MATURE] . . ." (I Cor. 2:6).

How many there are, even among those who have known Christ for years, who boast about believing the Bible but show little or no desire to *understand* it! Rather than *study* to attain to a better understanding of the Word of God and become such as know how to *wield* "the Sword of the Spirit," they boast that they have gotten no farther than "the simple things." To them the Bible is actually little more than a fetish; a mystical Book containing many wonderful comforting passages. They give the curses and difficult passages but passing glances and choose for their meditation and discussion only those which "warm their hearts."

The Bible itself calls such people *carnal*, or *fleshly* (Gr., *sarkikos*). They possess the Spirit, but walk after the flesh, with little interest in learning what the Spirit would have them know. They have been born of God but have not *grown*. They are not actually babes, for they have been saved long enough to have grown to spiritual maturity, but having failed to grow they must be dealt with "*as babes*." It was among *such* that the apostle determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2 cf. 3:1-4). The natural man, of course, cannot take in even this. The carnal Christian, like the babe in Christ, can take in the fact that Christ died for him but can digest little more than this. To such the apostle wrote, by inspiration:

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Cor. 3:1,2).

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat [solid food].

"For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Heb. 5:12,13).

RETARDED GROWTH

What joy and fellowship there is in gatherings where the newly-saved are present! In the spiritual realm, as well as in the physical, *everyone loves a baby!* But the joy that fills the hearts of loving parents is turned to bitter sorrow and disappointment if their babe fails to grow. The latter condition is as unspeakably sad and embarrassing as the former is joyous. Just so it is in the realm of the spirit.

The carnal Christian has failed to grow. He continues in a state of protracted infancy. He must be kept exclusively on a milk diet because, though saved for years, he is still unable to "bear" solid food, still "unskilful in the Word" and needing to be taught the elementary things.

THE EVIDENCES OF RETARDED GROWTH

Retarded spiritual growth is evidenced in many ways, all of which come under the headiffg of carnality or fieshliness. The Corinthians, so sternly rebuked for their carnality by the Apostle Paul, are said to have been careless about morals (I Cor. 5:1) puffed up (I Cor. 4:18; 5:2) inconsiderate of each other (I Cor. 6:14; 8:1,9,12) stingy (II Cor. 8:6-11; 11:7-9). While possessing the Spirit, they *walked* after the flesh.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.

"Idolatry, witchcraft, hawed, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit lthe kingdom of God."²²

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

"Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:19-23).

²² Obviously this does not mean that the *saved* who indulge in these things are therefore lost, for God counts us as perfect in Christ (Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10). After a similar list the apostle says to the failing Corinthian believers: "*And such were some of you: but ye are washed . . . in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*" (I Cor. 6:11). This is why we should desire with all our hearts to please and honor Him.

One of the most marked indications of retarded spiritual growth is self-interest and party strife, as seen in the case of the Corinthian believers. They were spiritually small and petty, so that the apostle had to write them:

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos;²³ are ye not carnal?" (ICor, 3:3,4),

It is not without significance that Peter's exhortation to "newborn babes" to "desire the sincere milk of the Word" that they may "grow thereby," is prefaced by the words: "*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings*" (I Pet. 2:1).

Similarly the Apostle Paul writes:

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

"WITH ALL LOWLINESS, AND MEEKNESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE;

"ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.

"THERE IS ONE BODY..." (Eph. 4:14).

We do well to give heed to these admonitions today, with the professing Church divided into hundreds of denominations. To think or talk in terms of "my church" or "our church," rather than "*the Church*", to consider only self and party, is a sign of spiritual immaturity. It is childish and petty, and sincere believers should grow up from such an attitude.

In connection with this the apostle writes to the Corinthians: "*Are ye not carnal and walk as men?*" i.e., as other men, in their natural, unsaved state. This aptly sums up the condition of the carnal Christian. He is saved, but *walks*, in many respects, as the unsaved about him. Put him among a group of unsaved people, and it will be difficult to tell the difference. Fortunately, we are told in II Tim. 2:19 that "*the Lord knoweth them that are His,*" but this passage goes on to say: "*AND, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*" Thank God, the simplest of believers are no longer "the children of wrath, even as others," but believers who "walk as men" will surely suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ.

²³ As though Paul and Apollos were rivals.

THE CAUSE OF RETARDED GROWTH

In the physical realm retarded growth may be due to some mishap or may be simply one of the results of the curse, having no direct bearing on the behavior of the parents, and certainly not of the child itself. In the spiritual realm this is not so. God has made abundant provision for every child of God to grow to spiritual manhood, and Paul rebukes the Corinthian believers for *not* having grown.

The trouble with the Corinthians was that they did not have much of an appetite for the Word; they did not have a passion to know and obey the truth. For the babe in Christ who "*desires*" the pure milk of the Word will surely "*grow thereby*." This was the trouble with the Hebrew believers too. For when the apostle would have gone further into the great subject of Christ as "an high priest after the order of Melchisedec," he was forced to write:

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, SEEING YE ARE DULL [Gr., Nothros, SLOTHFUL] OF HEARING" (Heb. 5:11).

And this is precisely the cause of the carnality among believers today.

During World War II there were several occasions when parents came to the writer with letters from their sons in the armed forces, explaining that a code had been arranged by which "Johnny" could let them know to which theatre of the war he had been sent, but that now it was difficult to understand his letter. Together we would sit down and study the letter in detail in an effort to make out exactly what it was that "Johnny" was trying to make his parents understand.

Such interest and concern over a letter from "Johnny"! and appropriately so, but do the majority of believers show such interest in *the Word of God to them*? Are they as deeply concerned to understand its contents as they would be over a letter from "Johnny"? They are not. They are satisfied with "the simple things," with knowing only a few passages which "warm their hearts." This is what is back of their spiritual immaturity and their carnality.

BELIEVERS RESPONSIBLE TO GROW

Let us put it down, then, and never forget it: *God holds us responsible to grow to spiritual maturity through sincere and diligent study of His Word.*

To the newly saved He says:

"Desire the sincere milk of the Word, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY" (I Pet. 2:2).

"GROW IN GRACE, AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST" (II Pet. 3:18).

To those who have been saved for some time He says:

"YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS" (Heb. 5:12).

To *all* He says:

"For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

"But strong meat [solid food] belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

"THEREFORE LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE [Gr., WORD OF THE BEGINNING] OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION [MATURITY] ..." (Heb. 5:13-6:1).

"THAT WE HENCEFORTH BE NO MORE CHILDREN, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they He in wait to deceive;

"But speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:14,15).

THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN

"But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things, yet he himself is judged [discerned] of no man.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:15,16).

From the above passage alone it is evident that the spiritual Christian stands far above the carnal Christian or the babe in Christ -- certainly above the natural man - - as far as *spiritual discernment* is concerned. He discerns all things, yet none can discern him, for he is spiritually above them. "*For who,*" asks the apostle, "*can understand the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him?*"

Through diligent, prayerful study of the Word, and with a sincere desire to obey it, the spiritual man has come to understand God and to know His Son more and more intimately. Babes in Christ and carnal believers about him cannot "judge" or "discern" him, simply because they have not come to know *God* as he. But he, having grown to spiritual maturity, quite understands *them*, for he has "the mind of Christ." He is among those of whom it written:

"But strong meat [solid food] belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

Thus there is a great difference betw'een the mere *child* of God and the *man* of God. The immature child of God can digest the milk of the Word and pass *that* on to others, but he must necessarily come far short of God's will for him. But of the *man* of God we read:

"ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

"THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT [COMPLETE] THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS" (II Tim. 3:16,17).

THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD

But what is this "*meat*," this "*solid food*" of the Word? What are these "*deep things of God*," this "*wisdom*," that Paul proclaimed to the spiritually mature?

The apostle gives us the answer himself when he says:

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [mature]; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

"BUT WE SPEAK THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY . . . THE HIDDEN . . . WHICH GOD ORDAINED BEFORE THE WORLD UNTO OUR GLORY" (I Cor. 2:6, 7).²⁴

The "*wisdom*" which Paul made known to mature believers, then, concerned "*the mystery*," the secret of God's eternal purpose and of all His good news; the most precious and exalted truth in all the Word of God.

The apostle says of this great body of truth that believers are established by it (Rom. 16:25) that God would have His saints know the riches of the glory of it (Col. 1:27) that it knits hearts together in love and gives the full assurance of *understanding* (Col. 2:2). He calls it "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) and prays for open doors and an open mouth to proclaim it (Eph. 6:19,20; Col. 4:3,4) and open minds and hearts to receive it (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21). Naturally, the devil hates it and those who stand for it will, like Paul, have to suffer for it (II Tim. 2:8-9; Eph. 6:10-20) but such suffering is sweet -- "the fellowship of *His* suffering."

²⁴ We have omitted from Verse 7 the italicized words erroneously applied by the translators of the A.V.

But alas, the vast majority of Christians are too willing to wait until they get to heaven to understand these glorious truths, not realizing that their indifference to the written Word of God will cost them dearly in rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. How many there are who suppose that the apostle is referring to heaven when he says:

"But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9).

But Paul does not refer to heaven here. He refers to truths *now made known*, for he goes on to say:

"BUT GOD HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD" (I Cor. 2:10).

It is not with respect to heaven, but with respect to the riches of God's mercy to all under the present dispensation of the mystery, that the apostle exclaims:

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.

"O THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES BOTH OF THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, AND HIS WAYS PAST FINDING OUT:" (Rom. 11:32,33).²⁵

SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

We have already seen that it is honest, prayerful study of the Word, not some emotional religious experience, that brings us to spiritual maturity and understanding. But does it not require superior intellectual powers to understand these "deep things of God?" No indeed. Superior intellects of unsaved men are unable to appreciate even the "simple" truths of the Word, for, as we have already seen, "*they are spiritually discerned*" (I Cor. 2:14). And as to the mystery, the apostle wrote that it was "revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets *by the Spirit*" (Eph. 3: 5).

The mystery is not merely something more difficult to grasp intellectually, for the apostle specifically states that it is "*not* the wisdom of this world" but "the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 2:6,7) and that only by the Spirit of God can it be understood and appreciated. This explains why many of the humblest believers rejoice in the mystery and understand it so clearly, while so many great theologians and religious leaders fail to grasp it and keep confusing it with God's prophesied program regarding the *kingdom* of Christ. The mystery is not "hard to be

²⁵ The phrase "past finding out" is the very same in the original as "unsearchable" in Eph. 3:8, where the apostle has been unfolding the mystery of the Body of Christ.

understood" because men are slow of *mind* to *understand*, but because they are "slow of *heart* to *believe*," because the devil, who "hath blinded the minds of them that *believe not*" also seeks to keep God's people from seeing and rejoicing in the truth of the mystery with its riches of grace, its "one body" and its "one baptism." This is why the apostle prayed so fervently that the believers to whom he ministered might be given "*spiritual understanding*" to take in the glorious message he was commissioned to proclaim:

"[I] cease not to give thanks for you, waiting mention of you in my prayers;

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM:

"THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING [Lit., HEART] BEING ENLIGHTENED; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and ... the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe . . ." (Eph. 1:16-19).

"For this cause we... do not cease to pray for you, and to desire THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING;

"THAT YE MIGHT WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD UNTO ALL PLEASING, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK, AND INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD" (Col. 1:9,10).

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus:

"Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and UNTO ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, TO

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT [Gr., epignosis, FULL KNOWLEDGE] OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD, AND OF THE FATHER, AND OF CHRIST;

"IN WHOM ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE" (Col. 1:26-2:3).²⁶

WHERE DO WE STAND?

As we bring this part of our study to a close, a few basic questions are in order.

If carnal Christians "walk as men" rather than as Christ, is the Church today mostly carnal or spiritual? If divisions among believers evidence carnality, is the Church today mostly carnal or spiritual? If the mystery revealed through Paul cannot be appreciated by carnal believers, but only by the spiritual, is the Church today mostly carnal or spiritual?

Here we must be careful, for the best of us must humbly acknowledge that we are as yet far from having attained to *full* spiritual maturity, and must say with Paul: "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect*" (Phil. 3:12).

In the light of this shall we not join the apostle in prayer for ourselves and for the whole household of faith, and shall we not add hard work to earnest prayer, that we may indeed stand approved of God, workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth?

"TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST" (Eph. 4:13).

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S WORD TO THE BELIEVER

Since, as we have seen, an interest in the Word of God and an understanding of it are the first and surest signs of true spirituality, it is evident that the Bible will always have first place in the life of the spiritual Christian.

It is of utmost importance that we understand this, for some who *feel* themselves quite spiritual give much time to prayer, but little, if any, to the study of the Word. Such have actually fallen for the subtle trick of the adversary to play upon their natural human pride and cause them to exalt self and push God into the background.

²⁶ Babes who keep crying for "the milk of the Word" and desire only what "warms their hearts," should take note of the words, wisdom, revelation, knowledge, enlightened, understanding and full knowledge, in this passage. Their hearts would indeed be warmed if only they would study the Word, asking God for spiritual understanding to take it in.

In saying this we do not for one moment minimize the importance of prayer, as we will prove when we discuss the subject later on; we only stress the *supreme* importance of the holy Word of God. In this we are surely Scriptural, for David says, by inspiration:

"FOR THOU HAST MAGNIFIED THY WORD ABOVE ALL THY NAME" (Psa. 138:2).

Of those who would still object and place first emphasis upon prayer rather than upon the Word, we would ask one simple question: Which is the more important, what we have to say to God or what *He* has to say to *us*? There can be but one answer to this question, for obviously what God has to say to us is infinitely more important than anything we might have to say to Him. Our prayers are as fraught with failure as *we* are, but the Word of God is infallible, immutable and eternal.

Yet some, having fallen for one of Satan's "devices" and feeling quite spiritual about it, are like the talkative person to whom one listens and listens, occasionally nodding his head, but receiving little or no opportunity to "get a word in edgewise." *They* do all the talking; *God* does all the listening.

They expect God to pay close attention to their prayers, but show little interest in *His* Word.

THE ONE ESSENTIAL THING

The place of the Word in the life of the believer is settled once and for all in the inspired record of one of our Lord's visits to the home of Mary and Martha ([Luke 10:38-42](#)). Commentaries on this passage generally point out that *both* Mary and Martha had their good points! This, of course, is true, but if we limit ourselves to this observation we rob the account of its intended lesson, for our Lord did *not* commend both sisters for their "good points." He reproved Martha and commended and defended Mary with regard to *one particular matter*.

What, exactly, was Mary commended for? How often she has been portrayed as an example to us to spend more time with the Lord in prayer! But this is missing the point of the passage again. Mary was not praying; she "*sat at Jesus' feet, and HEARD HIS WORD.*" She just sat there, drinking in all He had to say. This was "*the one essential thing*" which Mary had "*chosen*" and which our Lord said was not to be "taken away from her." Thus, while prayer and testimony and good works all have their importance in the life of the believer, *hearing God's Word* is "*the one essential thing*" above all others. Indeed, let this "one thing" be given its rightful place and all the rest will follow naturally.

It is granted, of course, that we must even study the Word prayerfully and with open heart, or it will have disastrous, rather than beneficial results, but this only goes to place still further emphasis upon the supreme importance of the Word of God, which we seek, by sincere and prayerful study, to understand and obey.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

It must not be supposed, however, that it is enough to use the Bible as a grand book of wonderful sayings from which we may choose what we wish for our inspiration, nor will one who truly realizes that "God hath spoken" ever hold so shallow an opinion of the sacred Scriptures.

"The Word of truth" must be "rightly divided"; for while it is all given for our spiritual profit, it was not all addressed *to us*, nor written *about us*. Thus one who truly desires to understand and obey God's Word will seek first to determine what Scriptures are particularly related to him and will study all the rest in the light of these.

Sad to say, however, there are many who fail to give the Book of God the respect and reverence it deserves. They flip it open at random, let a finger light upon the open page and then read the verse indicated to see if perchance they may find leading from the Lord in that way. And if it doesn't "work" the first time they try it again and again until it *does* "work."

They use "promise boxes" in the same way, on the basis that "every promise in the Book is mine." A mother begins her day by taking a promise out of the box. She reads: "*Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day*" (Psa. 91:5). Her brow, wrinkled in apprehension, she murmurs to herself: "Oh dear, I wonder what's going to happen today!" After further reflection, however, she comforts herself as she remembers that the verse said: "Thou shalt not be afraid!"

They take passages out of their contexts, "spiritualize" them, and give them "private interpretations." Finding "precious passages" anywhere at all, no matter to whom addressed or when or why, they place their own constructions upon them and claim them as promises of God *to them!*²⁷ To take isolated statements from the writings of men and use them in such a manner would be considered dishonest, but even Bible teachers do it with the Word of God!

They say: "*If it's in the Bible I believe it*" while even the most superficial examination of the Bible will reveal that it records many lies of men and Satan. that much of it is not addressed to us but to those of other dispensations, and that therefore things commanded in one passage may be positively forbidden in another (E.g., Cf. [Gen. 17:14](#) with [Gal. 5:2](#)).

²⁷ Some time ago the writer received a circular letter from a missionary in Africa, using the following Scriptrite passage as a heading: "*And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land*" (Gen. 28:15). The body of the letter contained these words: "During this year of furlough we claim, and have claimed, the above promise For us, 'this land' is Africa." Clearly, the passage in Genesis records God's promise to bring Jacob back to Canaan, not to bring a missionary back to Africa. The missionary may have felt that the promise applied to him in some way but in reality he was perverting the Word and *claiming* from God a promise which He had not made. See the author's book entitled: *Your Faith in God's Word, Is it Superstitious or Intelligent?*

The Word, rightly divided, is of supreme importance to the Church at large as well as to the individual believer, and it is because this fact has not yet been sufficiently recognized that we have not experienced the true, heaven-sent spiritual revival that the Church so sorely needs.

How much is said about "praying down" a revival; how little about the relation of Bible study to revival! In many cases the "revivalist" asks his hearers to raise their hands to indicate how many have spent one hour, one half-hour or fifteen minutes a day in prayer. But when has the reader last heard one inquire how many of his hearers have spent one hour, one half-hour or fifteen minutes a day in the study of God's Word? We will have more to say about this under the heading: Spiritual Revival.

Chapter IX

TRUE SPIRITUALITY AND OUR LIBERTY IN CHRIST

OUR POSITION AS SONS OF GOD

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

We have seen the divine classification of the human race into, 1.) *the natural man*, 2.) *the babe in Christ*, 3.) *the carnal Christian*, and 4.) *the spiritual Christian*. We must bear in mind, however, that the last three of these, and the responsibility to *grow* from spiritual babyhood to full maturity, have to do entirely with our *experience* and *conduct* as believers and not at all with our *position in Christ*.

The believer's *position* in *God's* sight, be he but a babe or even a carnal Christian, is that of a fullgrown son, simply because God sees him *in Christ*, His perfect Son.

How justly proud the Father was of His Son when, having beheld him already "numbered with the transgressors" at His baptism, He broke through the heavens to exclaim: "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matt. 3:17).

And now, in infinite grace, God tells us that He "*hath made us accepted in the Beloved [One], "complete in Him"* and seated with Him in the heavenlies, far beyond the reach of all accusers and even of the law itself (Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10; Eph. 2:6).

It is in the light of these glorious truths that we are to live, walking worthy of our high and holy calling; worthy of our position in Christ (Eph. 4:1; II Tim. 1:9). To go back under the law now would be to repudiate our position in Christ.

Nowhere is this more clearly expressed than in Gal. 4:1-7, where the Apostle Paul, by the Spirit, deals with our position in Christ as fullgrown sons, and our consequent freedom from the law.

SONSHIP

"Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all;

"But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:1-7).

In looking up the word "adoption" in a Bible Dictionary, some years ago, we were disappointed to find the following definition:

"Adoption is an act by which a person takes a stranger into his family, acknowledges him as his child, and constitutes him heir of his estate. . . . In the New Testament, adoption denotes the act of God's free grace . . . by which, on being justified through faith, we are received into the family of God, and made heirs of the inheritance of heaven."

That this is the meaning of the *English* word *adoption* in present popular usage, no one will deny, but that it is *not* the meaning of the *Greek* word rendered "adoption" in the *Authorized Version*, is clear from its usage in the New Testament and especially in the passage quoted above.

The adoption of children as we speak of it today refers to the taking of *other people's* children into one's family, but the word "adoption" (Gr., *huiiothesia*) in the *Authorized Version* of the Bible means simply "placing as a son," i.e., as a *fullgrown* son. In the passage from Galatians, above, it affects those *already* children! This is not to deny, of course, that a stranger could also be taken in and given a place as a fullgrown son, but the point is that Bible "adoption" does not refer to mere acceptance into the family, but to *a declaration of full sonship*, with all its rights and privileges.²⁸

**BABES ARE UNDER TUTORS
AND GOVERNORS
FULLGROWN SONS ARE NOT**

In the life of the Hebrew boy there came a time, appointed by the father, when "adoption" proceedings took place and the boy was formally *declared* to be the father's son and heir.

²⁸ See the author's pamphlet entitled, *Sonship*.

Prior to that time he had been a son, indeed, but "under tutors and governors." He had been told what he might and might not, what he must and must not do. In this he differed nothing from a servant, though "lord of all."

But finally the child developed into a grown son and the "time appointed" arrived. He would no longer need overseers to keep him in check. There would now be natural understanding and cooperation between father and son. And so the "adoption" proceedings took place -- a formal and official declaration that the son had now entered into all the rights and privileges of fullgrown sonship.

Such is the meaning of the word "adoption" (*huiiothesia*) in the writings of Paul.

OUR "ADOPTION" IN CHRIST

Prophetically speaking, the "adoption" pertains to God's covenant people Israel ([Rom. 9:4](#)) and this honor was offered to them by grace after they had failed to attain to it under law. The favored people rejected the distinction, however, and continued going about to establish *their own* righteousness, so that the fulfilment of this purpose now awaits a future day.

But God was not taken by surprise, for it was His secret, eternal purpose to show that *all blessing is wrapped up in Christ*. While Israel remains in unbelief, therefore, all who will trust in the perfect, finished work of Christ may have the "adoption" which Israel rejected -- and more.

Thus the apostle writes *historically*, when he says:

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5),

"The fulness of the time," when Christ died, is where prophecy and the mystery meet, for *we* come into the place of fullgrown sonship, not in fulfilment of covenant promises but rather in fulfilment of an *eternal* purpose kept secret until Paul. It was God's gracious plan to *make* us "holy and without blame before Him, IN LOVE HAVING PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN [PLACING AS SONS]"²⁹ (Eph. 1:4,5).

But how could He make us, sinners of the Gentiles, "holy and without blame before Him" and give us the honor of "adoption"?

²⁹ We take it that the words "In love" belong to Verse 5.

There is only one answer: "BY JESUS CHRIST," and it is eternally "TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE" that "HE HATH MADE US ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED [ONE]" (Eph. 1:5,6).

Thus the simplest believer is immediately given a place in Christ at God's right hand as a fullgrown son with all the rights and privileges of sonship, and forever free from the bondage of the law. It can but *dishonor* God to fail to recognize this position in Christ or to walk in the joy of it.

Yet the best of us fail and must often acknowledge with shame that we have not walked as the sons of God. The question arises, then: Does this imputed "adoption" work experientially -- this giving us a place of sonship *in Christ*. Does it produce the desired results in the conflict that goes on between "the flesh" and "the spirit"?

DOES IT WORK?

The Apostle Paul deals with this matter at considerable length and insists that an appreciation of our position in Christ is the *only* thing that can help us to live a life truly pleasing to God.

The Galatians probably thought that they were pleasing God by voluntarily adding the law to grace in their lives in an attempt to overcome the flesh. But while they were giving themselves more *things* to obey, the apostle points out that by placing themselves under the law they were "*disobeying the truth*" and dishonoring Christ, who had died to deliver them not only from sin, but from the law ([Gal. 3:1,13](#); [5:7](#)).

Furthermore, their attempted solution to the problem was false. It is true that "*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*" and that "*fleshly lusts . . . war against the soul*" ([Gal. 5:17](#); [1 Pet. 2:11](#)) but the Galatians, like many believers today, were unaware of the true nature of the flesh, whose "lusts," or desires, are expressed not only in the release of the baser passions but often also in the attempt *to make something of one's self*, to be one's *own* god. This form of flesh-expression is as contrary to the Spirit as other grosser forms.

Recalling Abraham's attempt -- and failure -- to help God through the flesh, the apostle says:

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

"But he who was of the bondwoman was born AFTER THE FLESH; but he of the freewoman was BY PROMISE" ([Gal. 4:22,23](#)).

The comparison between these two sons of Abraham the apostle likens, not to living in open sin and living righteously before God, but to *living under the law* and

living under grace. The son born after the flesh, says Paul, represents the principle of law in Christian behavior, while the son born of *promise* represents the principle of grace.

Nor -- note it carefully -- does the former *help* and *encourage* the latter, as though placing ourselves under the law might help us to grow in grace. On the contrary, they are *opposed* to one another:

"But as then he that was born after the flesh PERSECUTED him that was born after the Spirit, EVEN SO IT IS NOW" (Gal 4:29).

This desire to make something of one's self by becoming subject to the law is an expression of the flesh as antagonistic to the Spirit as any moral sin. With regard to it the apostle says:

"If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing ...Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law" (Gal. 5:2,4).³⁰

What need of Christ, if one can make something of *himself*? This was what had kept Israel from being saved:

"For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:3,4).

It will not be until the people of Israel cease struggling to establish their own righteousness, and find their all in *Christ*, that they will be saved and "adopted" at the same time, so that men will say: "*Ye are the sons of the living God*" (Hos. 1:10).

The Galatians, of course, had already been saved by grace, but now they "desired to be under the law" (Gal. 4:9,21). This amounted to a repudiation of Christ's finished work, was disobedience to the truth and -- sheer folly. "*Are ye so foolish,*" asks the apostle, "*having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*" (Gal. 3:3).

In Paul's epistle to the Romans we learn that "*the law ... was weak through the flesh*" and that "*the carnal mind [Gr., 'the mind of the flesh'] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*" (Rom. 8:3,7). How, then, can subjection to the law help us live holier lives?

But "*what the law could not do ... God, sending His own Son,*" accomplished.

³⁰ Logically, of course, *not actually*, for the context makes it clear that they were truly saved (4:28,31).

"THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT" (Rom. 8:4).

Galatian believers may seek to help God out by subjecting themselves to the law, and offering Him its works, as Abraham sought to help God out by marrying the bondwoman and offering Him her son,

"Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON: FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN.... STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE" (Gal. 4:30, 5:1).

"The works of the flesh," regardless of the 'law, *"are manifest,"* and they are *all bad* (Gal. 5:19-21). *"But the fruit of the Spirit"* is *all good* and, in its nature, needs no law to prompt it (Gal. 5:22,23).

As we have seen, the Holy Spirit does not take supernatural possession of us and *cause* us to do His will, but by God's grace He dwells within us, always ready to help (the law was always ready to condemn!). Thus we *may* have spiritual victory in any situation. What God provides by grace we must appropriate by faith, always recognizing that He has *already given* us a position at His right hand *in Christ* and seeking to please Him out of sheer gratitude.

The only way, then, to grow experientially to a place of full sonship, with the liberty and privilege it implies, is to recognize that we *are* fullgrown sons *in Christ*.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

"This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

THE SPIRITUAL USE OF LIBERTY

Christian liberty is a priceless possession. It can be abused, of course, but legitimately used it is an ever-flowing source of spiritual joy and power.

God's purpose with regard to the liberty of the believer in Christ is aptly summed up for us in one short verse in the Galatian letter. Falling naturally into three parts, the verse reads as follows:

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;

"Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,

"But by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13).

We have already seen that, as the cause of spiritual decline in Israel was always their departure from God's Word *to them* through Moses, so the cause of spiritual decline among believers today is always their departure from God's Word *to us* through Paul.

Now, if anything is made unmistakably clear in the epistles of Paul, it is the fact that believers in this present dispensation of grace have been delivered from the law and "called unto liberty," and the failure of God's people to appropriate and enjoy this liberty today results in spiritual decline as surely as did the failure of the people of Israel to observe the law of Moses in their day.

Could anything be plainer than those passages in this same Galatian epistle, where the apostle says by the Spirit:

"CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13).

"WHEREFORE THOU ART NO MORE A SERVANT, BUT A SON; AND IF A SON, THEN AN HEIR OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST" (Gal. 4:4-7).

In the light of this it would be *unbelief* and *disobedience* to place ourselves back under the law, even though all the Word of God, including the writings of Moses, is *for us* and "profitable." Indeed, when the Galatians, at the *dawn* of the dispensation of grace (the dispensation of law having scarcely passed away) "desired again to be in bondage," so as to obey *more* of God's Word, Paul rebuked them sternly, calling them "foolish" and "disobedient" (Gal. 3:1; 5:7) because in going back to the law they had repudiated the further revelation given by God through him and the liberty which Christ had purchased for them with His own blood.

Thus, to reject the liberty of sonship and go back to the servitude of the law is to repudiate not only the Word of God, but the Word of God *to us*, and this must necessarily result in spiritual decline.

It is not for *us* to decide how we can best please God. It is for us to hear, believe and obey *Him*. This alone is the course of true spirituality. Indeed, the apostle remarks on the relation of true spirituality to our liberty in Christ, saying:

"THIS I SAY THEN, WALK IN THE SPIRIT, AND YE SHALL NOT FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH IF YE BE LED OF THE SPIRIT, YE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW" (Gal. 5:16-18).

To depart from these instructions is to depart from the will of God for our lives and go backward spiritually.

Little wonder, then, that when the Judaizers sought to bring the believers at Antioch under the law, "*Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them*" ([Acts 15:2](#)). Little wonder he contended so vigorously with those "*who came in privily to spy out [their] liberty which [they had] in Christ Jesus*" and "*gave place by subjection, no, not [or an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with [the Galatians]]*" ([Gal. 2:4,5](#)). Little wonder that he wrote to the Galatians, who were being influenced by the Judaizers:

"STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE" (Gal. 5:1).

Surely we, who live nearly two thousand years after the law, should not, at this late date, be tempted to return to it again. Christ has died:

"BLOTTING OUT THE HANDWRITING OF ORDINANCES [DECREES] THAT WAS AGAINST US, WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO US, AND TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY, NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS;

"...

"LET NO MAN THEREFORE JUDGE YOU IN MEAT, OR IN DRINK, OR IN RESPECT OF AN HOLY DAY, OR OF THE NEW MOON, OR OF THE SABBATH DAYS:

"WHICH ARE A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME; BUT THE BODY [SUBSTANCE] IS OF CHRIST" (Col. 2:14-17).

These and many other Scriptures on the subject of the believer's liberty in Christ are too clear to leave room for controversy. To hesitate to accept and enjoy this God-given liberty is a sign, not of spirituality, but of carnality; not of humility, but of pride.

LIBERTY NOT LICENSE

The fact that we are given perfect liberty in Christ does not, however, mean that we should spend our lives in gratifying our own fleshly desires. Just the opposite is the case. We have been delivered from the bondage of *childhood* and given the liberty of fullgrown *sons* ([Gal. 3:24; 4:1-7](#)) and this advance from infancy to maturity in itself implies the acquisition of a sense of *responsibility*.

The doctrine of our liberty in Christ does not support; it rather refutes, the false theory that those who are under grace may do anything they please. Paul was "slanderosly reported" in this connection ([Rom. 3:8](#)) but there were carnal

believers then, as there are now, who actually did use their liberty as license to gratify their own desires. To turn from liberty to license in this way is fully as serious an error as to turn from liberty to law.

Many a believer, motivated only by his own fleshly desires and not at all by love for Christ or others, has indulged in pleasures of the flesh and of the world, justifying himself on the ground that he is under grace and has liberty in Christ. Taking others down with him in his spiritual declension he complains of any who would help him, that "They are trying to put me under the law."

Such are actually guilty of *departing* from *grace*, for "the *grace* of God.. . hath appeared":

"TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT WORLD [AGE];

"LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST;

"WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS" (Tit. 2:11-14).

Peter emphasizes this truth when he exhorts believers to live,

"As [truly] free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness [as a pretext for evil] but as the servants of God" (I Pet. 2:16).

And John further emphasizes it, when he says:

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NEITHER THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD. IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM"³¹ (I John 2:15).

Paul, the great apostle of grace, left no room for doubt as to *his* attitude toward worldliness and fleshly indulgence, for he said he was "*crucified unto the world*" (Gal. 6:14) and exhorted the Roman believers to "reckon" themselves "dead indeed" to the sins of the flesh, explaining that sin should not have dominion over them *because they were not under law but under grace* (Rom. 6:12-14). Moreover, he wrote by inspiration, so that his words to the Galatians and the Romans are also *God's Word to us*.

³¹ It does not follow from this that worldly believers lose their salvation. The meaning is simply that it is impossible to love the world and love the Father at the same time. One love displaces the other. Fortunately, it is God's love to us that keeps us safe (Rom. 8:35-39) but worldliness in the believer will surely result in loss at the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10).

"For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh . . ."

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY THE VEHICLE OF LOVE

The apostle is not negative in his attitude in this matter, only cautioning us against the abuse of our liberty. He is positive, explaining how our liberty should be used for the glory of God and for the good of ourselves and others:

"By love serve one another." Here is an admonition so simple that none can misunderstand it, yet so sublime, so all-comprehensive, that it covers the whole range of the believer's behavior toward his fellow-members in the Body of Christ.

If we but stop to consider the wonder of the fact that we should be entrusted with liberty -- full and free -- as fullgrown sons, while yet beset by temptation and sin, and often failing; if we contemplate the infinite love and condescension -- and the infinite cost involved in bestowing this liberty upon us; if we reflect that this liberty, on the other hand, is given to us, not as unregenerate sinners, but that it is given to us *in Christ*, as those who have been crucified, buried and raised with Him, to "walk in newness of life" -- if we take the time to consider all this it soon becomes evident that the *only* right use of liberty is "by love [to] serve one another."

It is important to remember that we have been "called unto liberty," but it is equally important to take care that we exercise this liberty in a life of usefulness for others. It is important that we "stand fast" in our God-given liberty, but it is equally important to heed the exhortation:

". . . TAKE HEED LEST BY ANY MEANS THIS LIBERTY OF YOURS BECOME A STUMBLING BLOCK TO THEM THAT ARE WEAK" (I Cor. 8:9).

Referring to the eating of meat and observing of days, the apostle exhorts:

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, THAT NO MAN PUT A STUMBLING BLOCK OR AN OCCASION TO FALL IN HIS BROTHER'S WAY. . . . IF THY BROTHER BE GRIEVED WITH THY MEAT, NOW WALKEST THOU NOT CHARITABLY. . . . HAPPY IS HE THAT CONDEMNEETH NOT HINISELF IN THAT THING WHICH HE ALLOWETH" (Rom. 14:13-22).

With regard to eating meat offered to idols, the apostle says further:

"KNOWLEDGE PUFFETH UP, BUT CHARITY [LOVE] EDIFIETH [BUILDS UP] WE KNOW THAT AN IDOL IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD HOWBEIT THERE IS NOT IN EVERY MAN THAT KNOWLEDGE. . . .

WHEREFORE, IF MEAT MAKE MY BROTHER TO OFFEND, I WILL EAT NO FLESH WHILE THE WORLD STANDETH . . ." (I Cor. 8:1-13).

As the late Dr. Bultema has well put it: "We have no right to cast aside our liberty, but we have liberty to cast aside our rights." This is the very essence of Gal. 5:13.

Outside of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, Paul himself was probably the greatest example of this use of Christian liberty.

Writing to the Corinthians he reminded them that he had the right as an apostle and as their benefactor under God, to live well and to expect them to care for his needs so that he might "forbear working." Advancing argument after argument from daily life and from the Scriptures to support him in this contention, he reminded them that they *owed* him their financial support (I Cor. 9:1-14). But he also wrote to these carnal Corinthians:

". . . NEVERTHELESS WE HAVE NOT USED THIS POWER; BUT SUFFER ALL THINGS, LEST WE SHOULD HINDER THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. . . .FOR THOUGH I BE FREE FROM ALL MEN, YET HAVE I MADE MYSELF SERVANT UNTO ALL, THAT I MIGHT GAIN THE MORE" (I Cor. 9:12-19).

Referring again to his use of his liberty in Christ, he says:

"ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME, BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT: ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME, BUT ALL THINGS EDIFY NOT.

"LET NO MAN SEEK HIS OWN, BUT EVERY MAN ANOTHER'S WEALTH" (I Cor. 10:23,24).

There we have it again. We have been set at liberty, not that we might indulge in the gratification of our own desires, but that we might live for others. Nor do we lose anything by this; this is true liberty, for "it *is* more blessed to give than to receive."

Thank God, we have been "called unto liberty." Through Christ we can breathe the air of freedom. But to enjoy this freedom to the full we must take care not to use it as an occasion to serve self, but rather as the means by which, in love, we may serve one another.

Chapter X

TRUE SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE

Prayer to God manifestly must hold great importance to those who would be truly spiritual. While God's Word to us is always to have first place in our lives, prayer must certainly have second place; indeed, we must even study God's Word with prayers for understanding and willingness to obey.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

The Scriptures everywhere exhort God's people to pray, and in the epistles of Paul we find greater cause, greater reason and greater incentive than ever to pray -- to pray "always," "in everything," "without ceasing." The example of our Lord and of His apostles -- particularly Paul -- is a call to prayer. Every need, every anxiety, every heartache is a call to prayer. Every temptation, every defeat -- yes, and every victory is a call to prayer.

Yet, merely praying, or even spending much time in prayer, is not in itself evidence of true spirituality. Many carnal Christians, still "babes in Christ," and even many unsaved people, spend much time in prayer. But the truly spiritual believer will join the Apostle Paul in saying: "*I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also*" (1 Cor. 14:15). "*With the spirit,*" earnestly, fervently, pouring out to God my adoration, my supplications and my thanks. And "*with the understanding also,*" intelligently, with a clear grasp of what the Scriptures, rightly divided, say about God's will and His provisions for *my* prayer life in this present dispensation of grace.

THE PREVALENT MISUSE OF PRAYER

The gross misuse of prayer in our day is a clear indication that many are failing to pray "with the understanding."

PRAYERS BY THE UNSAVED

In the minds of tens of thousands of unsaved people prayer is a power in itself. They say: "I believe in prayer" or "I don't believe in prayer." They try it. If they get what they pray for, they say: "It works. I've tried it." If they fail to get what they ask for, they say: "It's all so much nonsense. I've never gotten what I've prayed for." Other tens of thousands who have never trusted in Christ for salvation just go on praying, in some cases often and earnestly, feeling that somehow, sometime it might help. But all this is sheer superstition, not faith. It is founded, not on divine

revelation, but on human imagination. It springs, not from the Word of God, but from the will of man.

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that those who reject Christ have no claim whatever upon God. He is in no way obliged to hear their prayers.³²

Our Lord said to His disciples:

"... I am the way, the truth, and the life: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME" (John 14:6).

In Heb. 10:19,20, we are informed that it is the "*brethren*" who have,

". . . boldness to enter into the holiest BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS,

"BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY, WHICH HE HATH CONSECRATED FOR US, THROUGH THE VEIL, THAT IS TO SAY, HIS FLESH."

And it is distinctly to "*the people of God*," who can rest in the finished work of Christ (Heb. 4:9,10) that the apostle says:

"LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE. . ." (Heb. 4:16).

According to both Rom. 5:2 and Eph. 2:18 it is *through Christ* that we have access to the Father. How then can the Christ-rejector expect to be heard?

It is further because believers are sons of God that they have a legitimate claim upon Him as Father.

"...ye have received the Spirit of adoption [sonship] whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

"AND BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, GOD HATH SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS, CRYING, ABBA, FATHER" (Gal. 4:6).

Apart from all this, the prayers of the unsaved are unnatural, for surely it is unnatural to address God in prayer while He is still unknown and His Word doubted. It is only as He is known, loved and trusted that prayer becomes natural.

True prayer is an evidence of salvation. Saul of Tarsus had offered many prayers to God as a religious Jew, but it was not until his conversion that the Lord said: "*Behold he prayeth*" (Acts 9:11).

³² This is not to deny that God may, in His sovereignty, answer the prayers of the unsaved when He so chooses. We only insist that the unsaved have no claim to a hearing.

MISUSE OF PRAYER BY THE SAVED

But illegitimate uses of prayer are not confined to the unsaved alone. Many of God's people fail to pray acceptably. They indulge their wills, earnestly praying that God will lead; yet all the while determined that He shall lead *according to their desires*, even if contrary to His revealed will. Then, when faced with the written Word, they say: "*But I have prayed much about it.*" They even challenge God, like the young woman who justified herself for entering into an unequal marriage vow by saying: "I asked the Lord if this wasn't His will just to hinder it somehow." Such misuse of prayer is worse than superstition; it is sacrilege, for the young woman should have known -- probably *did* know -- that the written Word had already condemned what she wanted, prayed about and got.

Then too, there is much superstition among God's people with respect to prayer. How readily many believers "feel led," seek for "inner promptings" or listen for that "still small voice" in answer to their prayers! They say: "The Lord told me" this or that, or "The Spirit whispered to me" or "I could just hear Him saying." When such remarks are made to this writer he usually inquires further into the details and invariably learns that no voice was heard at all, but that the speaker merely took some feeling or impression to be, in some mystic way, a direction from the Lord.

God *does* speak to us through His Word, even when some incident or circumstance emphasizes the truth of His Word, but with the Word complete He no longer speaks to us by visions or even by still small voices, and the instructed believer will be careful not to depend upon "inner promptings," knowing that by nature "*the heart is deceitful above all things*" ([Jer. 17:9](#)).

Wrong claims are also often made for prayer by true believers. Taking Scripture out of its context and applying it to the wrong people in the wrong dispensation some preacher will say: "*Ask, and it shall be given you . . . for every one that asketh receiveth*" ([Matt. 7:7,8](#)). And then come the face-saving qualifications: *If you ask in faith, according to God's will, for His glory and don't harbor sin in your heart! "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"* ([Matt. 21:22](#)) *But --!* We will deal further with this incongruity under the problem of unanswered prayer.

REPETITION OF PRAYERS

One of the most unscriptural and unspiritual misuses of prayer is the *repeating* of prayers composed by others. Many members of both Protestant and Catholic churches, indeed, many sincere believers, repeat over and over again prayers that have been prepared for them to recite. Undoubtedly the greatest number of all make it a practice to repeat the so-called "Lord's Prayer," taken from the Gospel records.

Evidently all these millions of professing Christians have overlooked the fact that it was when the disciples asked our Lord to *teach* them how to pray ([Luke](#)

11:1) that He said: "*AFTER THIS MANNER therefore pray ye*" (Matt. 6:9). Moreover, He prefaced these words with the specific injunction:

"BUT WHEN YE PRAY, USE NOT VAIN REPETITIONS, AS THE HEATHEN DO: FOR THEY THINK THAT THEY SHALL BE HEARD FOR THEIR MUCH SPEAKING. BE NOT YE THEREFORE LIKE UNTO THEM . . ." (Matt. 6:7,8).

Yet Roman Catholics are actually taught to say "ten Hail Marys," "three Our Fathers," etc., as though the mere repetition of a prayer can make it more effectual, with the result that most Catholics and even their priests repeat their prayers in a singsong fashion or rattle them off as though they had no meaning at all. Likewise the members of various Protestant denominations are taught to read prayers out of prayer books -- not to study them as examples of acceptable prayer, or to recite them as one might recite a poem or a bit of prose, but to offer them up as their *own* prayers. Thus the same prayers are repeated over and over again.

Both Protestants and Catholics make much of repeating the "Lord's Prayer." They repeat it singly and in unison, in trouble and sorrow, in sickness and death, in storm and drought, in war and disaster, with little or no regard to its contents.

Imagine praying, "Give us this day our daily bread" at a funeral service! Imagine praying, "Thy kingdom come" at a sick bed or in a storm at sea! Yet this is solemnly done again and again throughout Christendom. Whole audiences continue to repeat the prayer in unison -- and this in the face of the fact that it was in connection with this very prayer that our Lord pronounced the mere repetition of prayers "vain" and enjoined His disciples not to follow the heathen in this practice³³.

What a difference there is between *praying* and *saying prayers*! No truly spiritual person will do the latter.

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

The question is sometimes asked: If God's will and purpose are unalterable, why pray? The answer is simply: Because the divine purpose, which any answer to prayer must represent, includes the prayer itself. It is enough that *He "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"* (Eph. 1:11) invites and exhorts His people to "*come boldly unto the throne of grace*" and to "*let [their] requests be made known unto God*" (Heb. 4:16; Phil. 4:6).

But prayer is not merely *petition*, as many suppose. It is one aspect of active *communion* with God (meditation on the Word being the other) and includes *adoration, thanksgiving* and *confession*, as well as supplication. Hyde, *in God's Education of Man*, Pp. 154, 155, says: "Prayer is the communion of two wills, in

³³ We freely acknowledge, of course, that this prayer is sublime and perfect in every way, but as a whole it cannot be legitimately applied to the changed circumstances of the present dispensation. See the writer's booklet: *The Lord's Prayer and the Lord's People Today*.

which the finite comes into connection with the Infinite, and, like the trolley, appropriates its purpose and power."

We have an example of this in the record of our Lord's prayer in the garden, for, while He is not to be classed with finite men, yet He laid aside His glory, became "a servant" (Phil. 2:7) and "learned obedience" (Heb. 5:8; Phil. 2:8). In this place of subjection He made definite and earnest requests of His Father, but closed His prayer with the words: "*Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done*" (Luke 22:42) with the result that He was "strengthened" for the ordeal He had to face (Ver. 43).

Thus prayer is not merely a means of "getting things from God" but a God-appointed means of *fellowship* with Him, and an acceptable prayer will include the supplication -- as sincerely desired as the rest -- "*Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done.*"

But this raises a problem with respect to certain passages of Scripture which seem to indicate that *whatever we ask for in true faith* will be granted.

THE PROBLEM OF UNANSWERED PRAYER

What about such plain passages as the following:

"AND ALL THINGS, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN PRAYER, BELIEVING, YE SHALL RECEIVE" (Matt. 21:22).

"AGAIN I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT IF TWO OF YOU SHALL AGREE ON EARTH AS TOUCHING ANYTHING THAT THEY SHALL ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR THEM OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" (Matt. 18:19).

These are remarkable promises. Ponder over them thoughtfully. "*All things-- whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing!*" "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching *anything that they shall ask*, it shall be done . . .!"

How many sincere Christians have been encouraged by these verses to expect physical healing, daily employment, deliverance from temptation and solutions to all sorts of problems in answer to their prayers! Yet who can deny that many godly people, claiming these promises in simple faith have also been deeply disappointed to find their requests ungranted? Such experiences have often left deeper scars on the lives of sincere believers than their fellowmen observe.

How can we explain this apparent failure on the part of God to keep His Word?

The answer is basically a dispensational one, for while it is true that condoned sin, selfish motives, unbelief, etc., often account for unanswered prayer, it is also

true that such promises as those quoted above *were not made to us in the first place*, and we have no right to claim them.

Before the reader thrusts this book aside in anger, we would urge him to consider one simple fact: that the "whatsoever" promises are to be found in only one small portion of the Bible: that dealing with our Lord's earthly ministry (though they are *alluded* to in the Hebrew Christian epistles). Never in the Old Testament, nor in Paul's epistles will we find that "*all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*"

Why is this? Simply because these promises had to do with the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. In the days that will usher in that kingdom, as at Pentecost, the believers will be *supernaturally controlled* by the Holy Spirit,³⁴ Who will cause them to do His will (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26,27; Psa. 110:3). Thus their very prayers will be Spirit-inspired. These are the conditions which will prevail in connection with our Lord's reign and He proclaimed them as part of "*the gospel of the kingdom.*" Further, we must remember that the bringing in of this present dispensation was then a "mystery... hid in God" and that the kingdom was then being proclaimed "*at hand*" (Matt. 4:17).³⁵

Before we leave this subject we must emphasize the other reasons for unanswered prayer already referred to. Here there are certain basic principles involved which necessarily maintain in any dispensation.

The Psalmist rightly said: "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*" (Psa. 66: 18). Sin harbored in the heart cannot but hinder fellowship between God and the believer. Thus it is always true that "*the . . . prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (Jas. 5:16).

Likewise, in any. dispensation a spirit of unbelief hinders answers to prayer (Jas. 1:5-7) as do selfish motives: "*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts [desires]*" (Jas. 4:3).

An effective prayer life, then, must be based on an intelligent understanding of God's Word as to prayer and a life in fellowship with Him.

PRAYER IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES

The divine program of prayer has undergone several important historical, or dispensational, changes through the centuries to Paul. For example, the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ affected it significantly. It was in view of His ascension that He said:

³⁴ See Acts 2:4, and the author's book: *The Believer's Walk in This Present Evil Age*.

³⁵ It is not our purpose here to discuss prayer solely from the dispensational viewpoint. A fuller consideration of this subject may be found in the writer's booklet: *Unanswered Prayer*.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

While even this statement was made with the kingdom in view, it was from this time on that they were to begin praying to the Father *in Christ's name*. Today prayer is to be offered to the Father, in the name of the Son and "in the Holy Spirit" (John 16:24; Eph. 3:14; 6:18).

Furthermore, prayer in Israel was based upon a *covenant* relationship with God, while prayer in the Body of Christ is based solely upon God's grace through the work and merits of Christ.

By grace we, the members of Christ's Body, have a closer relationship to God than Israel of old had. While Israel's calling was to make God's name great in the earth, our position is in the heavenlies at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:3; 2:4-6; Phil. 3:20). While Satan and his wicked spirits would prevent us from *occupying* that position *experientially* (Eph. 6:10-17) we have a right to occupy it and are *exhorted* to do so (Col. 3:1,2). Thus, positionally we are seated in the heavenlies, while experientially we have "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:2).

"For through Him [Christ] we both [Jewish and Gentile believers] have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18).

Further, the central place of prayer for Israel was the "golden altar" before the "mercy seat," where God met in mercy with His failing people, but to us, the members of Christ's Body, Paul says, by the Spirit:

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the THRONE OF GRACE, that we may obtain mercy, and find GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED" (Heb. 4:16).

As to receiving whatever we ask for, even in faith, would this be good for us in "this present evil age"? But the wonderful fact is that we have far more than this under grace.

In Rom. 8:26 we read what our hearts must often confess to be true:

"... WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT..."

But the apostle hastens to explain that the Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God, adding:

"AND WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK³⁶ TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, TO THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE" (Rom. 8:28).

³⁶ Lit., "are being worked."

Yes, *"the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for... the redemption of our body"* (Rom. 8:22,23) but few believers appreciate the fact that the Holy Spirit groans *with us* in our present state. He sympathizes deeply and *"maketh intercession for us-with groanings which cannot be uttered"* (Rom. 8:26). Thus God, by His Spirit, comes alongside to help.

Believers may not receive whatever they ask for in the darkness of this age, but,

"GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TOWARD YOU; THAT YE, ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS, MAY ABOUND TO EVERY GOOD WORK" (II Cor. 9:8).

We may not receive whatever we ask for, but by His grace we may have so much more than this, that the apostle, in contemplating it, breaks forth in a doxology:

"NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US,

"UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN" (Eph. 3:20, 21).

In the light of all this the highest expression of faith today is found in the words of Paul in Phil. 4:6,7:

"BE CAREFUL [ANXIOUS] FOR NOTHING;

"BUT IN EVERYTHING

"BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION,

"WITH THANKSGIVING,

"LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD

"AND . . ."

"And" what?

And "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"?

NO!!

"... AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING, SHALL KEEP [GARRISON] YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS."

Here is ample proof that God is not deaf to the cries of His children in this age. He urges them to pour out all their hearts before Him. "Tell Me *everything*," He says, "and be anxious about *nothing*, for I will work it *all* out for your good."

In conclusion, Paul's epistles to the members of Christ's Body exhort us:

1. To pray *sincerely*, "with a true heart" ([Heb. 10:22](#)).
2. To pray *fervently*, "with the spirit" ([I Cor. 14:15](#)).
3. To pray *intelligently*, "with the understanding also" ([I Cor. 14:15](#)).
4. To back our prayers with *Godly lives*, "lifting up holy hands" ([I Tim. 2:8](#)).
5. To pray with *confidence*, "boldly" ([Heb. 4:16](#)).
6. To pray with "*full assurance of faith*," knowing that He will work all out for our good ([Heb. 10:22](#)).
7. To pray about *every need*, "in everything" ([Phil. 4:6](#)).
8. To pray *immediately*, as needs arise, "instant in prayer" ([Rom. 12:12](#)).
9. To pray "*with thanksgiving*" ([Phil. 4:6](#)).
10. Never to *stop* praying, "always," "without ceasing" ([Eph. 6:18](#); [I Thes. 5:17](#)).

Chapter XI

TRUE SPIRITUALITY AND GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9).

Every truly spiritual believer will heartily desire to know and do the will of God, and as we write the above passage again we pray earnestly for our readers, as Paul did for his, that they may indeed be *filled* with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

We must be prepared, however, to expect that "the heart," which by nature is "deceitful above all things," and "the father of lies," who appears as "an angel of light," will both be ready to offer "attractive" substitutes for the true knowledge of God's will. Here we can find safety only in depending upon what God Himself says on the subject.

It is just because believers so often fail to recognize the *realm* of Satan's activities and the deceitfulness of their own hearts that they are constantly "tossed to and fro," not certain whether or not they are truly in the will of God.

For one thing, self-occupation enters entirely too much into the average Christian's desire to know God's will. The vast majority of believers, reading the passage quoted above, think only in terms of God's will for *their* lives in *their* particular circumstances.

A young Christian asks: "What is God's will for my life? Should I go into the ministry or become a missionary? If the latter, should I go to China, Africa or India? Or, would God have me stay in business and help to finance His work? But while the young man is so concerned about God's will for the details of *his* life, he is woefully ignorant of *God's will*, i. e., *what it is He wants done*. The emphasis is upon himself rather than upon God and His great plan for the present dispensation.

What would be thought of the soldier in the army who was constantly concerned about the details of his life, wondering whether or not his commanding officer would approve, while indifferent to the great objectives which his commanding officer had outlined for the progress of the battle?

Those who would truly know and do the will of God should learn first that such passages as the above do *not* refer to God's will *in a given situation* but to God's

purpose and *program* as revealed through the Apostle Paul by the glorified Lord, and that He rightly holds us responsible to learn what this is.

At Paul's conversion the Lord sent Ananias to tell him:

"... The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, THAT THOU SHOULDEST KNOW HIS WILL, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of His mouth.

"FOR THOU SHALT BE HIS WITNESS UNTO ALL MEN OF WHAT THOU HAST SEEN AND HEARD" (Acts 22:14.15).

That the revelation of God's will to and through Paul involved more than God's will concerning *his life* is evident from Paul's own writings about it. We cite here several passages as confirmation of this fact:

"[Christ] gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world [Gr., age] according to THE WILL OF GOD AND OUR FATHER" (Gal. 1:4).

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL" (Eph. 1:5).

"HAVING MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY [SECRET] OF HIS WILL, ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF" (Eph. 1:9).

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL" (Eph. 1:11).

In connection with God's having made known "the mystery of His will," the apostle emphatically states: *"By revelation He made known unto me the mystery"* and calls this mystery *"the dispensation of the grace of God"* (Eph. 3:1-3).

Such passages as Col. 1:9, then, refer not to God's will in a given situation, but to His longhidden *purpose* and *program* as revealed in the epistles of Paul. Briefly, it may be outlined as follows:

When Israel had rejected the risen, glorified Christ, joining the Gentiles in rebellion against God; when sin had risen to its height and all was ready, prophetically, for the outpouring of God's wrath upon this wicked world, God intervened, saving Paul and sending him forth with *"the gospel of the grace of God"* (Acts 20:24). *"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"* (Rom. 5:20). *"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all"* (Rom. 11:32). *"And that He might reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby"* (Eph. 2:16). This body, not

to be confused with the kingdom to be established on earth, enjoys a heavenly position, heavenly blessings and a heavenly prospect ([Phil. 3:20](#); [Eph. 1:3](#); [Col. 1:5](#)).

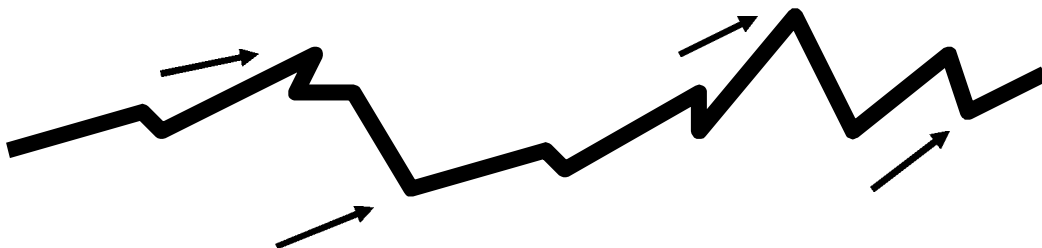
This, basically, is the great message Paul labored so earnestly and suffered so willingly to make known, asking prayers for an open mouth and open doors to proclaim it, and open hearts to receive it ([Eph. 1:15-23](#); [6:18,19](#); [Col. 4:3](#)).

Should the reader ask: What is God's will for my life? we would reply immediately: God's will for your life is that you obey [II Tim. 2:15](#) to obtain a clear understanding and deep convictions as to *His will for the present dispensation*, and then to *obey* it. Then the details will naturally fall into their proper places and assume their proper proportions.

A fine, faithful young Christian once asked the author about a change which was taking place in her prayer life. "I used to pray," she said, "about so many little things: my position, my salary, my health and even the smallest details of my life. Now I find I don't spend much time with these things. Oh, I *do* pray all the time, though, about this wonderful message of grace, and that the Lord will help me present it clearly and faithfully!" We answered: "Now you are getting to be a full general in God's army!"

As the general naturally has a larger outlook and is concerned about more important matters than the soldier of lower rank, so the believer who makes progress as "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" naturally becomes less and less occupied with the lesser circumstances of life and more and more occupied with the great overall objective.

The majority of God's people seem to think that God's will should accommodate itself to their fluctuating experience. When, in the depths of despair, they do not know where to turn, they cry to the Lord to show them His will. When on the mountain top, called upon, perhaps, to choose between two attractive alternatives, they ask the Lord again to show them His will, thus:



But all the while they neglect to inquire as to *His* objective, or to learn how *they* may fit into *His* plan and purpose, so clearly defined for us in the Pauline epistles. This plan -- the will of God for the present dispensation -- runs straight as an arrow, and we must conform ourselves to *it*, thus:



It is true that *God is interested in whatever concerns us* and that He would have us look to Him in any detail in which we may need help or guidance, but let us put the *emphasis* where it belongs. If a man is ignorant of the will and purpose of God, what good to inquire whether he should go to Africa or China for service? He may do as much harm as good wherever he goes. On the other hand, one who does have an intelligent understanding of the will of God and has been gripped by it will have little danger of remaining unused in the Lord's service.

If we would be in the center of the will of God, then, we *must* come to a knowledge and appreciation of the great secret revealed through Paul for us today. This alone can give us a true sense of our place in His program, broadening and balancing our spiritual experience.

PARTICULAR CASES

In seeking to determine God's will in the particular circumstances of life, the truly spiritual believer will pay little heed to the very things which others deem decisive. He will not depend upon "getting the mind of God through prayer," hoping for "inner promptings" (not "a voice" but "an impression" as one writer on "spirituality" put it). Nor will he go to "the promise box"³⁷ or flip his Bible open at random to learn God's will.

He will look for guidance *in answer* to prayer, to be sure, but this by using his God-given faculties in the light of the written Word, rightly divided.

God has given us hands to work with, hearts to love with and minds to think with, and He expects us to use them all to His glory. Hence, in any given situation we should use the common sense He has given us, in the light of His Word. True, there may be places so dark that we will not even know what to pray for, for it is still true that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought," but it is in this very connection that the apostle explains that the Holy Spirit "*maketh intercession*

³⁷ If for no other reason, simply because he would thus Limit God to the particular passages which the box happened to contain!

for the saints ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD," and the most perplexing problems need not lead us one step out of God's will, since *He* will work all out for us (See [Rom. 8:26-28](#)).

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

This holds good even with regard to calls to special service for Christ, whether to the pastorate, the mission field or any other branch of the work.

The truly spiritual child of God will not look for, nor depend upon, some overwhelming emotion as an indication that God has called him to the ministry. Much less will he expect a "Macedonian vision," for he will have learned that Paul's call to Macedonia is the last such call recorded in Scripture, and that it belonged with the signs of a past dispensation.

First, *all* believers are called to make known "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" and the written Word of God together with the appalling need all about us constitute an urgent call to this ministry.

All are not meant to minister in the same capacity, however. Some may accomplish much more for Christ in business than they could as pastors or missionaries. Here the particular qualifications of the individual and the particular ministry to which he is best suited are involved.

There is no room for superstition in matters so important. It is rather for each individual to ask God for light from the Word and for wisdom to consider the need, the circumstances and his own talents objectively, praying for an open door to that field of service where he may accomplish most for his Lord.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF THE LORD

The infinite importance of understanding God's will may be better appreciated if we consider that we are now living in the tense moments between man's declaration of war on God and God's counter-declaration of war on man, so that there is no time to lose in winning men to Christ.

After Pentecost, Israel, instead of repenting, joined the Gentiles in their rebellion. They "*set themselves . . . against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us*" ([Psa. 2:2,3](#)). In a word, they declared war on God and His Christ (See also [Acts 4:26,27](#); [8:1,3](#)). In reply God will "*speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure*" ([Psa. 2:5](#)) will "*make [His] enemies [His] footstool*" ([Psa. 110:1](#)) and, in a word, make a counter-declaration of war on *them* (Cf. [Rev. 19:11](#)).

As we have seen, however, the prophetic program was interrupted just when the judgment was about to fall and "the dispensation of the grace of God" was

ushered in, under which reconciliation is offered to all men by grace through faith in Christ and His merits.

But how long will this dispensation of His longsuffering last? When will it close? No man knows, for not one more day's delay has been promised, nor has one specific sign been given to indicate the time of its consummation. Hence the apostle begs the unsaved not to receive the grace of God in vain, counselling them: "*Behold, NOW is the accepted time; Behold, NOW is the day of salvation*" (II Cor. 6:2). And to the saved he says:

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

"Redeeming [Lit., buying up] the time, because the days are evil.

"WHEREFORE BE YE NOT UNWISE, BUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS" (Eph. 5:15-17) .

In the light of all this, how we should pray for ourselves and our fellow-believers "*that [we] may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God!*" ([Col. 4:12](#)).

Chapter XII

SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

A RECURRING NEED IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

These lines are written at a critical time in the world's history, when much is being said and written about revival. Many Christians are praying for revival; popular evangelists are doing their best to bring it about; leading periodicals, secular as well as religious, and even the daily newspapers, are discussing it, generally using such phraseology as "a revival of religion," "a revival of religious feeling" or "a revival of religious faith." Whatever the human failures involved, every true believer will thank God for the measure in which men are awakening to the need of supernatural aid in solving the grave problems that confront our generation.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL REVIVAL?

But precisely what is true spiritual revival? This question is not too simple to ask while there are those who call almost any series of religious meetings a revival, while others confuse revival with the waves of religious feeling which sweep over the masses periodically and still others suppose that a revival is an ingathering of souls.

Actually a revival is simply *a restoration to vigorous health*. It relates to the *living*, not to the dead. The dead cannot be revived, but we do administer food and medicine to those who are faint or ill, in order to restore them to vigorous health. Thus spiritual revival is the restoration of ailing Christians to vigorous spiritual health.

A series of meetings *may* be used of God to produce a spiritual revival among His people, and such a revival often *results* in an ingathering of souls, but neither the series of meetings nor the ingathering of souls is in itself the revival. The revival is the *spiritual restoration of believers*.

THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

With individual believers, as with the Church at large, the *need* for spiritual revival is frequently not recognized until exceedingly low levels of spirituality³⁸ have been reached. Actually, however, the need is almost continuous.

Physically most of us need to be revived at least three times a day. Hunger and weakness soon overtake us and we feel the need of food to renew our strength.

³⁸ We do not say morality, for believers who are scrupulously conscientious about moral matters and even about their duties as Christians, may still be far from spiritual.

Spiritually it is not less so, for *"man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (Matt. 4:4). Sad to say, however, we are by nature prone to neglect our spiritual welfare and lapse into carelessness and sin, so that repeatedly the need for spiritual revival and restoration becomes acute.

THE CAUSE OF SPIRITUAL DECLINE

Many feel that lack of prayer, failure to live separated lives, indifference toward the lost, etc., are the real causes of spiritual decline. These, however, are the *effects*, not the causes. The cause of spiritual decline today is always our departure from the Word of God in general and from the Word of God *to us* in particular. There lies the root of our spiritual ills, though comparatively few as yet recognize or acknowledge it.

With Israel it was departure from Moses' law that constantly got her into trouble; with us it has been the departure from Pauline truth, for, remember, as surely as the dispensation of the law was committed to Moses, so surely was the dispensation of grace committed to Paul ([Eph. 3:1-3](#)) and those who have lapsed or backslidden, from his day until ours, have done so through departing from the truths committed to him for us.

In Paul's epistles we find both the evidence and the tendency on the part of believers to depart from the path of blessing, and God's diagnosis of the particular cause of the trouble. In every case the cause is rebellion against the apostle's God-given authority and departure from his God-given message and program.

It was only a few short years after Paul had been sent forth with "the gospel of the grace of God" that the revolt against his authority began. The Galatians rebelled, followed the Judaizers and fell into the bondage of legalism. In his letter to them Paul takes almost two whole chapters to prove again his authority as "the apostle of the Gentiles," calling upon them to examine thoroughly the certificate of his apostleship and warning them of the dangers of departing from his God-given message.

Dumbfounded at their sudden declension, he exclaims:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

And he adds:

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Ver. 8).

Challenging them as to the result of their rebellion, he asks:

"WHERE IS THEN THE BLESSEDNESS YE SPAKE OF? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal. 4:15).

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15).

Mark well: the Galatian believers had lost their blessedness because of their departure from God's appointed messenger and God's appointed message to them.

Twice the apostle charges the Galatians with *disobedience* (Gal. 3:1; 5:7). But why? They had sought to obey *more* than Paul had commanded them. They were prepared to submit to circumcision *in addition* to the program he had, by revelation, outlined for them. And they had Scripture for their position too. Yes, but *not* Scripture *rightly divided*. Their return to Moses and the law was a repudiation of the *further* revelation given through Paul: "the preaching of the cross," which was even then bringing the Mosaic dispensation to a close. Even the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church had recognized the Gentiles' freedom from the law and had "*written and concluded that they observe no such thing*" (Acts 21:25). Thus obedience to the law now became *disobedience to the truth* and cost the Galatians their blessedness, bringing them into a state where they bit and devoured one another.

The Corinthians also rebelled and started rival sects among themselves, as though it were a question of who was right: Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ. Thus departing from the glorious revelation committed to Paul, the Corinthians fell into many other grievous errors and sins. The apostle therefore challenged them too as to his spiritual authority and warned them of the dangers of their heresy.

In Asia Minor, where the apostle had labored for "the space of two years," the issue was again *Paul and his message*. In his second letter to Timothy the apostle had to write:

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me . . ." (II Tim. 1:15).

This does not mean that all the saved in **the province of Asia** -- and there were many -- were now lost, or even that they did not genuinely love the Lord. It means simply that they had turned against *Paul* as the one to whom had been committed the new dispensation, "*the dispensation of the grace of God.*"

These are but a few examples. The sacred record contains many more examples of spiritual declension since the raising up of Paul, and always the declension was brought about by a departure from one or more of the particular truths revealed through him: the truth of the "one body" and the sympathy for one another which this implies, or the truth of the "one baptism" with its death to the

flesh and its identification with Christ in the heavenlies, or, perhaps, the truth of our standing in grace, with the resultant life lived for God out of sheer gratitude.

HOW TO ENJOY SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

When we recognize the fact that the old Adamic nature is still with us, it is easy to see why the most godly among us need spiritual revival almost constantly, for by that very nature we are ever prone to depart from the blessed teachings of the Pauline epistles.

This is why Paul wrote, by the Spirit, to Timothy and to us:

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 1:13).

The Word of God, then, is of supreme importance to the spiritual well-being of every believer; not merely as a collection of beautiful and heart-warming thoughts, but as the revelation of God's program for the ages, and especially for us today, to be studied, understood and obeyed. As food and medicine must be wisely administered to the weak and ill, so must the Word be "rightly divided" to provide the necessary benefit to those who need spiritual restoration.

How may we enjoy true spiritual revival? Can it be gained by more prayer or self-denial or confession of sin? No, these again are the *products*, the *results* of true spiritual revival, which begins with *God*, not with man. In spiritual revival as in regeneration, the Spirit uses *the Word*. There is the food and the medicine which God has given to restore us to vigorous spiritual health.

Perhaps the reader will recall the record of the revival under Ezra; how the *Book* was recovered for the people and how Ezra and his helpers "read... *distinctly*, and gave the *sense*, and caused them to *understand* the reading" ([Neh. 8:8](#)). What a spiritual awakening resulted! How the people wept ([Neh. 8:9](#)) and rejoiced ([Neh. 8:9-11](#)) "*because they had understood the words that were declared unto them*"! ([Neh. 8:12](#)).

The understanding of God's Word always revives His people spiritually. Hear the two at Emmaus from whom our Lord had just departed:

"Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while HE OPENED TO US THE SCRIPTURES?" (Luke 24:32).

And if this was true in other dispensations it is particularly so in this present dispensation of grace, when the glorious secret of God's purpose and grace has been revealed. Little wonder Paul prays so earnestly for the Colossians and for us all:

"... THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL [PURPOSE] IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING;

"THAT YE MIGHT WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD UNTO ALL PLEASING, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK, AND INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD" (Col. 1:9,10).

Little wonder he reminded them of his warnings and teachings, of his labor and strife and conflict (Col. 1: 28,29):

"THAT THEIR HEARTS MIGHT BE COMFORTED, BEING KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE, AND UNTO ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, TO THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT [Gr., THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE] OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD, AND OF THE FATHER, AND OF CHRIST;

"IN WHOM ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE" (Col. 2:2,3).

If indeed we would be spiritually revived and enjoy vigorous spiritual health; if indeed it is our desire to walk worthy of the Lord, to be fruitful in every good work, to increase in the knowledge of God, then we should be satisfied with nothing short of a clear understanding of "His will" and a thorough knowledge of "the mystery" as it is presented to us in the epistles of Paul. And as we grasp the vital and wonderful truths associated with "the mystery" the whole Word of God will prove the richer and more nourishing to us spiritually.

In these days of spiritual declension may God give us an *appetite* for the Word! May it be our deep desire to *know* God's Word *so that we may obey it*, for there is probably no joy like that which comes to the believer from the knowledge that he is *in the will of God*.

Chapter XIII

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

True spirituality will manifest itself in many ways in the life of the believer -- ways which in themselves will bespeak the blessedness of walking in the Spirit.

Among these is the combination of graces which Paul, by the Spirit, calls "*The fruit of the Spirit*":

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22,23).

First it should be observed that "the Spirit" here refers, not to "the spirit of man which is in him," but to the Spirit of God who indwells the believer and causes him to bring forth good fruit. This is evident, both from the context here in Gal. 5 and from what we are told of "the spirit of man" in I Cor. 2:11. These spiritual graces, then, do not spring from any natural goodness in us, but from the indwelling Spirit of God.

Next it should be noted that in contrast to "the *works* of the flesh" we have here "the *fruit* of the Spirit." These graces are not the product of human energy but the natural result of life and growth.

The reader will recognize at a glance the difference between these spiritual virtues and those which the world fosters and boasts of. Here we have the delicate and beautiful finish, so to speak, of God's workmanship. This is not to concede that it is superficial or merely outward, for, as we have pointed out, it is the outflow of the Spirit's work within.

Let us briefly consider these graces, possessed by believers in the measure that they yield to the Spirit's control.

Love. Here we must begin, for love is the great motivating force behind the truly spiritual life. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14). Faith "worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). It is "by love" that we are to "serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). Indeed, though we give our all for others, if this is not done out of genuine love it will profit us nothing (I Cor. 13:3). This is as it should be, for Christian service is truly blessed only in the measure that it is sincerely done and springs from heart-felt love.

Joy. The truly spiritual life is by no means a dull or unhappy one. Indeed, true spirituality is the key to true blessedness. And joy be it noted, runs far deeper than mere happiness or that natural cheerfulness which many of the unsaved possess. The original word (*chara*) is a close relative to the word grace (Gr., *charis*). True joy is anchored deep in God Himself. It springs from, 1.) a knowledge of what God has done for us and is to us (I [Thes. 1:6](#)) and, 2.) a consciousness that, being in His will, we are the recipients of His very best (II [Cor. 8:1,2](#)). This can be the fruit of the Spirit alone ([Rom. 14:17](#)).

Peace. Another blessed fruit of the Spirit! It begins with "peace with God," appropriated by faith in Christ ([Rom. 5:1](#)) is followed by "the peace of God," which garrisons the heart and mind, however dark the hour ([Phil. 4:7](#)) and naturally results in an attitude of peace, or peacefulness, toward others ([Rom. 12:18](#); II [Cor. 13:11](#); I [Thes. 5:13](#)). Pity those believers who fail to "walk in the Spirit," lose "the blessedness" and "bite and devour one another" ([Gal. 4:15](#); [5:15,16](#)) instead of bearing this blessed fruit.

Longsuffering. The idea here is that of patience, particularly with the failures of others. This virtue naturally follows love, joy and peace, and is, again, distinctly a fruit of the Spirit. How often we find it linked with graces *not* stressed in worldly society: "forbearance," "kindness," "meekness," etc.

Gentleness. The root of this word is variously rendered "easy," "better," "kind," "good," "gracious." It has the idea of *gentle kindness* toward another. This, despite the callousness of the world about him, will be a characteristic of every truly spiritual believer. Nor will this indicate weakness; indeed, it will indicate superior strength. Only the strong can afford to be gentle. God is *almighty*, yet He dealt with us in gentle kindness and thus led us to repentance ([Rom. 2:4](#)).

Goodness. Following again in natural sequence, the idea here is not that of personal righteousness, but rather of *a disposition to do good*. The same root is found in [Gal. 6:10](#), where we are exhorted: "*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*" How this all makes for objective living!

Faith. The word *faith* here, however, is *not* used objectively, but *subjectively*. It does not refer to what one *does*, but rather to a quality he possesses. It does not denote trust, but *fidelity* or *worthiness to be trusted*, as in [Rom. 3:3](#); [Gal. 2:15, 16,20](#); [3:22](#), etc. "*All men have not faith,*" wrote Paul, referring, not merely to unbelievers, but to "unreasonable and wicked men," who could not be trusted (II [Thes. 3:2](#)). By contrast every believer should be worthy of the confidence and trust of others at all times. *Fidelity* again follows the other moral virtues in natural sequence and is also a fruit of the Spirit.

Meekness. The meaning of this word is clear from its usage in the immediate context ([6:1](#)) where we read, with respect to the brother overtaken in a fault: "*Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering*

thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It refers to that mildness of attitude and manner which, in our case, springs from the realization that we too are liable to fall before temptation. It is a mildness which springs from a proper humility and recognition of our own weakness. How can I be harsh and severe toward a fallen brother when I, myself, am so liable to stumble and fall? Yet, meekness is not a *natural* trait where the sins of *others* are concerned. It is a fruit which only the Spirit can produce and, as such, follows naturally after *faith*, or personal fidelity. The writer's mother used to teach him in childhood to be very exacting with one's self but very understanding with others. This is not the way of the world.

Temperance. Temperance, or self-control, is the crowning grace of an, assuming that the others are already possessed. Few believers realize how important a place self-control should have in our lives. They think of it only in connection with eating, drinking and pleasure, and fail to realize the place it should have in our entire conduct and conversation as believers. Indeed, self-control should be exercised even in our worship. How many sincere but untaught believers there are who, loving the Lord with all their hearts, yet forgetting the majesty of the Godhead and the wonder of His work in our behalf, address Him as "dear Jesus" and praise Him with shallow love songs, as if He were some earthly lover.

Others again suppose that it is the highest form of worship to let one's self go. One of the strongest proofs that modern Pentecostalism is *not* of the Spirit is the fact that its devotees so often "let themselves go" and give themselves over completely to a preter-human power (which *they* suppose to be the Spirit) uttering thoughts not their own, often in languages they do not understand, meanwhile going to great excesses of emotional self-expression. They themselves frequently compare it with intoxication.³⁹ And this while the Apostle Paul, by inspiration, exhorts:

"BE NOT DRUNK WITH WINE, WHEREIN IS EXCESS; BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" (Eph. 5:18).

The truly spiritual person will not go to excesses of any kind, but will, by the Spirit, exercise self-control in his eating and drinking, in his conversation and conduct -- even in his prayer and praise. May God help us, in these evil and frivolous days, also to bear *this* fruit of the Spirit!

Referring to those who *do* bear the Spirit's fruit, the apostle says: "*Against such there is no law*" (Gal. 5:23). Of course not! Those who are led of the Spirit need not be placed under law, nor can they be condemned by it (Vers. 16,18).

³⁹ We attended a national convention of The Assemblies of God some time ago, in which the service ended in utter confusion. People were praying, singing, shouting, speaking in tongues, stretching out their hands and carrying on as if wholly out of control. Before us knelt one who, ten minutes earlier, had appeared to be a sensible-looking businessman. Now he was alternately speaking in tongues and repeating the prayer: "Save souls," so fast that one could only conclude that he was beside himself.

But besides those inward graces which the Spirit produces, there are also outward manifestations of true spirituality which should next be considered.

THE OUTWARD EVIDENCES

FAITHFUL TESTIMONY

No truly spiritual believer will lightly allow his fellowman to go to perdition, or his brother in Christ to stumble and fall. Even apart from his desire for the good of others, he will long to see his Lord honored in the salvation of the lost and the upbuilding of the saved. Thus it is that the inspired apostle writes with regard to his own testimony:

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

"And that HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THEY WHICH LIVE SHOULD NOT HENCEFORTH LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO HIM WHICH DIED FOR THEM, AND ROSE AGAIN" (II Cor. 5:14,15).

What an example the apostle himself was in this! He went everywhere *"witnessing both to small and great"* (Acts 26:22). As he committed the Ephesian elders "to God and to the word of His grace," he could say: *"... remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears"* (Acts 20:31,32) and could challenge them: *"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men"* (Ver. 26). Indeed, despite forebodings of future persecutions he could still say:

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, TO TESTIFY THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD" (Acts 20:24).

In all this let us, who would be truly spiritual, heed the apostle's exhortation:

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example" (Phil. 3:17).

CONSISTENT BEHAVIOR

But, as we have seen in our discussion of the conflict between the old and new natures, there is more to the Christian walk than merely witnessing to others. The music of a godly life must accompany the testimony of our lips.

Not only for our own spiritual good but for the sake of others and for the glory of the Christ who died for us, we must flee from the lusts of the flesh and keep ourselves "unspotted from the world."

How the Apostle Paul stresses this: *"Walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:4)--*"Walk not after the flesh"* (Rom. 8:4)--*"Walk honestly"* (Rom. 13:13) --*"Walk in the Spirit"* (Gal. 5:16)---*"Walk worthy of the [calling] wherewith ye are called"* (Eph. 4:1) --*"Walk not as [the] Gentiles walk"* (Eph. 4:17)-*"Walk in love"* (Eph. 5:2)--*"Walk as children of light"* (Eph. 5:8) --*"Walk circumspectly"* (Eph. 5: 15)--*"Walk worthy of the Lord"* (Col. 1:10)-*"Walk in wisdom"* (Col. 4:5).

DILIGENT TOIL

One of the Christian natives in a Congo compound had left the others hoeing the mission gardens and was missing, when the missionary appeared. Going in search of him the missionary found him in his hut, reading his New Testament. "What are you doing here while the others are working?" the missionary asked. "I'm trying to get victory," replied the native.

Too many Christians seem to suppose that a truly spiritual life is made up only of Bible study, prayer and the singing of hymns. Actually, true Bible study, prayer and thanksgiving will rouse us to give ourselves in lives of toil and self denial for Christ and others.

Our apostle was an example to us in this too. Writing to the Colossians, he says, with respect to his efforts to lead them to spiritual maturity: *"Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily"* (Col. 1:29). And his efforts to win the lost and establish the saved often entailed hard secular labor too, for to the Thessalonians he writes: *"Ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God"* (I Thes. 2: 9). Indeed, this often meant working physically with his hands, for to the Ephesian elders he said: *"Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me"* (Acts 20:34). In other words, he worked with his hands to support both himself and his co-workers. And while he did not consider this to be the ideal procedure, he did not feel himself too important to do it when necessary, even though "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." To the Corinthian believers he writes: *"Even unto this present hour we... labor, working with our hands"* (I Cor. 4:11,12).

This is an important phase of the truly spiritual life which is often overlooked. Those who can sing and pray and testify so heartily are often slow to offer their services when there is work to be done. Yes, even ministers of the gospel and leaders in Christian work are often delinquent in performing the tasks that properly go with their ministry. They seem to feel that the Holy Spirit should prosper their work if they only study the Word and pray.

The Apostle Paul was not too lazy or too proud to *work*, with his hands if necessary, and untiringly in any case, to reach greater numbers with the message committed to him. Comparing himself with other "ministers of Christ" he could honestly say: "*in labors more abundant*" (II Cor. 11:23).

If we would be truly spiritual, then, we should heed his exhortation to the Corinthians and to us, to be "ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD" (I Cor. 15:58).

SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Another manifestation of true spirituality is sacrificial giving for the Lord's sake. It is true that carnal Christians and even unbelievers are sometimes also generous with their resources. It is also true that we must obey I Tim. 5:8 and provide for our households, but it is *not* true that a truly spiritual believer will be niggardly with the wealth that God has entrusted to him. Invariably the healthiest churches, spiritually, are the most generous contributors to the work of the Lord. Yet, alas, how few of God's people, proportionately, have come to know the joy of making financial *sacrifices* for the Lord's sake!

The Philippians knew this joy. Poor as these godly people were in this world's goods, they sought Paul out again and again to minister to his needs and to help with the work of the Lord, sometimes urging him to accept what they could ill afford to give (Phil. 4:15,16; II Cor. 8:3). And this they did in a better way than Paul had hoped, first giving *themselves* to Paul and to the Lord (II Cor. 8:5).

With the carnal Corinthians this was not so. Probably the largest of all the churches founded by Paul, they did not even bear the apostle's meagre living expenses (II Cor. 11:9). Indeed, while at **Corinth**, the apostle was supported by the poor Macedonians! (Ibid).

Paul had to remind the Corinthians of the generosity of the Macedonians (especially the Philippians) to provoke them to emulation, lest the Macedonians should put them to shame (II Cor. 8:8; 9:4) when all the other churches presented their contributions for the "poor saints" of **Judaea**. He had to send Titus to stir up among them the grace of giving (II Cor. 8:6). He had to remind them how the Son of God had given His *all* and had become *poor* to make *them rich* (II Cor. 8:9). He had to remind them that they had promised to do their part a year before, exhorting them: "*Now therefore perform the doing of it*" (II Cor. 8:10,11). He had to challenge them: "*prove the sincerity of your love*" (II Cor. 8:8).

These Corinthians had the Pentecostal gifts, yet they were far from spiritual. The apostle called them "carnal" and "babes" (I Cor. 3:1). They had not shown due appreciation to God for His goodness to them. They had not accepted their responsibilities toward Christ and their brethren. How could they be called spiritual? True, they had much enthusiasm, even disorder, in their services (I Cor.

14:26-28,33,40) but can one be called spiritual who *knows* that God so loved the world that He *gave* -- *gave His very best, His beloved Son*, to save him from sin, yet is not in turn moved to offer himself and his goods to God? Can one be considered spiritual who *knows* that the Lord of glory became poor -- *so poor* -- that we might be rich, yet is not touched to make sacrifices for Him and for those for whom He died?

We have known Christian people who have labored industriously as a sort of substitute for giving, but this will not do. God is a generous and *sacrificial* Giver. "*He . . . spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all*" and even now, "*with Him also freely gives us all things*" (Rom. 8:32). And will not those who are truly spiritual partake of His nature? Thus diligent toil and sacrificial giving *both* go with true spirituality, for the Spirit Himself, who exhorts us to be "*always abounding in the work of the Lord,*" also exhorts, with respect to giving: "*See that ye abound in this grace also*" (II Cor. 8:7) and:

"This I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6).

Let those of us who have not yet entered into the joy and fellowship of sacrificial giving begin *now*, knowing that "*God loveth a cheerful (Lit., joyful) giver*" (II Cor. 9:7).

HEARTFELT WORSHIP

Actually, worship is both an inward and an outward manifestation of true spirituality.

Strangely, the Pauline epistles seldom use the word *worship* itself, yet have a great deal to say about it and afford many examples of it. Always true worship goes hand in hand with true spirituality. Thus the apostle exhorts:

"... be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18,19).

We cannot here go into the many doxologies -- all expressions of worship -- found in the epistles, or the many other exclamations of adoration, thanksgiving and praise found in these writings. Varied as they are, each one is a manifestation of true spirituality. We cite a few examples:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in [the heavenlies] in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

". . . the Son of God... loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

". . . I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1:3).

Surely, while we fail to witness for Christ, or to live or toil or sacrifice for Him -- and certainly, while our hearts remain unmoved to worship Him, it is idle to talk of being spiritual. As we bring this study to a close, then, let each of us ask God that by His grace we may bear the fruit of the Spirit and manifest the results of His presence within.