

# **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER**

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# INTRODUCTION

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Christian experience from the day of Pentecost onward is presented to us in the Acts of the Apostles as a life pervaded by the Holy Spirit of God. There was a fulfilment of the promise of the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ that those who believed the gospel would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. He was to be their Comforter, their Teacher and their Guide. Frequently they knew the joy of being filled with the Holy Spirit; out of their innermost being flowed the promised “rivers of living water”, The fruit of the Spirit was abundantly manifest in their character.

Almost two thousand years have passed by. Amidst the spiritual apostasy of the last days many believers feel keenly aware of the need for the power of the Holy Spirit in their daily experience. They realise that only His indwelling grace can produce the true fruit of the Spirit. He alone can convict unbelievers of sin, righteousness and judgment. He alone can guide into all the truth. Only His fulness and power can avail in spiritual conflict and testimony. Great longings are stirred in the believer’s heart, longings which can be answered only by the assurance of the indwelling Spirit of God, who “beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God”, and confirms to us the mighty truths of divine revelation.

Yet there is a bewildering confusion of teaching on this subject. Basic scriptural truths regarding the Holy Spirit in the believer are sometimes blurred by the tendency to build doctrines on experience rather than on a sound exposition of the word of God. There is an emphasis on spiritual manifestations of a sensational kind, which assume an importance out of proportion to their scriptural setting. Our safeguard is to establish from the Scriptures the truth regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. He who inspired the writers of the sacred oracles reveals to us in the written Word the fundamental facts of the Spirit’s indwelling and filling. These

truths are particularly clear in the Epistles. Having established landmarks of clear doctrinal statement, we may then relate to these the experiences of believers living in the time of the Lord and His apostles, and also of believers in the twentieth century.

The opening chapters of this book are designed to provide a brief outline of Bible truth regarding the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, with special reference to His activity in the believer in this present age of grace. Following this are discussions of more controversial issues which have tended to becloud the understanding of many in regard to the Spirit's ministry. Do we long for the Spirit's fulness and power? It is God's will that we should experience this, not fitfully, but continually. Let us then open God's word together, step by step to explore the wonder of the Holy Spirit's Person, the variety of His ministry, and the possibilities through knowing His filling. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and fight unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

# CHAPTER ONE: TRUTHS CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

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## **H**is Deity

With deep reverence the believer reads of truths concerning the Holy Spirit which are beyond natural comprehension. Faith rests implicitly upon God's word as to the fact that the Holy Spirit is God, even as the Father is God and the Son is God; not three Gods, but one God in three Persons. This profound truth is central to the whole revelation of Scripture. It is beyond tracing out by limited human thought (Romans 11:33), but accepted by faith it becomes a deeply treasured conviction, a source of gratitude and wonder that "things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man", should have been revealed to mere mortals through the Spirit by the Word.

In illustration of scriptural reference to the Deity of the Holy Spirit, it is clear that when Ananias lied to the Spirit (Acts 5:3) he lied to God (5:4). Then in 1 Corinthians 2:10 we read that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"; only One possessed of full Deity could plumb the depths of the thoughts of Deity. From 2 Corinthians 3:18 we learn that one of the Holy Spirit's titles is "the Lord the Spirit", the previous verse expressly stating that "the Lord is the Spirit". Both in Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14 the Holy Spirit is linked with Father and Son in such a way as to imply both equality and unity.

## **His Personality**

It is equally clear that the Holy Spirit is a Person, and not merely "an influence emanating from God the Father". This is shown by the words of the Lord Jesus in John 14:16,17: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give

you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth". The "other Comforter", the Holy Spirit, is referred to as a personality distinct from both the Father and the Son. The Son was to return to the Father (16:5), but the Spirit was to be sent forth from the Father that He might be with the Lord's disciples in this world. In John chapters 14 to 16 the Lord repeatedly uses the personal pronoun 'He' when referring to the Holy Spirit (see 14:26; 15:26; 16:13 for use of masculine demonstrative pronoun 'ekeinos').

Moreover it is possible to "grieve" the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), to "quench" the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and to "do despite" unto the Spirit (Hebrews 10:29). Such expressions would be inappropriate were the Holy Spirit not in fact a Person whose understanding (1 Corinthians 2:10), emotions (James 4:5) and will (Galatians 5:17) are clearly discernible in scriptural revelation.

### **His Participation in Divine Purpose towards Mankind**

The Holy Spirit's activity in connection with divine purpose is distinctively presented in Scripture. For instance, in regard to creation it was the Spirit of God who "moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2) when as yet the earth was waste and void. It was He also who strove with men in the days before the Flood, graciously stirring them to consider their guilt and the warning of coming judgment. It was He who came upon many servants of God in empowering grace at critical points in their experience, as with Samson (Judges 14:6; 15:14) or Saul (1 Samuel 11:6). There is illuminating reference to the Spirit's work in Numbers 11 when the LORD put upon seventy eiders of Israel the Spirit that was upon Moses to equip them to share the burden of responsibility among God's people. Indeed there has been no movement of God in the hearts of men apart from the activity of the Holy Spirit, as Zechariah so tellingly expressed it in chapter 4 verse 6 of his prophecy: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts".

A specialised aspect of the Spirit's work was His guidance of men chosen to provide us with God's written revelation. It was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them who testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow (1 Peter 1:11). Those led by the Spirit to write in this way searched "what time or what manner of time" the Holy Spirit was pointing unto, and it was revealed to them that fulfilment must await later generations. These prophets had spoken from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. Because of this Paul could write, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16 KJV). What the Spirit accomplished through earlier writers to provide the Old Testament, He continued through the writers of the New Testament, bringing to their remembrance all that the Lord had said to them (John 14:26), guiding them into all the truth and declaring to them the things that are to come (John 16:13).

As He was so closely associated with the provision of the written Word, so the Spirit was also prominent in connection with the birth and earthly experiences of the Incarnate Word. With reverence we ponder the words of Gabriel to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). At the Lord's baptism the Spirit descended in bodily form, as a dove, upon Him; He was afterwards driven of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Mark 1:9-13); He returned "in the power of the Spirit into Galilee and declared in the synagogue at Nazareth that the words of Isaiah's prophecy had found fulfilment that day: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor" (Luke 4:14-18).

This obtained throughout His ministry, and even in death it was "through the eternal Spirit" that He offered Himself without blemish unto God (Hebrews 9:14), whilst He was "quickened in the Spirit" (1

Peter 3:18) on the resurrection morning. For it is “the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead” who indwells the believer (Romans 8:11).

This activity of God’s Spirit is seen in connection with every aspect of divine purpose in the Old Testament, and during the time of the Lord’s first appearing among men. The day of Pentecost, however, marked the beginning of a new era in which the ministry of the Holy Spirit would be even more pronounced. The Lord Jesus had clearly foretold this (see John 7:37-39) before His death, and the promise was renewed after His resurrection (Acts 1:4,5,8). The Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost in fulfilment of the promise, ushering in an age of God’s dealings with men which would be especially characterized by a new and enlarged expression of the work of the Spirit.

The greater emphasis upon the work of the Spirit in the world during the present age of grace is illustrated by the wider variety of names or titles by which He is referred to in the New Testament as compared with the Old Testament. In the latter we read of “the Spirit of God”, “the Spirit of the LORD”, “My Spirit” or simply “the Spirit”. The New Testament includes such designations as “the Comforter”, “the Spirit of Holiness”, the “Spirit of Jesus”, “the Spirit of Christ”, “the eternal Spirit”, “the Spirit of the living God”, “the Spirit of Glory” and the “Holy Spirit of promise”. So the character and activities of this blessed Person are more fully revealed than in any previous era, and the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has particular blessings and privileges in association with the work of the Paraclete.

It is towards an examination of this work in the believer of the present age of grace that our study must now lead us.

“Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

# CHAPTER TWO: HERITAGE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN OF GOD IN THE AGE OF GRACE

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It is important that believers in the Lord Jesus should be assured by certain clear statements of God's word that they have been:

- born of the Spirit as to their relationship with God;
- sealed with the Spirit as to their security in Christ;
- baptized in the Spirit as to their being members of Christ's Body;
- indwelt by the Spirit as to the Paraclete's abiding presence.

Let us consider the teaching of God's word on these four points.

## **Born of the Spirit**

By comparing John 1:11-13 with John 3:3-8 and 1 Peter 1:23 it is seen that three things are vital to the new birth, the word of God, the work of the Spirit and the reception of the Lord Jesus by faith. James 1:17,18 explains that God the Father "of His own will ... brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures". So according to the will of the Father, the Holy Spirit brings the word to bear upon the soul of the sinner, revealing Christ as Saviour; when as a consequence Christ is received by faith, the miracle of new birth takes place. That person is now "born of God" (John 1:13), "born anew" (John 3:3), "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6,8); he is a child of God, brought into a relationship with the Father which can never be broken.

## **Sealed with the Spirit**

In 2 Corinthians 1. 21, 22 Paul wrote, “Now He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”. The stablishing, anointing and sealing are each referred to as blessings common to all believers. Indeed the sealing with the Spirit is described as an “earnest” or pledge. This is translated from the Greek word ‘arrabon’, and the implication of this is illustrated by the fact that in modern Greek ‘arrabona’ means an engagement ring. The word ‘arrabon’ is used again in 2 Corinthians 5:5: “He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit”.

What was “this very thing” of which Paul wrote? The believer’s future hope of being with the lord and like Him! So it is evident that the apostle here teaches that every believer must be seated with the Spirit, since this is the pledge of future glory. Two references in the epistle to the Ephesians clearly confirm this. The correct rendering of Ephesians 1:13,14 reads as in the Revised Version: “in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, - in whom, having also believed, ye were seated with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of His glory”.

It should be carefully noted that the King James version rendering, “after that ye believed”, might lead to misunderstanding. For it could be construed as meaning that the sealing with the Spirit took place at some time later than the moment of regeneration. The fact is that “having heard the word of the truth” and “having believed” both refer to the time when the gospel was believed, resulting in salvation. To quote W. E. Vine: “The aorist participle marks the definiteness and completeness of the act of faith”.

It is most significant that as in 2 Corinthians 5:5 so in Ephesians 1:14 and 4:30 the sealing of the believer with the Holy Spirit is linked with

“the redemption of the body”. Since all born-again believers of this dispensation will share in that physical “redemption” at the return of the Lord Jesus (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), it necessarily follows that each believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment he puts saving faith in Jesus (see also Romans 8.23).

### **Baptized in the Spirit**

It was John the Baptist who first used the expression “baptize ... in the Holy Spirit”. As the forerunner of the Messiah; John declared that the coming One would be distinguished by the fact that He would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire (Matthew 3:11 RV margin). Yet the Lord Jesus did not baptize in the Holy Spirit during the years of His earthly ministry (John 7:39). Before His final ascent to heaven He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the fulfilment of the promise of the Father: “For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).

On the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Lord’s resurrection from the dead, believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit for the first time in human history (Acts 2: 1-4). The occasion was marked by audible and visible manifestations, a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, tongues parting asunder like as of fire, and a supernatural speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave the disciples utterance. This marked the beginning of a new age in which the Spirit of God would operate in a manner not formerly experienced, and in the course of which would be developed a unique divine purpose, “which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men ... to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the Body”, that is “the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 3:5,6; 1:22,23).

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, the apostle Paul links the truth of baptism in the Holy Spirit with the truth of membership of “the Church which is the Body of Christ”. We learn from this verse that baptism in the Holy Spir-

it is the means by which one becomes a member of the Body. Nowhere in Scripture do we read of anyone baptizing in the Holy Spirit but the Lord Jesus Himself. So it is He who baptizes all believers in one Spirit into one Body. This is declared by Paul as a general truth applicable to all believers in Christ, just as we are assured in the last clause of the verse that all believers are made “to drink of one Spirit”. That there is no ambiguity about the meaning of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is confirmed by Ephesians 5:30: “Because we are members of His Body”.

Here is a definite statement that each believer is a member of the Church which is the Body of Christ. Therefore each believer must have been baptized in the Holy Spirit according to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

### **Indwelt by the Spirit**

“Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in You, which ye have from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). So wrote the apostle to the Corinthians, although some of them were by no means in a healthy spiritual state. The fact remained that in God’s sovereign grace the Spirit indwelt each new “born person, and this fact when accepted by faith would have a powerfully sanctifying effect. Again when writing to the Romans the apostle reasoned: “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

This verse makes clear that the Holy Spirit indwells each child of God, so fulfilling the promise of the Lord Jesus that when the Comforter came He would be with them for ever (John 14:16). Here then is a truth on which the believer’s heart may thankfully rest, rejoicing that the “Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:11).

## CHAPTER THREE: ASPECTS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVERS IN RELATION TO THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

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**W**hereas the wonderful realities of the previous chapter are assured to each believer the moment he trusts in the Lord Jesus, daily enjoyment of the spiritual blessing which ought to result may be marred by lack of heart concern before the Lord. It is a tragic possibility in Christian experience that a child of God who has had bestowed upon him such rich blessings in Christ may nevertheless be found in a joyless, powerless state of soul. The Scriptures warn against this possibility, ever beckoning forward to fuller enjoyment of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Walking by the Spirit**

“If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk” (Galatians 5:25). The powerful logic of this word is unmistakable. That we do live by the Spirit is certain, and therefore by the Spirit we should walk. By our walk is implied “the whole round of the activities of the individual life”, impressing us with the importance of every aspect of our lives being directed by the Holy Spirit. Two different Greek words are translated “walk” in Galatians 5. In verse 16, “Walk by the Spirit”, the word used is ‘peripateo’, a more general word; but in verse 25 it is the word ‘stoicheo’, signifying to walk in line, and therefore metaphorically to walk in step with others. Whether therefore in our personal responsibilities before the Lord, or in our associations with others in His service, we should seek daily grace to be guided by the Spirit of God.

### **The Fruit of the Spirit**

It is also from Galatians 5 that we learn of the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit", a conflict of which the believer indwelt by the Spirit is acutely aware. For although born from above he still has to contend with the power of indwelling sin, in this passage termed "the flesh". The impulses of the flesh are essentially against the Spirit, for in the flesh "dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). Yet by the power of the Spirit who indwells him the believer may overcome the urgings of the flesh. There will also be seen developing in his spiritual character the delightful fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22, 23. It is one of the evidences of the sure work of the Holy Spirit in a believer when love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control are abounding. The balance of character implied by the singular word "fruit" is noteworthy.

It is not that some aspects of Christian character should be manifest and others neglected, but rather as in a cluster of fruit with each characteristic developed proportionately. Nor is there an assumed imitation of these graces, but a growth in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ by the work of the Spirit who indwells us; "transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

### **The Fulness of the Spirit**

We are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), and this is a matter for constant exercise of heart before the Lord. Without an earnest concern for the Spirit's fulness we shall lack the power for conflict which is available to us. How may this fulness be known, and what does it result in? It may be known by allowing the Holy Spirit to control our hearts and minds, so bringing our lives into subjection to the divine will. It will result in attitudes which are associated with the Spirit-filled man in Ephesians 5:15-21, including a wise manner of life, concern to understand

what the will of the Lord is, a spirit of praise and thankfulness, and a becoming subjection to others in the fear of Christ.

When this true fulness of the Spirit is enjoyed, there will be power to meet the demands of service for the Lord, as particularly illustrated by the apostles' power in witness on certain occasions (e.g. Acts 4:8). Stephen was chosen for special service in Acts 6:5 because he was recognised to be habitually "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit". At the critical moment when his accusers assailed him (7:54,55) this fulness of the Spirit was the enabling power which caused him to glorify God so magnificently in martyrdom.

### **Grieving and Quenching the Spirit**

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed" (Ephesians 4:30).

"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

It is shown by the context of Ephesians 4:30 that the Spirit who indwells us may be grieved if we yield to the wrath, and works of the flesh. Corrupt speech, bitterness, malice and railings are examples of those things which will grieve Him. Do we not marvel at the long-suffering of the Spirit who so graciously bears with our natural frailties and perversity, still moving our hearts in fresh desire towards the Lord and making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered? (Romans 8:26). As for "quenching" the Spirit, we may repress His promptings within our own hearts, or we may hinder His work in others, discouraging them when the Spirit of God is urging them towards activity in spiritual service.

# CHAPTER FOUR: THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES OF GOD

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## **A** Product of the Spirit's Work

It has been suggested that the Acts of the Apostles might well be described by an alternative title, the Acts of the Holy Spirit. Luke's wonderful narrative unfolds the progress of God's work as the word of the Lord ran and was glorified "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth". The result of this work was the establishment of churches of God in numerous places, and those churches of God are viewed as "a temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16), "a holy temple in the lord a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21,22). To the church locally in Corinth Paul wrote, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). So that in the very nature of their constitution these churches of God were of the Holy Spirit, and it was through His presence among them that the purpose of God dwelling among men in a corporate sense was brought to pass in the present dispensation.

## **Operating by the Spirit's Power**

As disciples had been brought together as a result of the Spirit's work in their hearts, so their service in churches of God could be acceptably undertaken only in the power of the Holy Spirit. As to their worship it must be "by the Spirit of God", glorying in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3). As to their united exercise in prayer, it must be "praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20). As to their testimony towards others, it must be "in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). As to their attitude one to another

er they must give “diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). As to their general comportment, it must be “in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” (2 Corinthians 6:6-7).

Every aspect of their experience together in divine service was intended to be in the energy of the Spirit. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.” The whole conception of unity and service in churches of God was alien to the natural mind. It was the product of spiritual revelation and response to the divine will. Therefore in the activities of the churches of God the guiding principles were as revealed spiritually through the word of God, and the motive power was of the Holy Spirit alone.

### **Spirit-controlled Leadership**

Leadership of the New Testament churches of God was vested in the elders of the churches (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-11). As Paul reminded the elders of the church in Ephesus, it was the Holy Spirit who had made them overseers (Acts 20:28), and it is clear from God’s insistence on the standard of their spiritual character that the fruit of the Spirit must be manifest in their lives.

There are instructive examples of the concern of the elders to be assured of the Holy Spirit’s leading in regard to the development of the Lord’s work in their time. It was while the leaders of the church at Antioch (Syria) waited together before God that the Holy Spirit indicated His will that Barnabas and Saul should be separated for the work whereunto He had called them (Acts 13:1,2). Later on we learn that Paul, Silas and Timothy were “forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia”, and that when they tried to go into Bithynia “the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not” (Acts 16:6,7).

The elders were also dependent on the leading of the Spirit to preserve their united understanding of the will of God in regard to doctrinal matters. This is clearly seen in the issue that arose in Antioch (Syria) when some contended that Gentile believers were under obligation to keep the law of Moses (Acts 15:1). The apostles and elders gathered in Jerusalem to consider this division of opinion. There was much questioning; Peter, Barnabas, Paul and James spoke to the subject. The outcome of the meeting was summarized in a written message to the church in Antioch which included the revealing expression, “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us ...” (Acts 15:28). Their waiting together for the counsel of God by the leading of the Spirit points the way to the divinely ordained means of maintaining unity among leaders in churches of God.

It is abundantly clear from the epistles that it was the divine intention to allow liberty in the churches for the exercise of gifts bestowed by God. A local pastor or minister who monopolises the conduct of the services of the Lord’s people is not seen in New Testament churches of God. The gifts were not given to the few, or artificially limited by allowing only “ordained” men to carry out certain functions in the service of the churches. The conception of “clergy” as distinct from “laity” is foreign to the Biblical picture of these churches. All those gathered into churches of God were priests (Revelation 1:6), united together to form “a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). When they came together (1 Corinthians 14:26-33) there was liberty for each brother to take part in these exercises according to the leading of the Spirit and the particular character of the gathering. The apostle did emphasise, however, that there must be mutual consideration (verse 30), orderliness (verses 29, 32, 33, 40), and that women were not allowed to speak in church assembly (verses 34-38).

While women had a valued and honoured place in connection with the work of the churches, it was not a place of leadership. Nor did God design that they should lead the church in public prayer, prophecy or min-

istry. This is clear from 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11,12. Solid landmarks of apostolic teaching and practice are established by these scriptures. Nor does 1 Corinthians 14:34 contradict verse five of chapter eleven. When reference is made to women “praying or prophesying” in chapter eleven, the context shows that while so engaged in church assembly women must have their heads covered. They were not permitted to lead the company in prayer or otherwise at gatherings of a church of God, for by this they would “usurp authority over the man”.

As though the Spirit of God anticipated difficulty about this principle He constrained Paul to write: “it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church ... If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:35-37). We may safely abide in the truth that the Holy Spirit will not lead the believer in contradiction of the word of God.

# CHAPTER FIVE: REVIEW OF GIFTS IN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES OF GOD

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**F**ive passages call for special consideration in connection with this aspect of our subject:

(1) In Romans 12:3-8 it is God the Father who is seen as dealing to each man a measure of faith (verse 3), resulting in gifts differing according to the proportion of our faith (verse 6). The word translated gifts is ‘charisma’. The gifts include prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving and ruling.

(2) In 1 Corinthians 12:4 the diversities of gifts (‘charisma’) are linked with the Holy Spirit, and verse 7 shows that “to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal”. Nine gifts are specified in this portion:

- The word of wisdom.
- The word of knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of healings
- Workings of miracles
- Prophecy
- Discernings of spirits
- Divers kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

“All these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will” (verse 11).

(3) In Ephesians 4:7-12 it is the ascended Christ who “gave gifts unto men”. The word translated gifts is ‘doma’, “which lends greater stress to the concrete character of the gift than to its beneficent nature” (Vine). Included in these gifts are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

(4) In 1 Peter 4:10 the gifts are described as expressions of “the manifold grace of God” and include “speaking as it were oracles of God” and “ministering”. The word used for gift in this passage is again ‘charisma’. The object of the exercise of the gifts is “that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ”.

(5) In Hebrews 2:4 we read of God bearing witness with the apostles “by signs ... and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will”. This verse links the work of the Father with that of the Spirit, but places emphasis on the activity of the Spirit in regard to the gifts. The word translated gift in this verse is neither ‘charisma’ nor ‘doma’ but ‘merismos’, meaning a dividing (derived from ‘meros’, a part). So literally it would read: “by manifold powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit”.

Some have suggested that the nine gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are “spiritual” gifts as distinct from those mentioned in other passages, and this point calls for brief examination. The term “spiritual gift(s)” in our English Bible (RV and KJV) occurs only in four places: Romans 1:11, 1 Corinthians 12:1 and 14:1,12. It is clear that the spiritual gift or grace which Paul desired to impart to the Roman disciples was not one of the nine under discussion, because the bestowal of the latter was the Holy Spirit’s prerogative.

As to the occurrence of the expression in 1 Corinthians 12:1 and 14:1,12, the word gift is not in the original Greek, and the adjective ‘pneumatikos’ might equally well be rendered “spiritual things” or “spiritual matters”. It will be noted also that ‘charisma’ is used of such gifts as ministry or teaching. So one could not conclude from this expression that the nine gifts of verses 8-10 were in a class apart, “spiritual gifts” as distinct from other gifts.

It is helpful to appreciate that the gifts are seen as bestowed by the Triune God, but different passages present the matter from different viewpoints. Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4 speak of certain gifts in relation to the Father, Ephesians 4 in relation to the Son, and Hebrews 2:4 in relation to the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12. 4-6 shows the united activity of Spirit, Son and Father (in that order), and the chapter is divided into three sections corresponding with this introductory statement:

- verses 7-11 corresponding to verse 4, with emphasis on the diversity of gifts by the same Spirit;
- verses 12-27 corresponding to verse 5 as to diversities of ministrations under the same Lord;
- verses 28-31 corresponding to verse 6 as to diversities of workings under God the Father.

It is also important to distinguish certain gifts which had a special and temporary purpose involving miraculous power or manifestation. Indeed the gifts may be usefully classified into three groups:

(1) Those necessarily involving miraculous expression apostleship, gifts of healings, workings of miracles, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues.

(2) Those which may or may not require miraculous expression:

- Prophecy - in the special sense of new revelation or future predictions this gift involved the miraculous; it was also exercised to speak unto men edification, comfort and consolation (1 Corinthians 14:3). In the more general sense of speaking forth God's message on the basis of the written revelation, prophesying does not call for miraculous power.
- The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge - this gift may also have been used by God to impart new revelation or special guidance before the written Word was complete; but it equally operates in relation to the application of the written Word without any miraculous element.
- Faith - the gift of faith may have resulted in the miraculous during the period when God was confirming the word by the signs that followed; but it may equally be exercised in a non-miraculous context throughout the dispensation.
- Discernings of spirits - some evidently had a miraculous ability to discern and cast out evil spirits on the lines described in Acts 16:16-18, but this gift may also be seen operating in the simple application of the test of 1 John 4:1-3, or by testing the "doctrines of demons" by truths of the written Word.

(3) Those which do not in any case require miraculous expression - e.g., teachers, helps, governments, ministry, pastors.

Gifts involving some kind of miraculous activity or expression fulfilled a special purpose at the beginning of the present age or dispensation. This is stated in Hebrews 2:4, the purpose of miraculous evidence being to confirm the word spoken through the apostles. Succeeding generations were required to walk by faith in the light of that written revelation. This is illustrated by the five gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11.

The apostolic gift was not renewed after the first century. An apostle must have been an eye-witness of the Lord in resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1

Corinthians 9:1) and have wrought the “signs of an apostle” (2 Corinthians 12:12). Their particular witness having been given in their generation this gift was withdrawn, but the gifts of prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were perpetuated because they were essential for the continuance of churches of God and the spread of the word. It will be self-evident in the light of the warning in Revelation 22:18 that such miraculous gifts as were involved in imparting new revelation from God would be redundant once the written revelation was completed.

The following are among the gifts mentioned in the Epistles which have been in evidence throughout the dispensation: prophecy, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, discernings of spirits (all in their non-miraculous aspects), ministry, teaching, helps, governments, pastors, evangelists, exhorting, giving, ruling.

The functioning of a New Testament church of God depended upon the harmonious co-ordination of disciples who had been granted a particular gift or gifts to be used for the spiritual profit of the whole. It was God’s plan that there should be unity in diversity, just as the various members of the human body contribute their special function for the well-being of the whole. The Corinthians came behind in no gift, but had shown irresponsibility and immaturity in the exercise of their gifts. The apostle wrote to correct this attitude, and to show the supreme importance of love as the motive in all spiritual experience.

## CHAPTER SIX: MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - NEGLECTED OR WITHDRAWN?

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“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). On the basis of this text it is widely urged that the miraculous gifts of apostolic times were intended to continue throughout the present age. But is the text really relevant to this subject? The context of the verse does not deal with spiritual gifts at all. Its declaration regarding the changeless **character** of Jesus Christ is an assurance that as He was all-sufficient for the godly leaders of verse seven, He remains the same for all who would imitate their faith. Compare the statement, “I the LORD change not” (Malachi 3. 6), which again declares the unchanging character of God. This does not imply that there is no variation in the way God chooses to work out different aspects of His all-wise purposes.

### A Bible-Wide Pattern

A scriptural examination of the occurrence of miraculous powers reveals a remarkably consistent pattern of divine permission as illustrated by the following summary:

(1) **From Adam to Moses (2,500 years)**. Giants of faith such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the other patriarchs glorified God by a walk of faith in their respective generations. They knew God’s working for them in marvellous ways, such as the birth of Isaac. Yet such occurrences were rare, and they must be carefully distinguished from God’s giving men power to work miracles. There is no record of such powers having been granted from Adam to Moses.

**(2) Miraculous Era of Moses and Joshua (say 50 years).**

Concentrated into this relatively short period of Old Testament history was a series of signs and wonders accomplished at the hands of Moses, the man of God, and to a lesser degree through Joshua. In this way God confirmed the giving of the law through Moses, and the special calling of Israel as custodians of the oracles of God.

**(3) From Joshua to Elijah (approximately 500 years).**

Apart from isolated exceptions in 1 Samuel 12:16-18 and 1 Kings 13:4,5, here is another half-millennium without the power to work miracles. Illustrious servants of God in this period included Samson, David, Solomon and Asa. Certainly, God used Samson's abnormal strength and David's skill with sling and stone in a marvellous way; but this type of exploit was very different from the powers granted to men in the distinctively miraculous periods.

**(4) Miraculous era of Elijah and Elisha (say 50 years).**

As in the days of Moses and Joshua, God granted these two prophets the ability to perform signs and wonders in Israel. By this means the divine authority of the Mosaic revelation was strikingly confirmed at a time when Israel had backslidden into idolatry. These miracles also served to introduce that great prophetic era which ran on from Isaiah to Malachi, and brought such notable addition to the written Word. For Elijah may be regarded as representative of the prophets as Moses of the law (compare Luke 9:30, 24:44).

**(5) From Elisha to John the Baptist (approximately 900 years).**

Through declension, captivity and restoration, devoted servants of God walked by faith and glorified God in their achievements. Yet they worked no miracles! Daniel spent a

night among lions whose mouths were miraculously closed, and his companions walked the fiery furnace with one like unto the Son of God. Such deliverances were miraculous indeed. Nevertheless, these men were the passive subjects of God's miraculous protection; that is a different matter from being an active agent of miraculous power, as was so positively the case with Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha. This era closed with the ministry of John the Baptist of that great forerunner the Master said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist". Yet of him it is written, "John indeed did no sign".

**(6) Miraculous Era of the Lord and His Apostles.** All earlier manifestations of miraculous power were eclipsed by the outpouring of blessing through Immanuel in the days of His flesh. "When the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men" (Matthew 9:8). The parallel between this period and that of Moses is very clear. "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). A new and fuller revelation was being introduced. The Lord Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law and revealed further truths, appealing to the signs 'He did as proof that His teachings were of the Father: "The works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, hear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5:36). In similar strain, Peter urged the evidence of the miraculous works of Christ as evidence of God's approval: "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you" (Acts 2:22). After the Lord's ascension the apostles were sent forth with the gospel, and their witness was established by the evidence of miraculous power entrusted to

them: “God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will” (Hebrews 2: 4).

Whereas during the present age of grace the Holy Spirit indwells believers, as distinct from formerly having been “with” them (John 14-17), this is not linked in Scripture with a perpetuation of miraculous gifts. Indeed, as far as the scriptural record is concerned, there is no evidence of miraculous power having been exercised after about fifty years from the commencement of the Lord’s ministry. It seems highly significant that in the later epistles the Holy Spirit does not introduce the subject of miraculous gifts. Having regard to the limited periods of Old Testament history during which miraculous powers were granted to men, it was in harmony with God’s ways that miraculous gifts should have been withdrawn when their purpose had been accomplished through the ministry of the Lord and His apostles.

The New Covenant revelation had been adequately confirmed. Succeeding generations were to see a repetition of what had been the general rule in Old Testament times - that men of God walked by faith in His word, having no need of miraculous manifestations to confirm their faith.

### **Why this Pattern?**

The basic reason for this is not far to seek. To act in humble obedience to the word of God calls for a higher calibre of faith than to respond because of spectacular signs of His miraculous working. Indeed, the Lord repeatedly emphasized that many of the people who flocked after Him were but hankering after the unspiritual excitement of seeing fresh signs. He valued rather the allegiance of those who understood His miracles to be but a means of leading disciples to do the will of His Father.

It cannot be over-emphasized that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1 KJV), It demands

greater faith to walk with God under a “silent heaven” than to have visible evidences of God’s presence through the ability to work miracles. Modern claimants to miraculous manifestations are prone to suggest that Christians who do not experience some visible evidence of the Holy Spirit’s fulness are lacking in faith. Scripture teaches that the natural mind hankers after something of a supernatural character which can be tested by the senses. Faith rests on God’s word; it is the evidence of things **not seen**.

Yet some insist that through lack of faith the miraculous gifts of the apostolic era ceased. This suggestion is discredited by the whole tenor of scriptural precedent. It is denied by the realities of Christian experience. For who can challenge the genuineness of the faith of millions of dedicated Christians who have nevertheless not been granted miraculous powers?

### **Summarising Principles**

The following principles emerge from our study, and are commended for prayerful thought:

- (1) That God has normally expected men to walk with Him by faith and not by sight (Habakkuk 2:4).
- (2) That in line with this principle visible manifestations of miraculous power have been the exception rather than the rule.
- (3) That when granted, the power to work miracles has been only for short periods and for particular purposes.

### **Reasons Commonly Advanced in Support of Continuance of Miraculous Gifts**

Because of the importance of this issue, it seems desirable to consider in greater detail five points often put forward in support of the continuance of miraculous gifts:

(1) That the Lord Jesus said in John 14. 12: "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father". There is an obvious weakness in applying this scripture to the continuance of the miraculous gifts. For in what way did even the apostles do greater works than the Lord Jesus? Their works were not greater in the sense of being more wonderful! Certainly the modern claimant to miraculous power does nothing comparable to the work of Christ. The "greater works" are not necessarily greater signs. It seems therefore that the Master's words in John 14:12 apply to the world-wide extension of the kingdom of God by the work of the apostles and others, in contrast to the limitation of the Lord's own work to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (see Matthew 10: 5,6; 15:24). It has been wisely commented: "The works of the apostles were greater than those of the Lord in that they extended to a greater geographical area (the whole world as against one country), to a wider ethnic range (all nations as against one race) and to a greater time period (many years as compared with three years' ministry). In one sense also the conversion of idolatrous Gentiles was more wonderful than that of relatively enlightened Jews. Doubtless the Lord had in mind the age-long development of God's purpose in the gospel until the present time, for He spoke in a general sense of those who believed in Him, and not only of the apostles".

(2) That in resurrection the Lord further confirmed: "These signs shall follow them that believe: in My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall

take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17-18). This portion is, in fact, one of the proofs that the miraculous gifts were not intended to be permanent. For the Lord said that certain signs would follow them that believed the gospel. Yet multitudes have believed through many centuries without the signs following. If God had intended this statement to be applicable throughout the gospel age, such signs must necessarily have followed continually. Experience proves that this was not implied in the Lord’s words. The Lord taught the apostles to expect that miraculous signs would follow them that believe. Such signs did follow during the apostolic era, but they were not a usual result of belief in the gospel afterwards. It is important to face facts and see them in clear perspective. Scriptures such as Mark 16:17, 18 must be interpreted in the light of actual experience. It is on record that some have received mighty anointings for service, and that in times of stress or revival certain special manifestations have been known. Nevertheless this does not alter the basic truth that the signs of Mark 16:17,18 have not in fact followed in the vast majority of cases where believers have put saving faith in Christ over the past nineteen centuries. Yet the gospel has so often been proclaimed in the manifest power and fulness of the Holy Spirit.

(3) That the Corinthians were urged to “desire earnestly spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1), and so should we. This is an example of exhortations lifted from their context and used as an argument for the permanence of such gifts as speaking in tongues. In their setting, these exhortations stress rather that such miraculous gifts as speaking in tongues were of lesser value for the edification of the churches of God. “God hath set

some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues ... But desire earnestly the greater gifts" (1 Corinthians 12. 28-31). "Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

(4) That the miraculous gifts fell into disuse because of spiritual decline among believers, and may be recovered by personal exercise in deeper sanctification. On the surface this may appear as a reasonable suggestion, but it breaks down when more closely examined against scriptural example and historic fact. As to the former, when Paul wrote his first letter to the church of God in Corinth, that church was by no means to be commended for its high spiritual tone. The letter had to rebuke gross immorality, serious faction, brother going to law against brother, disorders in assembly gatherings, and sundry doctrinal errors. Yet miraculous gifts were in prominent manifestation! So it is difficult to establish that the enjoyment of certain spiritual gifts is dependent upon a high standard of holiness. As to historic fact, multitudes of believers, many sealing their testimony with the blood of martyrdom, have borne noble witness to the truth in their time; yet they were not granted miraculous gifts. None would appear to have been more deserving of them, yet it seems obvious that it was not in the counsel of God for the gifts to be continued throughout the dispensation.

(5) That the Scriptures do not definitely state that any of the spiritual gifts would be withdrawn. It is perfectly clear that the distinctive gift of apostleship belonged only to a limited period. Associated with the special responsibility of apostleship in personal witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts

1:22) there was granted power to prove that witness by miraculous signs. As Paul wrote of his own apostleship, “in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works” (2 Corinthians 12:11,12). Since the gift of apostleship was of a temporary character, it is consistent to accept that “the signs of an apostle were also limited to the apostolic era. It is in harmony with this that other gifts of a similar character should cease.

### “The Latter Rain”

The view is urged by some earnest believers that even though miraculous gifts were withdrawn after the apostolic era, they have been renewed again in these closing days of the age of grace. This is said to answer to the prophetic word of Hosea 6:1-3, that as a result of seeking unto the Lord, “He shall come unto us as ... the latter rain that watereth the earth”. There was the “former rain” of miraculous manifestation in the first century, and the “latter rain” is now being experienced. God’s sovereignty is absolute, and none could stay His hand if He chose to renew the miraculous gifts. Several formidable questions arise, however, including the following:

- (1) What justification is there for applying Hosea’s words in this way? Examination of the context shows no apparent link between the simile used in Hosea 6:3 and renewed miraculous manifestations in modern times.
- (2) Would Scripture otherwise suggest a renewal of miraculous spiritual gifts at the close of this age? Scriptural precedent would not lead one to expect this. The closing phases of previous dispensations have not been marked by the miraculous.

The present dispensation will be terminated by the coming to the air of the Lord Jesus for His Church. Then will follow the fearful “time of the end”, when there will be an outpouring of God’s Spirit upon all flesh, with resulting prophesyings, dreams and visions (Joel 2:28-31). That there must be a fulfilment of this prophecy beyond its application on the day of Pentecost is clear from its close association with “the great and terrible day of the LORD”, but it does not belong to the age of grace.

(3) Do manifestations claimed today really answer to those experienced in New Testament times?

(4) Why are modern claims to miraculous manifestations so often associated with serious doctrinal error?

Later chapters explore the aspects of enquiry raised by these fast two questions; they are merely noted at this point to emphasize the importance of carefully examining propositions which may appear at first sight to be reasonable.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: “SECOND BLESSING” - HEALTHFUL TEACHING OR ARTIFICIAL CRISIS?

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**M**any religious groups which give emphasis to a modern renewal of spiritual manifestations have in common that they insist on a certain pattern of spiritual crisis in the experience of every child of God. Stated in general terms, this teaching requires that after the new birth there is a separate and fuller experience of visitation by the Holy Spirit. This experience is represented as the most important step in a believer's life after he has been born again. He should never be satisfied until he has attained to a definite crisis in which he has proof to his natural senses of this special visitation.

Different terms are used to describe the experience by different exponents of this outlook, but all are based on a common pattern of working towards a crisis of spiritual manifestation. Does God's word in fact teach the believer to expect and strive for a specific experience of this kind as the most important step in his spiritual life after he has put saving faith in Christ? Careful search through the Acts and the Epistles will confirm that **NOT ONCE ARE WE TOLD TO EXPECT OR SEEK AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE!**

We can only conclude that an entirely wrong emphasis is given by all who advocate such teaching. There is of course abundant exhortation towards earnestness and growth from other points of view. How fervently, for example, the apostle Paul yearned in prayer for the disciples of his day, that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment (Philippians 1:9), that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will and increase in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9,10), that they might be filled unto all the fulness of God (Ephesians 3:19)!

Paul himself counted all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, never reckoning that he had already attained, or been made perfect, but ever pressing on in his spiritual experience (Philippians 3:8-14). Yet there is no suggestion that a crisis experience of “second blessing” should be sought.

Contradictory doctrinal explanations are offered by those claiming to have attained an experience of “second blessing”. It will be useful to examine four of these.

**(1) The Crisis Experience Claimed as Assurance of Salvation**

There are those who claim that until one has had a spiritual manifestation marked by speaking in tongues there is no assurance that one is a saved person. We mention this to illustrate the lengths to which a wrong premise has led some earnest seekers for a crisis of “manifestation in the realm of the spirit”.

**(2) The Crisis Experience claimed as “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”.**

Those who advocate this view hold that the disciples were born again through faith in Christ as recorded in the Gospels but were taught to pray for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11: 13). After waiting in prayer as recorded in Acts 1, they were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This sequence in the experience of those who companied with the Lord is wrongly applied to the present-day believer, who is urged to strive in prayer until he is granted a supernatural manifestation of “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. This mode of argument ignores the historical setting of the apostles’ experience. For they lived in a period of transition from the dispensation of law to the dispensation of grace. What occurred in their experience was unique to believers of the generation who had believed in the Lord Jesus before the day of Pentecost.

It is therefore misleading to build a doctrine for believers of this age upon the experience of disciples whose knowledge of the Lord began before the start of the present dispensation. The case of Cornelius and his friends (Acts 10) illustrates the normal experience of the Gentile believers in this age “as they received the Word, the Holy Spirit fell on them. They were born again and simultaneously baptized in one Spirit into the Body of Christ. In their case this baptism was marked with outward manifestations, to teach Peter and his Jewish brethren that “to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). As Peter himself put it: “If then God gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17).

The Holy Spirit is a gift from God, bestowed on every believer when baptized in the Spirit at the time of the new birth, and given purely on the principle of faith in Christ - see, for example, John 7:39; Galatians 3:2,14; Ephesians 1:13.

Some have difficulty regarding the two cases recorded in Acts chapters 8 and 19. In chapter 8, the Samaritans did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John came from Jerusalem and laid their hands upon them, although they had accepted the Saviour under Philip's ministry, and had been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. In Acts 19, Paul discovered certain disciples at Ephesus who had been taught only the baptism of John; the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues when Paul laid his hands on them, after their reception of the gospel and their baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus. There were special reasons for these exceptional cases. In the first case, we need only recall the deep cleavage which had traditionally obtained between Jews and Samaritans (John 4:9).

Lest that division should be perpetuated in the early churches of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit was withheld until the apostles came from

Jerusalem, thus welding the Samaritan work in close unity with that in Judaea. In the second case, the manifestation of tongues when these disciples accepted the gospel would emphasise to them the distinctive character of the truth they had now embraced. It would be unsound to build up a doctrine on such exceptional cases. Basic doctrine on any subject must rest on the main body of scriptural teaching. Exceptions serve to emphasise the general rule rather than contradict it.

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the three illustrations quoted from Acts 8, 10 and 19 all confirm how effortless was the reception of this gift of the Holy Spirit. There was no striving or crying for the gift. Nor was it dependent on the holiness of life of those who received it. Every believer received the Spirit as a gift from God, and was baptized in one Spirit into the Body of Christ.

### **(3) The Crisis Experience claimed as Confirmed by Tongues.**

Some teachers extend the foregoing view by asserting that the crisis of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not truly experienced unless one has spoken in tongues. This is out of line with scriptural precedent. There are only three places in the whole story of the Acts where speaking in tongues is mentioned – Acts 2:4, 10:46 and 19:6. The three thousand saved on the day of Pentecost were all baptized in one Spirit into one Body; so were the additional converts of Acts 4:4; also the eunuch of Acts 8 and the apostle Paul in Acts 9; to say nothing of the multitudes of converts reached during the missionary journeys of Paul and others. Yet in none of these cases does the Spirit record any miraculous manifestation accompanying the great reality of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We conclude that in the great majority of cases baptism in the Spirit into the Body of Christ took place without any outward proof to the natural senses. So it has been with multitudes of believers down to the present

day. Every born-again one being a member of the Body of Christ must necessarily have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed by comparing the great “proof text” of 1 Corinthians 12:13 with verse 30 of that chapter; verse 30 implies that all had not spoken with tongues, yet all had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. There is also a very illuminating word in 1 Corinthians 14:22: “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving”. To insist that even a temporary speaking in tongues must mark baptism in the Spirit contradicts this word. It makes tongues a sign to them that believe, a proof to believers that they have received the so-called “baptism of the Holy Spirit”.

#### **(4) The Crisis Experience claimed as Proof of the Holy Spirit’s Fulness.**

There are others who teach that whereas the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit at the moment of the new birth, he must nevertheless seek after a crisis of “second blessing” as evidence of attaining to “the fulness of the Spirit”. This is still presented as a marked crisis towards which every believer must strive until he attains it, an experience obvious to the natural senses even though varying in detail from person to person.

This change of terminology from “baptism of the Spirit” to “fulness of the Spirit” is scripturally untenable. For we are exhorted to be “filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18) as a matter of habitual exercise, not of unique crisis. We have examples of men whose spiritual character could be described as “full of the Holy Spirit”, that is, habitually so (Acts 6:5, 11:24). This does not of course preclude occasions on which God’s servants may be specially filled with the Spirit to meet a particular need (e.g., Acts 4:8).

#### **Hungering and Thirsting That We May Be Filled**

In contrast to the general pattern of teaching put forward in regard to a “second blessing”, God’s word shows that the essential conditions for

spiritual growth must be maintained life-long if progress is to be known. There will be a hungering and thirsting after a fuller knowledge of Christ and a greater resulting power in service. One example of such longings is given by the prayer recorded in Ephesians 3:16-19. If yearnings for a deeper and fuller knowledge of God are not stirred in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit there is something lacking in his experience. There should be earnest exercise for continuing fulness of the Spirit.

It is also clear that some believers who have never claimed supernatural manifestations have nevertheless known crises in their spiritual experience which have left indelible impressions. Deep exercise for greater holiness of life or power in witness have been followed by an unforgettable realization of the presence of God, and a fulness of the Spirit which has marked a distinct transformation in their spiritual life. To God be the glory for such experiences and their results! Yet we must guard against building wrong doctrine on these experiences. The instructed believer appreciates that God in His sovereignty grants these experiences to some, but He has not guaranteed them to all. There is a useful parallel in the Old Testament. All earnest Israelites could attain a measure of spiritual growth and enlightenment simply by ensuring that the basic condition of heart was right. "What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Through some, however, God had a special purpose, and in fitting them for their tasks He manifested Himself uniquely to them.

Moses stood with unshod feet as the voice of the Eternal God spoke to him from the burning bush; Elijah covered his face with his mantle at the cave entrance as the still small voice filled his heart with awe; Isaiah saw the LORD high and lifted up; Daniel's comeliness was turned into corruption at the divine presence. If then a believer should be granted some particular experience of God's manifest presence, let him cherish the blessing he has received through it; but it may not be God's will for another to have an identical experience.

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20, 21).

## CHAPTER EIGHT: GIFTS OF HEALINGS

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Among the miraculous spiritual gifts which are claimed by many today are “gifts of healings”. These are said to have been renewed so that the same powers are granted as were seen in exercise by the apostles and others in the first century. This claim calls for thoughtful examination, which may usefully be approached by considering certain broad issues as to bodily health in relation to Christian experience.

### **Spiritual Purpose in Bodily Suffering For the Glory of God**

Some of God’s deeper purposes, bringing much glory to His name, have been worked out through bodily suffering. It was the Lord Jesus Himself who explained to the disciples that the blind man of John 9 had been born in that condition “that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (verse 3). Equally the sickness and death of Lazarus were for “the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby” (John 11:4).

### **For the Proof of Faith**

The believer is taught to seek God’s help through prayer in every anxiety or need (Philippians 4:6). Times of sickness tend to draw out the heart to God in special fervour. Bodily weakness gives an increased sense of dependence upon the One in whom we live and move and have our being. If those we love are sick, it stirs the heart in earnest supplication for them. So the annals of Christian experience have been illumined by the emergence of strong faith in trials of sickness, often in apparently hopeless cases. Very wonderfully God has worked in response to prayer even beyond all medical expectation, and His name has been glorified through healing given. The Scriptures repeatedly testify to God’s pleasure in the faith of

those seeking healing, and the blessing granted as a result (e.g., Matthew 8:10,13; 9:22,29; Mark 2:5; 10:52; Luke 17:19; Hebrews 11:6,35).

Nevertheless, faith may be even more strongly manifested when God does not see fit to heal. It may be part of the discipline of Christian experience to accept as His will for one's life that chronic weakness and suffering have been chosen as circumstances in which He may most fully be glorified. To bow the heart in full acceptance of such trial, or of the apparent tragedy of fatal illness, has represented a high-water mark of faith in the lives of some devoted disciples. This aspect of the proof of faith through sickness is well illustrated in God's word. For example, Job's health was broken by a plague of boils which left him loathsome, pain-racked and utterly depressed.

Yet God was greatly glorified because Job held fast his integrity despite his terrible plight (see Job 2:7-10; 7:3-6). The apostle Paul, who on occasions exercised such great gifts of healings, was himself afflicted by a "thorn in the flesh". About this he three times besought the Lord, but was assured that divine grace was sufficient for him in enduring it (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). One purpose of God in this was to prevent His servant from becoming unduly exalted as a result of the spiritual revelation he had received. Despite bodily weakness he was to know the power of Christ made perfect in him.

### **For Chastisement**

There is the possibility of our heavenly Father's chastisement through sickness. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). Because of their spiritual carelessness in relation to the Lord's supper Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). James 5:15 links the raising up of certain who were sick with confession and forgiveness of sins. David also testified to God's chastening through bodily affliction (Psalm 32:1-8; 38:1-3). It is clear therefore

that God may use this means of speaking to His children with a view to purifying and spiritual restoration (Hebrews 12:11).

### **Is Physical Healing “in the Atonement”?**

It has been taught that through the Lord’s sufferings He purchased physical health for all who believe in Him, basing this on the quotation from Isaiah in Matthew 8:17, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases”. From this it is reasoned that ail believers should enjoy sound health, so that if they are ill it is because they are in some way out of touch with the Lord. This teaching is doctrinally unsound and does not accord with the realities of godly Christian experience.

The quotation in Matthew 8:17 applies the prophet’s words to the Lord’s healing ministry, not to His vicarious sacrifice. In close identification with human need, as a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, the Lord Jesus felt deeply for the afflictions of those who thronged around Him. It is of course true that through His sacrifice on Calvary He made propitiation for sin, and so provided the means for the ultimate redemption of believers from all the consequences of sin. However, the “redemption of the body” must await the coming again of the Lord. Meanwhile the believer shares in creation’s groaning because of sin (see Romans 8:22-25). There is no present assurance of bodily health. We wait for a Saviour from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, “who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory” (Philippians 3:21),

So if afflicted by sickness the believer should be exercised in prayer about it (James 5:13) He should examine himself to discern if he is being chastened by the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:30-32). He may beseech the Lord to grant healing (2 Corinthians 12: 8). He must also be prepared to accept, if this should be the Lord’s will, that God may be glorified through giving grace to bear bodily suffering: “strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all patience and longsuffering

with joy” (Colossians 1:11). This is further confirmed when we recall that several associates of the apostle Paul also had their share of ill health. Timothy was encouraged to take a little wine for his stomach’s sake and frequent infirmities (1 Timothy 5:23). Because Trophimus was sick he had to be left behind by the apostle Paul at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20). Epaphroditus, so highly commended for the devotion of his service to Christ, had been sick nigh unto death (Philippians 2:25-30).

### **Scriptural Examples of Gifts of Healings**

It was a glorious feature of the Lord’s ministry in Israel that so many benefited from His healing power. For the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that were bruised. To the apostles and others were given gifts of healings which they exercised for the relief of many. From a study of the Gospels and the Acts there emerge certain general principles which governed the exercise of healing powers, and these are a helpful guide in assessing modern claims to the renewal of such gifts.

#### **(1) The Principle of Discernment in the Healer**

With the power to heal in the name of the Lord Jesus went the ability to discern when it was God’s will to heal any particular case. This was an essential feature of the gift as exercised by the apostles. For it was a guarantee that the precious Name of God’s Son would not be dishonoured by attempted healings which did not materialise.

#### **(2) The Principle of Unfailing and Absolute Restoration**

“This perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (Acts 3:16). The Holy Spirit’s description of the perfect healing of this lame man may be taken as the true hallmark of all healing which resulted from the exercise of these gifts. It was a perfect healing, evident to all. One who had been well known as a life-long cripple was walking, leaping and praising God; and

the following day he was still perfectly healed (4:16)! Other examples include the palsied man of Lydda (9:34), the cripple of Lystra (14:10), the victim of fever and dysentery in Melita (28:8). In each case the disease or infirmity was clearly defined, evident to all, and instantaneously and fully cured.

### **(3) The Principle of Divine Sovereignty**

The man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple asked for a cure and received miraculous healing. This was gratuitously bestowed by God in sovereign grace, just as the Lord cured the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5). There were often earnest seeking and ardent faith on the part of those healed, but these two illustrations show that it was not necessarily so. Faith was indispensable on the part of the healer; some who expressed little faith, if any, were cured.

### **(4) The Principle of the Modest Exercise of the Gift**

The Lord frequently charged those He healed that they should not publicise what He had done for them (Matthew 9:30; Mark 5:43; 7:36; 8:26; Luke 5:14). Nor did the apostles use miracles as a means of publicity. The gift was exercised when the Holy Spirit made plain to His servants that God would be glorified by a miraculous expression of healing power. A danger is seen in Acts 3:12 and 14:11. Attention was all too readily focused on the human instruments of healing grace rather than on the deeper spiritual purpose of confirming divine truth.

### **Assessment of Modern Claims to Healing**

When tested by these principles many modern claims to the recovery of New Testament gifts of healings are found wanting. It would be quite unmistakable if God were to grant a recurrence of such miracles as are described in Scripture. Much that is claimed today is not comparable, either as to the type of disease or infirmity involved, or as to the character

of the healing. This is not to say that no benefit has resulted from the activities of those claiming a renewal of the gifts. For God may honour faith in His power to heal despite misunderstanding of doctrine. But where do these healings in any sense compare with the order of miracles seen in the Scripture record? It would appear that healings among believers who claim miraculous gifts are no more remarkable than those resulting from prayer by other believers who make no such claims.

It is vital that every aspect of our experience should be governed by the word of God. In regard to healings, therefore, disciples of the Lord Jesus will be concerned to ensure that the characteristics of their Master's healing activities are clearly evident. How deeply grieving to the Spirit if scriptural principles are violated! For instance, there are cases where through, lack of discernment by a would-be healer the patient's condition is not improved. This is blamed on the patient's lack of faith, an unkind perversion of truth, since the slightest evidence of faith was always rewarded by the Lord Jesus (Mark 9:22-24). It is equally contrary to scriptural principle if healing powers are publicised as a means of propaganda, or used as a means of financial gain.

### **The Spirit's Warning of False Imitation**

The need for caution in connexion with claims to the renewal of miraculous gifts is impressed upon us by the Lord's solemn warning in Matthew 7:21-23. It should be particularly noted that the false miracle workers of whom the Lord spoke were to do these wonderful works **in His name**, and would express surprise when He disowned them. The deer) subtlety of Satan's ways in producing a close imitation of divine working is shown by such scriptures as 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15.

Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, were able to do remarkable things through Satanic power. A superficial observer might be deceived by their imitations. But those earnestly seeking truth need only have waited until God showed up their limitations; for when the dust was

turned into lice by divine power they had to admit, “This is the finger of God” (see Exodus 8:19; 2 Timothy 3:8). Evidence of supernatural power in healing is not of itself proof that the miraculous gifts of apostolic times have been renewed.

It is relevant to point out that quite apart from “pentecostal” circles various religious groups claim miraculous powers of healing. Some are of ancient church tradition, others are relatively modern cults. The instructed believer has no difficulty in recognising the basic errors of their main doctrines, showing that these movements are out of line with scriptural principles. Nor do the healings claimed measure up to apostolic standards. That movements fundamentally unsound in doctrine do present claims to healing in support of their movements should serve as a further warning.

### **The Place of Medical Treatment**

Some well-meaning believers have been led to sad extremes in connexion with illness and healing, refusing to take any kind of medicine or to seek medical advice. That the Scriptures give many examples of healing in response to faith without any form of medical treatment is no reason to suggest that medical aid is therefore wrong. Certainly a believer’s trust must be in God. He must avoid the attitude of Asa, king of Judah, who in his disease “sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians” (2 Chronicles 16:12). Nevertheless, medical skill has been widely used to promote healing under God’s gracious hand!

# CHAPTER NINE: TONGUES AND THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

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## **T**he Scriptural Perspective of these Gifts

It was the Lord Jesus who first foretold that speaking with new tongues would be among signs which would follow faith in the gospel (Mark 16:15-18). Other signs referred to by the Lord included taking up serpents, or being unharmed after drinking any deadly thing. Such signs did follow the acceptance of the gospel in apostolic times. On one occasion Paul was unharmed when a viper fastened on to his hand (Acts 28: 4-6).

We read of people speaking in tongues on three occasions in the Acts of the Apostles (2:4;10:46;19:6). On the first occasion, some spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost, an evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit at the beginning of the present age of grace. This was also marked by a sound from heaven as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and “tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon ... them”. People of various nationalities who gathered around the apostles were amazed because “every man heard them speaking in his own language”. As some remarked, “We do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God”. Following this, Peter addressed the assembled crowd in the commonly understood language, preaching the gospel to them as recorded in Acts 2:14-40.

The second occasion of tongue-speaking was when Cornelius and other Gentiles with him believed the gospel, and the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on them (compare Acts 10:44-48 with 11:15-18). By this means it was confirmed to Peter and his Jewish brethren that “to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life”. The third occasion

of tongue-speaking, as recorded in Acts 19:6, marked the clear distinction between the message of John the Baptist and the apostolic message of the gospel as preached after Pentecost.

This limited reference to speaking in tongues throughout the whole of the Acts sets the subject in its true scriptural perspective. It is not presented as a major gift of essential importance. This is confirmed by discussion of the subject in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In the Corinthian church the gift of tongues had assumed a place out of all proportion to its usefulness. The apostle by the Spirit urged them to "desire earnestly the greater gifts" (12:31), making it quite clear that tongues and their interpretation were but lesser gifts.

### **Perspective of these Gifts among Modern Claimants**

Many who claim the modern renewal of the gift of tongues elevate this experience to an importance unjustified by Scripture. Some present it as a necessary evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit; others link it with the fulness of the Spirit; but whatever doctrinal emphasis is given, there is commonly an insistence that speaking in tongues marks a vital point in the development of spiritual experience, and that no believer should be satisfied unless he has done so. Yet 1 Corinthians 12:30 clearly implies that all those in the church of God in Corinth did not speak in tongues.

### **Claimants to a Renewal of the Gift of Tongues**

Manifestations claimed to be the gift of tongues have featured among widely varying religious groups in modern times. An early movement in which this became prominent led to the formation of what was called "The Catholic Apostolic Church", under the leadership of Edward Irving (1792 to 1834). In the first decade of the twentieth century tongue-speaking manifestations emerged as a new feature among a group in Kansas, U.S.A. This group taught that through a second work of grace after salvation a believer could know the destruction of inbred sin. There

followed a wide extension of these manifestations in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, giving rise to the establishment of large religious groups which tended to make such manifestations a point of denominational distinction.

Within recent years publicity has been given to a widening out of similar manifestations among minorities in such denominations as the Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and Brethren. This wider incidence of “tongues” is now being hailed by some as a movement of the Spirit towards **inter-denominational** union.

### **Doctrinal Considerations**

We have already considered the erroneous teaching that after being born again the believer should seek a second blessing described as “baptism of the Holy Spirit”, to be accompanied by a manifestation of speaking in an unknown tongue, even though this may not recur as a settled “gift”. Other doctrinal points in relation to speaking in tongues call for special note:

(1) “If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church” (1 Corinthians 14:28). These words imply that one gifted to speak in tongues could control the exercise of the gift. It would therefore be unscriptural if one speaking in tongues claimed that he was moved by an irresistible impulse which he could not control.

(2) “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1). There is a contrast in this chapter between the spiritual value of love and the worthlessness of spiritual gifts apart from love. The apostle shows that to glory in a gift for its own sake is essentially unspiritual.

(3) “In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Corinthians 14:19). This illustrates the burden of the chapter that the gift of tongues was being exercised in Corinth in an unprofitable way. The main purpose of spiritual gifts was for the “edifying” of the church. It was a mark of spiritual immaturity to display possession of a gift for its own sake if the church was not to be edified (verse 26). Hence the closing exhortation of the chapter, “Desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues” (verse 39). Speaking in tongues was to be regarded as of subordinate importance even within the period when it was operative.

(4) “If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church” (1 Corinthians 14:27, 28). There was characteristic orderliness in this Spirit-given advice about the use of the gift of tongues in church assembly. Nor was it expected that more than three should speak in tongues at any gathering of the church.

(5) Taking an overall view of the Epistles, it is significant that the subject of tongues is introduced in Corinthians (one of the earlier letters) but when touching on the matter of gifts at a later date in the Ephesian Epistle Paul does not refer to tongues.

(6) “They ... were amazed ... for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10:45,46). “The same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will” (1 Corinthians 12:11). Occurrences of speaking in tongues in the Acts all illustrate the truth that such utterances were granted by the

Holy Spirit as He willed. The experience was spontaneous according to the Spirit's sovereign will. It was not of the will of the flesh, but of God, so much so that in Acts 10:45 Peter and his companions were amazed that it should be granted to certain Gentiles who believed the gospel. The discerning Christian will therefore view with extreme caution any manifestation of speaking in tongues which is "artificially" induced, whether by fomenting of emotional excitement or by the deliberate yielding of the mind to a state of passivity in the desire for an ecstatic utterance.

(7) "Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1). There is clear evidence of a Satanic counterfeit of the gift of tongues, and the believer is responsible to heed the warning that he should not believe every spirit. When the test of spirits (1 John 4:2) has in some cases been applied to persons speaking in tongues, those under "spirit influence" have either denied that Jesus is come in the flesh, or evaded the point or refused to reply.

### **The Believer's Safeguard**

"To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isaiah 8:20). "The judgments of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether ... Moreover by them is Thy servant warned." (Psalm 19:9-11)

It will be apparent that, when viewed in the light of the doctrinal considerations outlined above, much of the so-called speaking in tongues current among evangelical groups today is open to most serious question. The instructed believer will never trust experiences which are in any sense out of accord with the detail of the written Word. The utmost caution is justified in regard to present-day manifestations of "tongues".

## CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

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**I**t is the delight of the Holy Spirit to guide the Lord's disciples into all the truth (John 16:13), and those who follow this guidance according to the written Word will come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Some are ever learning and never able to come to this full knowledge (2 Timothy 3:7). There is a general tendency to appreciate truth which brings certainty and finality as to the individual believer's personal walk with God, but to belittle truth which brings certainty and finality as to the unity of believers in a divinely authorized spiritual association for service. Yet the Holy Spirit wishes to guide into the latter as well as into the former.

In connection with association for spiritual service, God has been pleased to grant steadily increasing light to some of His children who have made quiet progress with His word. Light has been shed on the vital subject of the distinction between the unity of all believers in Christ as members of the Church which is His Body, and the unity in churches of God of those believers who are obedient to His will. It has been seen that such churches of God formed "a habitation of God in the Spirit" in New Testament times (Ephesians 2:22), and that it is still His desire for disciples to be associated together to form His spiritual dwelling place in this way.

There has been a fresh understanding of the weekly remembrance of the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread, an ordinance which not only keeps the heart centred on Christ, but helps to ensure that God obtains His rightful portion through the worship of His people. Such progress in the understanding and practice of God's will is of greater consequence than seeking after sensational spiritual manifestations. See

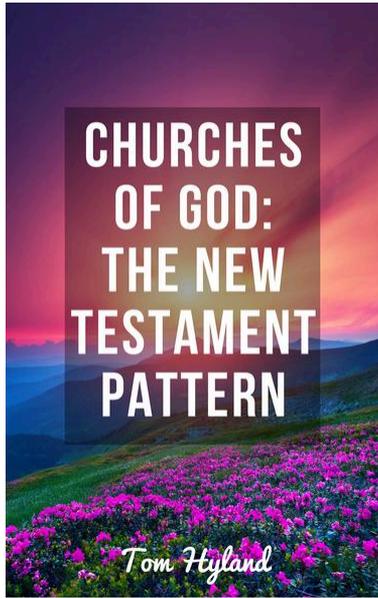
Mark 3: 31-35, and in illustration of the importance placed by the Lord Jesus upon our obedience to God's will.

This is not to suggest that having been guided of the Spirit into a divinely ordained place of service in churches of God, there is any room for spiritual complacency. Rather compare the Lord's words in Luke 11:27, 28, there should be constant exercise of heart towards the Lord to ensure a daily renewal of communion with Him. Formalism and apathy may have a deadening influence among disciples scripturally gathered in churches of God. Genuine joy in the Lord and power in the Holy Spirit will abound to the degree that there is this personal exercise of heart among the disciples.

The faith once for all delivered unto the saints must be guarded and contended for (Jude 3). We are expressly warned that in the last days some will fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1), and that the healthful teaching will no longer be tolerated by the majority (2 Timothy 4:3). "Little children, it is the last hour ... As for you, the anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you ... and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in Him". (1 John 2:18, 27).



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