

U**P**LOOK

JUNE-JULY 2006

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST

W. H. Burnett

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN

R. P. Amos

BUILDING TOGETHER: NEHEMIAH

Mike Attwood

THE HOLY SPIRIT

I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever. Jn.14:16

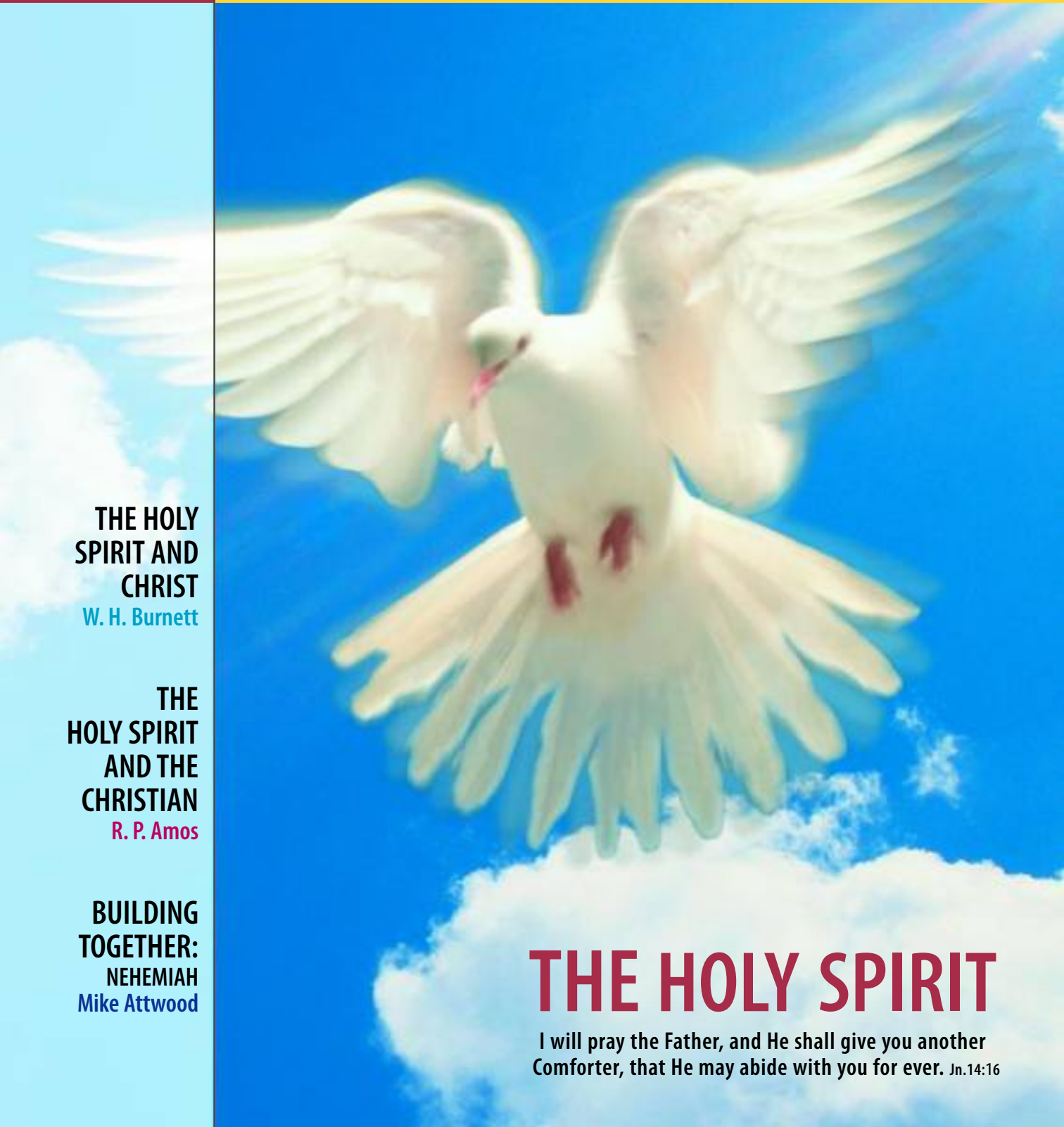




Illustration: New Tribes Mission, Inc.

In this moment of darkness, our Lord Jesus revealed one of the defining truths of the church age: the coming of the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell every believer.

Another Comforter

What would the disciples do once their Saviour went away?

On the night before the Lord went to the cross, He withdrew from the crowds and gathered together with His own one last time. The disciples understood it to be with the purpose of eating the Passover, but He knew it was much more than that. It was a time of *remembrance*, as they looked back to the first Passover. It was a time of *fulfillment*, for they were on the verge of the true Passover which all the others—even the original—anticipated. It was a time of *beginning*, for it was the institution of the New Covenant. But it was also a time of *sorrow*, and if the disciples weren't aware of this at the beginning of that evening, they knew it by the end.

Of course, the Lord knew. So He used that night as a time of *preparation*: the prepared Passover; a prepared place in the Father's house; and a few brief hours to prepare the disciples for the dreadful events that lay ahead.

He began with these words: "*Let not your heart be troubled*" (Jn. 14:1). How like the Lord! He was the One about to be mocked and abandoned. He was the One about to be beaten and whipped. He was the One about to suffer that most agonizing of deaths. He was the One about to bear the sin of the world, which His holy soul loathed. And yet His concern was for others, and He tenderly readied the Eleven for His departure.

To do so, Christ disclosed to them truth after truth. He told them where He is going. He assured them that He would prepare a place for them there. He promised to return for them and bring them home. He unfolded the great work and privileges in which they would share. But there was one wonderful truth in particular that He passed on for their comfort. For as long as they'd known Him, He had been their Comforter—encouraging them in every trial; consoling them in every fear; guiding them in every work; helping them in every task. Now He was leaving, and they would feel terribly, terribly alone. Who would comfort them then? The Lord revealed the glorious answer: He was going to send them another Comforter.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth ... I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." (Jn. 14:16-18)

He cared too much to leave them as orphans. So, in this time of darkness, our Lord Jesus divulged one of the defining truths of the church age: the coming of the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell every believer. The Lord Jesus would no longer visibly accompany His disciples. But He would not leave them alone. Another Comforter—one just like Him—would take up residence within them.

The Lord knew the needs of His disciples then. And, looking down the long centuries of time, our Lord anticipated our needs today. He knew we would need help, because apart from Him we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5). He knew we would need comfort, because the road home can be hard; so He gave us a Comforter; a Helper.

This Comforter performs countless works—these chapters in John tell us that He glorifies Christ, empowers believers, and convicts the world. And He has many names—John records that He is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and the Spirit of truth. But He has another name—a name that reminds us of the Lord's words of solace in the upper room. Romans 8:9 calls Him "the Spirit of Christ." No name could comfort us more, for it tells us that He is just like Him.

U P L O O K

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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- 2) by using the form on our website at:

<http://www.uplook.org/subscribe.html>

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NEW LIFE IN HIM *From seed planting to fruit growing*

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. [Mt. 6:33]



Will You Find the Time?

There's no shortcut to spiritual growth—it takes time!

A new believer does not initially need a crash course in homiletics, Bible commentaries, computer programs, or topical studies on any and every possible spiritual theme. While there is not necessarily anything wrong with these, the new believer needs to first consider: “Am I willing to give up my time that I might grow in the Lord?” An all-too-familiar stumbling block to spiritual growth for new believers—or for any believer—is time management.

Time for prayer

A well-established Bible teacher and author spoke at our annual conference. He shared that before he would consent to lead a Bible study with new believers, he wanted to meet with them in prayer each morning before they went to work. His exact words were, “I want to see them on their pink little knees in prayer.” To him, fervent prayer laid a foundation for serious Bible study, and he wanted to know if young converts were willing to make prayer a priority in their daily schedules. Jesus rose early to pray (Mk. 1:35), found time to pray when He was busy (Lk. 5:15), and sometimes prayed an entire night (Lk. 6:12). Both Peter and Paul were men of prayer (Acts 10:9; 16:25; Eph. 1:15f; 1 Thes. 3:10). In Acts 6:1-7, the apostles prioritized their schedules—even when it meant reassigning some ministry opportunities—to ensure adequate time for prayer with their ministry in the Word. Do we find time for prayer in our lives?

Time for study

Growing in God's Word is work and requires a commitment of time. The command is clear: “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). The word “study” suggests diligence, labor, and effort. Another key word in the verse is “workman,” which speaks of laboring. Recently, a young man spoke at our

assembly on finding time for the study of God's Word. His enthusiasm for the Scriptures was contagious as well as practical, and he cringed at the phrase “killing time.” With delight he informed us, “Did you know that in the time it takes to watch a TV sitcom you could read through the book of Ephesians three times?” He had clocked his reading of the Old Testament to be about forty-five hours and the New Testament to be about fifteen hours. T.E. Wilson, a well-respected missionary and Bible scholar, recalled the advice he received as a youth from an older believer: “Get a good Bible and an alarm clock.” Rising early every day for the study of the Word ensured he would have uninterrupted time alone with His Saviour, and it paid off for him in years to come. May we be modern-day Bereans: “*Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.*”

Time for ministry

Involvement in ministry opportunities also results in spiritual growth. God desires us to live out what we learn. One brother shared how he began his Christian ministry by simply straightening chairs after the Lord's Supper each Sunday. Now a full-time evangelist and Bible teacher, he reflects how he went from straightening chairs to straightening lives. Jesus said, “*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me*” (Mt. 11:29). The apostle Paul was an example to all believers of how to balance secular employment with godly ministry (Acts 20:34; 1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Thes. 3:8), and in his first letter to Timothy he encouraged the young believer to be diligent in the Word and to utilize his spiritual gift (4:12-14). Just as Paul, the apostles, and other missionaries had exemplified, Timothy was to “*carry out fully the ministry*” (2 Tim. 4:5).

May each of us make a commitment to prioritize our time to continually seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. —RANDY HORN

Good News on the Move II

An urgent call for a new group of committed young men!



While the 2005-2006 season for *Good News on the Move* is not exactly history—there is still a great deal of follow-up going on and a domino effect seems to be happening with new gospel efforts occurring across the continent—it’s time to think about next year, Lord willing. And we believe the Lord is calling us to be bold in faith. The words of the Lord to Joshua have gripped our souls: “*There is yet very much land to be possessed.*” We sense that we should be asking Him for a “double blessing”: TWO teams of men so we can share the encouragement from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Will you join us in prayer for this?

Of course, this will require double the personnel and double the provision. We are thrilled that seven men (including one from England) have already inquired, praise the Lord! But we are seeking more serious-minded, Spirit-led, soul-loving servants who believe that the Great Commission is to be operative in their lives.

Able-bodied young men (age 18+) who are teachable, co-operative, burdened for souls, and “well reported of” by their brethren should prayerfully consider if the Lord may be calling them to a year of *Christian Field Training*. If so, please discuss this with your elders and, if encouraged, contact Jerry Denny at: jerrydenny@bellsouth.net

LIVING WATERS BIBLE CAMP

Living Waters Bible Camp, Westby, WI, has several weeks of camp remaining for the summer:

Jul 30-Aug 5 • 7th–9th Grade Boys

Aug 6-12 • 3rd–6th Grade

Aug 6-12 • Young Adult Out-Trip

Registration and information for these camps can be found at www.lwbc.org

Contact: 608-634-4373

email: lwbc@lwbc.org

UPWARD BOUND

Upward Bound will hold its summer conference at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON. The first week will be a series of in-depth seminars on biblical subjects. There are many opportunities for Christian growth through fellowship and times of fun with other believers. Speakers include: Dr. David Gooding (Belfast, UK), Brian Russell (Eastbourne, UK), Dennis Leblanc (NB), and Sandy McEachern (NS). For those able, a second week of canoeing and camping in Algonquin Park will be a part of the

program. Aug 13-20 for Week One and Aug 20-25 for Week Two.

Contact: Sandy McEachern

email: sandymceachern@hotmail.com

CREATION CONFERENCE

Living Waters Bible Camp, Westby, WI, is hosting Creation Conferences at the camp. Conferences are planned for Aug 14-18 with Mike Riddle and Nov 10-11 with Bodie Hodge, both with “Answers in Genesis.” Registration information can be found at www.lwbc.org

Contact: 608-634-4373

KANSAS CONFERENCE

Westside Bible Chapel, 12050 W. Central, Wichita, KS is hosting a conference for young adults Aug 18-20. Lord willing, Mike Attwood (GA) will minister the Word. **Contact:** Darold Peters 316-943-3334 Vern Skiles 316-269-0517

TURKEY HILL RANCH BIBLE CAMP

The Labor Day Family camp is scheduled for Sep 1-4. Speakers: Keith Trevolt

(adults) & Buddy Hughes (children).

Visit www.turkeyhillranch.com for schedule and applications.

Contact: 573-744-9293

email: thrbc@turkeyhillranch.com

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Kansas Bible Camp is celebrating its 50th anniversary on Labor Day weekend. Visit www.ksbiblecamp.org for more details.



CAMP LI-LO-LI

Campers are welcome to attend the Labor Day Family Camp Weekend Sep 1-4 in the beautiful Allegheny Mountains of New York. Visit www.campLi-Lo-Li.com or call 877-518-1704 to request a complete brochure.

EAST TEXAS CONFERENCE

The East Texas Labor Day Bible Conference, hosted by Golden Bible Chapel, is planned for Sep 2 at

FRONT LINES *continued*

Mineola Civic Center, Mineola, TX. Ross Ragland (MO) is the expected speaker. Meals will be provided and cost is voluntary. **Contact:** Grady Dollar 903-768-2700
Bryan Hughes 903-569-8880
RV details 903-569-6115

LABOR DAY CONFERENCE IN BC

Believers at Horse Lake Christian Fellowship in 100 Mile House, BC are planning a Bible conference on Labor Day weekend, Sep 2-4 with the theme "Lord, Draw Us After You!" Invited speakers are Steve Price (KS) and William Yuille (ON). Workshops and seminars dealing with a variety of topics such as assembly life and testimony, the Christian's walk and topics for youth. **Contact:** Rob Brennan 250-791-5657
Don Street 250-395-4230

IOWA BIBLE CONFERENCE

The annual Atlantic, Iowa Bible Conference is planned for Sep 15-17, Lord willing. Scheduled speakers are Jon Glock (TN) and Keith Trevolt (KS). **Contact:** Dennis Oathoudt 712-243-6303 email: koathoudt@hotmail.com

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Albany Gospel Chapel in Albany, GA will celebrate their 50th anniversary with a conference on Sep 16-17. Planned speakers are Bob Spicer (NY) and Rex Trogdon (NC). **Contact:** Bobby Marshall 229-432-0436

BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP SEMINAR

Roy Hill (Bristol, UK), Randy Amos (NY) and Scott Thomson (PA) will be the speakers for a Saturday seminar on Biblical Stewardship Sep 23 from 9:30 AM – 1:30 PM at the Terrill Road

Bible Chapel in Fanwood, NJ. Topics will include: "Stewards of the Truth"; "Stewards of our Time and Talents"; and "Stewards of Our Treasures." There is no cost for this seminar, but registration in advance is helpful for the lunch that will be provided. **Contact:** Mark Kolchin, PO Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734
email: knowtheword@comcast.net

FALL FOLIAGE CONFERENCE

Roy Hill (UK) will be the speaker for a special five-day conference Sep. 25-29 at Camp-of-the-Woods in the scenic Adirondack region of NY State on the topic "Lessons from the Life of Abraham." The cost is \$310 per person including meals, deluxe accommodations and an afternoon excursion to nearby Lake George. **Contact:** email: knowtheword@comcast.net or to register, send fully-refundable amount to: Know the Word Ministries Inc. Mark Kolchin, P.O. Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

CAMP IROQUOINA

Fall/Winter Retreat Schedule
Sep 29-Oct 1 • Mother/Daughter
Oct 6-8 • Pre-teen Retreat
Oct 20-22 • Fall Teen Getaway
Nov 10-12 • Father/Son Retreat
Dec 14-17 • Staff Retreat
Dec 30-Jan 1 • College/Career
Jan 12-14 • Junior High #1
Jan 26-28 • Junior High #2
Feb 2-4 • Senior High Retreat
Feb 17-19 • Family Retreat
Mar 3-4 • Men's Retreat
May 4-6 • Ladies Retreat
May 18-20 • Retreakend

PENNSYLVANIA FALL CONFERENCE

The saints at Grace Gospel Chapel in

Gilbertsville, PA invite you to their annual Fall Conference on Sep 30 from 10 AM to 4:30 PM. The expected speaker is Malcolm Horlock (UK). Please RSVP by Sep 25. **Contact:** Bruce Keyser 610-582-8797
bakeyser@dejazzd.com

MISSION SPRINGS CONFERENCE

The annual Pacific Coast Christian Conference will be held Oct 2-6. Please note new location, Mission Springs (75 miles s. of San Francisco, CA in the Santa Cruz Mountains). The conference begins Monday with dinner at 6:00 PM and ends Friday after lunch. Speakers: David Reid (RI) and Bob Foutz (MI). **Contact:** Max Krieger 323-256-1992
e-mail: maxnbethk@sbcglobal.net

ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

A cordial invitation is extended for the annual Bible conference, DV, at Spring Hill Gospel Hall, Westbrook, ME on Oct 6-8. Speakers expected are Harold Smith (NS) and Brian Taylor (PEI). Accommodations available with early request. **Contact:** Daniel F. Chick, 95 Maple Street, Westbrook ME 04092, 207-854-4968.

FALL CONFERENCE IN NANAIMO

The saints at Wakesiah Gospel Chapel, Nanaimo, BC are pleased to announce their fall Bible conference Oct 13-15. The speaker is Boushra Mikhael (ON). **Contact:** Brian McKibbin: 250-758-6038
email: brimac1@shaw.ca

FAMILY CONFERENCE IN GEORGIA

The Fall Family Conference at Camp Hope, Dahlonega, GA will be held in the will of the Lord Nov 3-5. Thomas

Wheeler (TX) will be the speaker for the adults and Nate Thomas (SC) will minister to the children. The conference begins Friday at 6:00 PM and ends Sunday with lunch. Cost: \$40/family; \$25/individual.

Contact: Steve Roys 770-536-4787
email: camphopega@arilion.com
www.camphopega.org

RAMSEUR, NC BIBLE STUDY

Ramseur and Randleman Gospel Chapels will host the "Back to the Book" study one Saturday each month from Sep to May, except Dec, Lord willing, Randy Amos, Larry Price, Mike Attwood, Warren Henderson and Jim McKendrick are scheduled to speak. Also, three Ramseur/Randleman men are continuing with a class.

Contact: Mike Moody 336-824-5525
Ramseur Gospel Chapel, PO Box 1259, Ramseur, NC 27316
email: mcjmoody@yahoo.com

MOLINA, CO FELLOWSHIP

Visitors traveling near Grand Mesa are welcome to the Lighthouse Bible Fellowship, a small home fellowship near Molina, CO. Molina is between the towns of Collbran and Mesa.

Contact: Don and Alice Watt
970-268-50492 email: awatt@axint.net

COMMENDATIONS

Tom and Melissa Dowell

The elders at Park of the Palms Church, Keystone Heights, FL, have commended Tom and Melissa to the work of the Lord at Park of the Palms Retirement Community in Keystone Heights where they have both faithfully served the Lord for eighteen months. Their loving devotion attending the health and spiritual

needs of the elderly has been a source of blessing to all who live there. Both have radiated the love of Christ to everyone. The elders heartily commend them to this ministry.

Jerry Nininger

Jerry was commended by the Gospel Chapel in Hutchinson, KS to the Lord's work in Immanuel Mission in AZ over 20 years ago. He has faithfully served there with his family in many capacities. Jerry's love for the Lord Jesus and his heart to serve others are evident in his life and are an encouragement to all of us. Recently the Lord has led Jerry to move to Southwest Bible Camp in Glenwood, NM with his family to serve as caretakers. We heartily commend them to this new ministry and request your prayer and financial support as the Lord leads.

Layton and Deborah Kerr

The believers at Osgoode Bible Chapel, ON wish to announce the commendation of Layton and Deborah to full time ministry for the Lord. They plan to work with Open Air Campaigners in the Ottawa area. The Kerrs will be involved in evangelistic ministry to children and adults, open air, camps, door to door, and ministry to believers. Both Layton and Debbie exhibit a keen interest in the gospel. Their input in the affairs of the assembly at Osgoode is valued. The family includes two boys, Ryan, age 14 and Layton, age 8 months. They reside at 54B Foxfield Drive, Nepean, ON K2J 1P7. Their phone is 613-825-9956. Please stand with them spiritually, praying for them, and otherwise as the Lord leads.



HOMECALLS

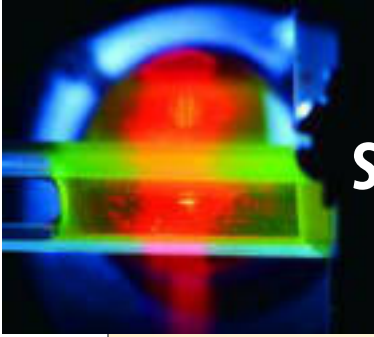
Jean Gibson

On May 1, Jean Gibson went home to be with his beloved Savior. Jean's suffering is over and he is no doubt delighted to be worshipping at our Lord's feet.

Jean, who co-labored in the Discipleship Intern Training Program with William MacDonald, was a skilled evangelist and teacher who shone in training young men. Several who graduated from DITP went on to serve the Lord overseas and in North America. Jean's workbooks, such as *Survey in Basic Christianity*, *Intermediate Christian Training*, *Advanced Christian Training*, *The Dynamic Church* and *Better Homes and Marriages* (all published by Walterick Publishing Ministries) have become standard tools of discipleship. The Memorial Service for Jean was held on Sat, May 13 at Fairhaven Bible Chapel.

Ben F. Parmer

Ben F. Parmer, age 89, of Burlington, CO went to be with the Lord on January 28. He served the Lord with the Limon Bible Chapel, Limon, CO and spent nearly 60 years ministering the Word. He had spoken in 49 of the 50 states as well as in Canada. A memorial service was held in Burlington. 📍



Which Forever is Coming?

It's a good idea to think about forever before you get there.

Forever is coming, whether we like it or not. The question is: which forever? Physicists and astronomers proclaim they know how and when the universe began and approximately when and how it will end. In the book, *Endless Universe*, the authors begin the story of the universe with the words: "From nothing" and "from nowhere" a "tiny speck of brilliant light appeared" and began to expand "not into anything, but throughout, because the Universe was, and is, everything and everywhere" ¹. There was no particular reason for the appearance of the speck some 13 billion years ago, they explain. It just happened. They then fast forward 8.4 billion years to when our sun and solar system, including earth, have formed. Add another billion years and the first life has appeared on earth. This would be, they say, about 3.5 billion years before the present.

But how long will life survive on earth, and what is the ultimate "forever" for each person and the universe as a whole? The Christian and the Materialist answer these questions very differently. The Materialist sees life as a short-lived accident in the long history of the universe. One author estimates we have two billion years before life on earth becomes extinct. By that time, we are told, our sun will expand to become a red giant star and burn or melt the earth to a lifeless lump of rock. This would make the entire history of life on earth about 5.5 billion years long. Five billion (5×10^9) years of life in a universe spanning 1×10^{100} years is less than a blink of an eye. So life is seen as a brief accident. It came from nowhere, has no

meaning or purpose, and as quickly as it arose, it will be gone.

But God has revealed in the Bible a distinctly different account of the origin and future of life; one that shows

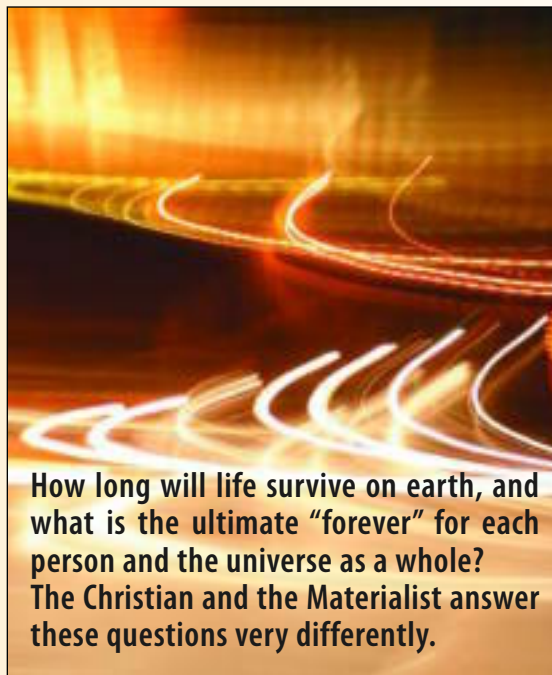
there is a reason for, and a purpose in, life and human existence. The purposeful order, complexity, and rationality of living things, as well as the elegant mathematical structure of the universe, are a reflection of the One who made all things by the Word of His power. They are the forensic evidence of the Creator (Rom. 1:20).

The Materialist believes that in the far distant future our sun and all other stars will exhaust their fuel and become brown or white dwarf stars that then collapse into black holes to be destroyed. All matter will break down and the universe will cool to a

temperature where nothing can ever happen again. The final forever, they predict, is cold, dark, and lifeless.

The Christian agrees that forever is coming, but points out that the Bible teaches we must choose between two different forevers: one forever in God's presence and the other away from His presence. The evidence of the universe and of life clearly point us to God, not to chance, as the originator of life, and can also guide our choice of forevers.

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.



How long will life survive on earth, and what is the ultimate "forever" for each person and the universe as a whole? The Christian and the Materialist answer these questions very differently.

¹ H. Couper H and N. Henbest, *Endless Universe. The Story of Space, Time, and the Search for Life Beyond Our Planet*, (New York, NY: Covent Garden Press, 1999).

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The answer is one of the glorious hallmarks of Christianity.

The Holy Spirit is arguably the most misunderstood person of the Trinity. Thanks to the twentieth century rise of Pentecostalism, along with the subsequent emergence of the “Signs and Wonders Movement,” the Holy Spirit is now the center of attention throughout the publishing and musical wings of Christendom. In spite of the plethora of books, sermons, and songs that have emerged concerning the so-called “Third Person of the Godhead,” the biblical doctrine of the Spirit remains obscure in the minds of many Christians. In fact, much of the attention has only muddled the exegetical waters by propounding errors regarding His identity and ministry. Like the other Persons of the Trinity, He is often maligned and attacked. Numerous cults deny His personality and deity; others misunderstand His activities. Nevertheless, the

Scriptures clearly teach that He is a distinct person of the Godhead with all of the attributes, prerogatives, and activities of deity.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

The personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly taught in our Lord’s upper room promise to His disciples: “*And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*” (Jn. 14:16-17).

There are two commonly used words for “another” in the Greek language. *Heteros* means “another of a different kind”; its counterpart, *allos*, signifies “another of the same

kind.” In verse 16, the Lord uses the second of these words to describe the coming Spirit of truth, thereby indicating that the new Comforter would be of the same kind as the other. That is to say, like the Lord Jesus, the Spirit is a divine person of the Trinity who would diligently attend to all of the spiritual needs of His own.

The Spirit’s personality is further seen in the Lord’s employment of the personal pronoun in reference to “*Him*.” The passage also promises that the Spirit will teach them—clearly the function of an active intelligence. Elsewhere in the Upper Room discourse, Christ refers to the Spirit’s testifying (15:26), reproving (16:8), as well as guiding, hearing, speaking, receiving, showing, and glorifying (16:13-15), all of these activities of a person.

The NT shows the Holy Spirit doing many other personal activities, such as empowering the early church (Acts 1:8). Peter clearly believed in His personality, saying: “*...the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas...*” (1:16). He also affirmed that the Spirit could be tested (5:9).

Acts further shows the Spirit speaking to Philip the evangelist (8:29), Peter (10:19), and Paul and Silas (16:7). In Romans 8:2, He frees the believer from the law of sin and of death. In addition, He enables Christians to mortify the flesh (8:13) and leads them (v. 14; cf. Lk. 4:1 & Gal. 5:18). The Spirit also confirms a believer’s possession of eternal life (v. 16) and intercedes for them in prayer (vv. 26f). Verse 27 speaks of the Spirit’s mind, which is another clear indication of personality. Hebrews 10:29 speaks of His being insulted. One cannot insult an impersonal force or mere energy. In other verses, He searches (1 Cor. 2:10), imparts spiritual gifts



How crucial to understand what the Bible says about that Person who has taken up residence in every believer’s heart.

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT? *continued*

(1 Cor. 12:11, JND), indicates (1 Pet. 1:11, NKJV), quickens (1 Pet. 3:18), is grieved (Eph. 4:30), is known (1 Jn. 4:2), and bears witness (1 Jn. 5:6). In Revelation, He speaks to the Churches (2:7, 11, 17, etc.). Lastly, the Spirit joins the Lord Jesus and the Bride in offering the last gospel appeal of the New Testament (Rev. 22:17). All of these activities show that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the triune Godhead.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

The deity of the Holy Spirit is clearly seen by the way in which He is grouped in Scripture with the Father and the Son. In certain salutations of the epistles, He is listed as an equal with the other two members of the Trinity. For example, 2 Corinthians 13:14 offers this parting Trinitarian benediction: “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*” Similarly, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, Titus 3:4-6, 1 Peter 1:2, and Revelation 1:4-6 also show the close connection of the persons of the Trinity.

The divine Spirit also acts in concert with the Father and the Son on notable occasions such as the creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Lk. 1:35), the baptism of Christ (Mat. 3:16), and the sacrificial death at Calvary (Heb. 9:14). He does only things that God can do, including regeneration (Jn. 3:6), inspiration (2 Pet. 1:21), and sanctification (2 Thes. 2:13).

He is also directly called God in Acts 5:3-4. Furthermore, He is equated with the Jehovah of the Old Testament in certain New Testament passages (compare Isa. 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25; also Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).¹ The Spirit also possesses the attributes of God such as omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10-16), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-12), power (Rom. 1:4; 15:19), truth (Jn. 14:17), and holiness (hence His normal name in the Bible “*the Holy Spirit*”). Thus we see that there is ample evidence to prove the deity of the Spirit.


The early eighteenth century theologian Thomas Sherlock sums up the case for the deity of the Spirit in an eloquent tribute to His variegated role in man’s salvation:

...can a creature be the universal spring and fountain of divine grace and life? Can a **finite** creature be a kind of universal soul to the whole Christian church, and to every sincere member of it? Can a creature make such close application to our minds, know our thoughts, set bounds to our passions, inspire us with

new affections and desires, and be more intimate to us than we are to ourselves? If a creature be the only instrument and principle of grace, we shall soon be tempted either to deny the grace of God, or to make it only an external thing, and entertain very mean conceits of it. All those miraculous gifts which were bestowed upon the apostles and primitive Christians, for the edification of the church, all the graces of the Christian life, are the fruits [sic] of the Spirit. The divine Spirit is the principle of immortality in us, which first gave life to our souls, and will, at the last day, raise our dead bodies out of the dust; works which sufficiently proclaim Him to be God, and which we cannot heartily believe, in the Gospel notion, if He be not.²

In other words, if the Spirit is not God, then how can He do all of the ministries that He does for the believer?

The Holy Spirit is both personal and divine. This should humble the Christian, for such a great personage indwells (Jn. 14:17), seals (Eph. 1:13), empowers (Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:16), guides (Rom. 8:14), and teaches him (1 Cor. 2:13). Thus, all of the resources of God are concentrated on the goal of making the believer like Christ and, one day, presenting him to Christ without spot or blemish or any such thing (Rom. 8:18-39).

The Father and Son have made their abode in believers by the Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 1 Cor. 6:19). Christians should thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who unites them to God and mediates the blessings of the gospel to them. 



Endnotes

1 John Walvoord points out that in these verses “the identification is not of Person but of Essence. Jehovah is used of all three Persons of the Trinity severally as well as of the Trinity corporately.” John Walvoord, “The Person of the Holy Spirit, Part 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 97 (April 1940): p. 171.

2 L.S. Chafer, “Trinitarianism, Part 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 97 (January 1940): pp. 16-17.

The Holy Spirit and the Church

He may be invisible, but His ministries should be evident to all.

"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" [1 Cor. 12:7]

The Holy Spirit of God plays a vital role in the proper functioning of the Church. The Holy Spirit baptizes individuals into the body of Christ, "makes" men overseers of the flock, manifests spiritual gifts in the lives of individual believers, and divinely unites Jew and Gentile together with the risen Lord Jesus in a new body.

In order to understand the role of the Holy Spirit, a review of the beginning of the Holy Spirit's working in the Church is essential.

Baptism of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the people of God in a new way on the day of Pentecost. Indeed, it was the Lord Jesus Himself who announced this dramatic change in the role of

the Holy Spirit. Shortly following the Lord Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit was given by God in a miraculous manner. In essence, the Holy Spirit came in a way that He had never come before.

The Spirit's ministry for this dispensation involves

regenerating, baptizing into the body of Christ, indwelling perpetually, and eternally sealing each new believer. Additionally, each believer is given the opportunity—even the responsibility—of being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. Since these roles are primarily related to the individual in contrast to the local church, they will be left for another article.

Beginning in Acts 2, it is evident that one of the distinctive roles that the Holy Spirit would play is in the baptism of believers into the Church. The word "baptized" is a transliteration

of the word *baptismos* which depicts one element being submersed into a different element. The Lord baptizes believers (*cf.* Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5) into the Church by taking them and "immersing" them in the Holy Spirit. The main reference to this is found in Acts 2. This marked the birthday of the Church (universal and local).

Other references throughout the book of Acts involve the Spirit validating the salvation of the Samaritans and the Gentiles. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Apostle Paul writes that *"by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."* From the day of Pentecost until today, believers have been placed into the body of Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Elders

One of the other functions of the Holy Spirit in relation to the local church is found in Acts 20:28-32. In this section of Scripture, the Holy Spirit is given the credit for "making" certain men overseers over the local churches and giving them the responsibility of shepherding and protecting the flock. The Word of God does not detail how the Spirit "makes" one an overseer. However, His sanctifying work is revealed in Acts 13 where it is recorded that the Holy Spirit said, *"set apart for Me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* Certainly the development of elders by the Holy Spirit is related to His role in the manifestation of the spiritual gifts within the sphere of the local assembly.

Spiritual Gifts

Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthian church that *"each one [believer] is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good"* (1 Cor. 12:7). In this passage, the Spirit is the One seen giving the spiritual gifts to believers. Paul summarizes



Illustration: New Tribes Mission, Inc.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH *continued*

the section by writing that “*one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills*” (v. 12). One can hardly imagine the local church without the sovereign distribution of spiritual gifts by the Spirit.

In Ephesians 4, the ascended Lord Jesus is depicted as the Giver of the gifts to the church, but the emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12 is the manifestation of the gifts and the use of the gift by the individual believers. Simply put, the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to each believer for the common good of the local church and the ascended Lord Jesus gives these gifted individuals for the building up of the body of believers (His own body!).

Unity

The Holy Spirit is also responsible for creating unity and fellowship out of individuals who were once enemies, both of God and of each other. In Ephesians 4:3, the apostle Paul exhorts believers to be “*diligent and to preserve the unity of the Spirit.*” This exhortation follows Paul’s challenge to each of us that we walk a walk worthy of our calling. In other words, as many have said before “our practice should match our position.” Part of our worthy walk is maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

Verse 2 tells us how to maintain spiritual unity: “*With all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love.*” But it is not the “how to” that we are interested in at this moment, but rather the “what is” of this spiritual unity.

Paul reminds us in verses 11-13 that the purpose for which the Lord Jesus gave gifts is that we would all attain to the “*unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.*” An important difference will be detected if one carefully examines verses 3 and 13. In verse 3 we are told to **maintain** unity but in verse 13 we are told to **attain** unity. The reason for this is not that there are two kinds of Christian unity but that Christian unity has in one sense already been accomplished and in another sense is in the process of being accomplished. In Ephesians 2:13-16 we see a decisive act of propitiation and reconciliation—Christ has already made us one. What He has

accomplished at Calvary is eternally settled. But in another sense the unity Christ purchased and guaranteed with His blood must now be manifested.

John Piper writes:

It’s the Holy Spirit who frees our hearts from irrational, self-defensive prejudices so that we are willing to own up to true convictions about Christ. It’s the Holy Spirit who enables us to have faith in Christ and to cry out to God with confidence, “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15-16). And it is the Holy Spirit who bears the fruit of love in our lives and gives us a common care for each other (Gal. 5:22). So our common convictions and confidence and care are all from the Holy Spirit. Therefore Paul calls it the “unity of the Spirit” (v. 3).

It is safe to say that the Holy Spirit has created the unity of the Spirit, but it is our responsibility to maintain it. Ah, but before we get too excited about our role, it is good to be reminded that the only way by which we can maintain the unity of the Spirit is by abiding in Christ and allowing His Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives so that we might live “*with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love.*”

Our responsibility to maintain the unity of the Spirit cannot be overemphasized. In the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus, recorded for us in John 17, He asks the Father “*that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*” If the world is to know that the Lord Jesus is the Sent One, then we must maintain the unity of the Spirit—this unity that is the result of the sending of the Saviour and His vicarious death on the cross of Calvary.

In summary, the Holy Spirit’s role in the local church begins with the baptizing of a new believer into the body of Christ and continues in a manner that enables the new believer to live a life that is consistent with the position into which he has been placed. 🕊



It is the Holy Spirit who bears the fruit of love in our lives and gives us a common care for each other.

Nehemiah

Lessons in building together for the Lord.

The first time I had the privilege to preach through the book of Nehemiah was immediately following a sad division in a local assembly. It seemed as if the local testimony was on the verge of ruin. The saints had asked for something to encourage them. The clarion call of “let us rise up and build” (2:18), after a clear description of why the work was in ruins in the first place, seemed to be just exactly what they needed. Thankfully, the work has continued by the grace of God and, in the purposes of God, the book of Nehemiah played its part. It is an ideal book in situations where there is a need to rebuild.

A Simple Outline of Nehemiah

- Chapters 1-6 – Repairing the Walls or Reconstructing the Walls
- Chapters 7-13 – Reviving the People or Reinstating the People

Alternatively we could look at:

Nehemiah the Man

- 1:1-2:10 – The Cupbearer
- 2:11-6:19 – The Wall-builder
- 7:1-13:31 – The Governor

Emphasis on Concern for the Lord’s Work

Nehemiah was burdened enough to inquire about the welfare of both the people of God and Jerusalem, the place where God had chosen to place His Name (1:2). This book can encourage us to focus on these great things today: the welfare of the Lord’s people and the place where He has indeed chosen to place His Name, the assembly (Mt. 18:20). What he heard in answer to his inquiry caused him to weep, fast, and pray. Would to God that we become so concerned for the Lord’s work that we are as moved as this man was!

Emphasis on Prayer

Nehemiah was first and foremost a man of prayer. It was



“Let us rise up and build!”
Nehemiah 2:18

evidently a habit of his life. Like other great men in Scripture, he was a dependent man. As he faced various difficulties, opposition, etc., his first recourse was to believing prayer. In a day where there is a tendency to run and buy the latest best-selling how-to book to try to find solutions to the problems in assembly life, Nehemiah will encourage the saints to get on their knees and seek the intervention of God (see 2:4; 4:4; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31).

Emphasis on Corporate Effort

It is really quite amazing to think that the people who built the wall had been there in the land for several years staring at the problem. All that was really needed was a spark plug like Nehemiah to get them fired up and working together. We have a beautiful description of how, shoulder to shoulder, they took their places around the wall and built the wall, each doing his own part, with some notable exceptions recorded as an eternal rebuke to them and as a warning to us (3:5).

What a lovely picture of corporate assembly effort, or what we might call body life. The work was overwhelming

NEHEMIAH *continued*

until it was broken down into smaller pieces. When each person did his part, suddenly the task was no longer quite so daunting (ch. 3).

Emphasis on the Enemy's Tactics

When the people began to rise up and build, the enemy began to rise up and seek to stop them (2:10). When they were inactive and living in defeat and the testimony was in ruins, the enemy did not need to bother. Now they were a threat to him and his dominion. We might describe this as “*the wiles of the devil*” or his crafty ways to disrupt the work of God.

The opposition took various forms including mockery (4:1-3), discouragement (4:10), internal dissension (5:1-5), temptation for wrong alliances (6:1-2), and deceit (6:5-10). The enemy still uses each of these tactics today.

Emphasis on Just Keeping On

Despite all the attempts to sidetrack Nehemiah and the workers, the people of God persevered. They just kept plodding on in the work, one stone placed upon another (4:6; 6:15). Much of the work in a local assembly is just sticking to it: sowing seed, faithful attendance, ongoing prayer and visitation, and so on. Nehemiah encourages us to press on.

Emphasis on Spiritual Revival

The reading of the Word of God (8:1-3) and its clear exposition (8:7), coupled with the people's good attention (8:3), produced profound results in the lives of the people of God. They separated themselves *from* all strangers and *unto* the Law of the Lord their God (10:28), confessed their sins (9:2), and once again began to give the house of God its proper place in their lives (10:32-39). This was followed by a time of great joy and rejoicing (12:43).

Considering all of this is valuable and encouraging for many of our local churches which are desperately in need of spiritual revival.



There is a great need to “press on” despite attacks of the enemy.

Commentaries on the Book of Nehemiah

Victorious Christian Service by Dr. Alan Redpath, published by Fleming H. Revell. A very heart-warming and practical book which will prove to be a help in expounding the book of Nehemiah.

Ezra & Nehemiah by Edward Dennett, published by Bible Truth Publishers. A practical book, especially in the area of application of the truth of Nehemiah to assembly life.

Nehemiah: The Dynamics of Effective Leadership by Cyril J. Barber, published by Loizeaux Bros., now reprinted in the UK by Christian Focus Publications. Mr. Barber uses Nehemiah to teach leadership principles and does a very good job in the process. This book is insightful in helping us see the value of visionaries and administrators among us.

Jerusalem's Gates by Ian Taylor, published by ECS Ministries. A very helpful work, subtitled “Illustrating the Christian Life.” Brother Taylor shows the spiritual significance of each of the gates surrounding the city. 📖



ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

Issues Regarding Commendation

How much should elders require of a worker before commending him?

When an important issue like this arises, it brings to light the spiritual state of everyone involved. Let us first consider the candidate.

Over the past few years, this individual will doubtless have faced problems, difficulties, and opportunities that have arisen in their family, their assembly, and in the community. If they have not handled these situations wisely, then they are not ready to be commended. Workers already on the field have enough to face without having to deal with a fellow worker who is immature. So elders have to act responsibly in such cases, even if their reluctance to commend an eager but unready candidate may be regarded by some as lack of love or vision. Although they are not lords themselves, they must act for the Lord (1 Pet. 5:3; Heb. 13:17).

Let us assume, however, that the candidate has proven himself mature. What does commendation involve? Allow us to suggest this definition: Commendation is a prayerful response toward God by spiritual men in the light of the proven fitness of a candidate for service in another area. It takes place when a servant of the Lord is called of God to leave the location where he has been serving to work in a new, unspecified sphere. Scripturally, this is a Spirit-guided exercise, having no immediate connection with money or with the requirements of a secular power. Barnabas and Saul were commended to the grace of God—not to men, nor to a place, but to minister wherever and however the Lord would direct them (Acts 14:26). Commendation, therefore, is not a commissioning, but a releasing, of those already called of God (Acts 13:1-3).

As far as “letters of commendation” are concerned, the apostle Paul carried no letter. Rather, his letter was continually being written as he served (2 Cor. 3:1-3)—but only spiritual persons could read it

(13:4-6). In the case of Timothy, he was well spoken of by the brethren at two cities, and Paul could vouch for his potential. These things were enough to prove his worth; no letter was required.¹

The above does not, however, address what may be required by human governments. If we expect them to honor tax-deductible receipts, for instance, we must conform to their rulings. They operate on a system that recognizes only ordination or its equivalent, and so require written approval of a worker and accountability by those commending, as well as by any other agencies involved such as CMML or MSC.²

Nevertheless, we must not allow the natural demands of secular authorities to muddy the waters as far as our understanding of commendation is concerned. The candidate must go forth with confidence in God, not in human promises, pledges, or guarantees. Nor should those commending a worker require that he obtain pledges for a certain amount of money before he leaves. Commendation means releasing the Lord’s servants to the ministry to which God has called them. The worker goes out in faith that the Lord will provide. Thousands can testify to the sufficiency of the Sovereign Lord in these matters. Let us not presume to lay down extra-biblical requirements that interfere with His rights. 📌

1. It is a scripturally sanctioned courtesy for someone traveling from one company of believers to another to carry a letter of introduction. Apollos and Phoebe provide illustrations of this (Acts 18:26-27; Rom. 16:1-2). But this is not the same as a worker’s commendation.

2. More specific details of governmental requirements may be obtained from these agencies in Canada and the U.S.:

www.msc.on.ca or www.cmmlusa.org



The Names of The Holy Spirit

NAMES RELATED TO GOD		
the Spirit of God Gen. 1:2	the Holy Spirit of God Eph. 4:30	the seven Spirits (of God) Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6
the Spirit of the LORD Isa. 11:2	the Spirit of the Lord GOD Isa. 61:1	the Spirit of the Lord Lk. 4:18
the Spirit of our God 1 Cor. 6:11	the Spirit of the Living God 2 Cor. 3:3	My Spirit Gen. 6:3
His Spirit Num. 11:29	His Holy Spirit Isa. 63:10f	the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus Rom. 8:11
Thy Holy Spirit Ps. 51:11	Thy Spirit Ps. 139:7	the Spirit of your Father Mt. 10:20
the Spirit of Christ Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11	the Spirit of Jesus Christ Php. 1:19	the Spirit of Jesus Ac. 16:7
the Spirit of His Son Gal. 4:6	the breath of the Almighty Job 32:8	the Lord, the Spirit 2 Cor. 3:18

NAMES RELATED TO HIS ATTRIBUTES		
the Holy Spirit Mt. 1:18	the Spirit of holiness Rom. 1:4	the holy Spirit of promise Eph. 1:13
the eternal Spirit Heb. 9:14	the Spirit of counsel and might Isa. 11:2	the Spirit of glory and of God 1 Pet. 4:14
the Spirit of grace Heb. 10:29	the Spirit of grace and of supplications Zech. 12:10	the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD Isa. 11:2
the Spirit of truth Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13	the Spirit of wisdom Ex. 28:3	the Spirit of wisdom and understanding Isa. 11:2
Thy good Spirit Neh. 9:20	the power of the Highest Lk. 1:35	the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus Rom. 8:2

NAMES RELATED TO HIS WORK		
another Comforter; Helper Jn. 14:16	the Comforter; Helper Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7	the anointing; His anointing 1 Jn. 2:27
the promise of My Father Lk. 24:49	the Spirit of adoption Rom. 8:15	a revealer of secrets Dan. 2:47

The Pictures of The Holy Spirit



"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted. . ." Lk. 4:18
"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38
See also 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:20; Zech. 4



"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Mt. 3:16
"And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him." Rev. 4:5 See also Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32



"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Isa. 44:3
"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1:5 See also Jn. 7:38-39



"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Jn. 3:8
"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Acts 2:2-4
See also Ezek. 37:5, 9, 14; John 20:22



"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Acts 2:3
"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Rev. 4:5



"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1:13
"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30
See also 2 Cor. 1:22



"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Eph. 1:14
"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." 2 Cor. 5:5
"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 1:22

The Holy Spirit and Christ

After millennia of striving, there was finally a Man upon whom the Spirit could rest.

“Finite minds cannot expect to grasp the infinite,” says this author, but our hearts long to understand more of this wondrous Being just the same.

What does Scripture reveal to us about the unique relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ while He was here in this world? In approaching this subject we understand that we will encounter things which defy analysis, things which have been hidden from our view, areas where we dare not tread, but where we can only bow our hearts in worship and praise.

The Incarnation of Christ

The first revelation in connection with the Holy Spirit and Christ has to do with the Lord's incarnation. Both Matthew and Luke record the events surrounding the birth of Christ, and the activity of the Holy Spirit in that regard.

Matthew 1:18 records: *“When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”*

Luke the physician reveals more of the tech-

nicalities involved when he writes concerning Mary: *“Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus”* (Lk. 1:31). And again, *“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”* (Lk. 1:35).

These scriptures make it abundantly clear that the humanity of the Lord Jesus was not introduced through the fallen Adamic line, but by a miracle of the Holy Spirit upon the virgin Mary. No human father was involved in His humanity. He was not *“of the earth, earthy,”* but the *“second man, the Lord out of heaven”* (1 Cor. 15:47).

The Anointing of the Lord for Service

Chronologically, the next record concerning the Holy Spirit and Christ is at His baptism. All of the Gospels record this event when the Father publicly proclaimed the Son, and the Holy Spirit rested upon Him at the beginning of His public service (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32). Luke, for example, records that *“the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily shape like a dove, and a voice from heaven which said, “Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*” These events silence forever any doubt as to the years of obscurity, where the Lord was hidden from the eyes of men, and declare His fitness for service.

Luke also records the subsequent visit to the synagogue in Nazareth where the Lord Jesus said, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor...”* (Lk. 4:18). And Luke again records, *“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power”* (Acts 10:38).



Before moving on, it is good to note that the incarnation and anointing of the Lord Jesus can be beautifully illustrated from the meal offering (Lev. 2). For example, we read of “*fine flour mingled with oil*” (v. 4). Oil in Scripture is a type of the Holy Spirit, and here in the “*mingling with the fine flour*” we have a picture of the incarnation. Next we read about “*wafers anointed with oil*” (v. 4), where we see the type illustrating His anointing for service.

Full of, and Led by, the Holy Spirit

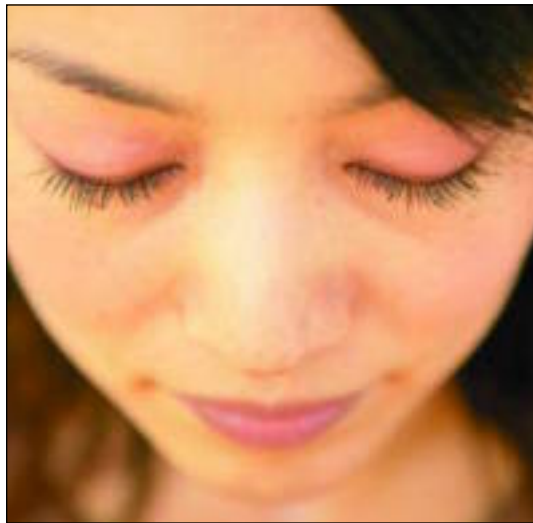
Luke goes on to relate the continuing relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ when he writes: “*And Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness*” (Lk. 4:1). Luke rightly combines “*being full*” and the being “*led*” by the Holy Spirit. It would be true to say that there never was a time in the life of the Lord Jesus, from the womb to the tomb, when He was not “*FULL of the Holy Spirit*.” Concerning John the Baptist we read “*he shall be FILLED with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb*” (Lk. 1:15). And if this is true of the forerunner, how much more so concerning the Christ of God.

The phrase “*being led*” must not be interpreted as indicative of any inferiority on the part of the Lord Jesus, but indicative of the fact that, having stepped into humanity, He assumed the servant’s role. While maintaining all of His deity, there was voluntary submission to the will of the Father and the direction of the Spirit on the part of the Son. We see this happening in the reverse later on when the Son sends the Spirit into the World, and the Spirit assumes the servant’s role (Jn. 16:7).

The practical application for those of us who follow Christ is to covet the experience of being “*filled with the Spirit*.” Of course, this is not an emotional experience, but one of yielding to His control—being led as the Lord Jesus was. The sad thing is that many in the Charismatic Movement who claim to be filled with the Spirit are markedly not being led by the Spirit, which makes their claim suspect.

The Power of the Spirit

Immediately following His baptism and anointing by the Spirit, the Lord Jesus was led into the wilderness, there to meet the arch-enemy of souls. The temptation in the wilderness was no mere play-acting; it was a decisive battle that vindicated Christ and demonstrated His moral authority to move into the scene where Satan had wrought



We cannot expect the power of the Spirit if we are not filled and led by the Spirit in our personal lives.

such havoc, in order that He might reverse the effects of sin. The “*first man*,” Adam, met Satan in a garden and failed by setting aside the Word of God. The “*second man*,” Christ, met Satan in the wilderness and triumphed through the Word of God. The Lord Jesus did not resort to any miracles or supernatural powers to defeat Satan, but He defeated him by using the Word of God to answer each of his temptations.

Following this victory, we read that He “*returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee*” (Lk. 4:14). His power in the public theater of conflict was derived from His private victory over Satan.

It is also worthy of note that, contrary to popular Charismatic teaching, being led by the Spirit is not to be interpreted as meaning that the life will be one of ease and freedom from trial. Quite the opposite is true, as we see from the life of the Lord Jesus. He was led “*into the wilderness*,” there to know the ravages of hunger and thirst and, above all else, the intensity of Satanic assault

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST *continued*

upon His person.

Today, we bemoan the lack of the power of the Spirit in our midst. We fret that we do not see souls saved and lives transformed as we once did, and we ask the question: “Why?” Perhaps our study gives the reason. We cannot expect the power of the Spirit if we are not filled and led by the Spirit in our personal lives.

Sending the Spirit

Before leaving the world via the cross and the tomb, the Lord Jesus spent a great deal of time with His disciples preparing them for the events that lay ahead and, in particular, His physical absence from their midst. It is John who records most of what the Lord had to say in this regard. It is not without significance that the Lord Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as “*the Comforter*.”

The original word is *parakletos* and it means “one who draws near to help and comfort.” The Lord Jesus had been this to His disciples during their time together, but now He was departing, and “*another Comforter*” (of the same kind) would come to fill the void that He would leave. He promised, “*I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]: I will come to you*” (Jn. 14:18). Here we see the Spirit moving into the place of subjection to the Father and the Son and taking the servant’s role: sent by the Son to continue the work He had begun in the world.

The Death of Christ

Very little is revealed to us concerning the sacred events surrounding the death of Christ, other than those that were immediately visible. The only glimpse we have into the mysterious movements of the Deity in connection with His death is when that terrible cry rang out from the Tree into a universe of blackness: “*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*” Beyond this hallowed statement, we dare not trespass. However, the writer to the Hebrews tells us how the Trinity was involved in the redemptive sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. We read that Christ “*through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God*” (Heb. 9:14). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were actively and collectively involved in securing our redemption.

The Resurrection of Christ

Here we come to the final phase of the earthly relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus. Having vindi-

cated Him at His baptism at the commencement of His public service, how appropriate that the Spirit is involved in the final vindication of Christ at the close of His earthly walk. Romans 1:4 informs us that Christ was “*declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*”

Not long before, men had disputed His claim to be the Son of God and, indeed, one of the reasons for their antagonism was that “*He made Himself equal with God.*” They had crucified Him because of His claim to deity.

...the Trinity was involved in the redemptive sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. We read that Christ “*through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.*” (Heb. 9:14)

Now that the work of redemption had been completed, God stepped in and vindicated His Son by attesting to His deity in unmistakable terms: resurrection from the dead. Note that His vindication was “*according to the Spirit of Holiness,*” which we judge to be a reference to the Holy Spirit of God. God, through the Spirit, reversed man’s judgment upon his Son by raising Him from the dead.

We have only begun to explore the vast ocean of truth concerning the Spirit of God and Christ. We find ourselves unable to fathom or explain many of the things concerning this unique relationship, and that is how it must be because we are dealing with the relationships between persons of the Godhead, and finite minds cannot expect to grasp or grapple with the infinite.

However, when we contemplate what has been revealed to us, our hearts are stirred to see the dependent Servant, Christ, moving according to the prompting of the Spirit. How much more should we be sensitive to the prompting of the Spirit in our lives and allow ourselves to be led and directed by Him in the path of God’s pleasure, for His glory? 🕊

Are We Too Individualistic?

Does over-occupation with self keep us from seeing the instructions given to the church?

Egocentrism is the spirit of the age. Our lives as believers should be centered on Christ, loving what He loves—especially His people.

We often apply the things we read in the Bible to ourselves as individuals, as though the instructions were written to us in isolation from other Christians. But having the privilege of reading on my own does not mean that the principles of Scripture can always be fully understood or applied apart from the context of the local church.

Nine of Paul's letters address believers as a gathered company, experiencing what some have called "body life." Much of the instruction he gives, therefore, is best understood when we apply it to ourselves as a congregation, rather than merely individually. For example, 1 Timothy 4:13 says, "...give attendance to reading." Now if I think of that as addressed to me and to other individual saints having our quiet times, I

to is the way the Scriptures should be read when the church is gathered.

The same thing needs to be borne in mind when we read "*let the peace of God rule in your hearts*" in Colossians 3:15. This is often taken to mean that a wise believer will wait until he or she has peace about what they consider doing before taking a step. In reality, however, it is a charge to the assembly to ask themselves as a congregation, "Will this plan make for peace in the fellowship or will it be a disturbing factor?" The use of the plural "hearts" reinforces this interpretation.

Our Focus in Prayer

A less obvious example, perhaps, is found in the words of Colossians 1:9: "*...we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*" If you read that as applying to you as an individual, you may think, "Yes indeed, I need to be filled with the knowledge of His will so that I may walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every respect." Then you might pray for His will for you that day or in the weeks ahead. But Paul, and the Holy Spirit who directed him, did not, I suggest, have such a narrow thought in mind. To apply the verse to oneself as an individual is not evil, but such an interpretation falls short and obscures the real intent of the text.

A better understanding would be gained by imagining you are in the company of the other believers of your locality as that passage is read (as was the case with the original recipients of the letter). Then you would not be tempted to focus on discovering His will regarding your own private path, so much as on the whole church being led into the fullness of God's plan

may come to the conclusion that I should read my Bible regularly and carefully. Not a bad idea, of course, but what the verse really refers



ARE WE TOO INDIVIDUALISTIC? *continued*

for all His children. This would put you on the right track, for you would then see that *“His will”* in this context has more to do with eternity than it does with tomorrow. And it is His will for the church as a whole, rather than special guidance for an individual.

Since Colossians and Ephesians are “twin” letters, written at about the same time, they tend to provide interpretations for each other. So we conclude that the understanding of God’s will, His eternal purpose as expounded in Ephesians 1:1-11, will promote the fulfillment of Paul’s prayer that the saints as a company will learn to *“walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work.”* This idea is expressed both in Ephesians 4:1 and Colossians 1:10. The point is: each local congregation needs to be taught God’s plan and to walk worthy of it.

The Effect of the Word

Likewise, *“let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...”* in Colossians 3:16 has in mind the whole company, rather than the individual Christian. You will note in this context, *“teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* is described as taking place. Paul is saying that the rich indwelling of the Word in the assembly as a whole will have this happy outcome.

Perhaps this has something to say to me about how I pray for the Word to take effect when teaching is given in the assembly. Am I hoping that I and some other individuals will take to heart the word that is spoken? That would surely be beneficial, but a faithful servant of Christ should also have the good of the whole assembly in mind. I can see not only that there needs to be a greater place given to the growth of the body in my own prayers, but that we all need to stop thinking simply of personal needs only, and strive together in prayer for the growth of the local congregation.

Oh, that together we might learn to understand His will for the Church and for our local assembly as an expression of that body. If that were the case, each member would also have a much clearer insight into His will for them individually. 🕒



Each local congregation needs to be taught God’s plan and to walk worthy of it.

Sins Against the Holy Spirit

- grieving the Holy Spirit – Eph. 4:30; Isa. 63:10
- quenching the Holy Spirit – 1 Thes. 5:19
- resisting the Holy Spirit – Acts 7:51
- blasphemy against the Holy Spirit – Mt. 12:31; Mk. 3:29; Lk. 12:10
- lying to the Holy Spirit – Acts 5:3-4
- testing (tempt) the Holy Spirit – Acts 5:9
- insulting the Holy Spirit – Heb. 10:29
- rebellion against the Holy Spirit – Ps. 106:33; Isa. 63:10

The Holy Spirit and the Bible

Two perfect companions for the journey Home.

Having gone to great lengths to preserve this revelation in written form, the Spirit of God now leans over our shoulders as the gracious teacher of His own text.

One of the most enjoyable studies the believer can engage in is the study of how each of the persons of the Godhead is involved in all of His great works: creation, salvation, prophecy, sanctification, and so on. For example, consider the role of the Holy Spirit in one of these works: the formation and application of God's Word, the Bible. The terms revelation, inspiration, and illumination provide us with a simple outline.

Revelation

The first stage in the Spirit's involvement with the Bible was His approach to finite man with knowledge from an infinite God. Revelation is God's giving to men divine truth that they would have never known had God not graciously spoken, initiated, or acted (Num. 12:6; Isa. 55:8-9).

7:27; 13:12; 30:1f; esp. Jer. 36:1-4; Ezk. 3:10f; 24:2f; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:1; Jon. 1:1; 1 Cor. 2:10; Eph. 2:3-5; 1 Tim. 4:1). Men could not speak or write for God unless revelation occurred; thus revelation separated false prophets from true (Deut. 18:20; 2 Pet. 1:16).

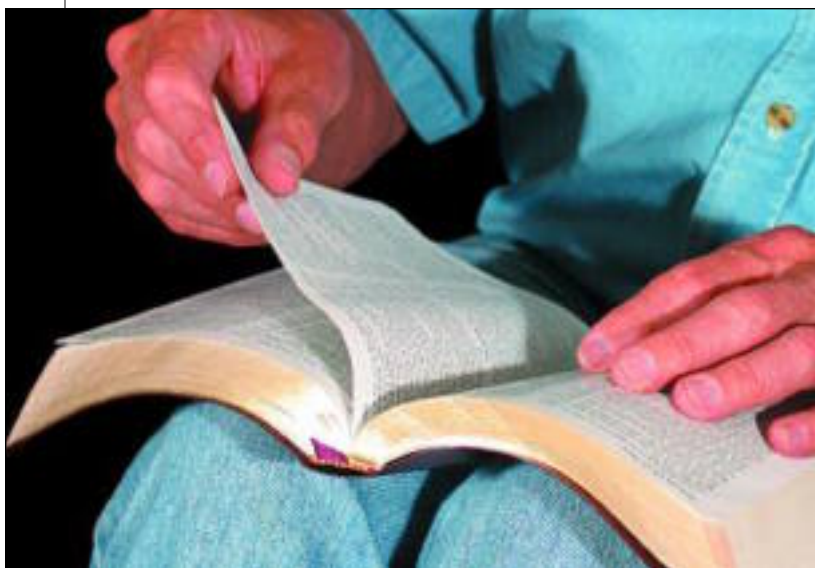
Inspiration

The word "inspiration" comes into the believer's vocabulary from 2 Timothy 3:16. There we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The Greek word behind this English word is *theopneustos*, meaning "God-breathed." The fundamental idea is that God breathed out the Scriptures. He didn't breathe divine truth into writings that previously existed; they were His words from the start. Thus, it is the Scriptures that were (and are) inspired, not the writers. Notice also that all Scripture is inspired. This is why one will hear the term "plenary inspiration" used. Plenary means "full in all respects"; all of the Bible is inspired. We also speak of "verbal inspiration," which means that the actual original word choice was superintended by God (Mt. 5:18).

It has been said: "Orthodoxy teaches that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Modernism holds that they contain the Word of God (i.e. some parts are inspired and others aren't). Neo-orthodoxy teaches that they become the Word of God as readers spiritually encounter God in studying them." The latter two ideas clearly contradict 2 Timothy 3:16.

The second classic text for explaining inspiration is 2 Peter 1:20-21. Peter sets forward prophetic Scripture as a light for us to fix our compass upon as we move through dark and uncertain times. A natural question arises: "How can I trust God's prophets so thoroughly? How do we know theirs is a 'more sure' word?" Peter's

Although God's Word did not always come in two stages, first by revelation, and then later to be written or proclaimed, that was often the method God employed (Isa. 8:1,11f; Jer. 1:7;



two-pronged answer: Old Testament prophets did not merely speak the word of God whenever they felt like it, and holy men of God spoke as they were moved [“carried along” like a ship by wind; cf. *phero* in Acts 27:15, 17] by the Holy Spirit.

Thus we see that the Spirit of God motivated, propelled, and directed their words such that their resultant speech or writing was breathed out by Him. In all this their own personalities and writing skills shine through in the varieties of writing styles and vocabulary found when comparing different books of Scripture.

Let us consider a specific example. Isaiah 6:9-10 is quoted more than once in the New Testament. In John 12:39-41 we are told that Isaiah spoke those words. But in Acts 28:25-27 we are told that it was the Holy Spirit who spoke them. These parallel quotations teach us that, although those words were recorded by Isaiah, it is also true that it was the Holy Spirit speaking. Over and over again the Bible highlights this relationship between the prophets and the Spirit who guided them and their words.

Other examples include: 2 Sam. 23:2-3, “*the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, His word was in my tongue*”; Mt. 1:22; 2:15, “*spoken of the Lord by the prophet*” (quoting Isa. 7:14; Hos. 11:1); Mark 12:36, “*David himself said by the Holy Ghost*” (quoting Ps. 110:1); John 16:13, “*the Spirit...shall...speak...and will show you things to come*”; Acts 1:16, “*the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke*” (quoting Ps. 41:9); Heb 3:7-11, “*as the Holy Ghost saith*” (quoting Ps. 95:7b-11); Heb. 10:15-17, “*the Holy Ghost...said*” (quoting Jer. 31:33; notice that Jeremiah attributes this quote to Jehovah, but Hebrews attributes it to the Spirit); 1 Peter 1:10-11, “*the Spirit of Christ...which was in them did signify...*”

For your own interest and study, you can also examine Hebrews 1:8 & Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:10-12 & Psalm 102:25-27; Acts 4:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Exodus 4:10-15; Jeremiah 1:7-9; Ezekiel 2:6-8; Matthew 10:20; Luke 12:12; 21:14; and Acts 2:4.

While 2 Timothy 3:16 says that God breathed out all Scripture, 2 Peter 1:20-21 explicitly states that it was the Spirit speaking. Putting these two passages together provides an excellent proof of the Holy Spirit’s deity. It is also interesting to note that both passages have the idea of wind or breath in them. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for Spirit imply breath or wind.

Illumination

Having so graciously revealed God (the subject of the Bible) to man and having gone to great lengths to preserve this revelation in written form, the Spirit of God now leans over our shoulders as the gracious teacher of His own text. Despite the range of use the word has had among believers through the centuries, illumination generally refers to the Spirit’s enabling and helping us to see and understand truths in Scripture (1 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 1:17f). We would go on to say that the Holy Spirit takes the Bible and works upon us with it—teaching, warning, convicting, leading, comforting, and encouraging (see Ps. 119).

In connection with hearing or reading the Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 2:14 contains two criteria: There must be an ability to discern truth and the willingness to submit to it. The unbeliever cannot truly discern the truth of God. But Romans 8:7 tells us that the unbeliever cannot receive spiritual truth even when understood. The believer has the capacity to do both but often does neither (1 Cor. 1:1-3; Heb. 5:12). Thus a primary work of the Spirit in connection with the Bible is to make us willing to submit to divine truth and to become experienced in discerning it. Both take time. Illumination does not make study unnecessary; it occurs through it, along with meditation and teaching.

While the Spirit of God is able to teach, and willing that we should learn, our reception of His illumination is influenced by the amount of Scripture known, the time we offer Him, and the degree to which we allow ourselves to be influenced by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our contributions, not His, account for conflicting interpretations.

Though His capacity to teach is infinite, our capacity to learn is not. The Spirit does not cause us to grow by the tap of a magic wand; He applies His inspired Word to real people through real circumstances in order to bring about real growth.

Why then did the Spirit oversee the Scriptures? For our sakes (Rom. 4:23a), to make us “*wise unto salvation*” (2 Tim. 3:15), to enable faith (Rom. 10:17), to show us ourselves (Jas. 1:23), to equip us unto good works (1 Tim. 3:17), for our warning (1 Cor. 10:11), to cleanse us (Ps. 119:9), for our comfort (1 Thes. 4:18), to reassure us (1 Jn. 2:12f), for our defense (Eph. 6:17), for our guidance (Ps. 119:105; 1 Pet. 1:19), for our enjoyment (Ps. 119:103), to teach us patience and bring us hope (Rom. 15:4), and, above all, to show us Christ and, through Him, God (Lk. 24:27). 🔗

The Holy Spirit and the World

Spirit-led lives can know the thrill of Spirit-led witnessing

“And when He is come, He will convict the world...”

I received my coffee and gave the MacDonald’s clerk a gospel tract. He took a quick glimpse at the tract and excitedly asked me, “Have you been baptized by the Holy Spirit?” “Yes,” I answered, “The Bible teaches that everyone who believes has been sealed by the Holy Spirit and baptized into the body of Christ.” “No,” he said, “I mean, do you speak in tongues?” Again I responded, “Yes, I speak Swahili, a little French, and some greetings in Kilese, Kinyali, and Kingiti.” Puzzled, he tried once more. “Do you believe in Spirit-led witnessing?” “I sure do,” I said, smiling, “the Spirit leads according to what the Word of God says.”

He looked disappointed. I knew the problem and what he was looking for, but I had hopes of raising our conversation to the level of truth rather than feeding emotional experience.

How does the Spirit lead us in witnessing? Spirit-led witnessing is, for the most part, *what* we say rather than *to whom* we say it. The Lord Jesus explained to His disciples what the Spirit of God would do in this world. John 16:8 describes the Spirit’s work as delivering a message entitled, “Conviction,” and lays out the three points of His message: sin, righteousness, and judgment.

The Content of the Message: This convicting three-point message is expounded by the Lord in the following three verses (9-11) as He relates what each point means. (Isn’t it wonderful that the Bible is the best commentary on itself? So often questions are answered by just reading a little further.)

The first point, given by the Spirit, is to be convicted of sin. Not sins, which are the symptom of the sinner’s sickness, but sin itself. The Spirit goes right for the heart. He declares that the sinner does not believe in the Lord Jesus.

The second point is the conviction of righteousness. The Lord Jesus said this would happen

because He was going to the Father and would be seen no more. Simply put, no one on earth is righteous. But the Lord Jesus is righteous and, because of His righteousness, He is with the Father. John calls Him *“Jesus Christ the righteous”* (1 Jn. 2:1). The apostle Paul says that this righteousness must be imputed to us (Rom. 4:5). And Jeremiah calls Him *“the Lord our righteousness”* (Jer. 23:6).

The third point in the Spirit’s message is the conviction of judgment, because the ruler of this world (the devil) has been judged. God’s wrath abides on him who does not believe (Jn. 3:36). It’s waiting for the moment that the Lord has appointed; for it will fall and crush all those who will have their part in the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. How gripping is this awful torment that awaits those who do not believe!

The Communication of the Message: We’ve learned about the Holy Spirit’s three-point message of conviction. But how does He communicate it? That’s where you and I come in. He calls us to be witnesses. This is the key to conviction and Spirit-led witnessing to our world. A witness simply tells what he saw and heard. We’ve learned what the Spirit says in the Word of God. Thankfully, it’s written in black and white so that we can’t make a mistake. When we have an opportunity to witness, we should use His points. As a Spirit-led witness, you’ll be in good company. Paul was a great example of Spirit-led witnessing as he used the Spirit’s message on Mars Hill (Acts 17), and at Caesarea when he preached to Felix (Acts 24).

So, you see, Spirit-led witnessing is not primarily about to whom we witness, but what we should say. To whom, then, should we witness? Thankfully, the Lord Jesus told us that even before the Spirit came. He said, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mk. 16:15). 📌





A Most Unreasonable Hope

What can be done when the wound is incurable?

“Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up” (Jer.30:12-13).

Jeremiah 30:12-15 describes a desperate time in Israel. They are seen by God as wounded beyond healing. If Jeremiah’s audience is inclined to think the incurable bruise is a minor issue, the prophet quickly adds that it is not simply a nagging annoyance or an occasional distraction; it is instead a “*grievous*” mortal wound.

More troubling for Israel—she shouldn’t seek any intermediary to act; there simply is none to plead for her. Nor can Israel heal herself; she is utterly without the ability. But the situation is darker still. Not only is there none present to help, none can be expected to arrive. Old allies are friends no more. They will not spare a moment in pity for Israel; they do not think of her.

Finally the wound’s cause is divulged: Jehovah is acting in judgment against the multitudes of Israel’s sin—sin that is terrible both in character and quantity. Israel faces the punishment she merits from God.

In verse 15, at the nadir of Jeremiah’s awful pronouncement, he asks a rhetorical question: why even cry out? If Israel is incurably and terribly wounded, if Israel cannot help herself and expects no outside help, if Israel has been forgotten by those she trusts, and if Israel is indeed under the Omnipotent’s judgment, there is no point in even raising her voice; it will accomplish nothing. God’s judgment is terrible and swift and sure. These words must have fallen as crushing blows on those few who listened. Jeremiah systematically removed every hope until all that could remain was a terrifying expectation of judgment. No hope was left; it was the Spirit’s intent that none should remain.

But we shouldn’t leave Jeremiah on such a somber note and Israel in such a desperate state; the Holy Spirit certainly does not. Thus, having pronounced Israel incurable, without help and without hope, we then—almost inexplicably—read these inspired words: “*For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord*” (v. 17).

What are we to make of a holy God who clearly and patiently outlines the utterly reasonable case for Israel’s doom? A God who takes pains to point out that there is no help, no hope, and that nothing at all can be done to forestall the bitter end, and then offers help and hope and redemption in the next breath? We must say, reverently, that this is not reasonable at all; we bow before Him and acknowledge Him as the Lord who has gone utterly beyond “reasonable” human expectation or hope.

Of course these words of Jeremiah were written thousands of years ago to generations who have long since passed; they could hardly carry weight for modern man, could they? Perhaps it’s worth considering what was really happening here in the book of Jeremiah: God’s truth, conveyed through the Holy Spirit, convicted men of sin, of God’s righteousness, and of certain judgment. John 16:8 assures us that this work continues down to our day.

Israel and the prophets may not seem terribly relevant at times, but surely that is our dullness. For all around us are men and women who understand what it is to be wounded and to know the wound is incurable. All around us are those who have found no ability in themselves to heal the spiritual wounds they carry, and who finally will come to understand that they have been forgotten and forsaken by others they hoped could help. All around us are those who need to hear that they rightly live under God’s judgment against sin.

To those who despair because they’ve grasped the truth of their position, and to those who imagine no purpose in even crying out—to those men and women we have been privileged to bear a message of grace that goes beyond human reason or expectation. If it seems too good to be true, we are nonetheless to proclaim this good news of our Saviour the Lord Jesus in confidence. The Holy Spirit goes before us and His work lingers on in the heart long after doors have slammed, invitations have been diffidently refused, or tracts carelessly discarded. May God encourage us to actively share the tremendous word of reconciliation with which we have been entrusted. ☪

—MARK ANDERSON

The Holy Spirit and the Christian

The Spirit's work in the believer is as comprehensive as the generosity of God.

The Law is for sinners; the Spirit is for sons.

The Spirit of God is imbedded in the one triune God. Like the Father and the Son, the Spirit has a unique role in the salvation of man. Once a sinner places repentant faith in the beloved Son of God, the Spirit of God is sent into his heart. A new life begins. For God has not only “*sent forth His Son*” to the cross but has also “*sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts*” (Gal. 4:4, 6).

The Spirit of God is not the authoritative designer of salvation, for that is the role of the Father. The Spirit is not the redeeming sacrifice of salvation, for that is the role of the Son. But “*the Spirit giveth life*” to the believer (2 Cor. 3:6).

The Spirit's Work in the Believer

If a person lacks the Spirit of Christ, he is not a Christian, just religious (Rom. 8:9). For it is the Spirit from Christ that brings one into a union with Christ and gives one the very life of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). What the Spirit is to a Christian is what an engine is to a car, or breath to a body, or a program to a computer—without such they are just powerless shells.

- The Spirit cries “Father” not “Master” (Gal. 4:6). Servants can be fired; sons are in a relationship.
- The Spirit provides power to overcome indwelling sin (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16).
- The Spirit produces fruit: Christlikeness (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:22f).
- The Spirit creates the love of God in us (Rom. 5:5).
- The Spirit will change our bodies (Rom. 8:11).

- The Spirit intercedes for us in prayer (Rom. 8:26).
- The Spirit reveals the deep things of God to us (1 Cor. 2:12).
- The Spirit gifts or equips us for service (1 Cor. 12:7).
- The Spirit gives access to the Father, not only in heaven but in the church (Eph. 2:18).
- The Spirit produces melody in every believer's heart (Eph. 5:18f).
- The Spirit is the catalyst that engrafts the believer into the body (1 Cor. 12:13).
- The Spirit seals us until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13f; 4:30).
- The Spirit confirms that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16).
- The Spirit transforms us into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Son deals with sin, the Spirit with character. The Son is the Head of the church; the Spirit is the life of the church. The Son gives the commandments; the Spirit gives the power to obey them. The Son sets the example for living; the Spirit lives Christ through us. The Son condemns sin in the flesh; the Spirit overcomes sin in the flesh. The Son gives the Father's truth; the Spirit reveals the understanding of that truth. The Son, by dying, demonstrates the Father's love to us; the Spirit sheds it abroad in our hearts.

The Father predestinated us to be sons, the Son makes us sons, and the Spirit gives us the life of sons. The Son's work guarantees us a new body; the Spirit will change our bodies. The Son gives us the image; the Spirit transforms us into that image. The Father receives our prayers through the Son; the Spirit intercedes for us in prayer according to the will of God. The Father



THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN *continued*

calls us to the service of His Son; the Spirit equips us to serve the Son. The Son writes the song of redemption; the Spirit puts the melody in our hearts.

The Spirit: God's Replacement for His Son on Earth Today

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 14:16f). John 5 teaches us that the Son represented the Father on earth and was under His authority. The Son never initiated anything of Himself. He only did what the Father showed Him. The life of the Son was radically unique—a life on earth that was governed by heaven. The Spirit is the replacement for the Son on earth. The Spirit also does nothing on His own authority but only what He hears from the Son (Jn. 16:13-15)—a life on earth sustained by heaven. The believer indwelt with the Spirit is to *"hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"* as He reveals the Lord Jesus' written Word to us (Rev. 2-3). We are to do nothing of our own authority—a life on earth governed by heaven's life.

The Spirit: God's Replacement for His Law

Christ's death has freed God's people from the control and principle of Law (Rom. 7). We are now sons—mature adults, rather than children or servants. As sons, though we don't have Law over us, we do have the Spirit of His Son in our hearts (Gal. 4). We are not left without guidance in the Christian life. Children need law but sons are mature and function by desire and discernment. This brings us into a whole new level of living for God.

The Law tells us what to do; the Spirit gives us the ability to do God's will. The Law tells us what; the Spirit shows us how. The Law gives us direction; the Spirit gives us desire. The Law speaks by rituals and symbols; the Spirit, by understanding the Father's will. The Law legislates in stone; the Spirit loves in the heart. The Law kills (we fall short and are condemned); the Spirit gives life. The Law is for sinners; the Spirit is for sons. The Law holds one in bondage to rules and men's interpretations to be accepted by God; the Spirit liberates from such rules so one can know and serve God from the heart.

Sons, because of their maturity, know the Father's desires and seek to do them—a higher way of obtaining good behavior.

Replacing the Spirit

Galatians 4:5-11 teaches that to be sons with the Son's Spirit and then turn back to the elements of childhood lifestyle is a fearful thing. Here the Galatians were turning, not to worldly sin, but back to the system of Law with its holy days of pageantry and rules—the visuals and limitations of childhood.

These religious trappings are called elements—baby ways of learning. They are called "weak"—nice to look at and feel, but no power to change. They are called "beggarly"—no value or wealth to bless. We would show the same alarm if our 22-year-old came home from college graduation and wanted a sandbox, rattle, diaper, or "Veggie Tales" for a present. Things that were helpful perhaps for a child would not be appropriate for an adult son.

Yet today we see Christians, in the name of liberty, going back to the bondage of the way of ceremony: there is the ordained professional to do the service, praise teams to lead the worship, and drama visuals to communicate. We, who can now all sing to God (Eph. 5:18f), and all be involved in the assembly with our gifts, roles, and hearts (1 Cor. 14), and who all have the Spirit and very mind of Christ to understand the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2), are being treated like children—and accepting it.

The work of the Father—creation—has been replaced by evolution, and Christians rightly condemn and oppose this. The work of the Son—redemption—has been replaced by legalistic religion, and some Christians condemn and oppose this. The work of the Spirit—transformation—is being replaced by man's philosophy, education, therapy, and imagination, yet only a few Christians condemn and oppose this.

The Two Commands

There are things which the Spirit automatically accomplishes for the believer by Christ's grace: sealing, indwelling, and baptizing, for example. But, as we close, let us note that there are two commandments we are to obey regarding the Spirit: *"Be filled with the Spirit"* and *"Walk in the Spirit"* (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16). When we do these by faith, the life of the Son is reproduced in us to the glory of God the Father. 📌

So, You Want to be Contemporary?

There is nothing new about the preoccupation with being up-to-date.

Contemporary society is not to be the standard for our worship, ethics, and lifestyle.

Society and culture seem to change constantly. To be contemporary and in step with the times is to be dated, because very soon change will come, especially in a culture which denies absolute truth and believes all is relative. Styles of clothing change from season to season. Advertising and sales feed on change. The message is that one must keep up with the times and the latest trends in dress. To look old-fashioned is a cardinal sin. Automobile sales are also driven by change. Many such changes are largely cosmetic but who wants to drive a car that looks old?

Ethical values are also changing, fueled by a philosophy of relativism. Society used to frown on divorce; marriage was honorable and should be preserved. A sexual liaison outside of marriage was condemned. Abortion and perversions such as homosexuality were viewed as criminal acts. That which was once abhorred by decent society is now accepted, legal, and even promoted.

The churches are also under pressure to change and to become contemporary. The roles of men and women are being changed. Some churches are even ordaining homosexuals to be their spiritual leaders. Music is changing; many churches now have completely disposed of their hymn books and sing

only catchy ditties, accompanied by a rock band. It is felt that, to attract people, a church must become flexible, flowing with the tide of contemporary thought and practice.

A Fashionable Altar

Ahaz became king in the southern kingdom of Judah about 735 BC, reigning in Jerusalem near

the temple of the Lord. *“He reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God as his father David had done”* (2 Ki. 16:2, NKJV). He fell into idolatry and the vile customs of the heathen around him, even as far as the abominable practice of child sacrifice. Yet he still wanted to worship in the temple and be religious. But he was surely open to being contemporary and in step with the times.

Ahaz went to Damascus to meet with Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, a rising world power. While there, he saw an altar that caught his eye; it was beautiful and more up-to-date than the altar in the Lord’s temple. After all, that altar was more than 200 years old, hardly current. *“And King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern according to all its workmanship. Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus”* (2 Ki. 16:10-11).

Ahaz began to worship at the new altar. He still kept the old altar but moved it aside. The new altar was the one used for sacrifice and offering; it was the center of attention. The old altar was still kept as a museum piece, a memento of the past, but it was no longer functioning. He also made other modifications to the laver and the carts used in worship. He was determined to modernize the worship.

God pleaded with His people through the prophets, *“Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers...”* (2 Ki. 17:13). Yet they persisted in their rebellion against the Lord and God finally judged them. In time, both the northern and southern kingdoms were destroyed.

One might wonder, “What does this have to do with the churches today?” The human heart is



SO, YOU WANT TO BE CONTEMPORARY? *continued*

the same and there is always the desire to fit in with the world, to be modern and contemporary. The world has its altars and religions but our God has laid out a different path for His people. Contemporary society is not to be the standard for our worship, ethics, and lifestyle. The church is to be different, to be salt in a decaying culture, to be light in a world of moral darkness.

A Trendy Church

God is unchangeable and His Word reflects His immutable character. Let believers then look to God's Word for guidance and direction in life. The moral conduct God desires is the same in every age: abortion is always wrong; sex outside marriage is sin; perversion in its varied forms is contrary to nature (Rom. 1:26-27) and an abomination to the Lord. God is holy and He desires His people to be holy.

When we come to the sphere of the local church, His instructions are "*the commandment of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 14:37). The different roles of the sexes are clearly laid out (1 Cor. 14; 1 Tim. 2). Furthermore, the Scripture reveals a pattern for the function of the church. Apostolic churches emphasized four activities in their meetings: teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). These are like the four legs of a chair: all are needed for strength and stability.

There is a modern tendency to modify or to eliminate some of these functions. Some churches have eliminated the prayer meeting; people are too busy and prayer is hard work. Or teaching may be minimized. People are used to TV with its fast-moving action. And frankly, teaching is boring to the unspiritual. We are told that the morning service should be entertaining, uplifting, and focused on creating a positive self-image in the hearers. Drama and a short message are sufficient. The goal is to make people feel good about themselves. To preach about sin and judgment and eternal hell will only create guilty feelings and empty the pews.

But the early churches emphasized the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Good teaching will inform people about the nature of God, the

blessings of salvation, and the godly character God desires in His people. The teaching may take the form of topical studies or book studies, and it will include an exhortation to obey God's Word. From teaching will flow fellowship, times of rich, fervent worship in the breaking of bread, and earnest prayer. Rather than minimizing it, churches need to stress teaching.

The Lord's Supper must have a central place, with opportunity for various brethren to lead God's people in worship. It is not a good sign if an assembly decides to organize the time, appointing specific men to take part. It is an indication of spiritual deadness. And some have now relegated that worship time to a few minutes at the close of the preaching service! Where is the exercise of heart on the part of God's people?

Elements of the clergy system are being introduced into some assemblies. It is argued that people expect a church to have a "pastor" and will be attracted to such a group. We are urged to conform to the successful churches with large congregations. So men are hired and salaried to do the work that elders should be doing. They may be called "pastor," "resident worker," or "teaching elder," but the work is the same. It is a confession of spiritual laziness on the part of the saints.

Ahaz chose to modify the worship of God in the temple. He was impressed with the contemporary worship outside Israel. Churches today need to forget about imitating superficially "successful" churches and, instead, get back to the Scriptures and seek to emulate the fervency and simplicity of the New Testament. This is not to advocate human tradition, which can be very deadening. But there must always be a fresh study of God's Word and an eager submission to it. Beware of becoming contemporary; it will soon become outdated. God states:

*But on this one I will look,
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My Word (Isa. 66:2).*



...there must always be a fresh study of God's Word and an eager submission to it.



Don't count the days;
make the days count.

Shadow Boxing?

We need to hit the enemy, and hard.

The apostle Paul often alluded to athletics to illustrate divine truth. In every case, he used it, not as we often think of sports today—for leisure and entertainment—but to call the people of God to a life of rigor, sacrifice, determination, and single-mindedness.

The runner lays aside every weight (Heb. 12:1) in order to run with endurance. The wrestler knows his opponent, not “*flesh and blood*,” but the rulers of darkness (Eph. 6:12). The athlete realizes that striving is not enough; he is “*not crowned, except he strive lawfully*” (1 Tim. 2:5).


In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote: “*Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air*” (9:25-26, NKJV).

Notice the preacher’s four main points:

1. The intensity of competition on the track demands temperance in lifestyle at all times: If the prize is to be won, it will largely be won when no one is watching. A disciplined life in private shows its benefits in the crisis of the competition. So too, the private life of prayer, meditation, study, personal holiness, discrete good works, and moderation in habits are keys to the winning edge in the Christian life. Raw native talent in place of spiritual exercise, “the gift of the gab” on the platform instead of hours of study with the open Book, or lengthy public prayers in lieu of private ones—all this will fool no one when our own resources fail us in the Big Race.

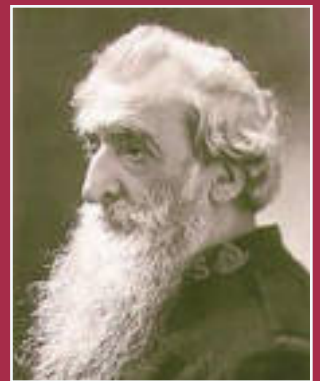
2. The seriousness of athletes for earthly prizes should spur us to greater zeal for our heavenly ones: Rain or shine, hot or cold, I see them, sometimes stumbling along the roadside in the early morning. Bundled against the winter chill or glistening with sweat, their dogged example shouts at me as I pass in the comfort of my car: “How serious are you, Jabe Nicholson, about the race you’re in, the race whose prize is to ‘*win Christ*’” (Php. 3:8)? Am I pressing—pushing myself—“*for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Php. 3:14)? Or is “take it easy” my repeated credo?

3. Since nothing is uncertain about my purpose, nothing should be uncertain about my performance: If the commission is clear—the gospel to the whole world in our lifetime (it’s axiomatic that only our generation can reach our generation)—how are we doing? How much closer to the goal are we than we were last week? Last year? Babies keep coming. People keep dying. Has this become some rerun farce with the conveyer belt at full speed? The hapless workers frantically watch the pies land in a heap because they have decided they cannot save them all? Christian, it is not our role to save them all. Jesus saves! But it is our role to be a witness to as many as we can.

4. Shadow boxing will not do in a real battle with a real enemy, and we must make every blow count: No damage will be done as long as we sit in social circles among our Christian friends and talk of conditions outside. We must engage the enemy in every way, making every penny, every moment, every ounce of energy count. Let it not be said of us what Muhammad Ali once said of fellow boxer George Foreman: “I’ve seen him shadow-boxing—and the shadow won!” 

The Spirit of the Age or the Spirit of God?

Toward the end of the Nineteenth Century, General William Booth prophetically wrote: “The chief danger that confronts the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell.”



As an antidote to this spirit of the present age, English Bible teacher and missionary to Jamaica, Harold Wildish, had the following written in the flyleaf of his Bible: “As you leave the whole burden of your sin, and rest upon the finished work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and service, and rest upon the present inworking of the Holy Spirit.

“Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forward praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit, all through the day, of joyfully depending on, and obeying, Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills.

“Count on His working as a fact, entirely apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us to the glory of God.”