



The Holy Spirit And The Church

1972

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

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Preface

There are three great festivals in the Christian year, three occasions when we are invited to celebrate the great events of our salvation. They are Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. At the first we celebrate the birth of our Saviour; at the second his death and resurrection; at the third we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. But we all know very well that it is only the first two of these festivals which are celebrated with real joy and enthusiasm in our churches. Christmas and Easter are great occasions when even the most careless Christian feels an obligation to come to church, and when there is joy and happiness in every Christian home. But the feast of Pentecost passes almost unnoticed. The outside observer of our churches would surely conclude that while it means a great deal to us that Jesus was born for us and died and rose again for us, the coming of the Spirit means very little or nothing.

And this outside observer would not be far wrong. Even though all Christians are familiar with the name of the Holy Spirit, and often hear or use the formula 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit', yet it must be confessed that for many members of our churches the reference to the Holy Spirit means very little. They know that our Pentecostal brothers speak much of the Holy Spirit and his gifts. They conclude that the Holy Spirit is what the Pentecostals speak about and know about. And for practical purposes they leave the matter there. Why should this be so?

The Bible certainly teaches us that all those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and have become members of his body the Church have also received the Holy Spirit. It teaches us that God gives his Spirit freely to those who ask. And it teaches us that all those who belong to Jesus are joint partakers in his many gifts. But the Bible also shows us that

there can be obstacles to the free working of the Spirit, and misunderstandings about his gifts. It is the duty of every Christian pastor to try to remove these obstacles and clear up these misunderstandings. This is what I am trying to do in these addresses. We shall simply try to study

our Bible together in order to understand as clearly as possible what is given to us there for our understanding of the Spirit and his work in our lives.

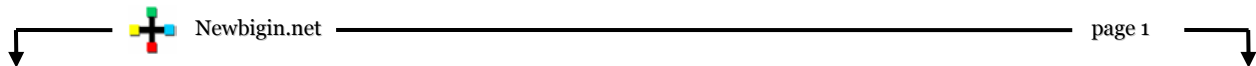
Madras.

Lesslie Newbigin

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I The Coming Of The Holy Spirit

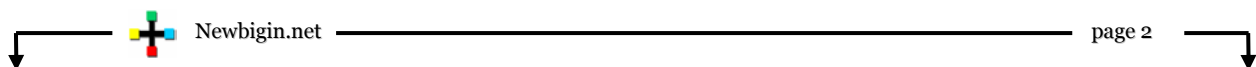
We shall begin with a passage from the Old Testament which gives us at the outset a very clear understanding of what the Bible means by the word 'Spirit'.

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!

And yet he is wise and brings disaster, he does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the helpers of those who work iniquity.

The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit (Isaiah 31: 1-3a).

The Israelites were a small people wedged between two super-powers, Assyria and Egypt. Like small nations to-day, they often tried to protect themselves by calling in the help of one power against the other. In a moment of national danger, there are those in Jerusalem who turn to Egypt for help, hoping that Egyptian military power will protect them. To these people the prophet says a very simple word: the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. In that simple sentence we have a clear understanding of the meaning of the words 'flesh' and 'spirit' in the Bible. Everything that belongs to the created world is flesh. In itself it is weak. It is without life and power. Over against it stands God the Creator, whose mighty Spirit is alone powerful and gives life to the flesh. The biblical distinction between flesh and spirit is not at all the same as our modern distinction between mind and matter, or



between soul and body. Both soul and body belong to the created world, and they remain flesh unless the spirit gives life to them (Cf. John 6: 63).

The Hebrew word which is translated as 'spirit' in our English Bibles is the word *ruach* which means first of all wind or breath. It can be used of the mighty scorching wind which blows out of the desert over the land of Palestine. It described the breath of God, the mighty life-giving breath of God by which man became a living being, and which is like the wind blowing where it will-free and strong.

It has been a problem for all who translated the Bible into other tongues to know how to translate this word. Our South Indian translators have taken different solutions. The translators of the Malayalam Bible preferred simply to transliterate the Hebrew word. In Telugu *ruach* is translated as *atma*, which is really the soul. The Tamil translators chose to use the word *avi*. The Madras University Lexicon translates 'spirit' by *uyir*, and perhaps that would have been a better translation. But we must learn from the Bible itself what the word means. It is the mighty breath of God which is the life of God himself.

This spirit of God is first of all the creative power of God. God's word and his spirit made all things.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth (Ps. 33:6).

At the creation 'the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters' and began to make order out of chaos (Gen. 1: 2). By the same spirit all living things have their life.

'Thou hidest thy face and they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to the dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground' (Ps. 104: 29-30).

By the same spirit man receives his own distinctive life.

'The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,



and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul' (Gen. 2: 7).

This verse helps us also to understand what is said about Christ in the beginning of St. John's Gospel: 'All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men' (Jn. 1:3 NEB).

As we read on through the Old Testament we read of the many ways in which this mighty power of God was given to special men in special times of need or danger. When Israel was almost overwhelmed by the Midianites 'the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon', and he received courage and skill to become a great leader and deliver his people (Judges 6: 34ff). So also 'the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah' and gave him power to deliver the children of Israel from the power of the Ammonites (Judges 11: 29). Samson likewise received prodigious physical strength when the spirit of the Lord came upon him (Judges 14-16). But this empowering by the spirit was not something permanent; on the contrary, the power of the spirit was given for a time only, and then taken away.

The spirit was not only a source of strength and courage but also of wisdom and insight and skill. In a time of national apostasy the spirit entered into Ezekiel and set him on his feet and enabled him to hear and declare the will of God (Ezek. 2: 1-2). When supreme skill and craftsmanship were needed for the building and furnishing of the Temple, God filled his chosen servants 'with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge' so that they might be able to complete the work (Ex. 31: 1-5). The same spirit was given to the seventy elders of Israel to equip them with another kind of wisdom, so that they could be wise and discerning judges among the people (Numbers 11: 17). And when the prophet Isaiah looked forward to the coming of the righteous Son of David who would be the true representative

of God in ruling his people, he saw him as one supremely endowed with the spirit.

‘The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord’ (Isaiah 11: 2).

We shall see when we come to study the New Testament writings about the spirit that this text plays a very fundamental role in their teaching.

As the prophets looked forward to the great works of God which were to come, they saw visions of the spirit's working. To Ezekiel the whole people of Israel looked like dry bones without even flesh upon them, but he saw a vision of a nation brought to life again by the power of the Spirit (Ezek. 37: 1-14). And the prophet Joel saw beyond this, to a vision of the Spirit poured out not only upon Israel but upon all the peoples of the world.

It shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2: 28).

This famous prophecy represents the climax of the vision of the Old Testament, and was, as we know, the text which Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost to interpret the new gift of the Spirit through Jesus.

After the days of the great prophets there followed a long period in which Israel felt that the Spirit was no more given to them. ‘The Spirit is not given in our days, said one of them. For those who loved the Lord it was a time of waiting and hoping – hoping for the fulfilment of the promises given to the Fathers.

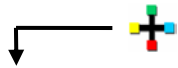
To this waiting and hoping people there came a man named John. He came like one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. His message was like theirs, a message from the living God. ‘The Kingdom of God is at hand-repent.’ Put into modern language, what he was saying was some-

thing like this: ‘God is not, as you think, someone far away, someone to think about later, at your convenience. God's power, God's presence, God's kingly authority is something here and now. You have to come to terms with him now. And this means that you must change, alter course, turn round and face the other way. And this is not only a matter of feelings and ideas; it must be a matter of deeds. The man who has taken a bribe must give it back; the tax-officer who has cheated the tax-payer must put things right. This is not just a matter of words but of deeds.

John's own teaching, moreover, was not just a matter of words. Like the old prophets, he used a vivid and expressive action to bring home the meaning of his words. Jeremiah had smashed a pot in the presence of the people to show that he was serious when he talked about Jerusalem being destroyed, and he went and buried his girdle in the ground as a sign of the fate that was in store for the people of Jerusalem – to be buried and forgotten as prisoners in Babylon. John did something similar. He called the people down to the River Jordan – the river that their fathers had had to cross in order to enter the Promised Land – and washed them there in the waters of the river, as a sign that they were unclean and needed to be cleansed if they were to be fit to meet their God. Probably he had in mind the promise of God through the Prophet Ezekiel

‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you’ (Ezek. 36: 25).

It was a sign that God was fulfilling his ancient promise and preparing his people to meet him in all his kingly power. Naturally the people asked him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, the Messiah, the King who comes to rule as God's representative on earth?’ John's answer was clear: ‘No. I am baptising you with water. This is only a sign. There



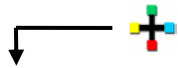
is one to come who will baptise you with the Holy Spirit not just a sign, but the real thing.'

Thousands flocked to him from the towns and villages of Judea and Galilee, moved to repentance by his preaching, seeking cleansing and the forgiveness of their sins. Among them came one who was already known to John because he was a kinsman. His Hebrew name was Joshua, but we know him by the Greek form of his name, Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth. To outward appearance he was just one among the crowd of those who came to be baptised. But in truth his coming meant something very different. They were coming burdened with a sense of their sin, seeking escape from the impending judgment of God. He carried no burden of his own sin; he was seeking to be with them in honouring God, his Father. They came seeking their own salvation; he came seeking the salvation of the world. But he made no distinction between himself and them. He made himself wholly one with them. He who was without sin came as a sinner among sinners to receive the baptism of repentance and forgiveness. In his love for men, he took their sins as his own. The sinless one was baptised, not for his own sin, but for the sin of the world.

And what happened then we well know:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved son, with thee I am well pleased' (Mark 1: 10-11).

When Jesus was baptised in water, he was also baptised in the Spirit. The sign and the thing which it signified came together. John had said 'I baptise in water – the sign; he who comes after me will baptise in the Spirit – the reality.' Jesus humbly accepted the sign, and the reality which it signified was given to him. Because of what happened then, these two things



are no more to be separated. Entrance into God's rule is to be by sharing in the baptism of Jesus – which is baptism in water and the Spirit. What God has thus joined together is not again to be put asunder. Those who try to separate them again, to put Spirit-baptism against water-baptism, are trying to go back behind the baptism of Jesus to the baptism of John, as we shall see later.

How did the Spirit come to Jesus? Not – as John had thought – with fire. Not with a mighty wind. Not with tongues. The Spirit came as a dove. The dove is the poor man's sacrifice. The Spirit who came upon Jesus in his baptism was the Spirit who would lead him to complete his baptism by the way of the cross, lead him to give himself up as a sacrifice for the sin of the whole world.

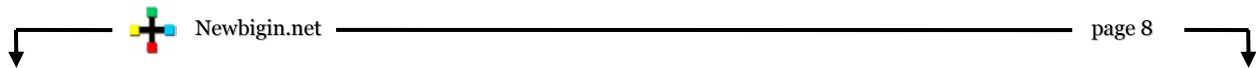
The coming of the Spirit was accompanied not only by a vision, but also by a word which interpreted the experience. As so often it was a precious word of Scripture which sounded in Jesus' ear at this great moment

'Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights' (Isaiah 42: 1).

The Hebrew word translated 'servant' in this passage also means 'son', or 'child'. Jesus knew himself to be the chosen, the beloved child of God, the one who is to 'bring forth justice to the nations', the one who will 'bear the sin of many', the one whose chastisement will be peace for mankind. Jesus knew himself to be the one who would fulfil Isaiah's vision of the Servant of the Lord. In this vision and this word we learn the character of the Spirit given to Jesus: he is the

Spirit of sacrifice, the Spirit of humble service, the Spirit who will lead Jesus by the way of the Cross to be the Saviour of the world.

There is a further point to be noted concerning Jesus' anointing by the Spirit. We have noted that in the Old Testament the Spirit was given for a time only; the Spirit given to Gideon or Jephthah or Samson could also be taken away. But



of Jesus it is testified that the Spirit was not given for a time only, but for ever.

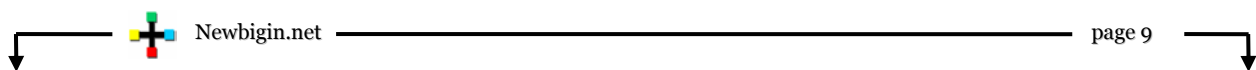
He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit (John 1: 33).

Here is the opening of a new chapter in the story of the work of the Holy Spirit; the gift of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism is no temporary gift; it is for ever.

What immediately followed Jesus' baptism is described by Mark:

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him (Mk. 1: 12-13).

This brief word of Mark is filled out by Matthew and Luke who give us an account of what happened during those days in the desert. What happened was immediately connected with the preceding baptism. Jesus had been declared to be the Son of God, the one anointed by the Spirit to 'bring forth justice to the nations' and to be the bearer of God's saving power to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 42 and 49). Immediately the tremendous question arises: 'How is this to be done?' 'How is this authority to be exercised?' 'What will be the outward sign that Jesus really is anointed by the Spirit?' 'Will it be by miracles which dazzle men and compel their allegiance by the sheer sense of marvel?' 'Will it be by meeting all their physical needs?' 'Will it be by creating a great political movement and becoming the kind of Messiah that many of the Jews dreamed of?' 'If you are the Son of God-what will you do?' 'How will you prove it? How will you show the visible signs that you have the power of the Spirit?' 'These are the questions that the tempter puts to Jesus as he wrestles alone with his tremendous calling in the solitude of the desert. The three temptations described in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke express in a vivid form the answers to these questions which



Jesus rejected. At the end of this great struggle he returned to Galilee stripped of all the things that men call power and wisdom. He came trusting simply in the power of God, which is the power of love – a power that men are apt to call weakness. With no other weapon than this he entered upon his ministry.

Luke places at the beginning of his account of the ministry a statement of Jesus which we might call his 'Manifesto'. Jesus went into the synagogue at Nazareth and read to the assembled people the following words from the prophet Isaiah

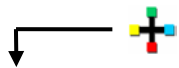
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk. 4: 18f).

Here is Jesus' own description of what it means to be anointed by the Spirit. It means doing the deeds of love and speaking the words of promise that give men hope to live by. The same idea is expressed in the sermon of Peter in the house of Cornelius

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power ... he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10: 38).

These words of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth, standing at the very outset of his ministry, constitute one of the fundamental statements of what it means to be filled by the Spirit.

So Jesus began his ministry of love and power. Very early in the course of it he chose twelve men and sent them out to be the messengers of the Kingdom of God. Later he chose 70 and sent them out. He gave them authority to heal and to cast out devils, but he did not give them the Spirit. These two things – power to do great works and the gift of the Spirit –



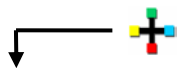
are not the same thing. The disciples were given this power; but they did not at this time receive the gift of the Spirit. Why was this?' The reason is given in the Fourth Gospel

On the last day of the Feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, ' If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.' Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified' (Jn. 7: 37-39)

The same thing is said in a different way at the end of the Gospel:

'I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you' (Jn. 16: 7).

The promise to pour out the Spirit upon all men could only be fulfilled when Jesus had completed his work, when the power of the Devil had been broken, when the baptism which began in the River Jordan was completed on the Hill of Calvary. The death and resurrection of Jesus were the necessary condition for the pouring out of the Spirit upon all men. To put it in another way, it is only when the fortress of the self has been broken at the cross that the Spirit can come in and take control. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit when he went down into the waters of baptism, taking upon himself all the sin and sorrow of the world. Peter and the other disciples had to go down into the valley of humiliation and despair before they could be wholly surrendered to the Spirit. It is only when the proud 'I' at the centre of all our lives has been crucified with Christ that the Spirit can reign in us. The disciples could only be sharers with Jesus in the anointing of the Spirit when they had been made sharers in his cross.



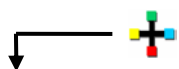
So, in the days of his flesh, Jesus spoke: to his – disciples of the Spirit as a gift promised, by the Father. But the gift could only be theirs when- he had completed his baptism in the cross.

There are two different places in the New Testament where we are told how that gift was given; one is in John 20: 19-23 and the other in Acts 2: 1-9. We have always to remember that what we read in the Gospels and Acts was written, down thirty to forty years after the events had happened and that the story has come to us through the memories of different groups of people in the different Christian communities of the first century. It is therefore quite natural that there should be differences in detail. When we compare these two accounts we immediately see important differences. One emphasises the gifts of pardon and peace; the other emphasises boldness in speech and the gift of tongues. In St. John's account the atmosphere is calm and solemn; in St. Luke's it is full of drama and excitement. These different emphases have been represented in the life of the Church all down the centuries and are represented to-day. But while

we recognise these differences it is also important to notice the many things which are common to both accounts. Let us mention five of these.

1. In both accounts we see that the gift of the Holy Spirit is to a company of people together and not to separate individuals. In the Old Testament, as we saw earlier, the Spirit is always given to individuals. In the New Testament it is always given to a fellowship. We never read in the New Testament that the Spirit was given to some members in a congregation and not to others. On the contrary, those who are members in the one body of Christ are also sharers in the one Spirit. It is sharing in the one Spirit which makes them one body.

2. The gift is given never to be taken away. In the Old Testament the Spirit is given for a time only and then is taken away. Here it is a gift which remains always with the, company to whom it is given.

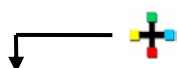


3. The Spirit is given to 'the disciples as the gift of the crucified and risen Lord. In Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost it is emphasised that this great new event is the consequence of what has happened in the dying and rising of Jesus. And in St. John's story we read that before Jesus breathed upon his disciples the life-giving Spirit, he showed them his hands and his side (Acts 2: 22-33)

4. The Spirit is given to enable the Church to fulfil its mission. In St. John's account Jesus says to the disciples, 'As the Father has sent me, so send I you.' The Spirit is given in order to empower them to continue what Jesus began to do—the things which he had spoken of at the beginning of his ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth. Very specially the Spirit is given in order that they may continue his work of bringing forgiveness to those who are under the power of sin (Jn. 20: 23). So also in St. Luke's account of what happened on the day of Pentecost we understand that the Spirit is given in order that men of every nation and tongue may understand the mighty works of God. The Spirit enables men to declare what God has done for the salvation of the world in *a way* that all men of every kind can understand. The story leads up to the confession of the by-standers: 'We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God' (Acts 2: 11). Thus the promise of Jesus that he would draw all men to himself begins to be fulfilled. The curse of Babel (Gen. 11: 9) is undone and God's mighty work of salvation in Jesus is carried forward among men of every tongue.

This is the first place in our study where we come to consider the gift of tongues. We shall study this more carefully at a later stage. At this stage two points will be helpful.

(i) The New Testament contains 27 books. In only two of them is there any reference to the gift of tongues: in I Corinthians, where Paul speaks very fully about the meaning and value of this gift; and in the Book of Acts. Acts records



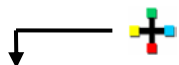
a very large number of conversions and speaks much of the work of the Spirit. Only in three places does it report that the gift of tongues was given to the new believers – on the Day of Pentecost, in the house of Cornelius and at Ephesus. It is important that we should not give this subject a place which is out of proportion to the place given in the New Testament.

(ii) What is referred to by St. Paul in the discussion in – 1 Corinthians 12-14 seems to be something different from what is referred to in Acts 2. In the discussion with the Corinthians, the whole point is that the language of 'tongues' is *not* understood by anyone except the speaker. Therefore, Paul says that one should not speak in tongues in church unless there is someone who can interpret. But in Acts 2 the whole point of the story is that what is spoken is understood. The climax of the Pentecost story is the confession by the hearers that all of them have heard the

mighty acts of God praised in their own languages. The Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit. The effect of his coming upon the Church is that the believers are enabled to continue the work of Jesus, to bring to men his gift of forgiveness, and to enable all men to see and praise the mighty works which God has wrought for the salvation of the world.

5. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given in the closest possible connection with the gift of forgiveness. We have already noted that, in John 20: 23 the disciples are empowered by the Spirit to bring forgiveness to others. This is because, in receiving the gift of peace from Jesus they have received forgiveness. And in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost the connection between the Spirit and forgiveness is made very clear. When the hearers were pricked in their conscience and asked 'What shall we do?', Peter replied:

Repent and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38).



It is very clear that these four things all belong together repentance, baptism, forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit. There is no separation between these things. Peter does not say 'First be baptised; then you will be forgiven; after that (as a separate gift) you will receive the Spirit.' These things are as closely knit together as they were in the baptism of Jesus. In effect Peter is telling them to follow Jesus in what he has done, to accept the baptism which was begun in Jordan and completed on Calvary, a baptism for the sin of the world, and to receive the anointing of the same Spirit that was given to Jesus at his baptism.

Those who receive this baptism and this gift of the Spirit immediately become one fellowship. The quality of this fellowship is described in the immediately following verses

Those who received his word were baptised, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they, devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2: 41-42)

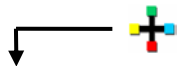
What is described here is the same thing that Paul describes in his letter to the Corinthians

By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body and all were made to drink of the one Spirit (I Cor. 12: 13).

There is absolutely no suggestion in Acts 2 that some of those who were baptised received the Spirit and others did not; or that there was an interval between their baptism and their receiving of the Spirit. All of these ideas are quite foreign to the language of the passage. The new reality into which they are brought is one body and one Spirit, and the two cannot be separated.

The essential features of this new shared life in one body are set out in this passage:

(a) Devotion to the apostles' teaching. They were



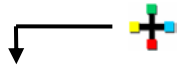
faithful to the testimony which the apostles gave from their own direct knowledge about Jesus and his work of salvation;

(b) Devotion to the apostles' fellowship. They lived a common life with the apostles as the centre. They did not form separate groups to develop their own distinctive ideas or their own special gifts;

(c) They were faithful in sharing in the breaking of the bread-in that visible, social act which Christ had given to renew day by day and week by week their union with the crucified and risen Lord;

(d) They were faithful to the common prayers of the fellowship, following on the way of prayer which Jesus had taught his disciples.

This wonderful new fellowship – one body and one Spirit – is the new creation of the day of Pentecost. It is grounded in the one baptism – the baptism of Jesus for the sin of the whole world, begun in Jordan and completed on Calvary. It is continually renewed by its devotion to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of the bread and the prayers. By the one Spirit this one body is equipped with many different gifts. To speak in detail of some of these gifts will be the purpose of our second study.



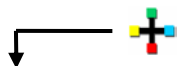
II The Working Of The Spirit

The most ancient testimony which we have to the life and teaching of the Christian Church is to be found in the letters of St. Paul. In all of his letters to the Church Paul speaks about the Spirit. In one letter only there is a detailed discussion of the varied gifts of the Spirit and especially of the gift of tongues. This is the letter which we call First Corinthians.

The Church at Corinth seems to have been full of people who were very enthusiastic about the various gifts which they had received – gifts of prophecy, of healing, of working miracles and of speaking in tongues. It was also a church which had been divided by faction. The apostle Paul had brought the Gospel to Corinth. Shortly afterwards he was followed by Apollos, and a party formed which claimed to follow him. Inevitably a counter-party arose to support the original apostle. Others rejected both parties and claimed the name of Peter – presumably because of his position as 'The Rock'. And finally there was a group which rejected all these parties and claimed to be just simple Christians, the undenominational denomination!

When news of this reached Paul he was deeply grieved. His letter is written in the first place to deal with these unhappy divisions.

It has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ'. Is Christ divided?' Was Paul crucified for



you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul?' (I Cor. 1: 12-13).

It is very instructive to notice the way Paul immediately reacts to this party strife. He instinctively thinks of three things: the one body of Christ, the one cross, the one baptism.' There is only one body of Christ, of which you are members. Can you tear this to pieces?' There is only one cross, in which you were made sharers by your baptism. Your baptism was not into Paul or Apollos or Cephas; it was baptism into Christ the Christ who died for you on the cross.'

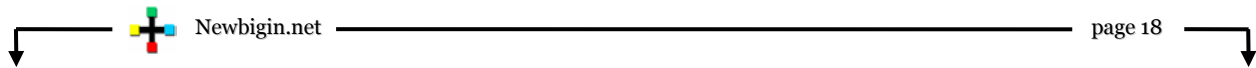
Paul reminds them again of the cross and what it means. He says that he himself had no claim to wisdom or power; he was only a messenger of the cross. In the presence of the cross all this party strife is impossible. One cannot talk about the greatness of Paul or Apollos when one is in the presence of the cross. To accept the cross means to accept the end of all human power and wisdom and to rely solely on the grace of God. It means, therefore, to pass from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit. To rely on Paul or Apollos is to abandon the Spirit and choose the flesh. Therefore Paul says

While there is strife and jealousy among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?' For when one says 'I belong to Paul',

and another, 'I belong to Apollos', are you not merely men? (I Cor. 3: 3-4)

When you say 'I belong to Luther', or 'I belong to Wesley', or 'I belong to Brother Bakht Singh' or 'I belong to Brother Daniel', or 'I belong to Brother Lawrie' – are you not following the flesh instead of the Spirit? In the presence of the cross, how can we use such boasting and rivalry?' The wisdom of men looks foolish in the presence of the wisdom of God which is displayed in the dying of Jesus.

But, says Paul, there is another kind of wisdom; it is wisdom given by the Spirit. It was promised through Isaiah that



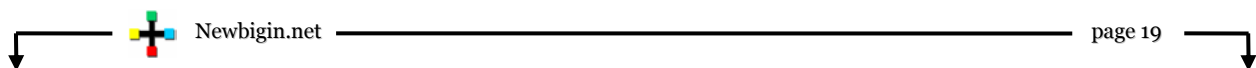
the Spirit of the Lord resting upon the Messiah would be the spirit of wisdom (Isaiah II: 2), and that promise had been fulfilled. As against the human wisdom which makes boasts and counter-boasts about human leaders and teachers, we teach another kind of wisdom:

Among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him', God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?' So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God (I Cor. 2: 6-12).

It is by the Spirit that we know that Christ is truly the power and the wisdom of God; it is by the Spirit that we recognise the cross as the power of God for salvation; it is by the Spirit that we know Jesus as Lord. And, moreover, it is by the Spirit that we are able to recognise and understand the gifts which God gives to each of us.

What are these gifts?' After Paul has dealt with a number of the problems of the Corinthian Church, he turns to a thorough discussion of this question. You will find it in the 12th, 13th and 14th chapters of this letter.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may' have been moved. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says



'Jesus be cursed', and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12: 1-3)

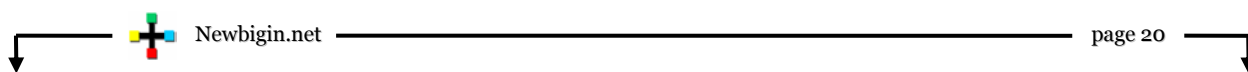
The Corinthians were asking the question 'How do we recognise the presence of the Spirit? How do we know whether a man has received the Spirit or not?' (You will note that this is essentially the question with which Jesus himself had to wrestle in the wilderness after his baptism.) Is it by the kinds of signs and wonders that; the heathen run after? No! We have already learned from the Lord himself that the work of the Spirit is to take of the things of Jesus and show

them to us (Jn. 16: 14.). His work is to glorify Jesus by giving true testimony to him – testimony which will make all men understand the mighty works of God (Jn. 15: 26). The presence of the Spirit is shown in the testimony which is borne to Jesus: When the Jews saw the cross they said, ‘This is the curse of God, for it is written that everyone who hangs on a tree is accursed. When the pagans saw it they said, ‘This is nonsense; what does a crucified criminal have to offer us? He cannot save himself; how can he save us?’ But he to whom the Spirit is given says: ‘This crucified Jesus is, the king and Lord of all.’ Jesus is Lord that’ – testimony is the mark of the presence of the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit to lead men to honour Jesus as Lord. By this we may know where the Spirit is at work.

Please note the teaching here. Men do not *first* accept Jesus as Lord and then, as a second and distinct step, receive the Holy Spirit. This is what many are teaching today, but it is not the teaching of Scripture. Just as we saw in studying Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, so we see here. There is no separation. It is by the work of the Spirit that men are brought to repent and to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Those who have received the Spirit have received also his gifts. But these gifts are not all of the same kind

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit;



and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills (I Cor. 12: 4-11).

The same rain falling on the ground causes a rich variety of grasses and flowers and shrubs to sprout and grow; so the same Spirit poured forth on men and women brings forth a rich variety of different gifts. This variety is God's will. He does not want us all to be the same. He loves and creates variety – in the world of nature, and in the new world which he is creating through the power of the Spirit.

You will notice that among the gifts of the Spirit wisdom and knowledge are placed first. This is in line with what we find in several of Paul's letters where he asks above all for his friends that they may grow in wisdom, knowledge and discernment (e.g. Col. I : 9-10; Phil. I: 9-10; Eph. I: 17ff). Probably this, emphasis upon wisdom and understanding among the gifts of the Spirit owes something to the influence of the great text of Isaiah 11: 2, to which we have referred. You will note also that the gift of tongues is included in the list, although it comes at the bottom. In the other lists of the ‘gifts’ which Paul gives tongues do not appear (Rom. 12: 6ff; Eph: 4: 11ff).

Having stressed the variety of the gifts, Paul goes on to make it plain that there is a reason for the variety: it is for the sake of the unity of the whole.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and



all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it, is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit (I Cor. 12: 12-13)

The body is a complex unity of many different members and organs. Each of the members is different, and each, therefore, is able to serve the whole body in a special way. The hand, the eye, the ear and the mouth are all different from each other; but each serves the whole body in a special way and ministers to the unity of the whole. So in the Church we have people with very different gifts. They are not the same and they are not meant to be. But all their different gifts are for the sake of the unity and growth of the whole fellowship.

Starting from this metaphor of the body, Paul begins to poke fun at those Corinthians who are quarrelling about their different gifts

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, 'nor again the head to the feet I have no need of you.' (I Cor. 12: 14-21).

To understand the point of this we must remember what was happening in Corinth. There were parties in the congregation, each wanting to have its Christianity with its own favourite flavour. 'I belong to Paul', some were saying, or 'I belong to Appollos'. This is all familiar to us, isn't it I like brother so-and-so. That is the kind of preaching



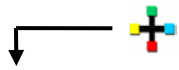
I like; that is the kind of service I enjoy; those are the tunes I like to sing; this is the kind of fellowship I feel at home in'. It is all very human. 'Birds of a feather flock together.' All of us who share the same ideas, who do things the same way we should all stick together. Then we feel happy and comfortable and there is nothing to upset us.

But look what we have done when we talk this way. If the eye begins to say: "I don't want to be mixed up with all those noses and ears. 'They are not my type. Let the noses and ears go their own way, why we eyes should stick together. Eyes are best' – then what happens to the body? A bag full of eyes is not a body. A box full of noses is no good to anyone. God *intends* this variety, for the sake of the unity and growth of the whole body. So the Church is to be a fellowship of human beings with very different gifts and endowments, all sharing the life of one body through the power of one Spirit, a life into which we are introduced by being brought into the one baptism of Jesus Christ for the sin of the whole world. 'By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.' One body, one Spirit, one baptism.

It follows, therefore, that no one has all the gifts – and no one should expect to have them all.

Now you are, the body of Christ and individually members of it. And has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?' (I Cor. 12: 27-30)

The whole point is that we have different gifts and therefore we can rejoice when we see that a brother has gifts which we do not have. If you have the gift of tongues, praise the Lord for it; but that does not mean that I must have the same gift. If I have a gift of teaching I praise the Lord for it;



but that does not mean that everyone is to be a teacher. We can sincerely rejoice and thank God for the gifts which we do not have, but which God has given to another member of the fellowship.

So we come back to the original question: which is the greatest gift? Is it tongues? Or prophecy? Or miracles of healing? Which is it?

Listen !

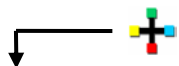
If I speak in tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mystery and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing (I Cor. 13:1-3)

How shall I decide which is the greatest among my members? Is it my hand? Or my foot? Or my eyes? Or my ears? How could I decide that question? I need them all, each doing its proper work. Look, for instance, at this hand of mine. It seems to me indispensable. I could not do without it. It is part of myself. But supposing I was to make a tourniquet and tighten it round my arm so as to stop all the flow of blood, and then leave it for 10 days. At the end, I would still have a hand – but it would be no use to me. It would be dead – fit only for amputation. Which, then, is the greatest of my members? None of them, but the lifeblood which makes them all part of one living body.

Which is the greatest gift of the Spirit? Neither tongues nor prophecy nor miracles nor wisdom nor knowledge, but the love that binds all together into one living body.

We began, you remember, with the question: how is the presence of the Spirit to be recognised? Here we have the answer:

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its



own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Cor. 13: 4-7).

These are the things by which we can recognise the presence of the Spirit. But where do we find these things. Whom did you think of when I read those words? Whose portrait is drawn there? There is only one that answers to that description. It is a portrait of Jesus.

We come back again, therefore, to the central teaching of the New Testament about the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. His essential work is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us – not only to teach us the truth as it is in Jesus, but also to give to us the life that is in Jesus. When we see the life of Jesus being reproduced in the lives of men, then we know that the Holy Spirit is present. This is the same teaching as that which Paul gives us in the letter to the Galatians

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5: 22-23).

And it rests upon the teaching of Jesus himself as it is interpreted to us in St. John's Gospel.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit (Jn. 15: 5).

The other gifts of the Spirit are for this life only; love is eternal.

Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes the imperfect will pass away (1 Cor. 13: 8-10)

There will be no need for tongues, for prophecies, for miracles, for my knowledge and wisdom in heaven; but love

is the very law of heaven. While we quarrel about these different gifts we are still children; when we grow up we shall understand that love alone is supreme. To be mature as a Christian means to be learning this lesson.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part but then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love (I Cor. 13: 11-13).

Now Paul goes on to show how the supremacy of love works out in the practical life of the Church. But before we continue our study I pause to make a small but important point.

In the passage we have been studying Paul speaks about the 'gifts' of the Spirit; in Galatians, which we have also referred to, he speaks of the 'fruit' of the Spirit. Some Pentecostal writers make much of this distinction.

They teach that love is not one of the gifts of the Spirit, but is its fruit. Among the gifts of the Spirit they emphasise tongues, prophecy and miracles, and indeed many leading Pentecostal teachers state that the gift of tongues is the one absolutely decisive gift by which it may be known whether or not a person has received the Spirit.

This teaching cannot be accepted. In the whole discussion of I Corinthians 12-14 Paul is speaking about the 'gifts' of the Spirit, including the gifts of tongues, prophecy and miracle. It is precisely in the context of this discussion that he leads them to see that love and love alone is supreme over all the gifts – the love that binds the whole body together in one.

Now the Apostle goes on to show how love must rule in practice over the exercise of the gifts.

Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no

one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless some one interprets, so that the church may be edified (I Cor. 14: 1-5).

Because love is supreme, the test of everything is just this: Does it help other people? Does it build up the life of the fellowship in unity? It is on this basis that we must assess the value and govern the use of the different gifts. Paul does not despise the gift of tongues. He has received this gift himself and thanks God for it. But he says that when we speak with tongues we are speaking to God, and our brother is not helped. My Pentecostal friends who have shared their experience with me have confirmed this: tongues are a way of praising God, of speaking freely with him. Paul accepts this. And he therefore concludes that tongues do not help unless there is someone who can interpret them into language that other believers can understand. On the other hand prophecy, which means taking the things of God and applying them to the concrete situation of the hearers now, has the effect of strengthening the brethren in their faith. It is therefore to be preferred.

Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how can any one in the position of an outsider say the Amen to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?' For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind,



in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue (I Cor. 14: 13-19).

Christian worship is to be rational and corporate throughout. All should be able to understand and share in what is going on. All should be able to join in the 'Amen' at the end of the prayers. What matters is the building up of the body in love. And therefore Paul, who has the gift of tongues, would rather speak five words with his understanding to teach others than ten thousand words in a tongue (v. 19). Love is supreme over all the gifts, and the test of every gift is: Does it help to build up the body in love?' There is one body and one Spirit, and the work of the one Spirit is to give life to the one body the life of God himself, given to all the members so that they may be truly one body.

I want you to notice one very important point about the way St. Paul writes to the Corinthians about this matter. This congregation in Corinth gave Paul an enormous amount of trouble. There were quarrels, factions and law-suits. There was abominable behaviour at the Lord's Supper. And there was flagrant immorality, worse than what was to be found among the pagans of that time (I Cor. 5: 1-2). How does Paul deal with this? Please note what he does *not* do. He does not say: 'Some of you have received the Spirit, but some of you have not; therefore let those who have the Spirit separate from those who have not.' He never says anything like that. He is angry with them. He rebukes them. He lashes them with his tongue. But all this is based on the assumption that they *have* received the Spirit. As Christians, baptised by the one Spirit into the one body, confessing the one Lord Jesus Christ, they *are* sharers in the Spirit. And it is precisely on this basis that he attacks them for their sins. When he is attacking their cliques and factions he writes: 'Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells, in you?' If anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that

temple you are' (1 Cor 3: 16f). When he is attacking their immorality he writes: 'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her?' ... But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you which you have from God?' (I Cor. 6: 15-19), In other words, Paul repeatedly tells them: 'You are members of Christ's body and sharers in his Spirit. Therefore, if you commit these sins your sin is even more horrible than it would be if you were pagans, and your punishment will be greater. It is because you have received the Spirit, and still do things like this, that your sin is so great.'

Essentially the same point is made in the terrible story of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5: 1-11). Ananias and his wife did not do anything which would be regarded as punishable in ordinary circumstances. They did not defraud anyone or take anything that was not their own. They simply kept quiet about that part of the sale-price which they had decided to keep for themselves, leaving the others to think that they had given it all. In the pagan world, no one would think this sinful. But within the fellowship of the Holy Spirit such a deception is unbearable. In the utter purity of that fellowship of truth created by the Spirit, their lie becomes deadly.

The reason why many devoted Christians say that we in the Churches have not received the Holy Spirit is because they see the sin in the life of the Church, and they conclude that where such sins are to be found the Holy Spirit cannot be present. They therefore say that there are two kinds of Christians – those who have the Spirit and those who do not. This is often expressed by saying that some are real Christians and the rest are nominal Christians. The New Testament also deals with the problem of sin in the Church – but in a different

way. It does not say that there are some Christians who have received the Spirit and some who have not. It says that all who confess Jesus as Lord can do so only by the Spirit. But, those who have received the Spirit can indeed sin, they can grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4: 30). But when they do so, their sin is much worse than if a pagan should do the same thing, and their punishment will be much more severe.

This discussion brings us to one of the main questions which we have to put our friends in the Pentecostal churches. They teach that there are two distinct steps involved in becoming a real (as distinct from a nominal) Christian. There is first of all the act by which a man believes in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, receives baptism and is made a member of the Church; but subsequent to this (they teach) there is a second and distinct event in which the believer receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit to endue him with the Spirit's gifts and to empower him for the work of God. These are, according to Pentecostal teaching, two distinct events; the effect of the first is that one is saved, of the second that one receives power. And the normal sign by which it may be known that this second baptism has been in fact received is the gift of tongues. We have to ask whether the Bible does in fact teach this distinction between two baptisms of water and of the Spirit, between being saved and being brought into, the life of the Spirit, between membership in the one body and sharing in the one Spirit. The evidence which we have so far studied does not support this teaching. Let us briefly review it again.

We saw that John the Baptist gave a baptism which was baptism in water, not in the Spirit – a baptism which was directed to the saving of the self, not to the saving of the world. But we saw that in the baptism of Jesus the two things which had been separated were brought together. The baptism which Jesus willingly accepted was baptism in water and in the Spirit, not for his own salvation but for the



salvation of the world. We saw that this baptism, begun in the river Jordan, had to be completed by the whole ministry of Jesus culminating in his death on Calvary. This is the 'one baptism' of which the New Testament speaks, a baptism which Jesus accepted for the sake of the whole world, and in which he invited his disciples to become partners. When this baptism was completed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter could invite his hearers to become sharers in it. This baptism means for them (as Acts 2 shows) the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and incorporation by that Spirit into one body living one common life but holding out the gift of life to all men (Acts 2: 38-42). We do not read that on the day of Pentecost, *after* the 3,000 had been baptised, *some* of them received the Holy Spirit. There is one single promise: 'Repent and be baptised everyone of you for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'; and one single gift: 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers.' By one Spirit they were all baptised into, one body and were all made to drink of the one Spirit. There is no separation between the body of Christ and the Spirit of Christ. It is impossible to imagine someone who is 'in Christ,' but does not have the Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8: 9). It is indeed possible to grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we have been sealed (Eph. 4: 30), but it is not possible to belong to Christ and be a stranger to his Spirit.



III The Spirit As Our Ground Of Hope

In the previous study we were concerned chiefly with the teaching of St. Paul. We saw that he links the one Spirit to, the one Body in the closest possible manner. 'There is one body and one Spirit one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and one Father of us all' (Eph. 4:4-5). The distinctive Pentecostal doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit rests primarily on the testimony of Acts, and to this we must now turn.

There are many references in Acts to the baptism of believing converts. Several of these make no explicit reference to the Holy Spirit: they speak directly of the fruit of the Spirit-love, joy, boldness and fellowship. For example, when the Ethiopian eunuch was baptised we only read that he went on his way rejoicing, and the Philippian jailor 'rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God'. There are five places in Acts where baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit are spoken of together. They are as follows:

1. The baptism of the first believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
2. The baptism of the converts in Samaria (Acts 8).
3. The baptism of Saul at Damascus (Acts 9).
4. The baptism of Cornelius and his household at Caesarea (Acts 10).
5. The baptism of 12 men at Ephesus (Acts 19).

The accounts of the baptism of the first believers, of Saul and of Cornelius and his household, give no ground whatever for the idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second and subsequent gift occurring at some time after baptism in



water. But Pentecostal theologians have found the basis for this belief in the records of what happened in Samaria and at Ephesus. We must examine these records. We shall take the case of the twelve men of Ephesus first.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said, 'No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said, 'Into what then were you baptised?' They said, 'Into John's baptism.' And Paul said, John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19: 1-5).

Paul finds twelve men who claim to be disciples and have been baptised, but know nothing of the Holy Spirit. Paul is evidently surprised. This is an abnormal situation. Obviously Paul expects that any group of baptised Christians will know and share the life in the Spirit. What has gone wrong? Please note the question which Paul asks: 'Into what then were you baptized?' From this question we understand how fundamental was the place of baptism in Paul's thinking about the Spirit. When the men answer: 'We received John's baptism', the whole matter is explained. These men have *not*, after all, received Christian baptism. John's baptism was only a sign pointing to the one who was to come; in Jesus' baptism the sign and the reality came together. In accepting the sign (baptism in water) Jesus took upon himself that baptism for the sin of the whole world which was to be consummated on Calvary. He had invited his disciples to share that same baptism, begun in water and completed by following Jesus on the way of the cross. That is also, for them as it was for Jesus, baptism in the Spirit.

These twelve men of Ephesus had never received this baptism. Paul has to instruct them, beginning from the



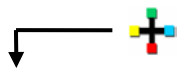
beginning. When they have understood and believed, Paul gives them Christian baptism and lays his hands upon them. At once they too become sharers in that same life of the Spirit which is the life of Paul and his companions. They also praise God in tongues and prophesy.

This passage is therefore a very strong confirmation of the teaching of the rest of the New Testament, that baptism and the Holy Spirit belong together. It is very sad that it is being used to teach the opposite. I do not need to remind you of what is happening in Madras to-day. Each month we have a new preacher coming to Madras, promising to revive the Church, and inviting Christian believers to be baptized again. The ground on which this invitation is given is simply anxiety about salvation. 'Are you quite sure that you are going to be saved?' they ask. 'Are you sure that the baptism you received as an infant will be sufficient?' Will it not be better to be baptized again, just to be quite sure?' 'And so we have Christians being baptised twice, thrice, four times – like a man who takes out two or three insurance policies because he cannot be quite sure about any of them.

What is this baptism?' It is not Christian baptism; it is rather the baptism of John again. We saw that John's baptism was given to those who wanted to save themselves from the wrath to come. This is exactly what is offered by these revivalists who urge baptised Christians to be baptised again and again. Christian baptism, on the contrary, is the share which Jesus graciously gives us in his mighty act for the salvation of the whole world. It begins, as Jesus' baptism began, in the humble act of baptism in water, but it leads out through a life of obedience as the believer

follows Jesus along the way of the cross. It is directed not just to my salvation, but to the salvation of the world.

In Ephesus Paul found twelve men who had received John's baptism, and he led them on to the point where they could receive Christian baptism with all that it carried with it.



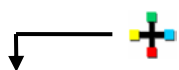
In Madras we have men and women who have received Christian baptism, but allow themselves to be led back to the baptism of John. They think that they are going forward, when truly they are going back. How sad that the meaning of this passage should be so completely reversed!

We come now to the record of what happened in Samaria.

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8: 14-17).

This is the only place in the Bible where we read of believers who have received Christian baptism, but have not received the Holy Spirit. How are we to understand it? From the text we see that, just as Paul was surprised to find believers who had not received the Spirit, so also in Samaria it was evidently something strange to find that the Spirit had not *yet* fallen on any of them (verse 16). Why was this? In order to understand it we must look at the circumstances.

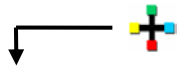
Up to this moment the Church had existed only in Jerusalem. It had consisted entirely of Jews and proselytes, living in a very close-knit fellowship in Jerusalem, depending entirely on the direct teaching and fellowship of the apostles (Acts 2:41, 42). Everything had been done under their direction. But now a new situation has arisen. The believers are scattered abroad and some of them become the messengers by whom the Samaritans are brought to faith in Jesus. This was not something done by the apostles or by their direction. Moreover, it raised a very difficult question. Jews and Samaritans, as we know, were divided *by* bitter hostility. The disciples had not even wished to allow Jesus to talk to a Samaritan woman. How, then, is this group of Samaritan believers to be related to the original company of Jewish believers in



Jerusalem?' Are they also going to live as one family with the Jews, breaking bread together with them, and thus causing scandal to the orthodox Jews?' Or are they to remain a separate congregation – rather like the so – called 'mission churches' which remain separate from the older churches which gave them birth?'

If we understand the situation, and understand the depth of the gulf which separated orthodox Jews from Samaritans, we can understand that the baptism of these Samaritan believers created a real problem for the infant Church. Either the Jerusalem Church – hitherto a purely Jewish fellowship knit together as one family – had to be broken open to admit Samaritans into its full fellowship; or else these Samaritan believers would remain separate – 'second-class Christians' not fully part of that wonderful new fellowship. That was why it was necessary for Peter and John to go to Samaria themselves, to give these Samaritan believers the full assurance (by prayer and the laying on of hands) that they were indeed integrally part of the one fellowship with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Only then did the Samaritans become fully sharers in the Holy Spirit. 'There is one Body and one Spirit.' The two cannot be separated. The Samaritans were now unmistakably part of that one body which had its visible centre in the apostles at Jerusalem, and therefore they shared also in the one Spirit.

This Samaritan experience no doubt helped to prepare the way for the next great outward leap of the gospel which occurred when Peter visited the Gentile army captain in Caesarea. But then it was Peter himself who both preached the Gospel and received the believers into the Church through baptism. What happened in Samaria remains unique. Never again in the New Testament do we find baptism separated from the gift of the Holy Spirit. All the rest of the evidence of Acts confirms the teaching of St. Paul – 'One Body, One Spirit, One Faith, One Baptism'.

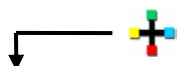


I want now to leave these controversial matters and to conclude these studies by looking at the greatest chapter in the whole of the New Testament on the subject of the Holy Spirit. I refer to the eighth chapter of Romans. Here we have the most fully developed teaching in all St. Paul's writings about the Spirit. In the letter to the Corinthians he is engaged in controversy because of the false emphasis which the Corinthian Christians were placing on certain manifestations of the Spirit, especially the gift of tongues. Controversy is sometimes necessary, and it can be helpful if it is conducted in love and without self-righteousness. But it is good that we end our studies with this great passage in which Paul is not engaged in controversy, but simply setting forth his vision of the meaning of our life in the Spirit.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Romans 8: 1-9).

There are two powers which compete for the life of man, two orders, two jurisdictions under which he may live, two realms which may control him – the realm – of the flesh and

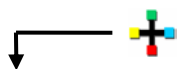


the realm of the Spirit. Paul characterises the first as the realm of the law, of sin and of death. 'It may seem at first very strange that Paul should speak in this way of the law. The law is the expression of God's will for men. God does indeed intend that men should live as the law prescribes. But the law is 'weakened by the flesh'. When a man thinks 'I will live according to God's law and in this way I will please God', he does not in fact attain to the real life which God intends. He remains under the jurisdiction of 'the flesh'. This was the situation of the devout Jews of Paul's time, and is always the situation of those who think of themselves as good and religious people. It does not matter whether we use the language of the Bible to describe this, and speak about God's law, or whether we talk about 'moral standards', 'high ideals', 'moral values' or any other jargon. The point is that those who think of themselves and their friends in these terms are

still under the control of the flesh. These are the people who are in bondage, who are on the road to death. This was demonstrated with frightful clarity by the fact that it was these people who crucified the Son of God. Paul has known in his own experience what it means to live in this way. He had been a leader among those who strove to uphold the sanctity of the law of God at all costs. And he had discovered that his zeal was actually an attack against God.

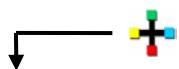
But Paul had discovered that there is another realm another jurisdiction, another rule – the rule of the Spirit. He had discovered that under this rule he was free – the rule of sin and death. He had found that there was a road that leads to freedom and life in Jesus Christ.

Paul goes on to explain just how he had been delivered from the realm of the flesh into the realm of the Spirit. He says that God did it 'by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin'. Jesus came as a man born under the law, living as we live under the power that keeps men in bondage – the power of the flesh, of sin, of the law. He



completely shared our human situation from the moment that he received the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins up to the moment when he died the death of a sinner on the cross. And by doing this he 'condemned sin in the flesh'. By his death on the cross Jesus 'showed up' our human righteousness for what it is. It was the 'righteous' who condemned him to death. But Jesus took upon himself all the agony and shame of our sin, dying the death of an accursed sinner. By this action – begun in his baptism, completed on his cross, proclaimed in his resurrection – Jesus opened the way for a quite new kind of life. This new life is not according to the flesh; that is to say it does not depend at all upon my power to live as a good man according to God's law. It is life according to the Spirit; that is to say it depends entirely on the grace and mercy and love of God. It is life in a new context, under a new rule.

Please note that the contrast which Paul is making is not between our 'lower nature' and our 'higher nature'. It is very unfortunate that the New English Bible has adopted this misleading paraphrase of the original words 'flesh' and 'Spirit'. The Pharisees who condemned Jesus no doubt had morally much higher natures than the publicans and harlots who received him. The elder son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son no doubt had (or thought he had) a much higher nature than his younger brother. But the elder brother in this parable is exactly the portrait of the man who lives 'according to the flesh'. The contrast is not between our lower and higher natures. It is a contrast between a life which rests its confidence on my own goodness, and a life which looks only to the crucified and risen Jesus and depends absolutely upon him. These are two different roads – the one leading inevitably to death, the other to life and peace. They are two different jurisdictions – the one of the flesh and the other of the Spirit. You cannot live under both. You cannot have both the self-righteousness of the elder brother and the joyful abandon of



the younger. You cannot both live according to the flesh and at the same time live according to the Spirit. If you really belong to Christ, if he is your absolute Lord, then you are in the Spirit (v 9).

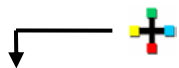
But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you (Romans 8: 10-11.)

We are still part of a world that is under the power of sin and death-the world to which Jesus came. We do not escape out of it – as Jesus did not escape out of it. But, nevertheless, the

living power of the Spirit of God, the power that raised Jesus from the dead, is at work in us, remaking our whole personalities, making us new men and women. This really does mean that our whole personalities – body as well as mind – are renewed. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, a bodily resurrection, is our assurance of this.

So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you live according to the – flesh you will die, but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry, ‘Abba!, Father!’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (Romans 8: 12-16).

But even though we are still living as part of a world that is under the jurisdiction of ‘the flesh’, we do not have to obey the flesh. Our debts (which we could never have paid anyway) are cancelled in the cross of Jesus. He has paid all our debts. We now have only one debt – to him. We are under a new

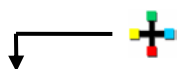


jurisdiction. Our one Lord now is the one who died for us, taking our debts upon himself. But, although he is our Lord, he does not want us to be slaves. There is plenty of slave-religion in the world already. There is plenty of the kind of piety which, so far from helping a man to stand on his feet as a free man, reduces him to the level of an unintelligent slave. It was not for this that Jesus died on the cross. It was to make us sons, not slaves. There is a vast difference between these two. A slave works for his own wages; a son works for the joy of pleasing his father. A slave simply obeys orders; a son shares his father's plans, hopes, joys. A slave is thinking primarily of himself; a son is thinking of his father's purpose.

To live in the realm of the Spirit, under the jurisdiction of the Spirit, means to live as a child of God. This is expressed in that precious word ‘Abba’ the Aramaic word which was always on the lips of Jesus himself when he spoke with his Father. When that word comes to our lips, we not only hear again the very sound that came from the lips of Jesus; we also share the very same Spirit that inspired that word. When, liberated by what Jesus has done on the cross, a man turns to God and says ‘Father’, that is the work of the Spirit. Once again we see that the work of the Spirit is to reproduce the very life of Jesus in us. That life is not the life of slaves but of sons – children of the God whom Jesus knew as ‘Father’.

And if we are God's children, then we are God's heirs. A slave has no inheritance in his master's property; a son knows that he can look forward to the full enjoyment of his father's estate. One who knows that he is a son of God, knows therefore that he can look forward in confident hope. The best is still to come.

How do we know that we are God's children, heirs with Jesus of his kingdom? Paul has already told us that we know we are heirs with Jesus because, like Jesus, we call God our



Father. Now he adds another test: we know we are heirs with Jesus if we suffer with Jesus. We prove ourselves to be sons of God and fellow-heirs with Jesus, not by escaping out of the sorrow and evil of this world, but by taking our share with Jesus in bearing the sorrow and evil of the world. If we suffer with him, taking up our cross and following him through all the sin and sorrow

of the world, then we know that we are also heirs with him of the Kingdom. Therefore, it is precisely in the midst of sorrow and suffering that we are filled with hope and thus become signs of the kingdom which God has promised.

But indeed our troubles are nothing compared to what God has promised.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8: 18-23).

The conflict, the agony and the hope concern not only our personal lives; they concern the whole created world. It is not that we are looking forward to escaping out of this evil world into a better one, but rather that the whole world is looking forward with longing to its liberation, and we share that longing. What God has so graciously done in making us his adopted sons is only a foretaste of what he intends to do. He intends to 'bring many sons to glory' (verses 19 & 21). And he intends to liberate the whole creation from the futility under which it now labours. For the world does indeed seem



to be full of futility. It is full of apparently meaningless pain and sorrow. But in truth it is not meaningless; these are the pains and sorrows of childbirth. A new world is struggling to be born (verse 22) and we also share in the pains of this childbirth (verse 23). The Spirit has been given to us as the first-fruit of the new world which is coming to the birth. As Paul says in other places, the Spirit is the 'guarantee' of the new world – the advance payment which God gives us to assure us that the new world really is coming. But having this first-fruit, this 'earnest' or 'guarantee' (see Eph. I: 13-14 & II Cor. I: 22), we are both full of hope and full of groaning and travail. We share to the full the pains of this child-birth; we suffer with Jesus in this world. But in the very midst of our suffering and perplexity we are full of hope.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?' But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Romans 8: 24-25).

Here the double character of the life in the Spirit is beautifully set forth. We *have* received the Spirit and this gives us our assurance. We are saved. We know that God is our Father and all will be well. But we are saved *in hope*. The Spirit is the assurance of something yet to come, something we long for. And this 'something' is not just something for ourselves. It is something for 'the whole creation'. It is not just that we who are saved will be rescued from this world; it is that we are saved as the first-fruit of a new world, and so we long and pray and labour for the new world which God has promised. The Gospel is not just about changing individuals, it is also about changing the world. As those who have received the Spirit we are engaged in the struggle for a new world, and this struggle is one of the marks of our life in the Spirit. But our struggle is not a bitter or impatient struggle; it is a patient and believing struggle. We hope for what we

do not see; yes, but we know that God has promised it and we know that he has given us the first-fruit of it, so we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Our groaning as we experience the sin and futility of this world, and our longing for a new and better world are not in vain. The Spirit himself takes our pain and perplexity, our wordless groans and sighs, and makes them into prayers which the Father himself understands. Indeed the Spirit himself is at work in these groanings and longings, opening up the very heart of God to us and opening up our hearts to him. As we thus groan and long and pray, we are already in the Spirit and beginning to live the life of the children of God.

Having thus described the life in the Spirit as the first fruit of the life of the new world to come, and therefore the source of our hope, Paul ends this chapter by turning right round and looking into the past. God's plan is not a thing of today or yesterday; it is from the very beginning, from before the foundation of the world. It is rooted in his eternal purpose. It is utterly sure. The past, the present and the future – all belong to God.

To sum up the teaching of this great chapter, Paul is telling us three things about life in the Spirit:

- the Spirit makes us free, free from the bondage of law, sin and death;
- the Spirit makes us children of God who cry, as Jesus did, Abba, Father;
- the Spirit makes us heirs of God's kingdom, always looking forward in hope, sharing the sufferings of

Jesus, rejoicing in the midst of the tribulations which are the birth-pangs of a new creation.

It is a short step from this to the last great affirmation of the New Testament about the life in the Spirit: the Spirit is the witness to Jesus and to the coming kingdom of God. If the Spirit makes us heirs of the kingdom and sets our hearts and our faces always looking forward in hope, then the Spirit is the witness of that kingdom in the midst of the world. This is most simply expressed in one of the great texts about the Spirit which we have not so far quoted in these studies. It is the promise of Jesus to his disciples when they asked him whether the Kingdom of God was going to come immediately.

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1: 8).

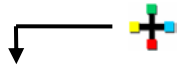
Please note that this is not a command; it is a promise. It is similar to the promises given in the last discourses as recorded by St. John.

When the Counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses (Jn. 15:26f).

When (the Counsellor) comes, he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment ... (Jn. 16: 8).

The Holy Spirit is the witness, because He is the first-fruit of the new creation which the Father has promised to give. Those who live in the Spirit will have their faces set towards the

light of that dawning day. They will be full of hope and expectation. They will always be moving forward towards that new world which is to come. And therefore they will be signs and witnesses to the rest of mankind of the new world for which men long and which they cannot yet see.



In Paul's long discussion with the Corinthians we learned that the supreme gift of the Spirit is the love which binds believers together in one body. From this letter to the Romans we learn that the Spirit sets us free, makes us children of God and gives us hope of a new world. Freedom, sonship and hope – these are the marks of life in the Spirit. And when these are present, the Spirit bears his own witness to Jesus and to his coming reign.

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