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Co-Editor's Column
THE "DIRECT" OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ERROR
 Garland Elkins



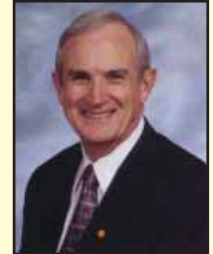
THE "DIRECT" OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ERROR IMPEACHES THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD
 Calvinism, from its beginning, has contended that the Holy Spirit operates directly on the human heart. Ben M. Bogard, Baptist preacher, with whom brother N. B. Hardeman conducted more than one debate, one of which is recorded in a book, said: "That is exactly what I am coming to now, the Holy Spirit actually touches (emph. his, GE) the human heart. Nothing between at all." He also said,

Even so the Holy Spirit has written his word to us, and there is power in the word, but when the Holy Spirit actually presents himself and comes into personal contact with the sinner there is a much more powerful influence.

Bogard, could not have been farther from the truth! Through the years, sound brethren have opposed and exposed the view that the Holy Spirit operates in a "direct" way, i.e., actually comes in contact, touches, the human spirit. In response to Bogard's contention that the Holy Spirit "touches the human spirit" brother Hardeman said,

But *how* does the Spirit operate? That is the question. My answer, first, last and all the time, is that he influences through the gospel, which is God's power. The word is the medium through which the Spirit accomplishes his work. If that book there were the sinner's heart and this hand were the Holy Spirit (placing hand on book) there is direct and immediate contact; if you put something between, the hand will operate on the book, but this time it is through the medium of this tablet. That represents the only two ideas that can be had from this proposition. That represents the difference between Dr. Bogard and me, the difference between error and truth! (Hardeman-Bogard Debate, pp. 21, 31).

Amazing as it is, some brethren are now contending for a "Direct" operation on the heart of a Christian, and some are also contending for Holy Spirit baptism for an alien sinner. In thus



From The Director

IS THE CHURCH GOING TO STAY THE CHURCH?

During my forty-five years of preaching the gospel, a number of issues have faced the people of God. Back in 1966-1969, when Annette and I were privileged to preach near Birmingham, Alabama, I got to be in brother Franklin Camp's classes at Shades Mountain on "Romans" on Mondays, and I got to be in brother Gus Nichols' classes on Friday afternoon and evenings. Those two men (one of whom believed that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian only through the Word, and the other of whom believed that the Spirit personally indwells the Christian, brother Camp and brother Nichols respectively) both were in clear opposition to a "direct operation" of the Holy Spirit upon either sinner or saint. Both of those great Bible scholars had debated Holiness preachers and were keenly aware of the implications of that false doctrine.

In Alabama Christian High School and College, I had been privileged from 1957-1962, to sit at the feet of brethren Eris B. Benson, Rex A. Turner, Sr., and others. They drilled into our minds that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word, not alongside the Word. Professor Benson would often take his hands and say, "Let my left hand represent man's spirit, and let my right hand represent the Holy Spirit." Putting both hands together, he would say, "The Holy Spirit never works directly on man's spirit." Then, picking up his Bible in his right hand and touching his left hand with his Bible between his hands, brother Benson would say, "The Holy Spirit always works only through the medium of the Word upon the human heart, whether sinner or saint." An admirer of brother Nichols, he often told me he took the same position which brother Nichols took.

In his excellent work Systematic Theology, brother Rex A. Turner, Sr., with whom I served as a school administrator/professor for over a decade, and my "second father" and mentor (and who knew Calvinism like the "back of his hand"), wrote,

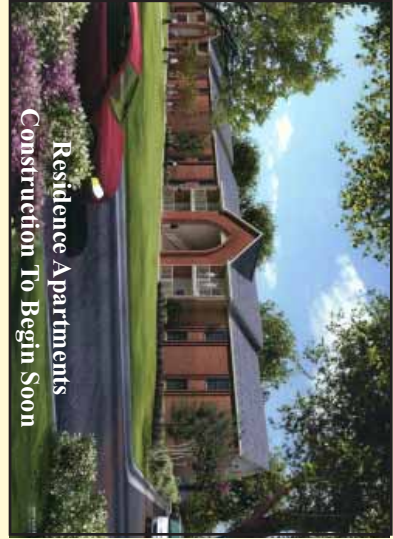
A third proposition is that the Holy Spirit as a person dwells in the physical body of a Christian in varying intensities and that a Christian experiences through the Spirit's indwelling a relationship which transcends the printed page. Those who subscribe to this proposition hold that through the indwelling of

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(Cates: Continued from Page 1)

the Holy Spirit the Christian is given additional power and incentive to overcome sin in a manner and to a degree that is not provided though the medium of the word. Those who hold this proposition also allow for sensuous and inner-conscious leadings or communications of the Holy Spirit—though such leadings and communications, they aver, cannot be and will not be contrary to the word. Those who subscribe to this proposition do not, therefore, hold that the word of God is the only standard, the highest and only source of revelation, in all matters of religion.

Brethren, the milk of the coconut is; if the heretical doctrine of the direct operation and baptism of the Holy Spirit is allowed unopposed and unexposed to have free-course among the brethren, the church in many places is going to become just a second-rate Holiness sect.

Curtis A. Cates

(Elkins: Continued from Page 1)

contending, they are just as wrong as Bogard. The Holy Spirit does not operate directly on the heart of saint or sinner, but He always operates through His Word (Eph. 6:17). Paul, wrote by inspiration:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

Then he wrote,

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

The Holy Spirit uses His “law,” the Word of God, to make men free from sin, and He also uses His Word to influence Christians. At Miletus, Paul said to Christians, elders of the church in Ephesus:

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:32).

In these passages, Paul points out two things that the Word of God does for faithful Christians: (1) The Word will build up the Christian. (2) The Word will cause the faithful Christian to receive an “inheritance.” The “inheritance” is heaven, for Peter wrote: “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4).

To deny what Paul said, that the Word is able to do, is an impeachment of the all-sufficiency of the Word. James wrote,

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls (Jas. 1:21).

This scripture teaches that the Word of God is able to save the soul. Nothing is said about a need for the Holy Spirit to operate on the heart in a “Direct” way. Therefore, when Ben M. Bogard said, “That is exactly what I am coming to now, the Holy Spirit actually touches the human heart,” he was as wrong as wrong can be. Neither did James say that “The Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word” must operate on the heart of a Christian.

Brother Mac Deaver contends that the Word alone is not capable of saving the soul. In a personal letter to me, dated July 9, 1998, and later published in *Biblical Notes* (July-September, 1998, p. 11), he wrote:

It is my opinion that in the providence of God, we have come to a point in the history of the church when God wants the error taught for years by the “word only” advocates (on the Holy Spirit issue) corrected.

When the inspired Paul and James pointed out the all-sufficiency of the Word of God to save both saint and sinner, that settles the matter! When God’s Word teaches a thing, that is the final word on the subject. Paul wrote,

For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar (Rom. 3:3-4a).

The Holy Spirit has a sword—the Word of God. Paul wrote, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (emph. mine, GE).

It is not a question as to whether the Holy Spirit dwells in a Christian, but the question is *how*? Paul wrote,

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:18).

In a parallel passage he wrote,

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

Inspiration reveals to us that the Holy Spirit dwells within us as Christians, but He does this through the Word of God!

Garland Elkins

AN “INFALLIBLE” ARGUMENT CONCERNING THE DIRECT OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DENIED

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

A hypothetical syllogism is, by definition, a deductive argument consisting of a conditional (hypothetical) premise preceded by if (the antecedent) and followed by then (its consequent). For example, “If one is a politician, that one lies!” could be the major premise followed by a minor premise, “If he lies, then he denies being a politician!” The conclusion must be, for the argument to be valid (validity is a reference to correct form in logic not to truthfulness): “Therefore, if that one is a politician, then he denies being a politician!” (See Irving Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, MacMillan, pp. 250-252.) The first premise of a hypothetical syllogism and the conclusion must have the same antecedent (if) and the second premise and the conclusion must have the same consequent (then) and when the component parts of a conditional syllogism are so related, the argument is valid (Ibid., p. 251).

Another kind of conditional syllogism can have one if-then premise and one categorical (direct statement or sentence) premise and the categorical premise must affirm the antecedent of the conditional premise and the conclusion must affirm its consequent (Ibid.). For example, “If one tells the truth, one is a politician!” “One told the truth,” (affirming the antecedent of the if premise), “Therefore, one is a politician” (affirming the consequent of the categorical or minor premise). Such a valid mixed hypothetical syllogism is called modus ponens (affirming mood).

A third type of valid hypothetical syllogism is one in which the categorical premise (minor premise) denies the consequent of the if-then premise and the conclusion then must deny the antecedent of the if-then premise. This latter form is called modus tollens (the mode of denial).

Any hypothetical syllogism not in one of the three valid forms described above would be guilty of a modal fallacy. That is, the argument would not be in a valid form. Consider the following syllogism which syllogism its author labeled infallible.

1. If (1) the word of God can directly affect the human heart and (2) the Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the word and (3) the word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit, and (4) the saint must produce the fruit of the Spirit, THEN the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint’s heart.

2. (1) The word of God can directly affect the human heart (Psa. 119:11; Acts 2:37) and (2) The Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the word (Acts 2:38; 1 Thess. 4:8; Eph. 5:17-19; Col. 3:16-17) and (3) the word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit (John 15:1ff; Rom. 8:9-11; Matt. 7:16-20) and (4) the saint must produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24).

3. THEN the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint’s heart.

In order to derive a necessary conclusion from an antecedent where there is the conditional “if-then,” there must be a necessary antecedent and a necessary condition. Logicians call this necessity qualification strict implication and where modus ponens (recall that this is an affirming syllogism) for strict implication is concerned, when the antecedent is affirmed by a particular modality (method) then the consequent must also be affirmed by that particular modality.

The above “infallible” argument is not sound because a formal fallacy of modality was committed when the argument was written. Something necessary cannot be derived from that which is merely possible. Note that the “infallible” argument starts with “if” and fallaciously derives a necessary conclusion. Therefore, the author of the argument failed fully to reveal the modality of his proof and so unknowingly or knowingly tried to secrete the fallacy. In other words, the author either deliberately hid the fallacy because he could not prove his major premise, or he did not realize (although he claims to be a logician) his mistake.

In Aristotelian categorical logic, the beginner is taught that one cannot draw a universal conclusion from a particular premise. A similar fallacy has been committed by the author of the “infallible” syllogism. He started with a partial and formed a whole! What he wrote is something like, “If it is a China, then it is a pig. It is possible it is a China. Therefore, it is a pig.” The formal fallacy of modality makes the “infallible” argument above invalid as to form and also indicates that the author assumed his “minor” categorical premise without proof. (The author had no verse of Holy Scripture that indicated the Holy Spirit worked “in conjunction with” the Word of God. He assumed such.)

A second problem with the above “infallible” argument (to a logician, a deductive argument means that one has a valid, syllogistic form) is that at least one of the terms in the wording and, perhaps, two are used in two differing senses. This aforementioned usage is called equivocation and this fallacy of ambiguity occurs when one confuses “the different meanings a single word or phrase may have” and uses such terms “in different senses in the same context” (Copi, p. 110). Copi included the traditional illustration of this fallacy which example is: “The

end of a thing is perfection: death is the end of life; hence, death is the perfection of life” (Ibid.). Since end can mean goal or last, the goal of a thing is its perfection, but as to death it is the last event of life. Both meanings, goal and last, are legitimate usages of end, but one cannot confuse the two terms in one syllogism.

In like manner, the author of the “infallible” argument used word in two differing senses. In the conditional premise, the author used the term to refer to the written Bible, but in the categorical minor premise, the term is defined by the author as either preached or written. His “proof” text in the if-then, major premise is not given, but he used Acts 2:37 (the record of the orally given Word), and Psalm 19:11 (the record of the engraved Word) to define his terms.

That author also mixed terms by using word and word alone which he does not define as to the contrast. His syllogism is something like this: “If nobody is a better comforter than God, and if somebody is a better comforter than nobody, then somebody is a better comforter than God!” Note that the author wrote that “if the word of God can directly affect the human heart, and if the Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the Word, and if the word alone” (here he equivocates, is it word or word alone?) “cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit” (which statement the author has never proved) “then the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint’s heart.”

In the if-then conditional, major premise, ambiguity also is seen in that the author surmised that the Word of God could directly affect a saint’s heart and then surmised that by itself (word, word alone), the Word of God could not produce fruit. Which if the author intended to be correct is certainly left to the imagination of other amateur logicians who, at least, know that humor and jokes are based on the fallacy of equivocation, but the working of the Holy Spirit and the understanding of that work should never be left to comedians. The Bible explicitly states that the “sword of the Spirit is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). Handlers of swords know that they work through the sword NOT parallel to it or “in conjunction” with it.

All of the above technicalities ASIDE, the author of the “infallible” syllogism needs a verse of Holy Writ he does not have. He needs one for his categorical premise (second premise) that teaches “in conjunction with” as the mode of the Holy Spirit’s working. Also, one who has a direct operation on one’s mind (heart) needs the information as to which side of the brain the testosterone driven male is affected directly by the Spirit and whether the Spirit affects both sides simultaneously of the non-testosterone female.

What does it feel like when the Holy Spirit directly affects a brain? Is there an electrical charge to each synapse (the point at which nervous impulses pass from one neuron to another) and are God’s children the only ones who can feel this charge? Or, is the “direct affection” of the Christian’s heart only “spiritual” thus defying explanation and outside of the realm of human understanding and logical syllogisms?

It is most interesting that all of the arguments (?) presented by one claiming direct (please, dear reader, understand the import of this claim) operation on the Christian use Scripture to affect his claims. The infallible author should just tell one how such an operation feels and how one knows when the operation is in effect and not try to use Holy Scripture to “prove” some feeling.

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