

Does The
HOLY SPIRIT
Operate Directly
Upon The Heart
Of A Saint?

*A Review Of
Neo-Calvinism
Among The Lord's People*

Curtis A. Cates

With Foreword by Garland Elkins

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Dedication

This book on the Holy Spirit is gratefully dedicated to a special Christian woman

Jean Taylor

with whom I am privileged to work in the Memphis School of Preaching. Her competent, dedicated, tireless devotion to the School, and as my secretary now into the seventeenth year, is invaluable to me. I deeply appreciate her.

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Foreword

The book that you hold in your hand is a definitive book, a book, "Whose time has come." One of the hard fought issues that faithful brethren have been forced to face since the church of Christ was planted in the United States has been the subject of the work of the Holy Spirit. In the pioneer days of this country many members of the church before their conversion had believed and followed Calvinism. When they rejected the error of Calvinism and obeyed the gospel, from time to time there would be some who wanted to go back to at least one facet of Calvinism, and that is, the doctrine of "The direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit." Some presently are pushing that phase of Calvinism. In this book brother Curtis A Cates does a superb job in teaching the truth, and in exposing error.

No one is baptized with the Holy Spirit today. Presently many are confused because much error is taught on the subject of the Holy Spirit. From those who are not Christians much error is taught on this subject. Our nation is bombarded with much denominational error relative to the work of the Holy Spirit. This is done by means of the pulpit, tracts, radio, television, newspaper articles, magazines, periodicals, etc. Members of the church, along with those that are not Christians, hear these false doctrines, often on an almost daily basis.

Many of the denominations contend that the Holy Spirit guides them in a miraculous way. On a Sunday morning while I was in a gospel meeting, I was staying in a motel. Being in a strange city and thinking that I might be able to hear a faithful gospel preacher on television before it was necessary for me to leave for the meeting house of the church for which I was to

preach that morning, I turned on the TV.

When I turned on the TV instead of hearing a gospel preacher, a so-called woman preacher was speaking, and one of the first errors that she taught (and of course for her to preach was a violation of 1 Tim. 2:12), was error on the subject of the Holy Spirit. She said the following: "I have so many things inside of me, and I just pray that the Holy Spirit will fit them into my mouth." She is, of course, wrong on two counts: she is not baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit therefore does not miraculously guide her speaking. However, she was at least consistent in her error. She, of course, is not baptized in the Holy Spirit; however, if like the apostles she were baptized with the Holy Spirit, then like the apostles she could expect the Holy Spirit to guide her. Did not the Holy Spirit guide the apostles (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21)?

A number of years ago I participated in a debate, and the debate was conducted on the courthouse square in the town where I was living. The preacher claimed that he was guided by the Holy Spirit in a miraculous way, and to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit did indeed guide his thoughts and words, he read a scripture, and then threw his Bible away. His Bible fell several feet away from him. However, when he attempted to quote a scripture he could neither remember the location of the scripture, nor even one word of it! His deep embarrassment was both painful and visible to all. The more he tried to remember the scripture the more nervous he became, and he was never able to remember a single word of the scripture. After I was certain that the entire audience was well aware of his predicament I quoted the passage for him. The passage is, "In the beginning God created

the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

I then pointed out to the audience that the preacher was a fake. I stressed that the Holy Spirit through Moses wrote Genesis 1:1. And He had not forgotten it! If that preacher were guided by the Holy Spirit, as were the apostles, the following scriptures would have applied to him: "But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Mat. 10:19-20). The preacher about whom I have written in the above account never came back again to that town to speak!

There are some brethren who contend that the Holy Spirit does something to them without the use of the Word of God. This is patently false, *but let it be stated at the very outset, if the Holy Spirit did indeed do something to them apart from the Word, it would be miraculous, regardless of their disclaimer!* Some brethren make the argument for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit and then deny that they believe in the miraculous. If they accepted the conclusions from their premises, they would be forced to contend for miracles. Though some disavow the conclusions and consequences of their promises, the conclusions, nevertheless, do follow. This group among the people of God argues for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then say that they do not believe nor advocate tongue-speaking, which was the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-8; 10:44-46; 11:15; 15:6-10). It is highly inconsistent and illogical for a man to cite the very passages that teach that the apostles and Cornelius were baptized in the Holy Spirit and contend that these passages

apply to every member of the church and then to deny tongue-speaking!

It is incredible that any Christian in our day, with an open Bible containing as it does the explicit command that we must rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), would claim that Christians of our day are baptized in the Holy Spirit. As previously stated, there are those among the people of God who make the claim and militantly contend that all Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit, but they will not accept the conclusion from such a premise which would necessitate tongue-speaking. These men are obligated to do one of two things, and, preferably, they will do the first. (1) They should cease teaching that Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit, or (2) they should, like the admitted and avowed Pentecostals in their error, contend that all Christians can speak in tongues, for in the New Testament record every person baptized in the Holy Spirit did speak in tongues. **Question:** When will these men face up to the dilemma, for indeed they are in a dilemma? *They cannot have it both ways!*

A Case In Point

Richard Oster is a professor in the Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee. He and I have treated each other with Christian kindness even though we disagree. He has taught much error, and I oppose it. I like the man but oppose the error that he teaches. We are to follow in the steps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus loved the sinner but hated the sin. He loved the people involved but opposed their error. To the church in Ephesus he wrote, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works

of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (Rev. 2:6).

Brother Oster's teaching relative to the Holy Spirit was first called to my attention by the beloved brother Emerson J. Estes, who was the first evangelist for the Getwell Church of Christ. He was the preacher at Getwell for some eight years. Though He has now lived beyond ninety years. He is a remarkable Christian gentleman, and for many years a faithful and able Gospel preacher, and a defender of the Truth.

A few years ago brother Estes called me stating that on the previous Wednesday evening he had taught, as he had through the years, that no one is baptized in the Holy Spirit today. To his surprise one of brother Oster's students took strong issue with him, denying brother Estes' affirmation. Brother Estes was, of course, simply setting out what the New Testament teaches. The father of the young man, who is himself a faithful Gospel preacher living in another state, called me requesting that I talk with his son. Also, the young brother called stating that his father wanted me to talk with him. I agreed to do so but requested him to bring with him a series of tapes which brother Oster had recorded on the subject of baptism in the Holy Spirit. I listened attentively and carefully to the tapes, and when the young man returned for them. I pointed out wherein they taught much error. While this young brother was in my office, I telephoned brother Oster and pointed out to him that he had taught much error.

Some time later in 1983, a preachers' forum was conducted at Harding Graduate School of Religion, and brother Oster was one of the speakers. In his speeches and in the answers to questions from the audience he contended that Holy Spirit baptism is for all Christians today. After he had stated that Christians

are baptized in the Holy Spirit, I raised my hand and was recognized by brother Clifton Ganus, President of Harding University, who was in charge of the forum. I asked him if we were going to be permitted to ask questions and to make comments before the forum was completed, and he gave me permission to speak. I held up the tapes and told him of some of the error that brother Oster had taught and asked him if he had heard the tapes, pointing out that if he had not he certainly needed to do so. I then pointed out some of brother Oster's errors relative to his contention that all Christians receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit today.

Brother Ganus said to brother Oster, "Rick, you don't believe in speaking in tongues, do you?" To which brother Oster said, "No." I then pointed out that whether he accepts the conclusion of his premise or not, the conclusion irresistibly follows: if he is baptized in the Holy Spirit, then he should be able to speak in tongues. Brother Ganus again said, "Rick, you don't believe in speaking in tongues, do you?" And again brother Oster said that he did not. I then pointed out that the question was, did he say what I said that he said as recorded on the tapes and that both he and I knew that he had, indeed, said and had taught the things which I had stated that he taught. I also pointed out that I would be willing to meet brother Oster on the polemic platform in public debate. He did not accept the invitation, and after it was over, I talked with him further stating again that I was willing to discuss the matter with him publicly to which he replied, "I think I shall pass."

In 1967, when I was in Belfast, Ireland, to assist in a Gospel meeting, I learned that brother Jim

McGuiggan was teaching that Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit, but like brother Oster, he denied that he believed in tongue-speaking. A number of preachers came together one evening in Belfast to discuss this subject, including brother McGuiggan. I pointed out to him from the Scriptures that he was in error on the subject of baptism of the Holy Spirit. Whether he has changed his view on this matter I do not know, for I have not discussed this subject with him since that time.

When brother Oster spoke on this subject at the Preachers' Forum at Harding Graduate School of Religion in 1983, he stated that brother Richard Rogers of Lubbock held the same position as does brother Oster in reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I say it kindly, but regardless of who or how many hold the position that Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit today, they believe and hold to error!

Refutation Of The Error

The Holy Spirit, through the pen of the inspired writer, refuted the false doctrine that all obedient believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Let us note two sections of Scripture. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John" (Acts 8:14). Note, "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:15). This passage forever repudiates, answers, and exposes the argument that when one becomes a Christian he is baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans were saved, for Jesus had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The Samaritans heard the Gospel, "But

when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Therefore, since they heard, believed, and were baptized, they were saved; however, let us carefully note that, even though they were saved, they had not as yet received the Holy Spirit in any miraculous way. "For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16). This passage refutes the false doctrine that we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, for they had already received the Word, but of the Holy Spirit, the writer says, "For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." They in fact had received no miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit, for we read, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (not directly from God at baptism per brother Oster's teaching, GE). "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money" (Acts 8:17-18).

Then, let us note a second illustration which has been recorded for us by the pen of inspiration. Paul came to Ephesus, and as he conversed with some men, he asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" (Acts 19:2). Their reply was, "nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given" (Acts 19:2). He then asked, "Into what then were ye baptized?" (Acts 19:3). They said, "into John's baptism" (Acts 19:3). Then, Paul explains the difference between John's baptism and the baptism of Jesus Christ. They understood Paul's explanation, which was, of course, inspired by the Holy Spirit, for the record

says, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). They have been baptized; they are saved. Have they been baptized in the Holy Spirit? A thousand times no! In fact, they have not received any miraculous manifestation of the Spirit, not even the miraculous gift that came "through laying on of the apostles' hands" (Acts 8:18).

Now, let us observe the absolute, perfect unity between Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:1-9. In both cases the people were baptized and thus saved before they received miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, which came "through the laying on of the apostles' hands" (Acts 8:18). As brother N. B. Hardeman used to say, "That's not nearly it; that's it!" These passages fully, completely, and clearly repudiate the error that is taught by brother Richard Oster and others, that the Holy Spirit enters a person the moment that he is baptized for the remission of sins. The argument set out in Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:1-9 is not mine, but it was directed by the Holy Spirit himself through three apostles, Peter, John, and Paul. That being the case, I plead with brother Oster to cease teaching his error, but rather renounce it and repudiate it and thus stand on the truth with the Holy Spirit, Peter, John, and Paul on this subject.

I point out again that in our day many, by implication, are questioning the all-sufficiency of the Bible, the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:21). The Holy Spirit leads, directs, convicts, saves, sanctifies, and instructs us only by and through the Word of God. It is incredible that brother Oster has made the statement:

Now, there have been a lot of arguments, different kinds of arguments and discussions, about the meaning of Ephesians 6:17, the

relationship between the sword and the Spirit and the word of God, and some of those arguments are fairly detailed....Now, a second example of this unscriptural subordination of the Spirit to the Bible is reflected in the way some people frame their questions, the way some people ask questions about the work of the Spirit itself. For example, some people always ask the question, "Does the Spirit operate separate and apart from the word?" Now, one of the indications that I receive from this kind of questioning is that the Godhead almost has to take its cue or leading from the word.

I am saddened that any member of the church would teach the false doctrine that Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit today. However, when a man teaches such error (and this brother does teach that all Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit today), he invariably attacks the all-sufficiency of the Word of God to save the soul. Regardless of how much he may attempt to ridicule the truth that the Holy Spirit operates through the Word, and only through the Word, the Bible, nevertheless, does teach it (Eph. 6:17; Rom. 8:2; Acts 20:32; James 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible teaches that there is no power other than the Gospel to save. It is "the power," the only power to save our souls. "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). The Gospel is the only power to instruct and edify us in living the Christian life. Paul from Miletus "sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17). These men were mature Christians, elders in the church. Paul did not

tell them that in addition to the Word they needed a direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit to build them up and to give them the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. He said, "*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). Nothing more than our being built up in this life and an inheritance in heaven is needed, and nothing more than that is promised in this passage, but bear in mind that all of it comes through the power of the Word in our lives.

The Word of God is complete, able, powerful, alive. There are no extras needed. The Word of Christ will judge us on that last day: "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).

There are some additional things to which I would call our attention. When Paul asked the twelve men at Ephesus, "*Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?*" (Acts 19:2), the word "*believed*" in that passage is a synecdoche in which the part is put for the whole; therefore, he was asking them, "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you were saved?*" Since they had received no miraculous spiritual gift after that salvation and since this was the day before the entire New Testament was revealed and written down and brought together in one volume, there was a need for the apostles sometimes to impart to various Christians miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Hence, we read, "*And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied*" (Acts 19:6).

How Does The Spirit Influence Us?

Brethren through the years have agreed that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit dwell in the children of God (1 John 4:12; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:18). However, the Bible teaches and therefore brethren generally have believed, that the Godhead dwells in us and thus influences the child of God by and through the Word of God (Col. 3:16).

Two views of how the Holy Spirit indwells the child of God have been generally held by faithful brethren. The first view has been that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian only through the Word of God. This has always been the view that I have and still do believe. Other good brethren have believed that the Holy Spirit personally indwells the body of the Christian. I do not believe this view, however, since none of the brethren that believe this view hold that the Holy Spirit performs any miracles nor does anything to the Christian that can be felt or sensed, this view does not disrupt our fellowship in Christ. Some of my friends have actually said to me, "Though I believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in me in a personal way, I would not know that He is within me if the Bible did not tell me. He does absolutely nothing to my heart **directly** because I am a Christian. The only way the Holy Spirit operates on my spirit is by the Word of God." Though I have never believed this view since I believe that the Holy Spirit influences the heart of the Christian **only** by the Word of God and since those who hold the "personal indwelling" view affirm that they believe the only way the Holy Spirit influences the Christian is by the Word of God, we have **no** problem in fellowshipping one another.

Brethren Gus Nichols and Guy N. Woods were

excellent examples of the above mentioned comments. Brother Woods believed that the Holy Spirit dwelt in the Christian and influenced the Christian only through the Word of God. Brother Nichols held to the personal indwelling view, and yet since neither of these great men believed that the Holy Spirit did anything to the human spirit, their differing views did not adversely affect their fellowship. Conversely they were the greatest of Christian friends, had profound respect for each other, and in both private and public ways expressed their great love and admiration for each other, and worked side by side as truly great soldiers in the Lord's army.

Brethren Gus Nichols and Guy N. Woods were two of my closest friends. Both preached in gospel meetings for congregations with which I worked as a local evangelist. Both encouraged me much, taught me much, were, and are, among my most respected heroes. Both of these brethren stayed in our home when preaching in gospel meetings in congregations with which I worked. My wife and I along with our three daughters have some of our fondest, and most precious memories of these two spiritual giants. For approximately thirty years I heard them discuss their differing views at the Freed Hardeman Open Forum. I emphasize again that they differed as Christian gentlemen should and it never affected their fellowship!

**Some Among Us Today Are Teaching
That The Holy Spirit Operates Directly
On The Human Spirit**

Brother Guy N. Woods wrote,

For, the shocking truth is that some among us today are advocating views, concerning

the Spirit's operations, more nearly coinciding with those of Baptist Bogard (Ben M. Bogard, who debated brother N. B. Hardeman and argued that the Holy Spirit operates **apart** from, and **independent** of, the word of truth — the Scriptures" (emphasis his—GE), than those of brother Hardeman, thus clearly evidencing the extent of the departures now characteristic of some in the churches of Christ today.¹

It is sad but true that Rubel Shelly has apostized. He now believes that the Holy Spirit is guiding him apart from the Word of God. Brother Shelly wrote,

Without the blood of Christ and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, though, life in its fullest form remains elusive. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, human willpower as buttressed by caring friends is the limit of one's capacity for doing good. The Holy Spirit, however, opens vistas beyond what is possible by human resolve and resources.²

One of the most difficult things in the life of a Christian is when one must oppose close personal and highly respected Christian friends. Peter and Paul loved and respected each other as fellow Christians, fellow apostles, and fellow soldiers in the army of the Lord. However, on one occasion it became Paul's sad duty to oppose Peter even in a public way. Paul wrote,

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned (Gal. 2:11).

Having read from the inspired pen of the peerless apostle Paul, surely no one would think that he derived pleasure in rebuking Peter. I am of the judgment that

it broke Paul's heart that it became necessary for him to rebuke Peter. I know that Paul was grieved that Peter had done wrong. Paul loved Peter, and Paul wrote that love, "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6).

Likewise I derive no pleasure but much pain that it is necessary for me to oppose some of the teaching brother Roy and brother Mac Deaver espouse regarding their view of the work of the Holy Spirit. This father and son team have contributed much to the work and welfare of the church of our Lord. Eternity alone can reveal the great amount of good that they have done. They have done much effective teaching against antisemitism, liberalism, false doctrines that are taught regarding Marriage-Divorce-Remarriage, et al. Not only have they preached against various errors, but they have engaged in numerous debates on these and other subjects. I have always been grateful for all of the great good that they have done, and I shall ever give them the richly deserved credit for all of their numerous efforts on behalf of the Lord and the truth of His Word.

Brother Curtis A. Cates shares my great appreciation for the Deavers. Both of us have the utmost appreciation for all of the great good that brethren Roy and Mac Deaver have done. Also, one of the reasons that the two of us have waited this long to address this subject is that we held off as long as possible before directly addressing their view of the work of the Holy Spirit because we have hoped that they could be persuaded to change their view. At least we had hoped that they would see that pushing their view is divisive to the Lord's church, and therefore they would back away from making their view the cause of further division in the church, the beautiful

Bride of Christ.

It has been our purpose to follow Paul's inspired teaching to Timothy when he wrote, "In meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; If peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will" (2 Tim. 2:25-26).

Having said what I have written above, I point out that brother Mac Deaver appears determined and obsessed in his efforts to oppose those of us who believe that the Holy Spirit does not operate in a direct way upon the human heart, but that he always operates through the Word of God (Acts 20:32; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 6:17).

In a personal letter to me, July 9, 1998, later published in **Biblical Notes** (July-September, 1998), p. 11, brother Mac 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 'Word only' advocates (on the Holy Spirit issue) corrected."

There you have it. Brother Mac has declared war (spiritually speaking) on the view that many of us have held all of our lives that the Holy Spirit operates on the heart of the Christian only by use of the truth (Eph. 6:17). Mac is, of course, contending that the Holy Spirit does more than simply influence the Christian through the use of the New Testament. In other words, Mac contends that the Holy Spirit operates in a direct way upon the heart of the Christian. This view I unhesitatingly reject, and though brother Mac is brilliant, is experienced, and has done much study of the Bible and related subjects, he cannot live long enough to

overthrow the truth that the New Testament so clearly teaches, i.e., the Holy Spirit operates on the hearts of sinners and saints only through the truth (Rom. 8:2; Eph. 6:17; Eph. 5:17; Col. 3:16).

I have always been very grateful that when I enrolled in Freed-Hardeman College, brother N. B. Hardeman was the president of the school, and one of my Bible teachers. In his Bible classes, brother Hardeman would sometimes place his hand directly upon a book and say, "That is a direct operation on this book." Then he would remove his hand from the book and take a pen in his hand and use the pen to contact the book and then say, "I am still bringing pressure to bear on **the** book, not directly but indirectly through the use of this pen." He would then explain that the Holy Spirit never makes direct contact with the hearts of sinner or saint, but he always operates on the human heart with His instrument, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Brother Hardeman was one hundred percent right in the above quoted comments.

In his debate with Ben M. Bogard brother Hardeman stated,

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!

Every single step in the divine plan, from the time the sinner decides to become a child of God until he sweeps through the gates into the heavenly realm—every step is effected by God's word! There is no such thing as the Spirit of God operating away or distinct from the written word.

Our difference is not that of whether the Spirit does or does not operate—it is whether he operates outside of the realm of God's will or in harmony with it. I know the man doesn't live who can find a single passage where the Spirit operates distinct—away—from the blessed word, or where there is the slightest intimation of an isolated span or distance intervening between the Holy Spirit's work and that of the word. It simply is not in God's book, and it is futile to fight against God.

I believed the view that brother Hardeman set out in the above before I met, or had ever heard of brother Hardeman.

In the Campbell-Rice Debate, brother Campbell correctly affirmed as proposition five, **"In conversion and sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the Word"** (emphasis his-GE).

I believed the above proposition that brother Campbell affirmed in his debate with Rice before I ever heard of Alexander Campbell because I read my Bible and that is what the Bible teaches (Eph. 6:17; Col. 3:16).

Endnotes

- 1 Guy N. Woods, "Echoes From The Past," **Gospel Advocate** (September 17, 1970), p. 593.
- 2 Rubel Shelly, "'Salvation' or 'Recovery:' Which Should You Choose?" **Wineskins** (September/October 1993), p. 5.
- 3 Alexander Campbell, **Campbell-Rice Debate** (Lexington, KY: A. T. Skillman and Son, 1844), p. 611.
- 4 N. B. Hardeman **Hardeman-Bogard Debate** (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate).

A Word About The Author

Curtis A. Cates is a genuine Christian gentleman, a faithful and able gospel preacher, and the capable Director of the Memphis School of Preaching. He has a wonderful Christian heritage, and is deeply and sincerely appreciative, not only for the Lord, His Church, the Bible, et al, but to his family, past, and immediate. His wife, Annette, is truly his great "help meet" and together they have accomplished many good things in the work of the Lord. Their two sons, Andy and Dan, are gospel preachers. Brother Cates' father is a gospel preacher of many years, and he comes from a family of preachers.

In addition to his preaching brother Cates is an educator, having taught and served as dean in several Christian colleges and presently serving as Director of the Memphis School of Preaching. He has served in this role for more than seventeen years. He has several academic degrees, having studied to the highest academic level. However, his first and foremost love is preaching the gospel of Christ.

I know that I speak for my fellow instructors in the Memphis School of Preaching when I say that it is both a privilege and honor to work with brother Cates on a daily basis, and to serve under him as the Director

Foreword

of the Memphis School of Preaching.

This book **Does The Holy Spirit Operate Directly Upon The Heart Of A Saint? (A Review Of Neo-Calvinism Among The Lord's People)** deserves and will receive a wide reading.

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Does The Holy Spirit Operate Directly Upon The Heart Of A Saint?

**A Review Of Neo-Calvinism
Among The Lord's People**

By
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INTRODUCTION

The false system of Calvinism has had a profound influence upon the denominational world. Its tenets are fatal to its adherents, attack the very character of God, remove the free, moral being of man, and make the Bible a collection of meaningless, impotent words. Those seeking souls in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had to shed its false tentacles in order to return to "the ancient order of things." This bitter yet persistent struggle was one they were determined to win. The salvation of their eternal souls and those of others depended upon it.

One tenet of Calvinism which the pioneers had to overcome was the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of man—Spirit-on-spirit. L. L. Brigance described it thus:

One of the points at which the Restoration Movement has from the beginning differed from the denominational world is the work of the Holy Spirit. Denominationalism teaches the direct and immediate contact, impact, influence, and effect of the Holy Spirit in the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of men. Sectarians in general believe the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the written or preached word, convicts, converts, and saves people from their sins. They continually pray for God to send down the Holy Spirit into the hearts of both sinner and saint to carry on his work of grace.

While Mr. Campbell was brought up amidst sectarianism on every hand and his eyes were blinded by false teaching, nevertheless as soon as he began to get them open and the light began to shine along the way he rejected this doctrine of the direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word. On the other hand, he believed that the Holy Spirit was the agent of "regeneration," and the word was the means through which he operated to reach the hearts of men.¹

Through the generations, faithful Gospel preachers have preached that the Holy Spirit works in leading the alien sinner to the Lamb of God and works in leading the Christian to faithfully follow the Christ through His instrument, the Word (Eph. 6:17). However, it has been emphasized that it is never Spirit-on-spirit, in conviction, conversion, or sanctification. One of the author's professors, the late, lamented Eris B. Benson, would illustrate it thus: his left hand would represent the Holy Spirit; his right hand would represent the human heart. Never, he would say, placing his hands

together, does the Holy Spirit directly influence the human spirit. He would then take his Bible in his left hand and state, "The Holy Spirit always works through the medium of the Word of God upon both alien sinner and saint." That conviction, dear reader, has been held by churches of Christ all through the years.

The Calvinistic teaching that there must be a direct, mysterious intervention and working upon the human heart has been soundly refuted by our brethren countless times on the polemic platform. The doctrine of total depravity—Inherited guilt of Adam's sin—has been exposed as the heresy it is and has been rejected. Since this doctrine is the basis for claiming the need for a direct operation of the Spirit, brethren have correctly held as fatal false doctrine the inane notion that the Holy Spirit has to act directly upon either saints or sinners before they can produce any fruit of the Spirit. Neither have brethren believed that the Spirit must "illuminate" the Word before one can understand and obey its precepts. In fact, Gus Nichols taught those who attended his preacher classes, "The Word of God as it is, is suited to man as he is." Note this unequivocal statement in his book, *Lectures on the Holy Spirit*:

The Holy Spirit now through the Bible influences us to speak; but there is now no direct, "Independent-of-the-word" operation, or revelation, for us. Such ideas "make the word of God of none effect." (Mark 7:13). Such "traditions" will make God's word of none effect today because people will "turn up their noses" at the word, and look forward to, or expect, imaginary direct revelation. This is absolutely a "decoy" to get people away

from the word of God. The whole thing is a work of Satan, who wants to belittle the "word" of God and render it ineffective.

Answering the question "Does the Holy Spirit guide men today other than through the word?" Nichols wrote:

Tonight I have been saying over and over that he does **not**. The Holy Spirit's guidance (is) in the written word of God, and by it he does a thorough job of guiding us. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." (Ps. 73:24). He does not guide us with "imaginings." But concerning such Paul wrote, "Casting down **imaginings**..." (2 Cor. 10:4-5). He did not say, "Exalt your imaginings, and follow them instead of the written word of God" (emph. GN).²

In spite of our having taught the Truth through the years as to the way the Spirit leads and works upon the alien and upon the child of God, some among us are now demanding a direct empowerment. Hershel Dyer wrote concerning claims of "spiritual promptings and neo-Pentecostalism in the Lord's church:

No, it is not that the Holy Spirit has generally been slighted or has gone unnoticed; the real complaint of these brethren is that we have not been saying what they want us to say about the Holy Spirit....

They are taking commandments and promises which Jesus gave to the apostles and are making a general application of these to the church in any age or time. The Pentecostal-Holiness sects could ask for no greater concession toward their practices than this! However, the brethren who so use these texts are not as logically consistent as the Pentecostals: They apply the texts to

themselves—as do the Pentecostals—but they disavow, for the most part, the promised miraculous powers! Some of their hearers, trying to be consistent, are seeking the miraculous gifts. And, if the texts apply to them, why shouldn't they? Hence, these prayers for the "leadership of the Spirit" in the midst of misapplied texts are "leading" some to think the Spirit is speaking to them and that they, in miraculous tongues, are speaking to him. Some are laying claim to a mystical knowledge or perception and others are avowing that the Spirit is openly "telling" them certain things. Is there now any reason to question the dangers of such teaching even though we can grant the purest of intentions to the persons involved?³

Some among us (incidentally, they claim not to believe in a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the **heart of the alien sinner**) are charging that what the pioneer preachers have taught through the years (that the Holy Spirit works upon the heart of the child of God only through the Word, not directly) denies what the Bible clearly teaches concerning the Holy Spirit.

First, they charge that to deny a direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart of the Christ in addition to the Word is to deny the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Concerning this, J. A. McNutt points out:

The careful student of the word of God accepts the fact that the Christian is led, guided, and comforted by the Holy Spirit. No one should ever deny that the Holy Spirit **dwells** in the Christian, since this is simply and clearly stated in the New Testament. The only question then, to be resolved among believers in the word of God, is **how** does the Spirit dwell in us. This has been, and

continues to be, a point of controversy among us. It seems to this writer, that one of the fundamental misconceptions lies in the failure to recognize that the Holy Spirit is a **person** possessing the same divine nature as God and Christ. Now, with this in view, bear in mind that it is just as clearly taught that God and Christ dwell in the Christian.⁴

McNutt went on to affirm his conviction that all three (God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit) dwell in the Christian through the influence of the Word.

Are you not saying that the Spirit does not dwell in us at all? No, but we are saying that the Spirit dwells in us like God and Christ dwell in us. Christ dwells in our hearts "by faith," but this is not to say that he does not **dwell** at all. We do not believe that the word is the Holy Spirit, or that the Holy Spirit is the Word, but we do believe that the Holy Spirit uses the instrument both in conversion and sanctification.

Brother McNutt differs (as does the author) with some regarding the mode of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as shown in the following. And yet, he does not hold it to be a matter that should divide faithful brethren, as long as the Holy Spirit is not held to work directly or miraculously upon the human heart—Spirit-on-spirit. Note:

Some great men among us have believed in the **personal** indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who did not, and do not today, believe in any miraculous leading, or illuminations to energize the word, and give them some special insights not granted to their brethren. These men we can still love and appreciate, though we may differ, because they still

accept the supreme authority of the word of God. However, we have not heard any of these brethren describe any special privileges granted, or blessings received, that are not granted to all of us through the gospel. If these men are more spiritually minded, more dedicated, and have a greater insight, and understanding of the Word, which in some instances we would not be disposed to deny, we do not attribute this to their claims of the personal indwelling Spirit. We attribute it rather to the fact that they have searched the scriptures more diligently, meditated on the great truths day and night, thus receiving the "precious and exceeding great promises" of that word. These men are not the men, however, who have claimed "special illumination," "direct leadings of the Spirit" and supernatural impressions, apart from the word of God. They have simply grown in grace and in knowledge of the truth. It is regrettable that some among us have shown utter disregard for the authority of the "mere word," which they seem to regard as a "dead letter" until it is **energized** by the Holy Spirit. This is the road to apostasy, to denominational error and eventual fellowship with one of the Pentecostal sects.⁵

It is not the purpose of this treatise to thoroughly study the mode of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Differences as to the mode —the "how," of the Spirit's indwelling—have not been allowed to divide brethren. Though he does not hold to the personal indwelling, Alan E. Highers points out: "There is general agreement among brethren that the Holy Spirit dwells in children of God."⁶ While late brethren Gus Nichols (who believed that the Spirit personally dwells in the

Christian) and Guy N. Woods (who believed that the Spirit indwells representatively through the Word) often and sometimes heatedly discussed their differences on the subject, neither held to a direct or miraculous working of the Spirit upon the human heart. Thus, they held each other in high esteem, were in full fellowship, and were the best of friends till they died. The late Franklin Camp, widely recognized Bible scholar, warned strongly against the direct operation of the Holy Spirit thus:

The teaching that the Spirit works directly and apart from the truth strikes at the very foundation of the authority of the Scriptures.... If one is led directly by the Spirit apart from the truth, then he does not need the Bible, nor indeed can he be expected to follow the Bible.

The question of how the Spirit works in conversion and sanctification is one that gospel preachers have debated with denominational preachers throughout the years. The proposition that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word is one that has stood the test on the polemic platform for more than a hundred and fifty years. It is my firm conviction that this proposition is as unshakable today as it has been in the past. The inroads of Pentecostalism into the church have not come as a result of brethren discovering something new about the Holy Spirit and His work. It has come about because of the neglect to teach on the subject.⁷

In the Foreword of Camp's book on the Holy Spirit, the scholarly Robert R. Taylor, Jr., spoke of Camp's warnings in the mid-sixties that the church

was going to have problems with Pentecostalism.⁸ Brother Camp had long met their arguments and thus was motivated to study the Holy Spirit in a very concentrated way. Having stated that some had disagreed with others on the gift of the Spirit and on the indwelling (Camp held the Holy Spirit indwells through the Word's influence, not personally), he wrote:

But I have always made it clear when these were discussed that I would not think any less of those who disagreed with me. I only asked that they not allow the differences to affect our relationship in the least. As far as I know, this has been true wherever the lessons have been presented.

While the things set forth in the book are, of course, my convictions on the subject, one thing I want to make crystal clear is that I do not believe that any differences about the gift of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of the Spirit should ever be made a test of fellowship. I do not have the slightest problem in my relationship with those who may differ with me on these questions. I have enough confidence in brethren that may not agree with me to believe that they in turn would not want to make their position a test of fellowship. I have always refused to allow any difference which I may have had with any brethren over these things not (sic) to cause any rupture of my relationship with them, and shall always continue this practice. Let me say to all that may read this book that as long as we agree that the Holy Spirit convicts, leads, directs, and edifies only through the Word, whatever other differences there may be on the subject ought not to have the least effect on the question of our fellowship.⁹

In the same vein, Dave Miller wrote:

Until recently, essentially two views of the Holy Spirit have prevailed and peacefully co-existed within churches of Christ. One view has been that the Holy Spirit personally indwells the body of the Christian. Many well-known, faithful Christian leaders have held this view. The other view has been that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian only through the word. Many well-known, faithful Christian leaders have held this view as well. While considerable discussion has been generated among brethren on these two basic views, both sides have virtually universally agreed that the Holy Spirit performs no miracles nor does anything to the Christian that may be **felt or sensed**. Those who hold to a personal indwelling have consistently maintained that the only way they know the Holy Spirit is within them is "because the Bible tells me so."

Neither of these two views have (sic) had an adverse effect upon religious doctrine and practice. Neither view interferes with the implementation of Bible teaching in one's life and worship. However, the younger generation, led by agents of change, has forged a different view of the work of the Holy Spirit. This view is profoundly affecting doctrine and practice.¹⁰

Second, they charge those who deny that the Holy Spirit operates directly with not believing in the providence of God and in the answer to our prayers by God. While a few may have gone to such extremes, as a general accusation, this is an absolute absurdity! Gus Nichols soundly answered such foolishness:

The Holy Spirit does not have to operate **directly** upon a heart to move it. There are

many things God providentially does—not miraculously—in answering our prayers. There is a difference between providence and miracles. Providence is the word “provide” plus “ence” (with a slight change in pronunciation). God provides without miracles (necessarily) in many cases, and always has done so.¹¹

Nichols then used the example of Elijah’s praying for rain to illustrate providence, sans a miracle. “There was no miracle about that: it was providence, and it was in answer to Elijah’s prayer,” he wrote.¹² Concerning the help the Holy Spirit provides for us when we pray, he said further:

Yes, I think that is the Holy Spirit making the intercession; but his intercessions are his prayers for us. They are made to God. He is working with God for us, in our behalf. But he is not working directly upon us. There is a world of difference. He is not operating on us, and inspiring us, when he is praying for us! When I pray for you, I am not operating and working directly upon you in any miraculous way. Abraham interceded for Sodom (Gen. 18:16-33)—but he was not operating on Sodom in any mysterious manner. There are many illogical conclusions being reached by some.¹³

Again he wrote:

2. Some argue that if the Spirit dwells in us without miraculous power, then he is in us in vain. I have shown that this is not true.
3. Some claim that the Spirit cannot intercede for us (Rom. 8:25-27) unless he can work miracles in us. But he intercedes to God, not within us; and to intercede to

God **for us** is not to work a miracle in us.

4. Some argue that the Spirit must work miracles in us, else God cannot answer our prayers. **Providence** is **not** the "indwelling of the Spirit." They are two separate subjects. I believe in divine providence; but I do not believe the Spirit works miracles in us.¹⁴

Some who attempt to affirm that the Holy Spirit works supernaturally—directly upon the heart of the Christian—like to quote such great men as brother Nichols, as if he agreed with them. However, he would be on the front line fighting their fatal error, were he alive today, just as he fought and exposed the Pentecostals and Calvinists of his day. Whenever adherents of such error have to attempt to claim, misquote, and misuse respected men to help shore up their averments, their cause is shown to be extremely weak. More will be said later relative to the stance of the pioneers and others.

Three, they charge that to deny that the Spirit operates in an immediate way upon the Christian's heart is to deny that the Holy Spirit works at all. At times some of those who hold that the Holy Spirit personally indwells the Christian have characterized those who do not believe in a personal indwelling as holding the "word only position." The author has never held to such, nor has any one else to his knowledge. Highers observes correctly (as did David Lipscomb):

It (i.e., denial of the personal indwelling) **does not imply a denial of the work of the Holy Spirit.** Advocates of the personal indwelling are fond of referring to what they call "the word-only position." To speak of the **word only**, or the **mere word**, seems to suggest the Spirit has been eliminated altogether. The

very phraseology reflects upon the Word as being insufficient. David Lipscomb once said, "So it is akin to blasphemy to call it the '**mere word**' of God." When we say the Spirit works **through** the Word, we are not saying that the Spirit does not work at all! We all agree—and have taught through the years—that the Holy Spirit acts in the conversion of sinners only through the Word. Now, does that mean "word-only" in conversion? The sectarians have said so and have falsely charged us with not believing in the power of the Holy Spirit in conversion. But **all** of us have answered the charge by declaring that the Spirit convicts and converts the sinner, yet he does so through the medium of divine truth. If it is not a denial of the work of the Spirit in conversion to insist that he acts **through the truth**, neither is it a denial of the **indwelling** of the Spirit to maintain that he works **through the Word**. Consequently, it is without merit to charge that we have depersonalized God, reduced religion to cold abstractions, and stripped the supernatural from Christianity by contending that the Spirit operates through the Word in the lives of Christians! We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit both in conversion and in sanctification, but let us not be stampeded into a mysterious, incomprehensible, and nebulous concept which is without foundation in the Word of God.¹⁵

Again, Gus Nichols wrote, "The Holy Spirit has no suggestions to make, no instructions to give, **other than what he has given in the Bible**." The Holy Scriptures are "the power of God unto salvation to

every one that believeth..." (Rom. 1:16), "...the sword of the Spirit...the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).¹⁶ One elder recently stated from the pulpit essentially this (holding his Bible): "This is nothing but words until the Holy Spirit acts directly upon the human heart." Such is utter blasphemy! G. K. Wallace was fully justified when he warned, "The doctrine of 'illumination' is affecting us." Further, "Brethren who are guided by their 'inner light' can manage to get a 'green light' to do what they wish to do. The inner light dogma destroys the Bible as authoritative."¹⁷ He continued:

When men leave the Bible they are unconcerned with the will of God. Their own feelings, wishes and desires become the criteria of life. When we abandon the Bible for so called "divine illumination" and "inner light" we will end up shipwrecked. It is later that we think....¹⁸

Through the years, brethren who have held or who presently hold to the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit have resisted the direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart of the Christian in any way. They, as the highly-respected Gus Nichols, have virtually always stated that "the Spirit does nothing **to** a person that the word does not do and one would not think that the Holy Spirit is personally in one if the Word did not say it." But, here of late, some have joined the Calvinists in having the Holy Spirit directly impacting and personally strengthening the spirit of man. They have become weary of merely having the Holy Spirit's presence; now, He is doing something. As stated by Guy N. Woods:

For, the shocking truth is that some among us today are advocating views, concerning the Spirit's operations, more nearly coinciding

with those of Baptist Bogard (Ben M. Bogard, who debated brother N. B. Hardeman and "argued that the Holy Spirit operates **apart** from, and **independent** of, the word of truth—the Scriptures"), than those of brother Hardeman, thus clearly evidencing the extent of the departures now characteristic of some in the churches of Christ today.¹⁹

They **claim** that such is not miraculous, but so did Ben Bogard.²⁰ Brethren who do not believe in the personal indwelling have long warned that there seems to be a temptation to "figure out" what the Holy Spirit is **doing** if He is literally, personally in another person. Some have Him now working Spirit-on-spirit. Such was not and is not an idle concern.

Our plan, in consideration of the foregoing, is to investigate the following major areas:

1. Calvinism's teachings relative to the work of the Spirit
2. The teaching of some in churches of Christ who hold the direct operation of the Spirit
3. The voices of the pioneer preachers on the work of the Holy Spirit
4. What the Scriptures say on the subject

CALVINISM AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Brethren Sound Ominous Alarms

The new teachings among churches of Christ demonstrate that some are no longer satisfied with the old Jerusalem Gospel and with the Lord's pattern. Their affirmations that the Spirit works directly, extra-Biblically, supra-literarily (or "super") to the Word in impacting the heart of the Christian, in some mystical, subjective way, smack of Calvinism. Note the alarm sounded by Guy N. Woods nearly thirty years ago.

The view, that the Holy Spirit exercises an influence apart from, and beyond that of the word of God is a new, novel and dangerous doctrine, unheard of in the churches of Christ until the last decade or two. We challenge any man among us to produce a statement from any prominent writer from the inception of the Restoration Movement until 1950 who taught that there is additional guidance and direction through the Spirit, not set out in God's word. Any differences which obtained among brethren, in an earlier day, regarding the **manner or mode**, of the Spirit's "indwelling" did not extend to contentions urging additional influence. It remained for our day and decade to produce the view that the Baptist Bogard was right in his insistence that there are influences wrought upon us, by the Spirit, in addition to the written word.²¹

Franklin Camp correctly connected the teaching of the direct operation of the Spirit to Calvinism:

The Restoration Movement has made numerous contributions to the religious world. One of the greatest contributions has been the insistence that the Holy Spirit operates only through the Word in conversion and sanctification. Calvinistic teaching of total depravity was the mother of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Calvinists' teaching that the sinner was dead and could do nothing, called for the direct operation of the Spirit in conversion. This laid the groundwork for the foolish claim of the Protestant world of the direct operation of the Spirit. The claim of the direct operation of the Spirit led men in all directions.... Since the emphasis of the Restoration Movement

was to turn men from emotional experiences back to the Bible, one would never have thought the day would come when the false teaching of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit would become a matter of controversy in the church. But it is here, and unless we can stop it, we are headed the same way that the Protestant world has gone. It is later than many think. The Bible study that has characterized us in the past will cease unless the claim of the direct leading of the Holy Spirit is repudiated—lock, stock, and barrel. The claim of the direct leading of the Holy Spirit has no place in the church. Any attempt to justify it by passages of Scripture is a misapplication of the Scriptures.... The Holy Spirit operates in conversion and sanctification only through the Word. This proposition has stood the test of debate after debate in the past. It will stand the test of all who may try to attack it. It is unshakable because it is the truth of the gospel of Christ.²²

Some have tried to claim the direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart of the Christian, all the while professing not to believe in the miraculous, but one cannot have it both ways. Camp correctly observed the following relative to "some special operation of the Spirit relative to the Christian":

I take it that the editor does not believe that miracles can be performed today, but if his arguments prove anything, they prove that miracles have not ceased. There is not a single argument in the articles that proves that the Spirit operates on the Christian apart from the Word. The basis of every argument is in relation to miraculous operations of the Spirit.... He also says, "That we have taken

the Spirit out." This is a false charge and is the same accusation made by denominational preachers when we deny the operation of the Spirit on the sinner apart from the Word.²³

Camp also noted (with tongue firmly in cheek): "Of course, it is possible that his diagnosis is correct and mine wrong, since he has some special operation of the Spirit and I only have the Bible."²⁴

Calvinism and the Work of the Holy Spirit

Is the supposition that the Holy Spirit works directly upon the heart of the child of God Calvinistic? Let the Calvinists speak on the direct operation:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who moves everywhere upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them to good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him...and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel.²⁵

John Calvin wrote:

By these words he reminds us that if the shedding of his sacred blood is not to be in vain, our souls must be washed in it by the **secret cleansing** of the Holy Spirit. (The Holy Spirit works) to open our minds and hearts, and make us capable of receiving this testimony.²⁶

The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches states:

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is affected in a manner above **our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth**, so as to secure our

voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.²⁷

Dear reader, does not the Calvinist's claim that the Spirit operates directly "in connection with divine truth" remind us of that which some of our brethren are saying, namely, that the Spirit operates directly "in conjunction with" the Word? Does this "in connection with" or "in conjunction with" make an unscriptural doctrine of men Scriptural? Lewis Sperry Chafer, a died-in-the-wool Calvinist, wrote:

By the **enabling power** of the Holy Spirit some measure of the experience of divine love, divine joy, and divine peace yet to come may be secured now. So, likewise, the knowledge of God and especially that part which He has caused to be written down in Scripture may be entered into by the same Spirit....

The spiritual man is the theme of the remainder of this volume. Suffice it to say at this point that he is called spiritual because he manifests a right adjustment to the Holy Spirit who indwells him. This manifestation includes the **enlightenment** given to such by which the spiritual man may come to know the Word of God....

The Holy Spirit is the Master Teacher, but spiritually this ministry is restricted, **in the main**, to the Word of God. That Word has been given to men by God in good faith and with the expectation that it would be understood and received by those for whom it is intended. That they need to study to show themselves approved unto God in making the right divisions of doctrine and in

arriving at its true meaning does not lessen the obligation; indeed, few apprehend the fact that the Word of God, **quite different from other themes of knowledge**, cannot be received with understanding other than by **personal illumination** such as the Holy Spirit alone can achieve....

It (sanctification—CAC) is accomplished by the power of God through the Spirit and through the Word....²⁸

Chafer wrote further:

The two foundation truths which determine all spiritual perception are that, by divine arrangement, (1) the Spirit is given only to those who are saved, and (2) spiritual understanding is made to **depend exclusively on the presence of the Spirit of God in the heart**....

Spiritual understanding is not, therefore, dependent upon human sagacity **or learning**; it depends only on the teaching of the **indwelling Spirit**. Possessing this Biblical testimony, misunderstanding at this point is without excuse.... Since the Spirit is given only to those who are saved through faith in Christ, they alone are able to receive the body of truth which the Spirit teaches. Neglect of this fundamental, unalterable fact is the key-error of all modernism.²⁹

The Canons of Dordt—Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine, Article 11 reads:

But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, **He** not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and **powerfully illuminates their minds by the**

Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit He pervades the inmost recesses of man; **He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart**, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, **He quickens**; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, **He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it**, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions.³⁰

Article 12 of the same document speaks of the Spirit's work in the human heart as "**evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable**; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead...."³¹

A. H. Strong, another Calvinistic authority, affirms that the Holy Spirit works directly, "in conjunction with," the Word; it is "within the soul itself." He continues:

Over and above all influence of the truth, there must be a direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Although wrought in conjunction with the presentation of truth to the intellect, regeneration differs from moral suasion in being an immediate act of God.³²

He goes further to say that "soul reaches soul.... The omnipresent Spirit penetrates and pervades all spirits that have been made by him.... The Spirit of God acts directly upon the spirit of man." Strong rejects "the view that God works **only** through the truth as a means, and that his **only** influence upon

the soul is a moral influence," which he says denies "the mystical union of the soul with Christ."³³

But Strong is not through:

In ascribing to the Holy Spirit the authorship of regeneration, we do not affirm that the divine Spirit accomplishes his work without any accompanying instrumentality. We simply assert that the power which regenerates is the power of God, and that although conjoined with the use of means, there is a direct operation of this power upon the sinner's heart which changes its moral character.³⁴

"But," someone says, "What about the Spirit's role in sanctification?" Hear Strong again: "Sanctification is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened."³⁵

Sanctification is not a matter of course, which will go on whatever we do, or do not do. It requires a **direct superintendence and surgery on the one hand** (emph. CAC), and on the other hand a practical hatred of evil on our part with the husbandry of God.³⁶

He affirms that "...the Spirit who dwells in believers is represented as **enabling** (emph. CAC) them successfully to resist those tendencies to evil which naturally exist within them."³⁷ Notice the connection Strong makes with man's supposed inherent "sinful nature." Though he affirms the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, he also says:

The operation of God reveals itself in, and is accompanied by, intelligent and voluntary activity of the believer in the discovery and

mortification of sinful desires, and in the bringing of the whole being into obedience to Christ and conformity to the standards of his word.³⁸

Dear reader, does this sound like the "direct operation of the Spirit in conjunction with the Word" doctrine being taught among churches of Christ today? What we have been reading is Calvinism! But, what does Henry Clarence Thiessen reveal?

There is a Christian mysticism, a direct fellowship of the soul with God, which no one who has had a vital Christian experience is likely to deny or forgo. But there is, in addition to this, the illumination of the Holy Spirit which is vouchsafed to every believer.³⁹

Describing the condition of the "unregenerate heart," Thiessen says that it "hates the truth until it is wrought upon by the Holy Spirit." He then quotes Strong that it is "in conjunction with the presentation of truth."⁴⁰

About sanctification, Thiessen says:

When the believer is wholly dedicated to God, progress in sanctification is assured. Then the Holy Spirit will put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13), work in him obedience to the Word (1 Pet. 1:22), produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and use him in God's service....⁴¹

But deliverance from the "law of sin and of death" does not mean the eradication of the fallen nature; for the Apostle insists that the believer needs still by the Spirit to "put to death the deeds of the body" (vs. 13).⁴²

Lorraine Boettner wrote, "Regeneration is said to be wrought by the same supernatural power which

God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:18-21).⁴⁵ One is "quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit."⁴⁶ "Nothing short of this supernatural life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever cause him to do that which is spiritually good."⁴⁵ The same is true relative to sanctification, he avers, quoting the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.⁴⁶

As our study proceeds it shall become increasingly apparent as to why we have examined Calvinistic theology relative to the work of the Holy Spirit in some detail.

THE TEACHINGS OF SOME AMONG US ON THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Dangerous Statements from Journals

Some claim that a new day is dawning in churches of Christ. This claim can be seen in the two most liberal papers in the brotherhood, *Image* (now defunct) and *Wineskins*. Bob Hendren proclaimed that we are "Moving toward an openness to the Holy Spirit...."⁴⁷ This writer had thought we **had been open all along** to the Holy Spirit, as He leads us through His sword, the Word of God; is that what Hendren meant?

Mike Cope is rejoicing:

I sense that we're discussing more freely the Holy Spirit. We're learning about and experiencing his guidance (How, brother Cope?—CAC), his renewal, his conviction. (Our doctrine never got farther off course than when some claimed the Holy Spirit's work is limited to the work of Scripture).⁴⁸

"As long as God's Spirit is alive, renewal can break out anywhere and at any time," Cope said further.⁴⁹

John Allen Chalk tells of a new find:

The controversy in Churches of Christ over the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit erupted in the 1960's just as I emerged from several years of personal search through the Bible for **authentic** spiritual and moral power. This quest inescapably led me to a new **existential** decision about Jesus as the living Word of God and a new personal relationship with God's Holy Spirit (emph. CAC).⁵⁰

(The student of contemporary religious thought will connect the words *authentic* and *existential* in the quote above with neo-orthodoxy.) Further, Chalk wrote of "The God whose Spirit is holy and alive with transcendental and eschatological energy."⁵¹

These brethren have found an "active" Spirit. Brethren mentioned earlier, such as Brigance, Nichols, McNutt, Highers, Camp, Wallace, Woods, and many others to be named held/hold the Holy Spirit to be active on the heart of the alien and the Christian through His instrument, the Word. Is this what Hendren, Cope, and Chalk (and many others who are saying such things) mean? It is not difficult to see what Jeff Nelson means in the following statement:

It takes many elements to create a "worship-led" service: willing elders, accepting members, and openness to the reality of the functioning Holy Spirit in our lives.⁵²

As a young preacher and throughout my full-time ministry years the Bible for me changed slowly through painfully intense study from a sermon text source to a variegated but coherent guide for God-given life shaped by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

and actualized in the personal presence of the Holy Spirit.⁵³

He continues his "confession":

God's ultimate word to me was a person—the Lord Jesus Christ. My introduction to him came from my study of the Bible. The Bible encouraged me to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. In that relationship, actualized by God's Holy Spirit, I am becoming a human being to whom the word of God is living, active, incisive, and awe-inspiring.⁵⁴

Rubel Shelly parrots this new Holy Spirit party-line of the left among us in the following words:

Without the blood of Christ and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, though, life in its fullest form remains elusive.

Without the power of the Holy Spirit, human willpower as buttressed by caring friends is the limit of one's capacity for doing good. The Holy Spirit, however, opens vistas beyond what is possible by human resolve and resources.⁵⁵

Bill Smith offers the following:

Further, after we were born anew, our Lord sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to relieve our loneliness for deity's presence, to give us support in our weaknesses, to infuse something of the divine nature in us, and to teach us how to live as God's children should.⁵⁶

Not to be outdone, Gary Collier writes:

Whether or not God chooses to give gifts of tongues these days (as in Acts 2, CAC), he

certainly gives us his Spirit to move and work among us the same as when it all began. And if that has not been the case among us, perhaps that says more about us than about God.⁵⁷

J. D. Thomas reasons as follows:

The how of the indwelling is personal (as well as through the teaching influence of his word). He is a personal guest of our human spirit and dwells within our fleshly bodies in the same sense as demonic spirits resided inside human bodies in the early days of the church. **Satan exercises supernatural power, even without the teaching influence of a Bible; surely we can believe the Holy Spirit can do the same** (emph. CAC),...⁵⁸ Christians are promised influence and power in other ways (than the "influences through the taught word," CAC).⁵⁹

Dan Dozier, in a article entitled, "I Just Want to Testify," writes: "Testimonies can benefit the assembly if shared by those who are guided by the Spirit of God."⁶⁰

The quotations above are indicative of a move toward emotionalism and subjectivism similar to that espoused by Rubel Shelly and Randall Harris in *The Second Incarnation*. Shelly is co-editor of *Wineskins*, and both *Image* and *Wineskins* were/are printed by Alton Howard, the publisher of *The Second Incarnation*. Shelly and Harris characterize the Holy Spirit as that "eternal dynamic," that "ongoing invigoration," "the effective agent in baptism," that "common agent" which empowers us "to function within" the church community, that "power...who indwells them all in order to validate and empower their unique experience," that active agent "indwelling every

member of the Body of Christ (which) draws us together," that "invigorating presence of the Spirit's fresh breezes" in worship, and such like. They further aver: "When the Spirit of God is present, it will not always be possible to determine the atmosphere in advance. Leaders may intend and prepare for a service of one sort, and God may bring about another end to his glory."⁶¹

Additionally, they say: "We must allow the Spirit of God to quicken our assemblies with freshness and life," and then quote Tozer: "The gospel...does not create worshipers.... We shall need to have fresh revelation of the greatness of God and the beauty of Jesus.... (We need to seek) "again to be filled with the Holy Spirit."⁶² All of this need for immediate action of the Holy Spirit pertaining to worship is news to those who believe in the all-sufficiency of the Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17)!

As the reader considers subsequently that which the pioneer preachers said and wrote concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, he should observe very clearly that the statements reproduced above are a radical departure from the Truth held by churches of Christ through the years. Such statements in fact constitute a departure from the Truth—**back into denominationalism!**

One can see the relentless retrogression toward denominationalism in the number of articles in *Image* and *Wineskins* which glorify and applaud the denominations.

William Banowsky wrote that we are to fellowship the denominations:

How do we preach freely on Sunday from the sermons of hundreds of evangelicals without

knowing how to embrace them in the work place on Monday? And how do we honor leaders like Dr. James Dobson who has [sic] done so much to save our families—as this courageous university (Abilene Christian University, CAC) did when he recently packed this arena for his Godly message—without being so diffident to embrace him as brother? We fear opening the door even a crack lest we have no place to stop. Let us start and stop with Christ. While we defend our door, He said, "I am the door. If any man enter in by me he shall be saved. I am the good shepherd. I know mine own and mine own know me. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also must I bring." Who are these other sheep? Where is this other fold? In our finitude, we must leave enough room for the magnitude and mystery of Christ.⁶³

John Allen Chalk described the Lord's church as a denomination in his slanderous comment: "And so, my heart is full of thanksgiving for the childhood heroes who made the Bible bigger than my **denominational subculture** (emph. CAC)...."⁶⁴

Mike Cope, co-editor of *Wineskins*, penned: "I sense that we're admitting that God has many other faithful children than those in our small 'brotherhood.' We're returning to our wonderful roots: 'Christians only, not the only Christians.'⁶⁵

Where does the direct operation of the Holy Spirit lead? Banowsky recalls:

Growing up in Fort Worth...our early preachers insisted there was no personal indwelling but that **the Holy Spirit was known indirectly only by knowing the Bible** (emph. CAC). In

other ways our faith was militantly personal and experiential. We rejected any intermediary but Christ, and stressed the universal priesthood of believers. But by **deifying the letter of the Bible** (emph. CAC), we placed paper and ink between us and God, thus inventing our own brand of the mediatorial separation we so condemned in Catholic neighbors.⁶⁶

He continues:

Faith is more a matter of intuition and feeling than of logic and reason.... Paul's personal relationship with Christ, which changed the world forever, was not faith and reason. Neither was it faith through reason. It was faith not reason! "You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart."⁶⁷

Interestingly, Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21), and "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). And shall we dismiss the prayer of Christ Himself? "Neither for these only (the apostles, CAC) do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). But the direct operation of the Holy Spirit very often leads away from the objectivity and absolute nature of God's Word.

Dangerous Statements from the Nashville Jubilee

The departure from the Truth to the contention that the Holy Spirit works directly upon the heart of the Christian is seen further in the Nashville Jubilee, Inc. (missionary society), which was begun and has been promoted by Rubel Shelly, of Woodmont Hills, and Steve Flatt, now president of David Lipscomb University. The Jubilee has pushed Calvinism, as many of their speakers sound like Pentecostals and other

denominationalists. Yes, they also aver that a new day is dawning in churches of Christ.

In 1991, Doris Black spoke on "Rejoice in the Spirit" at the Jubilee. Having stated agreement with ninety percent of Billy Graham's book on the Holy Spirit, she affirmed the following:

1. "The Spirit is going to come and literally indwell us," using John 14:16-17, a clear reference to the inspiration of the apostles, as her evidence.

2. She compared the Spirit, Who was poured out on Pentecost upon the apostles only, and the blood of Christ thus: "It can be appropriated just like the blood of Christ.... You can go to that outpouring when you become a Christian, and you can receive the Holy Spirit." So, the miraculous outpouring still persists and can still be received, evidently.

3. The Holy Spirit is pouring out gifts upon church members, such as "mercy," "administration," "service," "teaching...." Dear reader, is this the way persons demonstrate mercy, ability to teach and to lead, and other attributes? Does the non-Christian ever demonstrate these Spirit gifts? Contrast Black's averment of gifts today with Ephesians 4:8-15.

4. She stated, "Have you ever thought that every time you have that impulse to repent, that's God's Spirit nudging you? When you feel convicted of a sin...that's God's Spirit nudging you?"⁶⁸

What about sanctification? In the words of the inimitable Wayne Coats (who documented these teachings from Jubilee tapes), sister Black teaches:

The second ministry of the Spirit is that he "comes to sanctify us." There is a passage that the sister hunted for (the Holy Spirit left her for a moment) and she eventually found it and presto the Bible passage proved what

the Holy Spirit does without the Bible. Yes Ma'am! **"It means there is a force committed to bringing you to holiness."** **"Sanctified by the Holy Spirit."** **"The Spirit has a job cut out for him as he drags me to a state of holiness set aside for God's use...."** **"Sanctification is ongoing and with some of us it takes a long time."** **"The Holy Spirit is in me and he has a job to bring me to sanctification"** (Emph. his, CAC).⁶⁹

Black avers further, "The urge or impulse to repent, I'm convinced that's from the Spirit, because Jesus said in John 16, he would convict us of sin." (Dear reader, was Christ speaking to us in John 16, or to the apostles? And, how would the **world** be convicted of sin? Would it not be through the apostles' doctrine, "all truth," into which the Holy Spirit would guide them (v. 13))? She continues with more ridiculous claims:

"There are times the Spirit brings us to a quiet awareness." **"There's this quiet awareness of God's hand in your life."** **"There are times that the Spirit is in your life in a power and force that overwhelms you."** You just say, "Turn loose of me Spirit." "I was working totally in the power of the Spirit." "He has often filled me with the fruit of the Spirit, and I feel it with power that it overwhelms me."⁷⁰

Speaking on the 1993 Jubilee on "Does the Spirit Move You?" Steve Flatt stated: "The Holy Spirit's work is not limited to the word of God." Moreover, he said, **"He (the Holy Spirit, CAC) leads us but not exclusively through the word.... The Holy Spirit's work in this day and time is not limited to the word of God."**⁷¹

In the 1996 Jubilee, in reference to Romans 8:16, Bob Harrington stated: **"I trust that you have had an experience in your spirit where the Spirit of God has given testimony to your spirit that you are God's child."**⁷² (Does Romans 8:16 say the Holy Spirit testifies "to" our spirits? Paul said, "with our spirit," did he not?) Harrington asked and then answered: **"What does the Spirit of God do with me? ...There is this nudging, this prompting, often times these thoughts being drawn, the convictions, that's how the Spirit works with my spirit.... In my spirit I have this sense that I am God's son or daughter."**⁷³

That same year Earl Lavender's Jubilee speech was on "Walking in the Spirit," in which he affirmed:

If you do not believe in the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, there is only one thing you can replace that with.... In other words if we have been called to a standard of life, that is, a Christ-like life, and God has not placed in us his Holy Spirit to guide us to that life, what is the only other possibility to control our life in terms of behavior? Us! A code of behavior and folks that's what we call, "legalism."⁷⁴

(Dear reader, what does this statement imply concerning the power of the Word?) He continued, **"In the absence of the Spirit of God you must turn to law in order to maintain control."**⁷⁵ Holding that we are directed by the Holy Spirit, not by the law of Christ, Lavender said:

Elders instead of being shepherds, become border guards.... If you believe that what

kingdom life is, is observing a set of rituals in a certain way, or believing a certain set of truths, then if you are sort of in charge of that, what are you going to do? You're going to become the one who questions the individual at the border to make sure they have their visa in order before they enter into that territory. And we become very border oriented. Jesus came to tear that system down.⁷⁶

(We have some questions for Lavender: Does the kingdom of Christ have "borders"? Does one have to follow any "certain set of truths" when he enters the kingdom (John 3:1-5)? Did Paul command the elders from Ephesus to "guard the border" against ravening wolves (Acts 20:28-30; cf. Tit. 1:9-11)? What about the "border" implied in 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1; Colossians 1:13-14; and other passages? What about the "border" spoken of by Christ in John 10:1ff?)

Now, notice this absurdity from Lavender—it is pure Calvinism:

And I think what the New Testament teaches us is that the transformation of the heart—it's passive when it comes to our doing it. We can't transform ourselves. That is the work of the Holy Spirit of God.⁷⁷

(Contrast the foregoing with the clear command of Paul in Romans 12:2: "And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Calvinism teaches that man cannot transform himself, as already documented; transformation, they say, requires the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Lavender and the

Jubilee concur. But there is more!

Joe Beam spoke at the 1996 Jubilee on "The Holy Spirit." In his first speech he denied being a Pentecostal. (Now, have you, dear reader, ever had to deny being a Pentecostal? Likely not, and you know the reason. It is because you have never spouted Pentecostal doctrine.) He stated (from tape 1 of his speeches):

"Understand, I have studied some of the charismatic theology and I think they have some serious theological flaws and I reject it.... So, I'm not charismatic, nor do I want to make you one. But I am a spirit-filled Christian and I would love for you to be one." (What false teacher claims to be what he is?) In his second speech (from tape 2) he says: "I am not a Pentecostal.... I'm going to tell you that the Holy Spirit speaks to us not just through the Bible, that the Holy Spirit of God will speak to us beyond that."

According to Beam, therefore, the Holy Spirit speaks to us directly, in other ways—that is Pentecostalism! Toney L. Smith wrote of what Joe Beam calls "awakening or promptings" in his 1996 Jubilee speeches:

"Some people will never be free of sinful addictions in their lives without God's intervention." Beam stated that the Holy Spirit works in three avenues: through the Word, through spiritual wisdom, and in what he called wakening or promptings. It is in this latter category that his Pentecostalism is exposed. Notice these examples that were given:

In counseling a young couple, Beam stated he asked God to let him know when either lied. After some time in the counseling

session, he stopped the young man and told him that God had just told him that he had lied!

On another occasion, Beam claimed that the Spirit led him to a home where he surmised that the man was having an affair, without any evidence to sustain the allegation. He said a prisoner's soul was saved because God led him to a trash can where someone had discarded some Bible information.

He alleged a Texas preacher was able to keep a man from committing a murder because God sent him to stop the would-be killer.

Once he asked God to speak to him. He turned on the radio and pushed buttons until a woman came on singing a song that directly related to him.

He also stated that sometimes he listens to his speeches and hears himself saying things that he never knew before.

He saw a denominational program on television concerning a man who had not been able to speak above a whisper for ten years and God miraculously restored his voice. He then affirmed that God cannot be put in a box and that his fellowship extends beyond the church of Christ.⁷⁸

Beam also misused John 14:14-17, as do many Calvinists and Pentecostals. Thus in his third speech (tape 3), he argues:

God didn't leave the earth in the first century. God came to the earth in the first century in the form of the Holy Spirit. So that Jesus, when He was here incarnate in the flesh, when He was leaving us, said, "I'm gonna give you a Comforter, a buddy, a pal." And

I don't use those words sacrilegiously at all. He meant somebody who would stand with you through it all, to be your friend, to be there to strengthen you in the inner person when you need strengthening and that would be the Holy Spirit of God, and He is here for us.⁷⁹

That is the Calvinistic doctrine espoused by Ben M. Bogard in his debate with N. B. Hardeman in 1938. Bogard also misused John 14 (which was addressed to the apostles), but he did not stoop to calling the Holy Spirit "buddy" and "pal," as did Beam. The Holy Spirit would serve as a special "Comforter" to the apostles through inspiring them. The Holy Spirit today brings comfort **to us** through His Word, which He revealed through the apostles (Mat. 16:18-19; 18:18; 19:28; Luke 22:28-30; John 20:21-23). The Spirit guided the apostles into all Truth (14:26; 16:13), and they wrote it in the inspired Book, which furnishes man completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit is not a Comforter to us today as He was to the apostles, who had themselves been in the personal presence of Jesus.

False Doctrines on the Holy Spirit from Other Liberals

The departure from the Truth concerning the Holy Spirit is seen not only in Steve Flatt's Jubilee statements, but also in his statements on the "Amazing Grace Bible Class" television program. At the time he made the following statements he was preaching at Madison, Tennessee. Some of his statements follow:

The Holy Spirit's work is not limited to the word of God (upon the heart of the Christian—CAC)....The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian personally.... He (the Holy Spirit) is

regenerating my life.... (It takes the Holy Spirit) to make me different than what I was.... We are led by the word if we'll spend time there, but folks, it goes beyond that.... Our worship has evolved through the centuries.... We came to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit has, during the Christian era, given certain spiritual gifts to different believers, some of which may still be in force today.... Jesus never repudiated the law.... As a matter of fact, the law of Moses hasn't been done away.... It's not exactly accurate to call it (i.e., the kingdom,CAC) the church.⁸⁰

It is very revealing how far afield a person can get when he begins demeaning the power of the Word and begins teaching the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. He often begins defending the miraculous today. To quote Steve Flatt again:

You see, a miracle in essence, is when the supernatural invades the natural and causes something different to happen. A miracle is something that could not have happened under natural law—not in the normal course of things. So you see, as wonderful as it is, the birth of a baby isn't really a miracle because that does happen in the normal course of things. God designed it that way. But now something like the parting of the Red Sea (where walls of water would separate who knows how many feet high) by no physical force known to man, and two million people could walk between those walls of water on dry land...now that is a miracle. That's a miracle.⁸¹

(Well, so far so good! But, that is not all. Please read on):

Having said that, I want to make it clear that that's not to say that miracles do not occur today. Because, you see, I believe they do. Now I want you to listen again to the definition of a miracle. Webster says a miracle is, "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs." It doesn't say necessarily by the hands of men. And I want you to know that I believe with all my heart that there are still extraordinary events manifesting divine intervention in human affairs.⁸²

Flatt used James 5:16 as an "example" of God's performing miracles today. Note further:

But I want you to know during those times when God intervenes in human affairs, it is by definition, a miracle. But I do believe that God still performs miracles, as he intervenes in the normal course of human affairs when it serves his purpose to do so.⁸³

So, Steve Flatt has God still performing miracles, though He does not perform them through inspired men as in apostolic times. Does the Holy Spirit persist in directly performing miracles, dear reader?

The departures from the Truth on the Holy Spirit are seen in the Calvinism of Gary Ealy and John Mark Hicks of the Cordova Community Church, which meets in Harding Academy in Cordova, Tennessee. After having asserted that "It (the 'pattern...in Scripture'—CAC) is not a blueprint of specific details but a call to image God in this world through imitating the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as the people of God," Ealy and Hicks state the following Calvinistic heresy:

"There is **one Spirit**, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us as a deposit of our inheritance, empowers

our ministry, and transforms our character by producing his fruit in us."⁸⁴ Now, what do they mean by that? Do they mean what the Bible teaches and that to which brethren have held and defended all down through the years? Notice the small degree of appreciation these two men have for churches of Christ:

We derive our historical and theological roots from the Churches of Christ (note the capital "C"—Churches, which nearly always in the writing of liberals bespeaks their attitude that the church of Christ is but a denomination, CAC). We have a **critical** (emph. CAC), but appreciative, stance toward the Churches of Christ. We value the historical traditions and biblical theology of the Churches of Christ, but we are not slaves to that historical tradition nor do we accept their theology without criticism. Nevertheless, we recognize our debt to the Churches of Christ, and we intend to continue within that historical tradition as far as we see it consistent with biblical theology.⁸⁵

They criticize the "theology of Churches of Christ," as they put it, because they have apostatized from the Word of God and from faithful adherence and obedience into some of the tenets of Calvinism. From their writings, please observe whether or not this is the case:

Fallen humanity (now, what is that except Calvinism?) is oriented to evil through a **sinful nature** which **gives rise** to human sin by the exercise of human freedom. Sin is a free human decision, not a determined necessity. However, without the **power of the Spirit** in their lives **fallen humanity** would miserably fail to please God (emph. CAC).⁸⁶

Where could one ever find more double-talk than in the quotation above? We sin because of our being "fallen humanity," our being thus "oriented" to evil—and yet it is "not a determined necessity"? That is absurd, but utterly consistent with Calvinism. Thus man's "fallen" nature requires the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Dear reader, what is that? That is the miraculous operation demanded by Calvinistic "theology." Hear them again:

The Holy Spirit works powerfully in the lives of believers to produce his fruit, and, while he no longer distributes miraculous gifts to believers in the post-apostolic period (e.g., investing the gift of healing in specific individuals), he is not thereby limited from acting in miraculous ways according to God's good pleasure.⁸⁷

Note what they allege: The fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced without a direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart—because it is so depraved because of its sinful nature! How could Calvin have said it any better? Yes, indeed, the Calvinism of Ealy and Hicks has led them to be critical of the opposition to Calvinistic teaching (on the nature of man and the Holy Spirit) in churches of Christ throughout the years. They have surely abandoned the Truth. Did the direct, miraculous operation in Ealy's and Hicks' hearts lead them to their contention that instrumental music is not a "matter of salvation" nor a "fundamental gospel issue," thus nothing to divide the church over?⁸⁸

Holy Spirit Errors from a Conservative Brother

The departures from the sound doctrine on the Holy Spirit are seen in the teaching of this writer's

beloved friend Mac Deaver, who has in times past stood for the Truth like the Rock of Gibraltar. However, in the last four years or so, he has departed from the Truth into the false doctrine that the Holy Spirit works directly (Spirit-on-spirit) upon the Christian's heart. Read first how strong he was for the Truth on this very issue in 1993:

We **cannot fellowship** those who say (3) that by means of the Spirit's indwelling men can and do receive direction/guidance that is other than (or in addition to) the direction the Spirit has given us in the Bible. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit in some way **indwells** the Christian, but it also teaches that he **guides/directs** the Christian through the word (cf. Eph. 2:22; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). **Here we stand:** and agree that the Holy Spirit convicts, leads, **directs**, and **edifies** only through the word of God, whatever other differences there may be on the subject ought not to have the least effect on the question of our fellowship.⁸⁹

Well, our brother's **correct stance** that the Holy Spirit operates upon the human heart **only** through the Word of God did not last long after he wrote this transparently clear and forceful statement. We have often wondered if he wrote this article with his father's (Roy C. Deaver, editor of *Biblical Notes*, in which it appeared) blessing; perhaps not. But, evidently he changed his position in less than a year's time and began defending and upholding the direct, supernatural operation of the Spirit upon the human heart. This was done in spite of the fact that he clearly stated in 1993 that one "cannot fellowship" those who thus teach.

Interestingly, he has restudied the issue of fellowship, too. It is now **not** a matter of fellowship! According to Terry Hightower, Mac changed his convictions in preparation for his debate in 1994 with Marion Fox, at the insistence of others. In reaction to the Deaver statement in 1993, Hightower wrote:

Here some of us **still** stand... I trust this (change, CAC) was not from an "unnecessary and absurd overaction" or "mob mentality" stemming "from Holy Spirit phobia" or "what the 'party line' dictates" to him, nor a "reactionary study" which could "land us in an equally unfounded and extreme position that itself needs correction," **all of which he has so kindly and pointedly applied to those who oppose his new-found convictions.** To use Weylan's (Deaver, Mac's son) nomenclature to Jerry Moffitt, apparently the decision as to "what the Holy Spirit is allowed to do or not do" is **Mac's sole proprietorship!**⁹⁰

Hightower went on to observe, "Tragically, the Deavers labor under the erroneous assumption that opposition to their error comes **only** from those holding to a 'representative' mode of the Spirit's indwelling." He proceeded to quote Roy H. Lanier, Sr.'s strong statements that the Holy Spirit works in sanctification only through the Word, in agreement with Alexander Campbell in the Campbell-Rice Debate: "He uses the word of God to convict sinners and bring them to Christ (John 16:8); and next, he uses the word to sanctify children of God (Romans 15:16). All these things he does through instrumentality of the word of God."⁹¹

Lanier (as did Gus Nichols, as previously cited)

held to the literal, personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as do Dub McClish and Terry Hightower, both of whom commendably have been and are "set for the defence of the gospel" (Phi. 1:16) against the direct-operation doctrine of the Deavers. One cannot help wondering if the supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon Mac's heart led him "finally" and "correctly" to begin holding to the direct operation theorem.

But now hear his **present** contention (in contrast to his earlier statement in 1993) relative to the Holy Spirit's activity. In an e-mail letter to Kevin Townsend, May 5-6, 1997, Mac took the position that the Holy Spirit "does something directly to a Christian's heart," that He "strengthens the Christian directly," and that He "may directly lead a Christian in a non-informational way" (e.g., provide wisdom). However, this is "always in conjunction with the word (note that phrase! CAC)." He denied that the Holy Spirit provides "whispers" and "nudges." He defined what he meant by "direct," in his e-mail message to Kevin Townsend:

Note: I mean by "direct" as direct as the human spirit affects the human body or as direct as the Holy Spirit affected "inspired men" or as direct as demons affected the spirits of men possessed by them. Remember that the strength to be supplied (to which Paul referred) was to come partly in answer to prayer (Eph. 3:16-17; cf. Phil. 1:19-20), and not simply by the reading of the text. The text was one thing; prayer was another.⁹²

In a letter to Jerry Moffitt, Mac also taught the following: "You ask, 'Does He personally and directly apply the word to the heart? If so, how?' I would

answer that I simply do not know how. I will tell you how one moment after you tell me how God carries on providence."⁹³ Dear reader, does the Bible say, as does Mac in this statement, that the Holy Spirit **directly applies the Bible to the heart of the Christian?** This writer has the same reaction to such a far-out contention as did Hightower: "**Think about the implications of such if this is true!**" He also correctly observed: "Providence today does **NOT** include the Holy Spirit's direct operation upon the human heart...."⁹⁴ In the same e-mail letter referenced above Mac made this amazing statement: "Evidently God provided something additional for faithful brethren to help them remain faithful."⁹⁵

Our beloved brother Deaver says that "the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint's heart," affirming that "the word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit."⁹⁶ He affirmed in a debate with Bill Lockwood the following proposition: "The word of God teaches that the Holy Spirit **directly helps** (emph. CAC) (in conjunction with the word and never separate and apart from it) the inward man of the faithful child of God."⁹⁷ In a personal letter to the author, Mac wrote:

Your statement, "The Spirit never acts directly upon the heart in conviction, conversion, and sanctification or edification (Luke 8:11; Eph. 6:17)," is simply false and your scriptural references certainly do not prove that for which you refer to them. You overstate your case. It is a **logical problem**. And I do not think you yet understand the problem.⁹⁸

We stand by our statement—and by these and other verses that prove it. We **also** believe in logic; however, does **every** proof text have to be placed in

syllogistic form? We can cite many proofs in the Word that are not thus stated. They are proofs, nonetheless (1 The. 5:21). Yes, this writer **does** understand the problem—and, it is not with those who hold that the Spirit works through His sword, the Word of God, upon the human heart—**never** directly (Eph. 6:17)! Most of the statements and affirmations that our brother has made through the years have **not** been in syllogistic form, although some have been. Since when did everything have to be placed in a syllogism (not that the affirmation above could **not** have been placed in a syllogistic form)? In addition, he talks about the "Word only" position, which it is not; some have used this language to imply that those who reject the direct operation hypothesis do not hold that the Holy Spirit works. Nothing could be further from the truth! Some use "word only" in derision.

Deaver said further:

It is time for the cessation of the overreaction to Neo-Pentecostalism and Calvinism that still characterize many preachers. (We do not need to run from one **wrong extreme into another wrong extreme**.) And, of course, it certainly is no time for anyone to be creating a faction over the issue. But some here in Texas are now contributing to a faction.⁹⁹

The writer does not know anyone who is overreacting to Neo-Pentecostalism and Calvinism regarding the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart in conjunction with the Word. That is the exact terminology of numerous Calvinists, as earlier quoted and documented; it certainly is not the wording of the Scriptures (the reader is encouraged to go back and reread their statements about the

operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the child of God and compare them with Deaver's.) And, who is causing a "faction"?

To Garland Elkins, Deaver 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 'Word only' advocates (on the Holy Spirit issue) corrected."¹⁰⁰

Is it in the providence of God that the Deavers are finally, after two hundred years of restoration history, going to lead the Lord's people out of the wilderness? How long is it going to be before some feel they have been providentially raised up "for such a time as this" to lead brethren out of the wilderness, into another aspect of Calvinism: that the Holy Spirit works supernaturally or directly upon the heart of the alien in conversion? This writer is not a prophet, but likely some will claim before long that men can prophesy! Would anyone be surprised? Mac holds that now is "a significant historical moment."¹⁰¹ He is correct; it is an historic moment—another historic step into digression for some.

Mac Deaver also wrote a letter to Robert R. Taylor, Jr., in which he referred to Taylor's having characterized (correctly so, CAC) the Deavers' doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the child of God as (in Mac's words) "damning heresy (or fatal false doctrine)."¹⁰² Mac also spoke of holding the idea that there must be "**supra-literary** help," that the Bible is lacking in "power" to meet the needs of the Christian's soul; it is only "informational."¹⁰³ It is quite revealing that his idea makes the Bible sufficient to convert the wicked, rebellious alien but insufficient to strengthen the Christian! (More will be said on this point later.) Listen to him:

The church and the world do not need exactly the same things given their respective conditions. The world needs to hear information to change their conviction. God in his special providence will help truth seekers to find the truth (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; Matt. 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13; Acts 17:26-27). But the church (composed of persons who have turned their wills over to God—servants) are given direct help to strengthen them in conjunction with the literary help from the Bible. God wills and works through the church (Phil. 2:12-13); He does not will and work (in the same sense) through the world, not even in those under the influence of the Bible and who are on the way to baptism (Jno. 14:17).¹⁰⁴

What an amazing statement! Alien sinners do not have to have the Holy Spirit's supernatural, direct, powerful impact upon their hearts—the Word of God is plenty sufficient and powerful. **However**, one who has already become a child of God has to have this super help directly, Spirit-on-spirit, to live as God demands. Does that make sense, dear reader? Is that "logical"? Could that be a "logical problem"? Who is willing and working through the alien as he crucifies "the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof"—the Spirit, or Satan (Gal. 5:24)? Whose will is that person obeying? John answers unequivocally: "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

Did the Holy Spirit have anything to do with the conversion of those described below?

Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name (by the authority of, CAC) of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Indeed He did! Their conversion was through the instrumentality of the Word. The Bible is powerful enough to produce repentance in the lives of adulterers, thieves, homosexuals, and any other sinners. They had to **get out** of their wickedness and die to the love and practice of sin in repentance. Those aliens who have the mean, vicious dispositions of wolves, leopards, lions, bears, and snakes must repent of such meanness—cease and desist from such lifestyles—in order to enter the peaceable kingdom, according to Isaiah's prophecy of the Messianic kingdom (Isa. 11:6-9). How is this transformation possible for alien sinners if the Word does not even have enough power to produce such virtues in Christians?

Does the Bible so harden the hearts of those whose lives are **transformed** by it that they now have to have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to proceed toward Heaven? The very idea is absurd. Just think of the transformation of the Colossian saints, as described by Paul: "[The Father]...delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:13-14). Did it take the

supernatural, supra-literary, direct power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this deliverance from the "power of darkness"? The answer is "No"; it was through the "knowledge of God"—through His Word (1:10). The same Word had the power to convert the Colossians and to strengthen them as Christians:

The word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world **bearing fruit** (emph. CAC) and increasing, as it doth in you also, since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth; even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit (1:5-8).

Notice how Paul describes the character of the Colossian brethren in their pre-Christian, alien lives:

And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unproveable before him (Now, what power changed these Colossians? Was it not the system of faith, "the faith," the Gospel? Note further **how** they would be ultimately presented holy (sanctified), without blemish, and unproveable, CAC.): if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister (1:21-23).

Paul commanded them to put to death their immoralities, wherein they once walked, and to renew the new man "unto knowledge after the image of him

that created him" (3:5-10). Then, notice Paul's command to them:

Put on therefore, ...compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another and forgiving each other, ...and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. ...and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, ...and be ye thankful" (3:12-15).

Now, what does the next verse say? "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom..." (3:16). Beloved reader, is there not some connection? Indeed there is, for the Holy Spirit is producing these things in the heart of the Christian **through** His instrument, the Word. See the parallel verse in Ephesians 5:18: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit..."

Is it possible that when a person obeys the Gospel and is delivered from sin's strangle-hold by the **power** of the Gospel, one by that very act and at that time **becomes so depraved** that the Gospel no longer has the power to strengthen one's heart and keep the new convert from sinning? If so, what happened to that one's soul between the time the Gospel could **transform** that person's heart, and the time when that person's heart **could not thereafter be sufficiently strengthened** by the Gospel without an accompanying direct, powerful, supernatural (Mac claims it is non-miraculous) working of the Holy Spirit? To make the **claim** that such would be non-miraculous is not the equivalent of proving it. It has been clearly demonstrated that many self-proclaimed Calvinists (and others who hold to the direct operation doctrine) hold it to be miraculous; miracles have not ceased, they

aver. Mac Deaver holds that what the brethren (including Guy N. Woods, whom he specifically mentioned) have held all through the years is "serious error" which "needs to be addressed." Robert Taylor told Mac that brother Woods would "have responded and promptly to Mac's direct operation doctrine." Deaver responded:

Yes, I know that if he were alive, he would "have responded and promptly!" But I say that **he could not have responded accurately** and at the same time **have upheld his "word only"** (note that term, CAC) **doctrine**. Such would be impossible. I know you have great respect for him. I have respect for him, too. But the "word only" position cannot be successfully upheld by anyone.¹⁰⁵

Deaver's "direct-operation" doctrine must have the Holy Spirit personally indwelling. He can now "prove the **absolute connection** between the personal indwelling and the fruit of the Spirit." He says, "I have learned, after all, that the controversy over the years has not simply been about **'how'** the Spirit indwells the church. It is, after all, a controversy over **whether or not** the Spirit is in the church at all! This is serious."¹⁰⁶

It is interesting that evidently our brother became aware of the **real** controversy in the church when he discovered the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit directly upon the heart of the Christian. Before then, he did not realize how heretical and far afield Woods, Hardeman, and countless others were in their delusions about the Holy Spirit. Is the controversy serious enough to ride the Calvinistic direct operation hobby and split the church? Deaver very often cites Gus Nichols in

connection with his stance. It is not unusual for some to misuse respected brethren of the past. What did these good men hold relative to the Holy Spirit?

THE VOICES OF THE PIONEERS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Where have God's people always stood on the miraculous, supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the **heart of the Christian**? Churches of Christ have stood exactly where they stood on the miraculous, supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the **heart of an alien**. Such teaching was/is non-existent. Until several decades ago, one never heard the denominational doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit taught at all in the Lord's church.

The Misuse of Words of Those Gone Before

The lamented J. Roy Vaughan put it thus:

Of late some brethren have tried to push aside the teaching of great men in the church of a generation or two ago, on the subject of "the indwelling of the Holy Spirit," saying, these men were not inspired as were the apostles. They were ordinary men and should not be placed upon the level of the apostles. This we readily admit. But many of us would much prefer to consider seriously what these men taught on this subject, than to ignore them and accept what younger men have to say on the subject, some of whom are barely out of college. Some of these young brethren who write so boldly, not only need to read what great men of a generation ago have written, but they need to be better informed in regard to the history of the church in recent years. Their ignorance is indicated in their

careless remarks about what "the old preachers" used to preach and how sadly they lacked in preaching ability (and the author might add, "in logical ability," since it is a "logical problem." CAC).¹⁰⁷

Vaughan also spoke of those who "attempt to destroy the influence of great men of years gone by," and he spoke of others who misquote great men such as H. Leo Boles and J. W. McGarvey.¹⁰⁸

The late Guy N. Woods spoke of such misuse of Alexander Campbell:

It is by some alleged that **Alexander Campbell** supported the thesis, lately being advocated by some brethren, that the Holy Spirit, in the life of the Christian, exercises an influence apart from, independent of, and in addition to, the written word. The most superficial examination of his writings, however, will reveal that he repeatedly contended against this view of the Holy Spirit in both debate and didactic discourses.¹⁰⁹

Having quoted one of Campbell's superb arguments against the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the Christian (argument number 10), Woods quoted a reaction thus: "A modern-day professor has styled this deduction 'unsound reasoning'!"¹¹⁰ That sounds familiar. (The argument Campbell used, and others, will be quoted later.)

Yes indeed, the pioneers are just men, and they are not to be deified. The Holy Word is the standard. With that stated, note the following observation by the scholarly Woods:

Great and good men of the past though in no sense infallible and authoritative interpreters of the Word, nonetheless (a)

reflect the results of their lifelong and completely consecrated study of the Scriptures; (b) reveal the views generally held in their day; and (c) provide us with a criterion by which to determine any divergence from positions earlier held by our ablest, wisest and greatest men.¹¹¹

And it might be appropriately added that many of these men had themselves been steeped in and deluded by the tenets of Calvinism and had studied/were studying themselves out of its tentacles, one of which was the direct, supernatural work of the Spirit upon the child of God. They dealt with this fatal false doctrine every day, numerous ones of them challenging the error and defending the Truth against the most able, best qualified, and most scholarly defenders of Calvinism of the day. How many of the people advocating a direct operation **today** have escaped the Calvinism they were once in and defended the Truth against its soul-damning tenets? The great men of the past met the Calvinistic arguments, and the Truth shined to a lost and dying world.

Woods also urged:

Considerable care is requisite, in quoting from others, in order to avoid misrepresentation, and candor, honesty and truth compel us to represent their views correctly if we presume to reflect them at all. Lately, Campbell, Lipscomb, McGarvey, Boles, and numerous others, long loved and highly respected for their devotion to truth, are being quoted by some among us as supporters of the view that the Holy Spirit, apart from and independent of the Word, exercises an influence in the hearts and lives of Christians today, doing to them "things which the

Scriptures cannot do." The effort is, to this writer, particularly disturbing, in that it demonstrates on the part of those who thus do either (a) an inability to discern the writer's intent; or (b) deliberate disregard of such design.¹¹²

He also warned:

There is an ancient adage in **homiletics** that "a text taken **from** its context, becomes a mere pretext." Quotations, whether from the writings of men, or from those of the Holy Spirit, ought to be sufficiently full to (a) reflect the sense of the statement cited and (b) the position the writer sought, by it, to sustain. It is very easy, as those of us who write regarding controversial matters soon come to know, to have excerpts taken from what we have written in the past which **appear** to reflect views wholly foreign to that which we intended, because the context from which the citations were taken was not properly **presented**. Candor and common honesty require that we deal honorably and fairly with those whose views we propose to present. Lately, some brethren among us have begun to advocate the view that the Holy Spirit leads, guides, directs, and supports the Christian by an influence wrought independent of, and apart from, the word of truth—the Scriptures. To create respectability for this doctrine—which we believe to be denominational in origin, and destined to be destructive to the cause we love—quotations have been made from men of great power and prominence in the past. Among those thus cited are David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell.¹¹³

J. W. McGarvey's words have been often

misapplied. Accordingly, Woods observed:

Some, having espoused the view that the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart of the Christian in abstract fashion, apart from, and independent of, the word of truth, claim McGarvey in support thereof. We repeat our thesis which we are demonstrating in this series: **No man of prominence in the Restoration movement ever taught that the Holy Spirit, apart from the word and acting independently of it, ever wrought any moral influence on any child of God.** This is a denominational concept, refuted a thousand times, in the decisive battles which were fought out in the formative years of the movement. Brethren, it is true, differed with reference to the terminology which might be properly used to describe the relationship of the Spirit to the Christian; but, none taught that "the Holy Spirit does things to us which the word cannot." Such a view they would have rejected as an impeachment of the totality and all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. If there is any influence wrought upon the heart of God's children, by direct impact of the Spirit—and not through the word as the medium thereof—the Bible, to the extent of such influence, ceases to furnish us completely to every good work. (2 Tim. 3:17.) This, denominational theologians have long taught; it is **terrifying** to think that an increasing number of our own brethren are now advocating this view!¹¹⁴

Dear reader, this work could stop right here and the case be proved from this one verse: 2 Timothy 3:16-17!

Sad, but true, some of our brethren are now

defenders of and hobby-riders on denominational, Calvinistic doctrine. And we are told not to "over-react"? The author is reminded of the false prophets and the priests in Jeremiah's time who, in the midst of false prophesying, were shouting, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; cf. Eze. 13:10). The **only** solution was to return to "the old paths" (Jer. 6:16), and that is the only answer today!

That which separated those who led the Restoration from the sects was their walking in the old Jerusalem Gospell It was strict, unswerving loyalty to the **absolute, all-sufficient** Scriptures. Those great scholars of the past cannot with the wave of the hand—and by writing them off as illogical and unlearned—just be dismissed. Their contentions will stand now, as then; many know that, so they are often misquoted and misused. Alan Highers well wrote, "We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit both in conversion and in sanctification, but let us not be stampeded into a mysterious, incomprehensible, and nebulous concept which is without foundation in the Word of God."¹¹⁵

This writer is **very skeptical** when finally, out of the blue, someone steps forward and essentially claims:

After all of this useless, unaided, ignorant, and blind wandering in the wilderness, I have it figured out. With the direct, supernatural, powerful work of the Holy Spirit on our souls, we can finally overcome adultery and other fleshly desires, produce the fruit of the Spirit, and make it to the promised land.

In fact, we have wondered, since the pioneers were around people who believed that the miraculous, direct work of the Holy Spirit takes place on the human heart, including the child of God, why did our folks

not learn this "truth" from them? Still further, why would they ever **leave** the "truth" of the supernatural work of the Spirit to assume the unlearned, ignorant, and illogical position that the Word is sufficient power to equip a person to every good work and make him complete in God?

Furthermore, this idea that the Word is "only informational" in equipping man is **nowhere** taught in the Scriptures and is a direct affront to such passages as 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 1:16, Hebrews 4:12, and a host of other passages!

Great Men of the Past on the Work of the Holy Spirit

What did the pioneers hold on the Holy Spirit's work on the Christian's heart, and why did they hold those positions? Let us allow them to speak.

Alexander Campbell held unwaveringly to the fact that the Spirit works upon the heart of the child of God **only** through the Word, as Jerry Moffitt documents:

Writing of his times, he said, "I say deluded; for every man who supposes he was converted to God by the literal descent of the Holy Spirit, or by its **naked influence upon his spirit**, is as certainly deluded as the followers of Joseph Smith" (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1831, pp. 211-212).

To argue his point in *Millennial Harbinger* he made a dialogue between "Austin" and "Timothy." Here are some clear statements he makes worthy of consideration: "**The argument is the power of the spirit of man, and the only power which one spirit can exert over another is its arguments** (1831, p. 294).... **As the spirit of man puts forth all its moral power in the words**

which it fills with its ideas; so the Spirit of God puts forth all its converting and sanctifying power in the words it fills with its ideas (p. 295). We plead that all the converting power of the Holy Spirit is exhibited in the Divine Record (p. 296).... They are most clamorous for help, who will not help themselves, by submitting their minds to the impression of the Holy Spirit in its word (p. 297).¹¹⁶

Note, now, Campbell's clear, powerful statements in the Campbell-Rice Debate, in which he affirmed as proposition five, **"In Conversion and Sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on Persons only through the Word":**¹¹⁷

As respects the passages read from Christianity Restored, I will say that the gentleman has very greatly misrepresented me. I was explaining what is usually called **moral** power in contradistinction from **physical** power, or what some call **spiritual** power, as defined by some of our schoolmen. Physical force and the power of motives are very different things. Reasons, containing **motives**, constitute the elements and materials of all moral, **converting** or **sanctifying** power, so far as known to man. God's power is omnipotent, but it is consistent with himself and itself. The gospel, Paul says, is **"the power of God unto salvation."** Hence the moral omnipotence of God is in the document called the gospel. God's moral power is infinitely superior to ours. **Yet all that power is in the gospel,** and this is all we mean by all the converting power being in the Word of God. God may employ other means, other power, if you

please, in converting men; but nothing finally converts them but the light and love of God in the gospel.

Every work of God has life in it. If I might explain myself by one of the divine metaphors:—The seed, said Jesus, is **the Word of God**. Now every grain of wheat, sound and good, has **life** in it; but it must be placed in a soil and under circumstances favorable to its development. It will not germinate nor grow but under those circumstances. Hence, when the Word of God is sown in the heart, it will grow and develop itself in all the fruits of righteousness and holiness. The question is not, **how** is it sown, **how it gets into the heart**; but the question is, as to the power developed and exhibited when there. Whenever the seed of the Word is planted in the moral constitution of man, I believe it will vegetate, grow, blossom, and fructify unto eternal life.

With Mr. Rice conversion and sanctification seem to be by the Spirit alone. If this be so in one case, it is so in all cases. This is one of my main arguments; for, as before affirmed, whatever will produce one ear of corn will produce an indefinite number; seeing that all that is essential in any one case, is essential, neither more nor less, in every other case. So observation and experience testify in all vegetable and animal products. Is it not so, also, in the spiritual? If the Bible is to be our only guide, that it is so, can be made most evident. It is thus that we use and apply those offensive words, that all the converting power of the Holy Spirit is in the Word. All the motives, arguments, and persuasions of the Holy Spirit

are found in the record. He uses no other in the work of conversion, or in the work of sanctification. "Sanctify them through thy truth." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." So far as **moral** influence is concerned there is none besides, none beyond this.¹¹⁸

He further affirmed that direct operation doctrine "neutralizes preaching, annuls the Bible, and perfectly annihilates human responsibility. I know of no doctrine more fatal," and it "makes man a mere machine...and the Word of God a mere superfluity, of no essential importance...."¹¹⁹ Hear him again:

With me every christian is a new man. His heart is changed. His soul is renewed in the image of God, "in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness." God's Holy Spirit is the agent—his gospel is the instrument. Instrumental causes are not original nor procuring causes. Without the instrumental, however, it cannot be accomplished. No man can see without the instrument called an eye, or the instrument called *light*. Truth and faith are the means, or the conjoint means, of conversion and sanctification.¹²⁰

In Campbell's argument number 10, he stated:

Whatever influence is ascribed to the Word of God in the sacred Scriptures, is also ascribed to the Spirit of God. Or in other words, what the Spirit of God is at one place, said to do, is at some other time or in some other place, ascribed to the Word of God. Hence I argue that they do not operate separately, but in all cases conjointly. We shall give an induction of a number of cases in exemplification of the fact. Are we said to

be enlightened by the Spirit of God? We are told in another place, "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Again, "The entrance of thy word giveth light, and makes the simple wise." Are we said to be converted by the Spirit of God? we hear the prophet David say, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Are we said to be sanctified through the Spirit of God? we hear our Lord praying to his Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is the truth." Are we said to be quickened by the Spirit of God? the same is ascribed to the Word of God. David says, "Thy Word, O Lord, hath quickened me,"— "Stay me with thy precepts, thy statutes quicken me." This is one of the strongest expressions.

In other forms of speech, the same effects and influence are ascribed to both. Paul, in one context says, "Be filled with the Spirit;" and when again speaking of the same subject, in another, he says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." In both cases the precepts are to be fulfilled in the same way, "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts to the Lord." "The Spirit," says Paul to Timothy, "speaketh expressly that in the latter day some shall depart from the faith." Again, "Know ye, in the last days perilous times shall come." Again, Paul says he has sanctified the church and cleansed it with "a bath of water and the Word." In another instance he says, he hath saved us "with the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." Are we said to be "born of the Spirit?" we are also said to be born again, or "regenerated by the Word of God."

I might trace this matter much further, but I presume, as we have touched upon the most important items, we have found such an induction as will satisfy the most scrupulous.¹²¹

He affirmed that "the Spirit and Word of God are not separate and distinct kinds of power—the one superadded to the other, but both acting conjointly and simultaneously in the work of sanctification and salvation."¹²² He further added (in argument eleven) that to resist the Word is to resist the Spirit—"the same thing.... This being admitted, follows it not again, that the Spirit of God operates through the truth; and that we are not to suppose that in conversion and sanctification, they do not act separately and distinctly from each other?"¹²³ Campbell affirmed the same thing in his book, *The Christian System*:

Now we cannot separate the Spirit and Word of God, and ascribe so much power to one and so much to the other: for so did not the apostles. Whatever the Word does, the Spirit does; and whatever the Spirit does in the work of converting men, the Word does. We neither believe nor teach abstract Spirit, no abstract word; but Word and Spirit, and Spirit and Word.¹²⁴

At times, as a result of the Truth preached by Campbell concerning how the Holy Spirit works, he was falsely accused of denying the activity of the Holy Spirit. Note his remarks:

We have four kinds of operations of the Spirit in America—physical, metaphysical, spiritual, and moral. I have been represented as committing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; as denying the Holy Spirit; as preaching a

spiritless religion—because I teach that the Spirit of God now operated through the written word, either in convincing sinners or in consoling saints....Where the word, the written word, has not come, has not been heard or preached, there is no one spiritual idea in the human mind. By this word, and in this word, the Spirit works; and without it, he works no good view, feeling, or desire in any human being. As all the influence which my spirit has exerted on other spirits, at home or abroad, has been by the stipulated signs of ideas, of spiritual operations by my written or spoken word—so believe I that all the influence of God's good Spirit now felt in any is called the Living Oracles.¹²⁵

Basil Overton said about Campbell:

Nobody claims that Alexander Campbell was divinely inspired, but anybody who has even an average knowledge of him and who is aware of his tremendous grasp of the Bible knows that he knew more about the Holy Spirit and what the Holy Spirit taught in the Bible than all the modern promoters of the so-called "new quest for the things of the Spirit" put together.¹²⁶

Barton W. Stone studied himself out of Calvinism. Woods quoted the following statement by him from the *Works of Elder B. W. Stone*:

The Bible plainly teaches that the whole work of regeneration and salvation from sin, is the work of the Spirit (Eph. 2:10; Phi. 1:6; 3:5-6; John 3:5). From these and many similar texts it is plain that God begins, carries on, and perfects the whole work. It is also plain that God begins, carries on, and perfects this

work by means of his word (1 Pet. 1:18.). It is equally plain that God does this whole work in us by means of the word believed by us, and not in unbelief (Rom. 1:16; 1 The. 2:11).¹²⁷

Moses E. Lard wrote at length on this subject. Guy N. Woods quoted and wrote of Lard thus:

Moses E. Lard: "We say simply, that is, our brethren, with not one exception in a hundred, that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian; and by this we mean that the Spirit itself dwells in him, and not merely that the truth or something else dwells in him in lieu of the Spirit, and as representing it. **We do not say that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian in contact with his spirit**" (*Quarterly*, April, 1866). Lard opposed the idea that the Spirit **is** the Word and sharply distinguished between them, but he did not believe that there is "a real affinity between God's Spirit and man's spirit," as is today erroneously taught. With all of us he taught that the Spirit **is in** us; but neither did he, nor any other of his contemporaries teach that the Spirit "does things to us the Word cannot," being now urged by some brethren among us. Lard rightly resented, as do we, any suggestion that it is the 'mere word' which directs us; with him we believe that it is the Word of God infused by the Holy Spirit which is "quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). And we join him in rejecting utterly the denominational notion that there is some divine leading exercised above and beyond the full and complete revelation of the Spirit completed nearly two thousand years ago.¹²⁸

J. W. McGarvey, speaking on "The Witness of the Spirits," denied that the Holy Spirit works directly, supernaturally on the heart of anyone:

"God has revealed these things to us through his Spirit," says Paul; "which things we also speak; not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but in words which the Holy Spirit teaches." Others, then, heard the testimony of the Spirit through the lips of those inspired men, and in this they heard the very words of the Spirit. These words, again, were written down, so that those who had not the opportunity of hearing the living voice of the apostles might have the same words in writing, and suffer no disadvantage, as compared with those who first heard them. We stand in the position of this last class. We have no testimony of the Spirit by inspiration of our own minds, neither have we the living voice of inspired men to inform us; but we have, what is just equal to this in value, the written depositions of the Spirit of God; and these testify, in unmistakable terms, what a man must do to be a child of God.¹²⁹

Discussing Romans 8:16, McGarvey wrote:

In respect to our own spirit's testimony, especially, have our friends of the religious parties generally misunderstood this passage of Scripture. They understand the text as if it read: "The Spirit itself bears witness **to** our spirit that we are children of God." This would make but one witness, the Holy Spirit. But Paul has two witnesses, for he says: "The Spirit itself bears witness **with** our spirit." This is an exact translation of the Greek.

Now, when I testify **to** my brother, there is but one witness; but when I testify **with** him, he and I are both witnesses, and my testimony agrees with his. This is just Paul's idea. The Holy Spirit itself bears testimony which agrees with the testimony of our own spirit, that we are children of God.¹³⁰

It impels a man, by all the force of his desire, to know his prospects of heaven, to study closely the elements of character prescribed in the Word of God for his imitation, and then to look deeply within himself, not for some mysterious whisperings of the Spirit of God, but from those fruits of the Spirit which characterize the child of God.¹³¹

Though McGarvey held that the Spirit personally indwells the Christian, he strongly rejected the direct, prompting, supernatural, subjective work on the heart. Note these strong denials, commenting on Acts 16:6:

Preachers of the present day have no authoritative visions by night to guide them, and the supposition indulged by some, that they are at times prompted by the Spirit as Paul was, is nothing more than the conceit of an enthusiast, while it is nothing less than a claim to inspiration.¹³²

Writing on Acts 11:4-8, McGarvey said:

We have in this incident an exhibition of the actual method by which the minds of **Christians** were enlightened, and their hearts enlarged. We see Peter was first enlightened by a combination of facts, visions, and words, so as to understand the will of God in the matter, and that through this enlightened understanding he was made to feel the weight of divine authority. Although the Spirit of

God dwelt in him continually, and imparted ideas to his understanding directly, yet, when his heart was to be relieved from an injurious prejudice, the end was accomplished by the means of ideas communicated to his understanding. Thus the case stands with Peter, who occupies the position of an original recipient of truth. **With the brethren in Jerusalem, who occupied the exact position toward this particular subject which we do to all revealed truth, there is this difference, that all the influence, both upon the understanding and the emotional nature, exerted in their case, reached them through Peter's words.** Still, the influence was not inherent in the words, but in the facts of which the words were the medium of communication. Moreover the facts had such an influence only because they indicated the will of God. It was then, at last, the moral of God embodied in the facts reported by Peter, which so changed their hearts. They had only to believe what Peter reported, in order to feel this power. If they had retained their prejudice after this, they would have felt that they were resisting God.

In precisely this way the converting and **sanctifying** influence of the Holy Spirit reached the hearts of men now. We do not have direct communications with heavenly beings, as Peter had, but, like the brethren in Jerusalem, we hear from his lips, and the lips and pens of other original recipients, the same truth which affected their minds and hearts, and we find ours affected by it in the same way. When we resist, we are resisting not Peter and Paul but the Holy Spirit, by

whom they spoke and wrote. The fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in us is no proof that his action upon our moral sentiments is **direct or immediate**; for he dwelt in Peter, and the apostles who arraigned Peter; yet his action upon even their hearts was mediate, through ideas communicated. He who asserts for us a species of spiritual influence which was not exerted even upon the apostles and other inspired men, is, to say the least, a **daring speculator.**¹³³

How can anyone so clear on the matter as McGarvey was be misrepresented, except by crass ignorance or unabashed fraud?

Tolbert Fanning, like the others of his day, grew up under the influence of sectarianism. His biographer, James R. Wilburn, wrote, "Arminians and Calvinists made up the two major religious parties. According to reputable historians, the cut of the preacher's Sunday coat revealed his partisan creed—whether he got religion, or religion got him!"¹³⁴ In light of his background, the following is significant:

Another important subject to which Fanning gave editorial notice was the Holy Spirit. From his strong conviction against direct intuitive knowledge, it might be supposed that he belittled the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. On the contrary, when J. M. Hackworth, a minister who subscribed to Fanning's magazine, suggested to Fanning that the Holy Spirit was the word of God, Fanning replied, "Although the word of God is spiritual, or spirit, it is not the same as **the Spirit** of which it is said to be the sword...if the Bible is true, God has a spirit which dwells in the bodies of his saints, as literally so as

the breath was breathed into Adam's nostrils when he became a living soul."¹³⁵

Z. T. Sweeney, in his sermon, "The Source of Authority in Christianity," expressed his studied conviction in no uncertain terms:

When the apostles completed the revelation of the will of God in Jesus Christ, it became the perfect law of liberty to which nothing could be rightfully added; from which nothing could be rightfully taken away. The object of the bestowal of the Paraclete and His divine guidance was to insure against mistakes in revelation of the gospel. That object having been attained, there is no more necessity for special illumination and guidance of the Spirit of God, and, therefore, no more special illumination by the Spirit. Men talk of being led and guided and controlled by the direct operation of the Spirit. Such men talk blindly and madly. In the history of religious fanaticism there has hardly been a single case of an infatuated or misguided man who has not made a similar claim. Likewise, the same is true of wicked and designing impostors. That man today is led by the Spirit who is **led by the truth**, and the man who walks not according to the teaching of the apostles, walks not according to the Spirit. The man who taught men to disobey the plain commandments of the apostles can not be guided by the same Spirit that inspired them to proclaim these commandments. The same Spirit which led an apostle to proclaim a truth, will not lead any one else to ignore or to disobey that truth. "He that hath a dream, let him tell it as a dream. He that hath my word, let him declare my word faithfully."¹³⁶

David Lipscomb has been misapplied, misquoted, and misused by countless errorists in the church. Various ones have had him believing that baptism for the remission of sins is neither here nor there, denominationalism is not sinful, and instrumental music is authorized in Christian worship. Now, some depict him as believing the Holy Spirit operates supernaturally, directly on the heart of the Christian. If a person must misuse the pioneers to bolster his false assumption, his position is weak indeed! Notice what Lipscomb said:

The Spirit of God dwells in a man because he is a child of God. He receives the Spirit in becoming a child of God, for the Spirit is imparted to him in the begettal; so he cannot receive the Spirit of God, save as he becomes a child of God. The church is composed of individual Christians. The Spirit dwells in the church by dwelling in the members that compose the church. **But the spirit dwells in no man, save as he takes the word of God into his heart and treasures it there and molds his thoughts, feelings, life by that word.** Here are two expressions that mean exactly the same thing: "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19). "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). To be "filled with the Spirit" and to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" mean precisely the same

thing. Persons receive the Spirit of God in the heart by receiving and believing the word of God. The Spirit dwells in the heart by treasuring the word of God in the heart, and the Spirit dwells in the church by dwelling in the persons who compose the church. The idea that the Spirit enters the heart otherwise than through receiving the word into the heart opens the door for attributing all kinds of dreams, visions, and hallucinations to the Spirit. The idea that the Spirit dwells in the person or the church, save through and in the word cherished in the heart is the fruitful mother of many hurtful errors so that decisions of the church are infallible, that the church under the guidance of the Spirit may change the appointments of God, and all the societies and institutions of men are prompted by the Spirit, that all results of labor not directed by God are approvals of the Spirit of God. The Catholic claims that the presence of the Spirit in the church renders the decisions of the pope infallible; the Mormon claims that he gives revelations to their priests; the Methodist, that the Spirit in the church justifies the mourners' bench system of conversion; and those who introduce societies and innovations of every class and character claim that they are results of the Spirit in the church separate from the word of God. The church does not exist separate from the word of God. **The word of God furnishes the arteries and veins through which all influences of the Spirit and the life of God flow to all parts of the body. Where the word does not go, no spiritual truth or blessings flow.**¹³⁷

In his book, *Salvation from Sin*, Lipscomb wrote:

The only spiritual instruction, guidance, or influence possible to man is to be gained through coming to the word of God and taking it into the heart as the seed of the kingdom, treasuring it there, and gilding our feelings, thoughts, purposes, and lives by its sacred teaching. In this way the Spirit that dwells in the word, introduced into our hearts, infects, pervades, and molds our feelings, thoughts, purposes, and lives. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God" (Col. 3:16). In perfect harmony with this truth that the Spirit of God dwells in and puts forth his power in the word given by that Spirit, the Psalmist declares: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psa. 33:6). And Peter says: "There were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3: 5-7). We have heretofore shown how the Spirit directs and accomplishes all these results; but as he does it through the word, here it is attributed to the word. David asks: "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psa. 119: 9). By bringing his ways into obedience to the word

of God. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (v. 11). The word of the Lord in the heart holds back from sin. "Remember the word unto thy servant, because thou hast made me to hope. (The word of God is the only basis of true hope.) This is my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me" (vv. 49-50). "I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me" (v. 93). He was made alive through the precepts of God. "Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I kept thy precepts" (vv. 98-100). Wisdom above his enemies and understanding above his teachers and above all the ancient worthies of God were his, because he meditated upon and kept the precepts of God.¹³⁸

Lipscomb used many more Scriptures demonstrating the same truths. Some of those who deny those truths need to get back into the powerful, all-sufficient Word! But still further:

A man may never be perfect or perform all good works. The fault is not in the provisions in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are sufficient, and, lived up to with faultless obedience, would make a perfect man, would make a character equal to that of Jesus the Christ. The Scripture was the rule of life Jesus lived up to with faultless obedience. His life thus is the perfect exponent and illustration of his teaching. The failure is in man's weakness, not in the inefficiency of the provisions made

in the Scriptures. Whatever is effected by the Scriptures is done by the Spirit who gave the Scriptures and who dwells in and works through them. Then the Spirit in and through the Scriptures does the work of making man wise unto salvation and furnishes all necessary help to make him perfect and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works. If the Spirit works outside of and independent of the word of God, what more could he do than he does through this word? What more can he do than to make man perfect and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works?¹³⁸9

The Spirit dwells in and works through his laws, and...the only way man can come to the Spirit and receive of his guiding and helping power is to come to the word of God revealed by the Spirit and take this into his heart, nurture it as the seed of the kingdom, and seek to mold his thoughts, feelings, purposes, and life by that holy word.¹⁴⁰

God's words are powerful and differ from man's words. One cannot say, "These are mere words," or this is the "word only" view. Having quoted such verses as John 4:15-23, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalms 34:15, and 1 Peter 3:12, Lipscomb wrote:

These expressions and many others of similar import declare that God is present in his law to bestow blessings and favors on all who receive his laws into their hearts and conform the desires of the heart and the life and being of the man to the will of God. He is present in the Spirit.

Man's spirit dwells in his words, so that wherever man's words go, there his spirit goes to influence and mold other spirits.

God's Spirit dwells in his words in a manner not different from that in which man's spirit dwells in his words. The spirit of a man is marked and peculiar and earnest according to the distinctness of his personality and the strength and earnestness of his convictions. A man with a distinct and marked personality, aroused and in earnest, throws an unction and a spiritual power peculiarly his own into his words, spoken or written; and whenever these words are received into the heart of another, they reproduce in that other the peculiar spirit that their author breathed into them. Distance in time or space has no modifying effect upon this peculiar spiritual power breathed into the words. The conditions necessary to their highest reproductive power is that they must be appreciated in their full and distinctive meaning and must be received in the full appreciation of all the distinctive thoughts and influences couched in the words. Just so the Spirit breathed into the words of God is God's Spirit, the high and distinct personality of God (himself Spirit). With an earnestness and intensity that is divine, he breathed into his words the power, distinctness, and unction that God alone can give.

Hence the spiritual power breathed into and working through the words of God differ nothing in manner of work from man's spirit working through his words; but in power and unction and in the distinct spirituality and earnestness conveyed it is as much more mighty, and distinct in his character and personality than man is.¹⁴¹

So the spirit of God is the author of the word of God, and everything attributed to the word of God is really attributed to the Spirit of God, who gave that word and breathed into it all power and efficacy contained in that word. The thought that power and efficacy attributed to the word of God detracts from the honor, glory, and efficiency of the Spirit of God is absurd, and, in any other department of life than the domain of religion, would mark him so contending as deficient in mental poise.¹⁴²

Never were truer words spoken by Lipscomb. What would be his reaction if he were to hear some current topwater say, holding up the Sacred Scriptures, "These are mere words without the direct, supernatural working of the Holy Spirit"! And just to think, some are trying to defend such outrageousness! Hear Lipscomb further:

God having chosen his word as the means or instrument through which he exerts his power, it would be a confession of weakness or lack of wisdom to do the work through other instruments.

God having from the *arcana* of the universe chosen his word as the means through which he will accomplish his work of creating, procreating, and developing the material world, and of regenerating, guiding, and saying in the spiritual world, has so pledged and plighted himself to it that to call in other means or to do the work through other means must be to confess his own failure in wisdom or power. "The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11.) In seed is the germinating element of the material, moral,

and spiritual world. The word of God is the "incorruptible seed"—"the word of God, which liveth and abideth." It can never be divested of its living, life-giving power. So it is akin to blasphemy to call it the "mere word" of God. God's presence and power are always in his word, and will spring forth into spiritual life whenever it falls into a good, honest, and understanding heart. God's word implies God's power; and wherever this word is, there the Spirit in its life-giving power is present.¹⁴³

Jesse L. Sewell, according to David Lipscomb's biography of him, recognized the following about the written Word:

It is full and complete in its instructions, and is sufficient to make the man of God perfect, and to thoroughly furnish him unto all good works—that when a man accepts the word of God into his heart, and molds his feelings, thoughts and life by the word, he is led by the Spirit of God. That the dreams, visions and experiences usually attributed to the Spirit are only the imaginations of the deceitful heart of man, and not the influences of the Spirit of God. That after they become Christians the word of God must be studied to learn how the Christian character must be perfected—that a life of daily study of the Divine will, earnest, faithful prayers, praise and thanksgiving to God, with the meeting on the first day of the week, to steadfastly continue in the apostolic doctrine, the fellowship, prayers, breaking of bread, and mutual exhortation to the Christian life, were universally accepted by the disciples as essential Christian service, and constituted what may be considered the distinctive

features of this movement to restore Scripture order.¹⁴⁴

In a sermon on "The Holy Spirit," Sewell refuted the idea of the direct operation on the heart of the sinner, proving, if such could be so, that the sinner would have "no power to prevent it," would have "no agency in it.... Their conversion depends wholly on the will of God." Granting one can be thus converted, he "is entitled to no credit for it." If the Spirit must operate directly to convert the sinner and one is not converted, the sinner "cannot be blamed or punished, for he cannot control the Spirit and therefore has no power to procure his own salvation."

Sewell stated concerning the other position, that the Spirit works only through the Word:

So the Spirit always spoke to the people by men as his agents. We have already shown in this sermon that when the Spirit works through an agent he respects the agency of the people. But when he works directly he does not. So the second theory gives man an agency and makes him an accountable being. We see from what has now been said that both parties agree that the Spirit has something to do in the conversion of sinners, but disagree as to how he performs that work.¹⁴⁵

They have been so taught that they are attributing the effect produced upon their heart, by the word of God, to an immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. And we regard this teaching that the word of God is a dead letter and that there must be an immediate operation of the Spirit before the sinner can be converted as a very dangerous doctrine. It causes the people to lose all confidence

in the word of God, and prevents them from making an effort to seek salvation and causes them to sit down and wait for an operation that the Lord has never promised and if the Lord was to send the Spirit to some and convert them in that way and did not send it to all then he would be a respecter of persons.¹⁴⁶

Dear reader, the direct operation folks **still** hold the Word to be a dead letter—to the Christian. But hear Sewell once more:

The word is all that we need, for it contains all things that pertain to life and godliness. The holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. The word of God is able to save our souls, and to make us perfect and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works.¹⁴⁷

Benjamin Franklin, in his sermon on "How Are Persons Made Believers," rejects the idea that "God puts forth an **immediate** power, or influence of his Spirit from himself, or a **direct** influence to the soul of the unbeliever, and makes him a believer." He rather states that God puts forth His power "through the Holy Spirit that was in and inspired the apostles, and through the Gospel preached by the apostles, and makes believers." He says that "these two theories are wholly irreconcilable." He cited verses proving that the seed, the Word of God, is necessary to bear fruit. And, one cannot believe without the Word, the only way the Holy spirit works on the heart. Speaking of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the saints in the seven churches of Asia, he observed: "We are not commanded to **feel** some impression the Spirit makes on our hearts **without words**, but to hear what the Spirit says."¹⁴⁸

The direct operation, or immediate influence, he says, "has done more harm and prevented more sincere and honest people from becoming Christians, than any other error in the land, or even infidelity itself." It is the "power of intelligence addressed to human understanding...." "Human accountability is at an end, so far as being made believers and turning to God, if men are made believers by an **immediate** influence."¹⁴⁹

Franklin recognized that the Bible is not merely words, as some charge:

The Bible is not "the mere word," or "the bare word," or "mere ink and paper."

1. It is the word of God.
2. Certainly there is no power in mere ink and paper to turn a sinner to God, but there is power in the **divine intelligence**, communicated through signs of ideas, made in ink on paper.
3. Why should sensible people doubt the power of intelligence, when they have seen a whole family stricken to the heart by a single dispatch of three lines, announcing the death of some beloved friends.
4. If uninspired communications about earthly things can strike grieor joy throughout a whole community why may not a proclamation from the Almighty Father of heaven, involving the destinies of the human race, effect on the hearts of mankind?
5. We have all seen the power of the word in its effect on whole audiences under the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.¹⁵⁰

In his sermon on "Spiritual Influences," Franklin wrote: "Jesus commands Christians to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Where do we find this

gospel...? We certainly find it in the scriptures and nowhere else." He further said the changes thus brought about by the Word are "divine purification and change." "No one can reasonably deny, that divine Being operating through divine instrumentalities upon the human heart, can produce any other influence, operation, or change but a divine one."¹⁵¹

The child of God, when he hears

what the Spirit saith unto the churches,...is actuated by the highest and most pure motives of any man in all the world, and consequently is as good and happy in this life as his nature is capable of being, and expects the highest and most great felicity of heavenly light.¹⁵²

Franklin most certainly rejected and exposed the concept of any supernatural work of the Spirit on the human heart.

F. G. Allen, in his sermon, "The Witness of the Spirits," wrote that to prove that we are sons of God, the following must occur:

To establish this proposition there are two witnesses. These are the Holy Spirit and our own spirit. They bear their joint testimony. The testimony of each is peculiar to itself, and each is infallible in its place. The testimony of neither alone is sufficient; but combined they establish the proposition with infallible certainty.

The sectarian theory makes but one witness—the Holy Spirit. It bears testimony to our spirit. This is done in some mysterious kind of way, and our spirit is the recipient of it. But the inspired word makes two witnesses, and they bear their testimony jointly. If the testimony

of the two agree, the proposition is established.¹⁵³

Allen pointed out that the Spirit's testimony was by speaking, through the apostles' doctrine, the new covenant—directly.¹⁵⁴

We are told that if we are the children of God, the Spirit of God dwells in us; and that if the Spirit of God dwell in us, the fruits of the spirit will be manifest in our lives. This is the testimony of the divine Spirit. He then tells us in what these fruits consist. They are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Hence, if one has not these graces in a good degree, he may know that the Spirit dwells not in him; and if it dwell not in him, he is not a child of God.¹⁵⁵

In His divine testimony the Holy Spirit directs men how to serve the Savior by a life devoted to Him. "And as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."¹⁵⁶

Ashley S. Johnson, in his work, *The Great Controversy*, asked in view of Calvinism, "Where did the apostles proclaim that the gospel of Jesus Christ was a 'dead letter,' thus making it appear that it was without inherent power?" Again, "Where did the apostles declare that the gospel of Jesus is 'the mere word,' and that it is powerless unless 'accompanied by the Spirit'?"¹⁵⁷ How appropriate are these questions today for the neo-Calvinists in the church!

The man who reads the Bible, meditates upon its precepts, obeys its commands, and lives in sight of the cross, will be "strong in the Lord and the power of his might," but the man who does not appreciate these means

will be a moral weakling, to say the least of it. Bear in mind I do not deny that there is a Holy Spirit, nor that He is instrumental in the conversion of the world, but I do assert in all confidence that He operates through the word of God, and it alone. If this is true, it is indispensably necessary to send missionaries to respond to the "Macedonian cry." It is necessary to "preach the gospel to every creature." It is necessary to publish the truth through the instrumentality of books, tracts and newspapers. Most of my friends in this assembly virtually admit that this argument is correct, for when a revival is proposed among them, they endeavor to procure the most talented, eloquent and magnetic preacher attainable, thus indicating that they believe that there is power in the spoken word. When they buy books, papers or tracts, they get the best. "But," urges Brother Presbyterian, "the Spirit accompanies the word." Where is the chapter and verse in the Bible which says so? If the minister rehearses the words of Jesus, "they are spirit and they are life." If he preaches his opinions or uses such arguments as will excite rather than enlighten, there is no "spirit of truth" about them. Look at these additional facts: The spirit was to "speak," "teach," "testify," "comfort," "convict." In the second and third chapters of the Revelation, I find the following statement seven times: "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." The last invitation in the New Testament is embraced in the following language: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And

whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).¹⁵⁸

After giving numerous quotations, Johnson observed correctly:

I glean the following from these quotations: Born of the word, born of the Spirit; sanctified through the Spirit, sanctified through the truth; the Spirit of grace, the word of grace; quickened by the Spirit, quickened by the word; instructed by the Spirit, instructed by the Scriptures.¹⁵⁹

Having spoken of the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), with supporting Scriptures, he concluded:

Observe, the apostle uses a definite article before the word gospel, and also before the word power. He does not say, "a power" or "some power," but "the power." He does not say anything about the gospel being a dead letter, or the necessity of the Spirit accompanying it in order to render it effectual. This argument is unmistakably plain. Hence I conclude that the same apostle spoke an important truth when he said: "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).¹⁶⁰

Brethren, this direct operation teaching today is "new" doctrine (Mat. 15:9)!

J. W. Jackson addressed the claim that one must have the supernatural, powerful, direct operation of the holy Spirit upon the heart of the Christian to bear the fruit of the Spirit:

If the heart, then, be filled with the spirit, the words and actions will be the "fruits of the Spirit," which are "love, joy, peace, long

suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23).

How can a Christian obey this exhortation and "be filled with the Spirit?" It is easy enough to see how a man fills himself with wine—he drinks it. Paul uses the figure to illustrate filling one's self with the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:13: "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into One Spirit." We drink in or imbibe the Spirit. We must do this, God will not force the Spirit upon us or into us any more than men force the wine down our throats. It must be our act, and our willing act, to fill up our hearts with the Spirit. God has furnished all the means by which we may be filled, just as men furnish wine that appeals to our appetite. Paul said to the Colossian Christians: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1:9-11). Here we have the fruits of the Spirit springing from "the knowledge of His will." God has given to us "all things that pertain to life and Godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the

corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:3-4). The knowledge of His will is the means by which we may fill up with the Spirit, just as Paul says: "Be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:17-18).¹⁶⁰

Oram Jackson Swinney pointed out how God answers prayer, though He "does not reveal anything to man by the Spirit or otherwise, in the present day." Swinney moved to answer the following questions about being led by the Spirit.

Q. How may a person know when he is led by the Spirit of God?

A. A person is led by the Spirit of God when he is led by the teachings of the Word of God.

Q. What is the Spirit's manner of bearing witness?

A. Like that of a man, by declaring or speaking.

Q. How does the Spirit of God bear witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God?

A. When we do the will of God, as it is taught by his Spirit through the Apostles, then we have His Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are his obedient children. For as many as are led by the teachings of His word are led by His Spirit, and are, therefore, the children of God.¹⁶¹

Eugene W. Herndon stated, in light of the fact that after Christ ascended to the Father the apostles were guided "into all truth":

Since the New Testament canon has been completed, the Holy Spirit has exerted his

influence through the word that he gave to the world; and we say this because it says so and because we know that since that time no one has come to a knowledge of the truth except through a knowledge of the New Testament Scriptures.¹⁶²

W. D. Frazee, in speaking of the soul of man, observed:

God, his Son, and the Holy Spirit, the creator, the provider, and the enlightener. God signifies creator; Lord, provider; Spirit, enlightener. God created all things. The Lord provides for man's redemption. The Spirit enlightens through the word.¹⁶³

Charles Mitchell Pullias declared:

Now, to be led by the Spirit is to mind the things of the Spirit evidently, for "they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." The "things of the Spirit" are all in the revelation the Spirit makes in the Scriptures. Not one is outside the Bible, therefore.¹⁶⁴

Pullias continued:

I wish here to say to you that this is the only thing that the church is to hear; that the church of Christ must be governed in its service, in its teaching, and its worship—in everything that it believes and does—by what the Spirit of God says. I know of no thing in all the Bible that would even alter or change that expression in the least—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The Spirit of God has never made an impression upon any heart, at any time, as far as I know, without saying something. The Spirit of God talks to us.¹⁶⁵

John T. Hinds expressed his convictions as follows:

The other general work was to enable the recipient to accurately teach the truth respecting man's duty to God and man. This work was miraculous so far as the teacher was concerned, but the teaching was in plain human words so the taught could understand. This teaching, which was first in oral form, was written in the New Testament also. In both cases it is the language of the Holy Spirit. The difference between then and now is just the difference between hearing words spoken and reading them. It is the Spirit speaking in both cases. We no longer hear the inspired speakers, for their work has long since been finished in the form of personally speaking to me, but we read their words. So through their written words the Spirit is now teaching us.¹⁶⁷

Frank D. Young, son-in-law of Gus Nichols, in writing about the Holy Spirit's "leadership in the Christian life" described it thus: "not directly."¹⁶⁸

James A. Harding, in his debate with Moody (as quoted by Alan E. Highers), said:

When he proves that God quickens sinners that they may come to Christ, he proves what the Bible clearly teaches, and what I most heartily believe.... But when he says these results are brought about by an immediate operation—by the Spirit entering the sinner's heart—we take issue; the Spirit never enters the sinner's heart, never performs an immediate operation on it.¹⁶⁹

L. R. Wilson reacted strongly to the heresy of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the Christian.

How true are his words!

Truly, it is a sad day in the church of the Lord when brethren make the highly imaginative and unfounded claim that they are independently guided by the Holy Spirit in their work, as the denominations used to claim. Such teaching creates confusion, it leads souls astray, and infidelity flourishes anew.

Having once worked my way out of this tangled web, I still remember its perils and pemiciousness. I will have no more of it.¹⁷⁰

F. W. Smith expressed himself as follows on the issue before us: "If the Holy Spirit has ever impressed, led, or guided a human being in any other way than **through words addressed to the comprehension of the human mind**, the Bible does not reveal the fact."¹⁷¹

N. B. Hardeman, in his debate with Bogard, stated:

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!¹⁷²

Every single step in the divine plan, from the time the sinner decides to become a child of God until he sweeps through the gates into the heavenly realm—every step is effected by God's word! There is no such thing as the Spirit of God operating away or distinct from the written word.¹⁷³

Our difference is not that of whether the Spirit does or does not operate—it is whether he operates outside of the realm of God's will or in harmony with it. I know the man doesn't live who can find a single passage where the Spirit operates distinct—away—from the blessed word, or where there is the slightest intimation of an isolated span or distance intervening between the Holy Spirit's work and that of the word. It simply is not in God's book, and it is futile to fight against God.¹⁷⁴

Joe S. Warlick summed up the matter well when he stated in his débate with the Baptist, Ben M. Bogard:

It will not be enough to find one (passage of Scripture, CAC) which shows that the Holy Spirit actually operates, this we admit. Find one for us which shows how it operates, and which teaches, mately or remotely, that the operation is by direct or immediate touch, 'unconfused with means.'¹⁷⁵

Bogard could not find even one, and neither can anyone else. The pioneers rejected post-baptismal Calvinism, for they were determined to "speak where the Bible speaks" and to "remain silent where the Bible is silent." When they sought to return to a "thus saith the Lord," they entered a very heated battle against Calvin's theology—especially with those advocating a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the

heart of the sinner and saint—and were powerfully victorious. The direct operation, Spirit-on-spirit, was proved not to be based on Scripture and was thus summarily rejected. Truth took precedence over denominational loyalty, familial and filial relationships, and long-time friendships. With the pioneers, the Truth was still the standard—not culture, physical relationships, situation ethics, or emotions. They did not consider Truth to be absolute **except** where friends and/or family were involved. The statement is attributed to Foy E. Wallace, Jr., that "when truth is involved, I have no friends."

That attitude, dear reader, enabled the giants of the Restoration to extricate themselves from the eternally fatal jaws of Calvinism, and its blasphemous affirmation of the direct, miraculous, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word upon the heart of sinner and saint. When the Word became to them both powerful and the objective standard, the church of the New Testament was restored. Whenever the direct, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit is "necessary," observe whether or not the Lord's sacred pattern is exalted; it becomes just empty, impotent "words," "word only." All lovers of the Truth are delighted that the pioneers did not teach and practice that delusion. It is tragic to see some going back into it. May no one "turn back from the holy commandment" (2 Pet. 2:18-22).

THE POWERFUL WORD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Direct Operation Doctrine Denies the All-sufficiency of the Revealed Word

The direct, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the child of God diminishes and

rejects the powerful, all-sufficient Word of God, making it a "dead letter." The late E. R. Harper made it very clear that "in conjunction with the Word," and other such phrases, actually means separate, apart from, and distinct. In refuting the teaching of Jo Bass of the Highland Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas, Harper went to the *Memoirs of J. N. Hall*, a Calvinist, from which he derived "the most concise, the most distinct, and clarifying explanation I have ever read explaining what is meant by the 'direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit.'" Harper stated that this was taught not only by Bass, but by "ALL of those among us who are in any way pressing the 'miraculous, supernatural indwelling of the Holy Spirit's person,' performing any kind of '**miraculous influence upon us**,' which influence is '**not the direct result of the effectual working** of the Word of God."¹⁷⁶ Hear Harper:

In J. N. Hall's definition to his affirmation of the Holy Spirit's "distinct power" in his operations upon man, he has this to say: "By the word, 'distinct,' I mean that the WRITTEN and SPOKEN WORD may be, and is used as a MEANS, but IN ADDITION TO the MEANS and DISTINCT FROM THEM, in themselves considered, the Spirit DISPLAYS HIS POWER. To be DISTINCT is to be SO SEPARATED FROM THE MEANS as not to be CONFOUNDED WITH THEM, nor LIABLE to be MISUNDERSTOOD." This is the most concise explanation of what is meant by the expression "**distinct from**." Here "the means" is the Word of God. On page 230 is almost word for word, our Sister Bass' proposition regarding the Holy Spirit. You know Dr. Hall realized his tragic position from the deliberate attempt to confuse his readers in his sentence given. Hall says,

"God's doctrines, ordinances and teachings are embodied in his written Word and that not beyond, or without them, but in **CONJUNCTION WITH THEM**, there is a **DIRECT PERSONAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**" Dr. Hall hoped that by the time one reached the word "DISTINCT," one would have forgotten his definition of this word. Sister Bass says, "Word written down in the Bible." Dr. Hall says, "Written Word." However, her "Word" written down in the Bible: and Dr. Hall's "Written Word" both require a "miraculous power upon that Word" by the Holy Spirit before it can be of value to man—hers "illuminated"; his "quickened." In this she joins hard and fast to Calvinism.

Brethren, what is wrong?¹⁷⁷

Notice that it was/is "distinct," yet "in conjunction with." Thus, "the Holy Spirit was accomplishing a **work** 'separate and apart and **distinct from** the work of the Word'." Harper continues:

Hall took the position that the Word and the Holy Spirit work in conjunction with, that is, "side by side"; BUT, J. N. Hall explained that the work of the Holy Spirit was "in **ADDITION TO THE WORD**; and **DISTINCT FROM THE WORD**, as not to be **CONFOUNDED WITH THE WORD**; not **LIABLE TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD**." While each, he claimed, was **IN THE HEART** at the same time, the **OPERATION** of EACH, the **FUNCTION** of EACH, the **WORK** of EACH was so **DISTINCT** that they could not be **CONFUSED** as the **SAME WORK OR OPERATIONS**. They **HAD TO STAND AS SEPARATE, DISTINCT WORKS OR OPERATIONS**, each from the **OTHER**. This was Sister Bass' argument and Brethren, **THIS IS**

THE DIRECT MIRACULOUS OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN, as well as the ALIEN SINNER. This is the position that every man is forced to accept who teaches this old revived, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit issue.¹⁷⁸

How serious did Harper believe this doctrine to be? He identified it as "transcendentalism" and "subjectivism." He said, "This is denominationalism with a **destructive vengeance** which we have fought **all our lives as false**, and now it has invaded the Highland Church of Christ, and nothing, seemingly is being done about it" Then he warned:

This is the most destructive of all supposed Christian religious doctrines known to me. It is as destructive, if not more so, than miracles and tongues. It must be stopped in our ranks, or we are soon to be a "forgotten people." More dangerous than the above in that this position of theirs is the **breeding ground**, the "spawning ground" upon which tongues, miracles, and prophesies are **brought forth**. It is a more or less "coverup" of what they are striving to do.¹⁷⁹

Robert R. Taylor, Jr., great scholar of the Word, quoted our dear departed friend J. Noel Merideth thus:

Since Calvinism has man born in sin and totally depraved, how could God save the elect? They teach that God calls the elect irresistibly to salvation by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. They thus have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the sinner's heart.¹⁸⁰

Taylor pointed out (with Merideth) that the direct

operation implies depravity. This has been expressed explicitly in early statements quoted in this work. Those who hold the supernatural direct influence on the heart of a Christian are inconsistent. If the Christian is depraved, why is the alien not depraved? If the Christian must have the direct operation, why not the alien? There is one thing true about Calvinism. If any part is correct about this system, it is all correct. But if one part is incorrect, it all falls of its own weight (see Oliver Windell Holmes' poem, "The Deacon's Masterpiece"). Of course, the system falls, for it disregards the basic nature of man—he is a free moral being. If there is a direct operation of the Spirit, salvation is irresistible.

Taylor states again:

In irrefutable fashion, brother Sewel (sic) shows conclusively that if it is the former (i.e., the Holy Spirit acting directly on the human heart, CAC), then man could not resist the Spirit's direct operation regardless of how potent his resistance was.¹⁸¹

So, the direct operation doctrine implies irresistible grace upon a Christian. (Please note that the author is not saying that every person who holds that the Holy Spirit operates supernaturally, directly upon the human heart holds every tenet of Calvinism or would agree with every other person who holds to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, in all their beliefs. Even the thorough-going Calvinists have disagreements in some areas, for example, infra-lapsarianism versus supra-lapsarianism.)

According to the teaching of Mac Deaver (as well as some others), the Word alone is sufficient for the reformation and conversion of the alien sinner. When

a person becomes a Christian, what happens to necessitate the direct, supernatural operation of the Spirit on the child of God? Does the Spirit's sword all of a sudden become dull and lose its power, or does obedience to the Gospel cause a person to become depraved the moment he becomes a Christian? One of the two has to happen, as this writer sees it. If the baptized penitent believer becomes depraved, what made him so? Was it the cleansing blood of Christ? Was it his reformation of life and humble submission to God? Was it his becoming a member of God's family, born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)? If, on the other hand, man did not become depraved, what caused the Word to lose its power? Before the person obeyed the Gospel, was the Word to him "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16)? Was it able to make a person perfect, completely prepared and adequate to every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17)? Is the Word of God dual-powered—one great degree of power for the alien, and a greatly diminished degree of power for the child of God? If so, where is the "syllogism" to prove it? (It is a "logical matter"—right?)

Hear the Calvinistic "supernatural, miraculous, direct-work-of-the-Holy Spirit-on-the-heart-of-the-Christian" version of some well-known passages:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every alien (but not to the child of God) that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness (for the alien, but not the child of God); that the alien sinner (but not the

man of God) may be converted, but not made complete, not furnished completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

For the word of God (to the alien, but not to the child of God) is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing (the alien, but not the child of God) even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and quick to discern (in the alien, but not the child of God) the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

Enough said?

This doctrine has a very low regard for the power of the Word on the Christian; in fact, it smashes and denies its all-sufficiency! This attitude toward the authoritative Truth is innate with liberalism by definition. (Some who hold the direct operation theory are still doctrinally sound in most things; others are not.) Please remember that we are discussing the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the child of God, not the mode of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. The latter is a totally separate issue, both as to subject matter and significance.

Some of these errorists in the church today are betwixt and between on the work of the Holy Spirit: (1) They reject that for which the Lord's body has always stood—that the Spirit works solely through the instrumentation of the Word upon the human heart in conviction, conversion, and sanctification, all three. (They say sanctification of the Christian requires direct, supra-literary help from the Spirit.) (2) However, they also reject the denominational teaching that conviction, conversion, and sanctification, all three, came about by the supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word. They say conviction and

conversion of the alien sinner is accomplished solely by the Word, with no need for direct action by the Spirit.) These doctrinal "half-breeds" go their own way, having aliens convicted and converted by the Word, but the Christian sanctified by supernatural, direct work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word. They hold to the Word as the Spirit's all-sufficient instrument in conviction and conversion, but to a tenet of Calvinism relative to the Spirit's supernatural work on the heart of a Christian, the Word being insufficient for his needs.

The Word of God is all-sufficient in all three: conviction, conversion, and sanctification. Just as rain accomplishes God's purpose in giving "seed to the sower and bread to the eater," the Lord said, "...so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10-11). Never in the history of the world has God's Word failed to accomplish its mission.

The very fact of the Word's existence disproves the idea that a supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit is necessary. It is God's very words to both sinner and saint: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:13). Peter affirmed: "Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). This verse alone (even if there were no others) rules out any necessity of the supra-literary, supernatural impact of the Holy Spirit. But, also remember that the

verbally-inspired Scriptures make the man of God "complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Any special touch of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the sinner flies into the face of these clear, inspired affirmations.

No wonder the devil tries to pervert the Scriptures (Gal. 1:6-9), and even snatch the powerful Word out of the heart (Luke 8:12; Acts 20:29; 2 John 9-11)! How did Paul command Titus to build sound churches? It was by speaking "the things which befit the sound doctrine," was it not (Tit. 2:1)? Not one time did Paul teach that a supra-literary, supernatural, direct operation was necessary. Why not? Our Lord had extolled the all-powerful role of the Bible in sanctification in His prayer to the Father thus: "Sanctify them in thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). And, His Word would perfect the children of God "into one" (v. 23). One had better weigh the consequences carefully before he exalts his opinion that a direct operation is necessary in light of the clear statement of James: The Word is "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (Jam. 1:25). No wonder the law of Christ is described as a mirror to show a person his condition before God and to bless him to practice "pure religion,...undefiled before our God" (Jam. 1:23-27). No direct impact is needed, either on the alien or on the Christian.

Taylor says further about the Holy Spirit's work only through the Word:

The very presence of the Bible refutes such. There would be no need for a Bible if each man had a direct impact of the Holy Spirit on his heart.

God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17). Yet, He would

be such if His Spirit operated directly on the elect for their salvation and failed to do so toward the non-elect. He would be a respecter of persons and one very partial if irresistible grace was conferred on some and denied others. This direct operation of the Holy Spirit strikes at the very heart of the gospel. The gospel convicts all of sin (Romans 3:9, 23). The gospel is God's call to all (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Yet, this is not the Calvinistic approach to the Spirit's direct operation at all. Calvinism denies stipulations of salvation, conditions of conversion and the plan of pardon. All who believe and obey the gospel will be saved as per Mark 16:16 and Hebrews 5:8,9. Doers of Deity's directives will enter the Eternal Paradise on heavenly high (Revelation 22:14). The Timeless Trinity chooses to save those who choose to obey the gospel and be faithful the remnant of their days on earth. Salvation is conditional as per Romans 10:17; John 8:21, 24; Luke 13:3, 5; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37 and Galatians 3:27. Yet, Calvinism denies such in blatant, blasphemous fashion.

The book of Acts calls the Spirit's direct operation of fallacious Calvinism a colossal lie. Those saved heard the word of God; they believed what it said about Christ as God's only begotten Son; they repented of their sins; they confessed Christ's Deity; they were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 18:8; 16:30-31; 17:30; 8:37; 2:38). Then they were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Then they continued steadfastly in apostolic doctrine (teaching), in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers (Acts 2:42). Conversions in

Acts 2, 8-11, 16-19, and 22 all illustrate the above.¹⁶²

Taylor again quotes Noel Merideth thus:

The New Testament records that the action performed by the Holy Spirit is also said to have been accomplished by the word of God. The Holy Spirit gives life through the word of God (2 Corinthians 3:6; James 1:18). We are born of the Spirit through the word of God (John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 1 Corinthians 4:15). We are saved by the Spirit through the word of God (Titus 3:5; James 1:21). We are sanctified by the Spirit through the word of God (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17). We are saved by the power of the Spirit through the word of God (Romans 15:13; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 1:3). We are led by the Spirit through the word of God (Romans 8:9; Psalm 119:105). We are comforted by the Spirit through the word of God (Acts 9:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:18). We are made alive (by) the Spirit through the word of God (John 6:63; Psalm 119:50, 93). And the Holy Spirit dwells in us through the word of God (Romans 8:9-11; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18).¹⁶³

The reader will note that this argument was made by the pioneers without successful contradiction. There is nothing that the Holy Spirit does to the heart of a Christian that the Word does not do.

In the words of Gus Nichols, note the following:

The Holy Spirit does not reveal ideas and thoughts to people directly, nor guide them directly in some mysterious way, leaving them to wonder whether it is the spirit of the devil, or the Spirit of God that is doing the

suggesting, and the leading, and such like. The Holy Spirit has no suggestions to make, no instruction to give, **other than what he has given in the Bible.**¹⁸⁴

When that gospel is preached, and when people believe and obey it to become Christians and to live according to the words and teaching of the Holy Spirit, they are "led by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:14), and are comforted by the Spirit. They are encouraged by the Spirit. They have the Spirit's incentives and motives and inducements—vast as all eternity—to be Christians. And if the Spirit were to do his work over, he could not do any better! He did his best—he did a perfect job.¹⁸⁵

The Holy Spirit now through the Bible influences us to speak; but there is now no direct "independent-of-the-word" operation, or revelation, for us. Such ideas "make the word of God of none effect" (Mark 7:13). Such "traditions" will make God's word of none effect today because people will "turn up their noses" at the word, and look forward to, or expect, imaginary direct revelation. This is absolutely a "decoy" to get people away from the word of God. The whole thing is a work of Satan, who wants to belittle the "word" of God and render it ineffective.¹⁸⁶ Yes, I think that is the Holy Spirit making the intercession; but his intercessions are his prayers for us. They are made to God. He is working with God for us, in our behalf. But he is not working directly upon us. There is a world of difference!¹⁸⁷

Oh yes! the Spirit encourages us very much to live the Christian life; but he does it through his word. When we study that, and

follow his word, we are encouraged by it, strengthened by it, and by it mortify the deeds of the body. But when you imagine that the Spirit in some direct way encourages you, how would he do it? What sort of thought would he present? How much more could he say than has been said? The grand old song, How Firm A Foundation, stresses this:

How firm a foundation,
ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith
in his excellent word!
What more can He say
than to you He has said,
You who unto Jesus
for refuge have fled?¹⁸⁸

Brother Nichols believed in the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but he **strongly** rejected the idea of any supernatural, direct operation of the Spirit on the Christian! Please read his answer to a question on this subject:

Question: Can God or Christ or the Holy Spirit help a Christian any other way than through the word?

Answer: Yes, but he doesn't work any miracle upon us in doing it. It's not miraculous. There is no miraculous revelation through any Christian and there is no miraculous something done to us. It's all done through the word of God, and through worship and service to God. Christian growth and development come through the word. "Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow **thereby**" (1 Pet. 2:2). It is not by something else that is imaginary and yet miraculous and directly given. Every effort

made to try to defend some other sort of revelation other than through God's word is just some sort of atheism and infidelity. It is just advertising unbelief in the all-sufficiency of the word of God as a revelation from God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).¹⁸⁹

Franklin Camp (who held that the Holy Spirit indwells representatively through the Word) likewise strongly rejected the direct operation of the Spirit on the Christian:

Any claim for any influence of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word would be a miraculous operation. If the Holy Spirit influences apart from the Word, it would have to be a direct influence, and a direct influence would be a miraculous operation. To deny that the Holy Spirit is operating miraculously today is not to deny that the Holy Spirit operates. Before the New Testament was written, the Holy Spirit operated through inspired men. Now He operates through the inspired Book. Even when the Holy Spirit operated miraculously through inspired men, He did not operate in conversion and sanctification apart from the Word. The miraculous operation was to reveal the Word, by which the sinner was converted and the saint edified. Even the apostles who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit were dependent upon the revelation received in their living and conduct. Peter was an apostle and the gospel he preached was infallible, but his conduct was not. The Holy Spirit guided his preaching, but it was up to Peter to put into practice what the Spirit revealed. A miracle revealed to Peter that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not make

Peter practice what the miracle revealed to him (Galatians 2:11-14).¹⁹⁰

Were he still alive, it is obvious that Camp would reject any such idea as the claimed direct, but "non-miraculous" work of the Holy Spirit as a self-contradiction, this former student of his beliefs. This is a distinction without a difference. He further said:

If the Spirit operates directly and apart from the Word, what does the Spirit do? Consider the following: a) The Spirit could not lead contrary to the Word. In 2 Corinthians 13:8 Paul says, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." This simply means that as the Spirit directed Paul in inspiration, it was not possible for him to contradict any truth. Indeed, how could the Holy Spirit contradict Himself? This is one of the very arguments that we have made against denominational preachers who have claimed to be led by the Holy Spirit. They contradict each other and contradict the Bible as well. So if the Holy Spirit operated directly, He could not lead anyone contrary to what the Bible teaches. b) If the Holy Spirit operated directly, He could not add any new revelation. Jude 3 says, "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This simply means that revelation is complete. Thus, if the Holy Spirit operated directly today, He would not add any new revelation. c) If the Holy Spirit operated directly today, it would not be to interpret the Word, for if the sinner can understand the Word without the Holy Spirit interpreting it for him, why could not the Christian? There would be no point in giving revelation if it was impossible to understand the revelation when it was given.

In Acts, chapter 2, the Spirit guided the apostles to reveal the truth. The audience did not receive the Holy Spirit to enable them to understand it. In Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 3 to 6, Paul states that he received the mystery by direct revelation, and he was writing it to the Ephesians. When the Ephesians read what he had written, they would know as much about it as he did. d) The direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the Christian strikes at the free moral agency in man. The claim is that the direct operation of the Holy Spirit empowers man and makes it possible for him to obey. If this is the case, then man's responsibility is eliminated. The Holy Spirit has taken over for him and is doing for him what he is unable to do. The direct operation of the Holy Spirit was never simply for the benefit of the individual, but for people in general. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul says in verse 7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." That is, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of others, not the individual. It was to be used for the benefit of the church. This is also evident as he discusses miraculous manifestation of the Spirit in Chapter 14. If one spoke in a tongue and there was no interpreter, he was to remain silent, for the simple reason that it would not benefit the church. These problems cannot simply be passed off by ignoring them. They are vital to a discussion of this question.¹⁹¹

So, one of the following implications (both of which constitute false doctrine) must follow if the Holy Spirit operates directly, supernaturally on the heart of

the Christian: (1) Either the Bible is not the perfect, all-sufficient Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, able to accomplish its mission (Eph. 6:17), **or** (2) when each person becomes a child of God by the contact of the precious cleansing blood of Christ, upon obedience of faith, that person becomes at that time too depraved for the all-powerful, all-sufficient Word to strengthen him, and his continued salvation thus depends upon the direct, miraculous touch of the Holy Spirit. But, we have already proved that the Bible is perfect, and the idea that one who has been transformed out of the power of darkness thereupon becomes depraved is absurd. Thus, the direct operation of the Spirit is unbiblical.

An Argument Set Forth and Answered

In attempting to prove his supra-literary, supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit, Mac Deaver (as noted earlier) has set forth the following argument:

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. 5:22-25).

3. Then the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint's heart.¹⁹²

Without doubt, the Word of God influences the human heart, for it is the Holy Spirit's sword (his premise no. 1). But, why does he list as his proof Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee"? That verse contradicts his claim that the Word alone cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit (premise no. 2, point no. 3). Did David have any "fruit of the Spirit" in his life, since he did not have the personal indwelling? If David kept from sinning by the old law alone (without the personal indwelling and direct work of the Holy Spirit) and we, under the new law, cannot, is the new law inferior to the old?

Did we become depraved when the new law was brought in? Or (we ask again) did we become depraved when we contacted the blood of Christ? Or, is David lost? Would it have been better for us to have lived under the law of Moses? Although **Calvinists** say that the human heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit without the direct operation of the Spirit "in conjunction with the Word," **David** (by inspiration!) did not place any such **limitation** on the Word!

In Acts 2:37-41, the Holy Spirit's teaching through the apostles produced the fruit of obedience in three thousand souls. Now, whose fruit was that: the Holy Spirit's or Satan's? By necessary implication, they had to repent of such evil practices as sexual sins (I Cor. 6:9-11). Mac Deaver's doctrine says that it takes direct operation to produce the fruit of the Spirit; one cannot produce the fruit without the indwelling, direct, supernatural work of the Spirit.

That the Word "can directly affect the human heart" (Deaver's syllogism) violates his own "direct operation" contention. He continually belittles the

power of the Word, saying that it cannot accomplish in the life of the Christian that which God says it can. Interestingly, according to the Deavers' doctrine, the very power which "pricked" the hearts and brought about the tremendous transformation in the lives of the three thousand penitent, obedient souls on Pentecost could not keep it up and maintain it! Then, the Holy Spirit had to start directly, supernaturally touching and helping them. Amazing!

The reader is reminded that the mode of the Spirit's indwelling is not the topic of this work. The author does not hold to the personal, literal indwelling, but almost all of those who believe in the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit **reject summarily, completely** the idea that the Holy Spirit works directly or supernaturally upon the heart of the child of God. Neither Acts 2:38, 1 Thessalonians 4:8, Ephesians 5:17-19, nor Colossians 3:16-17 teaches the supernatural, supra-literary operation of the Holy Spirit on the human heart!

Still further, Deaver's syllogism states: "The word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit" (premise no. 2, point no.3). He goes to John 15:1ff to prove it. The author fails to see what this passage even remotely has to do with the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. When one begins to make applications beyond the major lessons intended by a parable, an allegory, or other symbolic language, he departs into the realm of the fanciful, as any basic course in hermeneutics teaches. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is not under discussion in John 15. Rather, the Lord is emphasizing the necessity of remaining faithful to Christ and to the teachings of His Word, and the consequences of failing to do so. He is most definitely not talking

of the direct work of the Holy Spirit. Note the emphasis:

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth (purgeth, KJV) it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the **word** which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you.... If ye abide in me, and **my words** abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you (John 15:2-4, 7, emph. CAC).

The Spirit's Word is prominent in this passage, but this writer fails to see anything related to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit! The Father "cleanses" the branches that they may bear more fruit, but He does this through the agency of the Word (i.e., the teaching) of the Lord (vv. 2-3). Thus, the Word actually produces the fruit! John 15 is not Mac Deaver's verse!

Next, Mac cites Romans 8:9-11, where again there is no mention of any supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. He believes this indwelling is personal, literal, and then jumps to the direct operation. He neglects the context, which states "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). He attempts to affirm that the direct operation is proven by the statement, "... he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Dear reader, this phrase "shall give life (shall also quicken, KJV)" is future time. It is not speaking of the present but of the last day, the day of the resurrection. Mac answers that since we will be given **immortal** bodies in the final resurrection, Paul is referring to a figurative "resurrection." However, he needs to read Paul's affirmation in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the physical body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also spiritual body.

Does it not make sense that the Holy Spirit who was sent forth to create the universe (Psa. 104:30) will change our mortal bodies to immortal bodies? There is no direct operation on the heart of a Christian in Romans 8. David said, "...thy word hath quickened me" (Psa. 119:50). Imagine the Psalmist being **quickened** before some say that the Holy Spirit started literally inhabiting man on the day of Pentecost of Acts 2—and that, by the Word **only!** When did the Word lose its power? The Hebrews writer says that we live under a superior covenant, not an inferior one (Heb. 8:6).

Again, Deaver cites Matthew 7:16-20, averring that since a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, therefore no one can produce good fruit (i.e., "the fruit of the Spirit") until he becomes a Christian and thus receives the supernatural touch of the Holy Spirit in his heart. His view is that the alien sinner cannot ever produce good fruit. (Is this not parallel to the Calvinistic doctrine of total hereditary depravity?) The context shows Christ to be speaking of false teachers in sheep's clothing. One is not going to hear the Truth preached by ravening wolves—that is the message of this passage.

Not everyone who **claims** to be teaching in Christ's name is actually doing so (Mat. 7:15, 21-23). To claim that these verses teach the direct operation is far-

fetched, invalid hermeneutics. In the context, the Lord points out that some evil persons do good things, like asking (7:7), giving good gifts to their children (7:11), and so forth. So, He is not saying that aliens are not able to do anything good. If so, He is teaching the Calvinistic doctrine of total hereditary depravity!

Now, examine the other side. The Lord said: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.... A good tree **cannot** (emph. CAC) bring forth evil fruit" (7:17-18). Question: Was Christ teaching the Calvinistic doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy? Absolutely not! But, that is the implication of this fallacious argument! Christ is affirming here that a true prophet will preach the Truth. It is as simple as that. Did a true prophet or an apostle ever sin? Ask Peter (Gal. 2:11-14) or John (1 John 1:8-10; see also, 1 Cor. 9:27).¹⁹³ To say that non-Christians cannot do anything good is unthinkable; if they could not, they could not, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, even obey the Gospel.

Yet further, Deaver argues: "The saint must produce the fruit of the Spirit" (premise No. 2, point no. 4). And, he stated elsewhere that "only a saint can produce the fruit of the Spirit." Since, allegedly, the alien cannot produce the Spirit's fruit, therefore, the Spirit **must** personally and literally indwell the heart of the Christian and **must** produce the fruit of the Spirit—fruit which cannot be borne apart from the Spirit's direct and immediate touch. He says "a spiritually dead person (i.e., an alien sinner, CAC) **cannot** produce the fruit of the Spirit" (emph. CAC).

All that is necessary to disprove his whole thesis is to demonstrate **only one** fruit of the Spirit produced in an alien sinner. When this is done, the whole theory collapses like a house of cards. But, we can cite

numerous ones which can—indeed **must**—be produced in the heart and life of the alien in order for him or her to **become** a child of God. Brother Mac gives as his proof text Galatians 5:22-25:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Jesus Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

First, it was earlier proved that "the knowledge of his will," through the Word, the sword of the Spirit, produces fruit and delivers us "out of the power of darkness and translate(s) us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:9-14). Second, Gus Nichols makes it very clear that the Spirit **always** produces fruit by means of His seed, the Word of God (Luke 8:11)—not by an immediate or supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, he has a whole chapter on the topic.¹⁹⁴ He states very clearly that "**The Spirit begets this fruit through his seed, the word of God.**" One of those fruits he identifies as producing Christians:

The Holy Spirit, in giving the spiritual law, produces Christians. The Spirit makes people Christians. He makes people to be faithful Christians, if they are led by the Spirit, **by the teaching of His word**, by this seed as planted in their hearts and cultivated properly, and if they weed out these foreign growths which naturally spring up (the works of the flesh) (emph. his—CAC).¹⁹⁵

Whose fruit are those who obey the Gospel, brother Nichols? Are they fruit produced by the Spirit?

So then, the seed is planted as we preach the word of God. We sow the seed of the

kingdom (Mark 4:14 and Matt. 13:19) and this gospel—this word when preached—produces fruit. In Colossians 1 and beginning with verse 5, Paul thanks God for the hope, he says, "which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit." That would be the fruit of the Spirit, wouldn't it? In 1 Peter 1:12, Peter tells us that the gospel was preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Whatever the gospel produced, the Holy Spirit that preached it through inspired men produced, and hence the "fruit of the spirit." The Spirit therefore, being the author of the seed, having revealed it and having confirmed it and having given it to us, with the law of reproduction after its kind, has commanded that we are to preach the word or be lost. We are to sow the seed of the kingdom unto others, or we ourselves will not be Christlike and Christians.¹⁹⁶

Is it honorable to try to leave the impression with an audience that Nichols took the Deavers' position on the supernatural, direct operation, when **HE DID NOT?**

In Mac's "proof text," there are listed nine components or qualities produced by the Spirit. Of course, there are others also, some of which are contained within these. Are any of these qualities which the Spirit produces in the lives of the alien sinner? If there can be demonstrated to be even one, the argument falls. (Please notice in the meantime, incidentally, that the **sole** way Mac or anyone else has learned of the fruit of the Spirit was through the Word

of God, the very way the Galatians learned of it. If it is direct, there is no need for the Bible for the Christian. Every one would be under the direct, supernatural wisdom and knowledge of the Spirit. The Galatians were dependent upon Divine spoken or written revelation, even though they had spiritual gifts. Remember Paul's admonition: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another..." (Col. 3:16).)

One of the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit is "love." Dear reader, you know that an alien cannot even obey the Gospel without love. Our Lord commanded, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me" (v. 24). Now, how would that love be produced? It would be through the Spirit's Word, the apostles' doctrine, the seed, would it not (v. 26)? Can anyone who does not possess this fruit of the Spirit (who does not love God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Word) obey the Gospel? If this love of God and His Son is not produced by the Spirit, by whom is it produced?

Another of the qualities produced by the Spirit is "self-control (temperance, KJV)." Question: Can anyone bring himself to change his mind, to repent, without self-control? Has temperance, a fruit of the Spirit, ever been required of an alien sinner, a Gentile? "And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come (to Drusilla and Felix, CAC), Felix was terrified..." (Acts 24:25). Although they did not respond by bringing their lives under control of the will of Heaven, could they not have done so? Had they done so, whose "fruit" would it have been? Now,

whose message was it? Was it not the Spirit's message (v. 24) that was demanding self-control of these alien sinners? If not, "the faith" is Satan's message!

Does repentance require the Spirit's fruit of self-control? If repentance in the alien sinner is not His fruit, whose is it? John preached by the Holy Spirit, "Bring forth therefore **fruit** (emph. CAC) worthy of repentance" (Matt. 3:8). But somebody says, "That was to the Jews." Well, try this one on: Paul "declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance" (Acts 26:20). Should Paul have said, "Wait a minute. Let me back up. You cannot produce works, fruit, meet for repentance until you have the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in and on your heart. So, you will have to leave off good works until after you are a Christian"? That is absurd! But, do not be surprised at the lengths to which one will go when he becomes fixed on one hobby and theory! Now, are fruits of repentance from the Spirit, or from Satan? Must one, as an alien sinner, demonstrate self-control in order to repent? If so, who produces it?

Dear friend, please notice what is included in self-control, temperance. Nicoll points out correctly that "**Self-control** comprehends every form of temperance, and includes the mastery of all appetites, tempers and passions."¹⁹⁷

Either the Word of the Spirit can produce the fruit of the Spirit—self-control—in the heart of an alien sinner, or he cannot obey the Gospel and be saved; it is just that simple. The reader can surely see the difficulty these false teachers are in—the contrast

between their post-baptismal Calvinism and the Bible? Every alien must repent in order to become a Christian. This includes getting out of adultery, homosexuality, or any other sexual perversion and every other kind of sin. Repentance thus includes, yea demands, the Spirit's fruit of self-control (of "all appetites, tempers, and passions").

Must a person repent, depart from evil, exercise self-control before he becomes a Christian? To be consistent our brother Deaver must occupy the unenviable position of allowing an adulterer or a homosexual to stay in his sinful situation as he is "becoming a Christian," because it would be impossible for him to repent. (Repentance, which implies self-control, is a fruit produced by the Holy Spirit and it is not possible for an alien sinner to produce any!) Typically, trying to sustain one error leads to trying to sustain many others.

Is it possible that our brother actually believes that the Word is more powerful and can do more for the alien than for the child of God? Dear reader, do you take the absurd view that the Word is powerful enough to bring about self-control in the alien (even to the point of getting him out of adulterous or homosexual "marriages") and yet it becomes/is so impotent for the Christian that it cannot (without some immediate, supernatural help) keep him from committing fornication? That is what his doctrine requires, unless the alien becomes depraved at the point of the blood's contacting and purifying his soul in obedience.

Still another of the part of the Spirit's fruit is "kindness," defined by Nicoll as "rendering service to others." Can the alien help an invalid, elderly person

across the street? Might that person have come across the "golden rule" (Mat. 7:12)? Is that an "evil" person bearing a good fruit? Under whose influence is it produced? Whether by an alien or a Christian, is that "rendering service to others"?

No one questions the fact that "unto him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever" (Eph. 3:21). All who would be saved and go to Heaven must believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, and live the Christian life. These truths do not rule out the Spirit's production of fruit in alien sinners, as **proven** above; in fact, the alien sinner absolutely **must** produce at least some of the fruit of the Spirit if he would become a Christian! A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It has been demonstrated that the whole chain of the syllogism set forth to prove the supernatural, direct touch of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the Christian is non-existent.

It is interesting indeed that the New Testament uses as **examples** of those who bore the fruit of the Spirit numerous great persons in the Old Testament. We know of none of those who believe in the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian who believe that He thus dwelled in the Old Testament characters. Job is used as an example of patience, endurance, self-control, faithfulness (Jam. 5:11), Abraham of faithfulness (Jam. 2:20-22), Rahab the harlot of self-control and faithfulness (Heb. 11:31), as are countless others (e.g., many others in Hebrews 11). It would be ludicrous to claim that they did not possess or produce the fruit of the Spirit. If they did not, how could the writer of Hebrews use them for a powerful example of the fruit that we are to bear of endurance, self-

control, and faithfulness, for instance (Heb. 12:1-2)? (Remember, now, it is a **logical** problem!) These Old Testament heroes and heroines were the very personification of the fruit of the Spirit—and their fruit was not a mere counterfeit, a "stab at," or a "hint of" the fruit of the Spirit! Their genuine lives are **our** examples!

CONCLUSION

It has been said that, since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has not been in Heaven but rather on earth dwelling literally in the saints, directly and supernaturally "enabling" them to do right, overcome adultery, and the like. (This writer cannot help wondering where He was during the apostasy, the dark ages, etc.) Revelation 1:4 speaks of the "seven Spirits that are before his throne." We take this to be representative of either the Holy Spirit or seven angels. It is no doubt a reference to the perfect, complete (represented by the number *seven*) Holy Spirit. This interpretation certainly fits, for John speaks in the immediate context of God, "him who is and who was and who is to come" (1:4), and of Jesus Christ (1:5). So, the "seven Spirits" must be the third person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Now note, He is "before" God's throne, a death knell to the above theory! This passage is a tribute by John to all of the Sacred Three.

It has also been said that a refusal to believe in the supernatural, direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of a Christian will produce dead churches. Why, that sounds like the "change agents" (Shelly, Lucado, and their ilk), not a faithful Gospel preacher who holds to the all-sufficiency of the Word. And, it rejects the power of the message of the cross

(John 12:32). Will "holy-rollerism" be next? It may be that the next **challenge** to debate will be what brings about lively churches today.

It has been pointed out very clearly in this work that the pioneers rejected Calvinistic theology, which included the direct, miraculous work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the child of God "in conjunction with" the Word. The pioneers soundly refuted that fatal, destructive error. They exalted the all-sufficient Word. It has been shown also that, in the last several decades, some have insisted on going back into post-baptismal Calvinism, some even into full-blown Calvinism. Any degree of Calvinism is fatal error. Faithful brethren **can not and will not** fellowship it!

Numerous arguments made by "direct operation" brethren have been dealt with herein, both by the pioneers quoted and by the author. We are not going into sectarianism. And, we feel keenly our duty to stop the mouths of those who would lead the precious bride of Christ into apostasy and ravish her purity (Tit. 1:9-11). Faithful Christians dare not stand idly by and preach "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). The Truth must and will be defended (Phi. 1:16), and the errorists will be marked (Rom. 16:17-18).

One must either give up his direct-operation-for-the-Christian-only false doctrine, or give up clear Bible teaching. We pray that these long-time friends will give up the former and that they will "buy the truth, and sell it not." We love their souls and have nothing but good will for them. But, we hate every false way, as did David. The one who begins the "good work" in us will perfect it until the "day of Jesus Christ," through the knowledge of the Word (Phi. 1:6-9).

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ADDENDA

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The fact of the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures is crucial to the existence of the New Testament church and to the salvation of lost souls. In fact, the term "all-sufficient" means that the object under discussion is wholly adequate to accomplish an intended end or purpose. That term exactly describes the ability and power of the Word of God, the purpose of which is to produce salvation from sin, godliness in life, and ultimate eternal existence in heaven, the home of the immortal soul (I Pet. 1:9; John 8:32; 17:17; Matt. 4:4; II Pet. 1:3,5-11). Gary McDade stated that the Bible "is all-sufficient for the purpose of conveying an obedient soul into an acceptable relationship with God, purifying that soul, and providing the means for that soul to endure."¹ J. Roy Vaughan observed, "The present divided condition among professed Christians is deplorable. Division produces jealousy and envy, but Christianity will bring peace and unity. 'God is not a God of confusion but of peace.' (I Cor. 14:33)." Unity is possible and is achievable only by preaching the unadulterated Word (John 17:17-23). The gospel is God's wisdom (I Cor. 1:23-24); "Preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2). In no other way can a person believe in Christ and call upon the Lord in obedience of faith (Rom. 10:13-17). G. K. Wallace observed,

Preaching the gospel does not consist in preaching oneself Blessed is the man who is well read in science, literature and the arts but he must remember that there is nothing in these things that can either justify or redeem a soul. The preacher may speak eloquently about

political science and the various philosophies of the world and at last lie down in sorrow because of failure to tell men of the simple gospel of Christ ... That which saves is faith in Christ and not a system of philosophy, science or metaphysics ... We should make every effort to persuade men to love, receive, honor and serve Jesus Christ. Preach the word.³

The issue before us was very powerfully stated and delineated by brother James A. Allen, as follows:

We are identified with a strange and peculiar people. They stand alone, before the whole religious world, upon a position that all sects and parties concede to be infallibly safe, but upon which no other religious body is willing to consistently stand. No other religious body occupies, or has ever occupied, the unique position occupied by the churches of Christ. All religious bodies oppose the churches of Christ - not because the churches of Christ are bigoted, or selfish, or unfriendly, but purely on account of the religious position they occupy. Of course all the denominations oppose each other, but their antagonism to the church of Christ is such that they form a temporary truce among themselves and all join together in opposing it.

To state the position of the Christian people, and to state it as being the position that all denominations oppose, is the most amazing and strangest thing of all. The length and breadth, the height and depth of the position occupied by the church of Christ is simply that men and women should be guided by the Bible. The Christian people advocate nothing more; they can conscientiously accept nothing less. If the Bible is not the guidebook, what is it? If it is not the book to guide us, of what use is it? The

fundamental difference, which is all-inclusive and which embraces every point in the controversy between the church of Christ and all other religious bodies, is simply that the church of Christ takes "the Bible, and the Bible alone," as its all-sufficient and alone-sufficient guide.⁴

Brother Allen gets immediately to the heart of the problem. Many in the Lord's church are endeavoring to copy the denominations, and they are in the process becoming denominational. They are joining the denominations in attacking the Lord's people, even terming faithful brethren who defend the all-sufficiency of God's Word "new antis." He continues:

The vital question, then, between the churches of Christ and all denominations is thus centered on one point: Is the Bible a perfect, full, and complete guidebook? If it is, we do not need anything else - no creed, no discipline, no prayer book, no manual, no confession of faith. Without these human creeds there could be no human denominations. If the Bible is perfect, full, and complete, and if it is an all-sufficient guide, then every church, every denomination, every organization, every religious institution that is unknown to the Bible is unscriptural and sinful. There can be no compromise or evasion of the issue. If the Bible is what it claims to be, they are not just merely unwise, matters of expediency, etc.; they are presumptuous and wicked. Just as sure as the Bible presents all the truth, "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," and thoroughly furnish "the man of God unto every good work," just that sure everything that the Bible does not teach and authorize is false, presumptuous, and sinful. This is not a matter of being conservative or

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liberal, of being a crank or of being broad-minded; and it is not a question of being an extremist or a nonextremist. It is simply a clear-cut issue, one side of which is right and the other side of which is wrong.

And that issue, divested of all subterfuge and technicality, we repeat, is simply that, as the Bible is given to man from above as the perfect and complete guide, the only course he can pursue that will be pleasing and acceptable to God is to believe and practice what it teaches and authorizes. The command given by the Holy Spirit not to go beyond "the things which are written" makes it wicked and sinful to introduce anything into the work or worship of the church for which there is neither precept nor example in the Scriptures....

Sometimes men and women in the churches of Christ allow themselves to look around at the practices of the human denominations, and, like the Israelites, want to be like them To the extent that any one departs from the teaching and practice of New Testament times, to that extent he gives up the Bible as his guide.⁵

Wiinfred Claiborne wrote,

Outstanding preachers among churches of Christ, such as, N. B. Hardeman, G. C. Brewer, Gus Nichols, and a host of others, often appealed to Jeremiah's use of the term, "old paths" (Jer. 6:16). At no time did I hear any of these great Gospel preachers make light of devotion to God's plan for his church. They believed God had revealed a pattern for his church that we must know and honor if we are to enjoy God's approval. Tragically, some of our younger preachers—and some not quite so young—delight in ridiculing such strict adherence to the word

of God. Those left-leaning preachers refer to strict constructionists as "legalists." Many of the ones who are so critical of churches of Christ are professors in our own colleges and universities. They are striving to steal - and in some cases have stolen - the colleges and universities from faithful Christians. In addition, they have perverted the purposes for which the schools' founders and supporters have worked and prayed. Anyone who can call that honesty has a different definition of honesty than most of us have.⁶

THE PROBLEM DELINEATED

Brother M. C. Kurfees understood very keenly the ever-present temptation for God's people to seek "greener pastures" outside the written will of God, whether it be to find and gain "acceptance" among other religionists, to build a more numerous following, to come with the innovations we "enjoy," to have the Holy Spirit "moving" in our lives and assemblies, to "discover" some "new and long-abandoned truth" whereby a self-professed wise logician will lead the church out of the wilderness of darkness, or otherwise to "appeal" to the masses.

It is an indisputable and significant fact that in all the ages of God's recorded dealings with man, His people have exhibited, in some form or other, the tendency to compromise with error. This tendency is not always flagrant nor even very manifest on the surface, but the tendency, nevertheless, has always existed. Like the pendulum of a clock swinging to and fro, the people of God have swung from one extreme to another, sometimes clinging tenaciously to the word and way of God, and sometimes drifting

away from His word and way and following their own ways.⁷

Whereas the innovators often blame faithful brethren for being the cause of discord and division among the Lord's people and make them out to be the villains and "new antis," brother Kurfees identifies those who compromise with error and join the sectarians as having "in all the ages, been the cause and the prolific source of strife, division, and partyism among the followers of Christ."⁸ The all-sufficiency of God's inerrant, plenary, verbally inspired Word has been challenged by a number of errant philosophies and traditions of men (Col. 2:8; Matt. 15:9), including the following:

First, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures has been challenged by the belief that one's conscience is the standard: "let your conscience be your guide." However, the Word is the standard (Col. 3:17; John 8:32; Matt. 4:4; et al.); the conscience only prompts one to do what he has been taught and believes is right. The conscience can be mistaught, and it can be defiled or hardened (Tit. 1:15; I Tim. 4:1,2). Even while Saul of Tarsus was persecuting the church and murdering Christians, he was living "before God in all good conscience" (Acts 23:1). One must in good conscience obey the gospel standard (Rom. 14:23), but the conscience is not the standard.

Second, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures has been challenged by the belief that one's subjective feelings are the standard. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Jacob had the feelings that his son Joseph had been killed by wild beasts and "refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning." However, his son was very much alive (Gen. 37:33-36). No doubt Joseph felt his father no longer loved him and

had abandoned him, refusing to rescue him from Egypt; thus, "Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For, said he, God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house" (Gen. 41:51). But, Joseph was wrong in his feelings, for his father deeply loved him and was indeed grieving himself nearly to death thinking his son had been killed viciously. Many when confronted by clear Scripture have argued, "But, I know I am saved because I feel it right here." One can feel that he is on the narrow way that leads to life, whereas he is actually headed down the broad way to death and destruction (Matt. 7:13,14, 21-23). Subjective feelings undermine in one's mind the all-sufficient Word.

Three, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures has been challenged by belief in so-called "visions." Some feel they have seen an angel, or some spirit, or even the Lord himself telling them that they are saved, coming with a "still small voice," or some such. Some claim to "speak with the Lord" every night, as a lady in South Alabama told the writer on one occasion; Christ supposedly told her that she was not to go to a physician when she was suffering grievously with a compound fracture of the arm. Almost without exception, the "still small voice" contradicts clear scripture. God's servant Job had to deal with such, when his friend Eliphaz rebuked him, giving "evidence" from "a spirit" he had seen vaguely and had heard in a vision in the night that God does not trust either his servants nor his holy angels (Job 412-21). It was a false charge against Job [that no one ever perishes being innocent; in other words, Job is suffering because he is wicked and guilty, 4:7, and because no one can be just in God's eyes, 4:17; but, contrast this false charge supposedly from "a spirit" with God's statement that Job was perfect and upright, 1:1; 2:3]. God does indeed trust his righteous children and righteous angels. Who was lying, Eliphaz or this "spirit" which he

claimed to have seen in a vision ?

No person is going to see a vision or hear such "a voice." This claim to hear a voice, or to have "an experience better felt than told," or some such is precipitated by Calvinistic direct Holy Spirit error rather than by Biblical truth. Paul wrote that neither man nor angel is to "preach unto you any gospel other than that which we [inspired writers of God's Word-CAC] have preached unto you"—not even an angel out of heaven (Gal. 1:6-9). Even an angel cannot challenge the Bible's all-sufficiency!

Four, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures has been challenged by the creed books of men. "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11), not the doctrines of men. Whereas the Word sown into the hearts of accountable men and women, boys and girls, believed and obeyed, produces the kingdom of God, the creeds of synods, counsels, and other law-making bodies produce denominations. "But he answered and said, Every plant [religious group - CAC] which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13,1). Note Paul's strong warning in Colossians 2:8: "Take heed lest there be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:22). Man is to "lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5,6), whether upon his own reasoning or upon the reasoning of religious groups; man apart from divine revelation is perverted, and perverted thinking leads to and establishes perverted religion (Rom. 1:18-28). Note: An example of perverted religion is the Saddleback Community Church denomination, with which some brethren are infatuated and imitate. See Jerry Martin, 2000 Spiritual Sword Lectureship, pp. 343-362.

Five, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures has been challenged by holding to the authority of an "infallible" POPE. They feel that there has been apostolic succession since the first century and that Peter was the first of many popes of the Roman church. However, there is but one "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," Jesus Christ (I Tim. 6:15). The Bible knows nothing of "apostolic succession," of Peter's being the Vicar of Christ" on earth, etc. Incidentally, Peter was married (I Cor. 9:5; Matt. 8:14-15; I Pet. 5:1; Tit. 1:5,6) and would not allow anyone to bow down and worship him (Acts 10:25,26). Therefore, the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope of Rome is a rejection of the all-sufficiency of God's Word, another example of making void the Word of God by the traditions of men (Matt. 15:3; cf. 23:9,10).

Six, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures has been challenged by teaching the direct supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit today, that otherwise the Bible is a "dead letter." Loraine Boettner, Calvinist, stated that

The Scriptures constantly teach that the Gospel becomes effectual only when it is attended by the special illuminating power of the Spirit, and without this power it is to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness.⁹

Boettner characterizes as a "great short-coming" the "failure to recognize the necessity for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit on the heart." That must take place not only upon the alien sinner but also in "sanctification," upon the child of God, this Calvinist affirms.

...sanctification is a process [beyond regeneration, which "is performed by supernatural power and is complete in an instant"]. It consists in the gradual triumph of the new nature implanted in regeneration

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Sanctification, however, is not fully completed until death, at which time the Holy Spirit cleanses the soul of every vestige of sin, making it holy....¹⁰

... Only those are saved who are regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit [meaning the supernatural - CAC], ... God's constant sustaining power.¹¹

Speaking of his having searched the Word, E. G. Sewell affirmed, "I saw not one word about getting religion or any sort of conversion by an abstract operation of the Holy Spirit."¹² J. Noel Merideth stated that the Bible meets man's spiritual needs "without any miracle performed on it since it was given to the world, without any additional power to make it intelligible or credible." He continued,

We believe the Bible as it is, is adapted to man as he is. Man does not have to have some sort of a miracle wrought upon him so the Bible may be adapted to him. All the change desired in man is to be brought about by the word of God and man's response thereto.¹³

He was speaking of the Word's influence both upon non-saints and saints.

Brother James T. Amis spoke of some who felt the Bible to be an inadequate guide.

Do those men who pretend to interpret God's word claim to be able to make men understand better than God can teach them? Surely the God who created man's mind should be better able to speak intelligibly to it. Do they claim inspiration or spiritual guidance in their interpretation?

If all religionists in the United States would suddenly decide to "accept the whole Bible, plus

nothing, minus nothing," there would be no assemblies at denominational churches any more There would be no doctrines of heredity total depravity, and a necessity for a quickening work of the Spirit upon the sinner to enable him to accept Christ, for the Bible teaches no such doctrine....¹⁴

Brother J. W. Lowber [F. D. Srygley wrote the introduction to his book] stated about the direct "quicken" and "renewal" doctrine of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith,

This language certainly destroys the freedom of the will, and makes conversion a miracle. The Disciples have always opposed every theory which tended to destroy the responsibility of man. The doctrine of the "abstract operation of the Holy Spirit" is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural, and it has greatly impeded the progress of Christianity.

We have space only for a few reasons for the correctness of the position of the Disciples, that the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification operates through the word of truth.¹⁵

Brother Lowber proceeded to give evidence from God's Word for the fact of the Holy Spirit's operation not supernatural, direct, and mysterious but only through the Word, making clear that the position of members of the Lord's church "on the operation of the Holy Spirit is distinctive" from the position of the sectarians.¹⁶ Brethren Lowber and Srygley would be shocked to learn that brethren today who are likewise "set for the defense of the gospel" and of its all-sufficiency are being charged with "new antiism" by those who teach the direct operation upon the alien sinners [baptism in the Holy Spirit, when a person is baptized in water] and upon the child of God,

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supernaturally. Z. T. Sweeney wrote,

... there is no more necessity for special illumination and guidance of the Spirit of God, and therefore, no more special illumination by the Spirit. Men talk of being led and guided and controlled by the direct operation of the Spirit. Such men talk blindly and madly.¹⁷

Franklin Camp stated,

The teaching that the Spirit works directly and apart from the truth strikes at the very foundation of the authority of the Scriptures. This doctrine opens the door for the claims of all false teachers from Joseph Smith and Oral Roberts to Billy Graham. If one is led directly by the Spirit apart from the truth, then he does not need the Bible, nor indeed can he be expected to follow the Bible.... Calvinistic teaching of total depravity was the mother of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Calvinists' teaching that the sinner was dead and could do nothing, called for the direct operation of the Spirit in conversion.... The Christian was told that he was being guided directly by the Spirit so he had no need to study.¹⁸

Brother Camp contrasted with the Calvinists those who restored the New Testament church, whose "emphasis was upon the Bible. The Bible was held up as man's only infallible guide."¹⁹

Brother Gus Nichols affirmed that any direct operation of the Holy Spirit undermines the Word's all-sufficiency. "It is just advertising unbelief in the all-sufficiency of the word of God as a revelation from God. (2 Tim. 3:16-17.)"²⁰ He repudiated the idea of a direct, supernatural operation; expecting an "imaginary direct operation" causes some to "'turn up their noses' at the

word," "to belittle the 'word' of God and render it ineffective."²¹ "The Holy Spirit does not reveal ideas and thoughts to people directly, nor guide them directly in some mysterious way....The Holy Spirit has no suggestions to make, no instructions to give, other than what he has given in the Bible."²² "The Spirit [operates] only through the word of God upon the sinner, or upon the child of God," brother Nichols wrote.²³

Any claim for any influence of the Holy Spirit apart from the Word would be a miraculous operation. If the Holy Spirit influences apart from the Word, it would have to be a direct influence, and a direct influence would be a miraculous operation. To deny that the Holy Spirit is operating miraculously today is not to deny that the Holy Spirit operates. Before the New Testament was written, the Holy Spirit operated through inspired men. Now He operates through the inspired Book. Even when the Holy Spirit operated miraculously through inspired men, He did not operate in conversion and sanctification apart from the Word. The miraculous operation was to reveal the Word, by which the sinner was converted and the saint edified.²⁴

E. R. Harper argued that "The only reason, one can suggest, for this [direct - CAC] operation is that the Christian, motivated by the Word of God, cannot obey God." He stated,

Both the Primitive and Missionary Baptists teach that God sends the Holy Spirit to do for the Christian that which the Christian cannot do for himself due to his inherent, sinful nature given him at birth. This Holy Spirit doctrine, that some in the church today are teaching, reverts (back)

to the doctrine of the depravity of man - that man, in his depraved state, as man, is unable, at some point of time in his life, to obey the commands that God gave the Christian.... This is Calvinism and the denominational foundation upon which they were born.²⁵

Thus, according to this direct doctrine, "man at this point is no longer a "free moral agent capable of obeying God. If it were true, that man could obey God, man would not need this extra, added Holy Spirit power."²⁶ According to this false doctrine, further, "If God ... does not move in this direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit and perform this act ["special, operational Holy Spirit power"] for the Christian, or give to this Christian extra power, in addition to, and above and beyond the power inherent in the Word, the Christian will be lost.... This is Calvinism," brother Harper wrote.²⁷

FOUNDATIONS OF ALL-SUFFICIENCY

The Word is powerful (Rom. 1:16). A. B. Lipscomb urged, "It is the word of the living God. Its pages are luminous with exhortation and reminder. No man can read it prayerfully and intelligently without being stirred into action."²⁸ R. L. Whiteside was referring to II Peter 1:3 when he wrote, "We are in the habit of saying that God has given us in the gospel everything that is essential to life and godliness; but Peter goes a little farther than that and affirms that God hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness." He concludes, "If there is, therefore, anything in your religion that did not come to you through the gospel, it does not so much as pertain to life and godliness."²⁹ G. K. Wallace observed, "If the Bible is not regarded as authoritative surely no one will follow it."³⁰ Lowber stated that "nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, not required of them as terms

of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God."³¹

The Word of God is all-sufficient just "informationally," some now contend in an attempt to come with supernatural direct operation/baptism of the Holy Spirit innovation into the thinking of brethren. Brother Robert R. Taylor, Jr., exposed this innovation, stating, "Before 1993-94 I never heard such from any of our preachers and never read such from any of their pens." He gave numerous examples of the all-sufficiency of God's word, such as at creation, the flood, the parting of the Red Sea, in the wilderness wanderings, etc. He pointed out that God's Word is the word of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). "No ancient soldier viewed his sword as just informational; those slain by such were not killed by something just informational!" Brother Taylor warned,

It is slanderous and blasphemous to reduce God's powerful, all-sufficient word to an informational medium. I would be ashamed to accept such and then to parrot it to others. The ones who have coined it need to give it up as bad theology....

This shallow, superficial informational bit applied to the Bible in NO way enhances biblical all-sufficiency. I would be ashamed to reduce God's all-powerful, all-sufficient word to this informational stance.³²

Why would brother Taylor and all these other brethren speak of the Word's all-sufficiency? How is the Word the Spirit's sword? Brother Nichols answered the question "Can God or Christ or the Holy Spirit help a Christian any other way than through the word?" thus: "It's all done through the word of God, and through worship and service to God. Christian growth and development come through

the word." Note: "It is not by something else that is imaginary and yet miraculous and directly given," which he classifies as "some sort of atheism and infidelity."³³ Regarding the all-sufficiency of the Word, he stated the things he preached "are nothing new in gospel preaching. The old pioneers preached them!"³⁴ The writer was in brother Nichols' classes for three years and heard brother Nichols' strong emphasis against the direct operation of the Holy Spirit and upon the all-sufficiency of the Word of God. Harper wrote that "the Holy Spirit convicts the heart of man only by and through God's word revealed by the Holy Spirit, be that man saint or sinner. Romans 1:16; I Thessalonians 2:13, and James 1:21."³⁵ Foy E. Wallace, Jr., stated unequivocally that what is ascribed to the Holy Spirit "is affirmed also of the Word of God," that "the Holy Spirit operates upon and within the heart of man only through the Word."³⁶ In Alexander Campbell's debate with N. L. Rice, Campbell affirmed, "In conversion and sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the Word."³⁷ "Christians are, therefore, clearly and unequivocally temples of the Holy Spirit; and they are quickened, animated, encouraged, and sanctified by the power and influence of the Spirit of God, working in them through the truth."³⁸

The difference between the Calvinist N. L. Rice and Alexander Campbell was described by Campbell as follows:

The proposition before us is --"In conversion and sanctification the Spirit of God operates only through the Word of Truth," or always through the Word of Truth. Mr. Rice admits it sometimes so operates, but not always; sometimes operating without the Word of Truth. The proper difference between us is the difference between sometimes and always. That the Spirit of God

does operate in both conversion and sanctification we both admit. But I affirm and he denies that it operates only in that way.³⁹

"Whatever influence is ascribed to the Word of God in the sacred Scriptures, is also ascribed to the Spirit of God. Or in other words, what the Spirit of God is at one time, and in one place, said to do, is at some other time or in some other place, ascribed to the Word of God."⁴⁰ When some charge "word only" toward those who hold to all-sufficiency of God's Word, Campbell's comments are appropriate:

Now we can not separate the Spirit and the word of God, and ascribe so much power to the one and so much to the other; for so did not the apostles. Whatever the word does, the Spirit does; and whatever the Spirit does in the work of converting men, the word does. We neither believe nor teach abstract Spirit nor abstract word, but word and Spirit, Spirit and word.⁴¹

And yet, Alexander Campbell did not hold the Spirit to be the Word. It is to say that just as a man uses an axe to chop wood but is not personally the axe, the Holy Spirit uses the Word to influence the heart of man but is not personally the written Word. Brother Woods illustrates this truth with I Corinthians 12:3, that "No man can say, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," and with John 20:30,31, "...these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...." Thus, the Holy Spirit testifies through inspired writers of the Word that Jesus is Lord.⁴²

Notice what the Bible states the Spirit does; but, notice also that he does it through the Word. Brother Woods wrote,

The Holy Spirit strengthens (Ephesians 3:16), sanctifies (2 Thessalonians 2:13), saves

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(Titus 3:5), justifies (1 Timothy 3:16), witnesses to us (Hebrews 10:15), prompts us to love God (Romans 5:5), leads us as God's sons (Romans 8:16), and will eventually raise us from the dead. (Romans 8:11.) He does this by means of the word of truth, his instrument: He strengthens us by providing the "whole armor of God," which includes the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:10-17; 2 Timothy 2:1.) He sanctifies by the truth, which is God's word. (John 17:17.) He saves by supplying the "engrafted word," which is "able to save" our souls (James 1:21.) The Spirit justifies "by faith," which comes by hearing God's word (Romans 5:1; 10:17.) He witnesses to us by the scriptures which testify of Christ. (John 5:39.) He causes us to love God by presenting God to us as a lovable being. (John 3:16.) He leads us by providing a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. (Psalm 119:105.) ... We are strengthened with might "by his Spirit in the inner man," (Ephesians 3:16) by being "rooted and builded up in him," and the word of God is fully "able" to accomplish this. (Colossians 2:7; Acts 20:32.) Hence, the Spirit strengthens by means of the word which he gave. And, similarly, in the resurrection, the Spirit will raise us up by means of the words of Christ... (John 5:28,29.)⁴³

Gus Nichols likewise affirmed that the Holy Spirit accomplishes the following through the Word: Comforts (John 14:16,17; Rom. 15:4; I Thess. 4:18), Produces faith (Acts 2:22-24; Rom. 1:16; Acts 2:36,37; 15:7; 1 Cor. 15:1-4); Begets (Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:12; 1 Cor. 4:15; I Pet. 1:22,23); Guides (John 16:13; I Cor. 2:13; Neh. 9:20,30; Rev. 2:7; I Tim. 4:1-3), but "not with 'imaginings'" (Psm. 72:24; II Cor. 10:4,5); Perfects (Rom. 8:2; Jas. 1:21; Psm. 19:7); Converts (I Pet. 1:12; Psm. 19:7; Acts 8:12; Mark 16:15,15;

1 Cor. 1:21); Encourages (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Thess. 4:13-18); Persuades (Gen. 6:3; II Pet. 2:5; John 8:32; Jude 3); Makes righteous (Rom. 8:13; Psm. 119:172; 1 John 3:7; Acts 10:34; Rom. 6:17,18); Causes to grow (I Pet. 2:2; II Tim. 3:16,17; Heb. 5:12-14).⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The blasphemous, damnable doctrine of Calvinism has influenced millions of people to oppose the all-sufficiency of God's word, not only in denominationalism but even in the Lord's church. The little end of the taproot is Total Inability, also called Total Hereditary Depravity - the attitude that "God can, but man cannot." This leads to Calvinism's three imputations: Adam's sin imputed to all his descendants, man's sin imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness imputed to the believer,⁴⁵ which "imputations" have been described as the "glue" which holds together the five tenets of Calvinism. Because of man's depravity and inability, and because of Christ's righteousness having to be transferred to the believer [which the Word knows absolutely nothing about, as is true with the other tenets and imputations of Calvinism], then there must be the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural direct operation upon the hearts of both sinner and saint - to enable to happen what the Spirit through the Word cannot do. Some claim not to believe in Calvinism and yet teach the supernatural baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the alien as well as the supernatural direct operation upon the heart of the saint. Brother Woods pleaded,

We earnestly entreat our brethren to avoid encouraging current Pentecostalism by a reversion to the denomination doctrine of special, direct and immediate influence of the Spirit.*

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"To the extent that any one departs from the teaching and practice of New Testament times, to that extent he gives up the Bible as his guide."⁴⁷

Brother N. B. Hardeman stated,

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.⁴⁸

He continued:

Every single step in the divine plan, from the time the sinner decides to become a child of God until he sweeps through the gates into the heavenly abode - every step is effected by God's word. There is no such thing as the Spirit of God operating away or distinct from the written word.⁴⁹

Brother Camp summarized the matter thus:

Either the Bible is a complete and sufficient revelation from God and meets all of our needs, or it's not. If the Bible is not our one and only guide, then it's not true, since it claims to be (II Timothy 3:15-16).⁵⁰

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TRANSFERRED RIGHTEOUSNESS

The "Restoration Movement" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century [the restoration of New Testament Christianity] took place because those pioneer preachers repudiated the creeds and doctrines of men, most of which were grounded in "Calvinism." There are five basic tenets of Calvinism, which are described by the Presbyterian Loraine Boettner thus:

The Five Points may be more easily remembered if they are associated with the word T-U-L-I-P; T, Total Inability [also termed "Total hereditary depravity"—CAC]; U, Unconditional Election; L, Limited Atonement; I, Irresistible (Efficacious) Grace; and P, Perseverance of the Saints.¹

Boettner observed that Calvinism has had a profound influence upon the denominationalism of past centuries and of today. In endeavoring to call people back to the pristine, old Jerusalem gospel, gospel preachers and other Christians have had to differentiate between these foundation teachings of John Calvin and the teaching of God's Word. An integral part of Calvinism is also the doctrine of imputation [transference or representative principle], which is the subject of this study.

Those who studied themselves out of Calvinism two centuries ago had a definitive influence upon those in churches of Christ. They exposed Calvin's system of predestination, total depravity, grace and faith only, impossibility of apostasy, transferred righteousness, et al., on the polemic platform and from the pulpit, and brethren were virtually free of such fatal error until recent years.

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Calvinism did not have its beginning with the Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutheranism, Baptists, et al., or even with John Calvin, the reformer who systemized the religion. Boettner correctly stated,

Augustine had taught the essentials of the system a thousand years before Calvin was born.... "The inherent principles of it had been in existence for long ages before Calvin was born." ...But inasmuch as it was Calvin who first formulated these principles into a more or less complete system, that system, or creed, if you will, and likewise those principles which are embodied in it, came to bear his name.

Calvin's work is The Institutes of the Christian Religion, in which he was greatly influenced by the teachings of Augustine (354-430). Augustiné held to the doctrine of man's inherited total depravity because of Adam's sin and man's lack of free will and his inability to act as a result of that depravity. The apostate church of Rome promulgated that theory through the centuries, having followed Augustine rather than the "free will" position of Pelagius (350-425), who was proclaimed a heretic. The emphasis of the Scriptures is that every accountable person is responsible for his own sins [not for the sins of Adam] and can choose whom he will serve, God or Satan [one's salvation does not depend upon a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon an individual today]; but, what an adverse effect Augustine's victory over Pelagius has had upon countless ones who would claim to follow Christ.

Many writers have spoken of Calvin's theology as very logical. Boettner characterized it as follows:

It was Calvin who wrought out this system of theological thought with such logical clearness and emphasis that it has ever since borne his name.² Calvin's clear and consistent theism gave

him a keen sense of the infinite majesty of the Almighty Person in whose hands all things lay, and made him a very pronounced pre-destinarian.³

... these are not isolated and independent doctrines ["The Five Points of Calvinism" - CAC] but are so inter-related that they form a simple, harmonious, self-consistent system; and the way in which they fit together as component parts of a well-ordered whole has won the admiration of thinking men of all creeds. Prove any one of them true and all the others will follow as logical and necessary parts of the system. Prove any of them false and the whole system must be abandoned. They are found to dovetail perfectly one into the other. They are so many links in the great chain of causes, and not one of them can be taken away without marring and subverting the whole Gospel plan of salvation through Christ. We cannot conceive of this agreement arising merely by accident, nor even being possible, unless these doctrines are true.⁴

It is not the burden of this study to examine each of the tenets of Calvinism but to examine the doctrine of imputation. The Calvinistic view of imputation, or transference, is the bond that holds together the "Five Points." This is to be differentiated from the false view of "infused righteousness," held by Roman Catholicism, namely, that God "infuses" personal righteousness through grace. Just as there are five foundational points of Calvinism, there are three foundational points of imputation. But, like a house of cards, if even one point falls they all fall.

While a graduate student in Samford University nearly forty years ago, the author had a very competent, scholarly professor of English, who was a Baptist deacon.

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In a course in American Literature, he taught us "The Deacon's Masterpiece," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, pointing out that the Deacon's "Wonderful 'One-Hoss-Shay'" was a description of Calvinism. Since all carriages wore out in one place or another, the Deacon would build a carriage wherein every part was just as strong as every other part; it would be admirably consistent. And yet, one hundred years to the day, it fell completely to pieces all at once; it totally collapsed. M. A. De Wolfe Howe described Holmes' "Masterpiece in lighter verse" thus:

The significance of the "One-Hoss-Shay,"
whether or not it was detected by its first
readers, has been recognized as lying in its
character as a parable of the breakdown of
Calvinism....⁵

My professor stated that Calvinism was internally consistent but that it was absolutely flawed, because "it left out man's free will." And yet, I was caused to wonder how he himself could be consistent and hold Baptist doctrine on the nature of man, faith only, perseverance of saints, etc. In fact, the Hiscox Manual for Baptist Churches states, "American Churches are decidedly Calvinistic..." (p. 37). Evidently my professor had rejected some Calvinistic notions but not others; by his own words, he demonstrated inconsistency. Boettner and Holmes are right; when one point of this human system falls (Matt. 15:9), it all falls. This is true with imputation, also.

IMPUTATION

For one to see the vital importance and integral nature of imputation to Calvinism, notice the following from Boettner's discussion of "The Representative Principle" in the chapter on "Total Inability."

It is easy for us to understand representative Adam stood as the official head and representative of his people....⁶

Adam was made not only the father but also the representative of the whole human race. And if we fully understood the closeness of the relation between him and them we would fully realize the justice of the transmission of his sin to them. Adam's sin is imputed to his descendants in the same way that Christ's righteousness is imputed to those who believe in him. Adam's descendants are, of course, no more personally guilty of his sin than Christ's redeemed are personally meritorious of His righteousness.

Suffering and death are declared to be the consequence of sin; and the reason that all die is that "all sinned." Now we know that many suffer and die in infancy, before they have committed any sin themselves. It follows that either God is unjust in punishing the innocent, or that those infants are in some way guilty creatures. And if guilty, how have they sinned? It is impossible to explain it on any other supposition than that they sinned in Adam (I Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12, 18); and they could not have sinned in him in any other way than by representation.⁷

Now, what are the implications of this imputation of Adam's sin to the whole human race (transferred wickedness)?

But while we are not personally guilty of Adam's sin, we are, nevertheless, liable to punishment for it. "The guilt of Adam's public sin, says Dr. A. A. Hodge, "is by a judicial act of God immediately charged to the account of each and everyone of his descendants [which would include the Son of God, would it not?] from the

moment he begins to exist, and antecedently to any act of his own. Hence all men come into existence deprived of all those influences of the Holy Spirit upon which their moral and spiritual life depends...and with an antecedent prevailing tendency in their natures to sin [compare the Calvinistic translation "sinful nature" in the New International Version, glorified by many liberals - CAC]; which tendency in them is itself of the nature of sin, and worthy of punishment. Human nature since the fall retains its constitutional faculties of reason, conscience and free agency and hence man continues to be a responsible moral agent. [how is this possible, since each person is totally depraved, not of his own making? - CAC]. Yet he is spiritually dead, and totally adverse to and incapable of the discharge of any of these duties which sprang out of his relation to God, and entirely unable to change his own evil dispositions or innate moral tendencies, or to dispose himself to such a change, or to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in effecting such a change."*

The word "imputation" is used a number of times in the King James Version; for example, Psalm 32:2 reads, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile," and Romans 4:8 reads, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." "The word is used in AV [the KJV - CAC] a number of times to translate the Hebrew vb. Hashab and the Gr vb. logizomai." These words are also translated and can mean "to think," "to count," "to reckon," "to esteem."⁹ Gary Workman observed that logizomai may mean "to calculate, to evaluate, to consider."

The word logizomai is found predominately in the writings of Paul, particularly in Romans

where it occurs nineteen times. Eleven of these are in Romans 4, which is the prime passage in the New Testament on this theme. In that chapter, the KJV rendered logizomai by three English words: "count" (vv. 3, 5), "reckon" (vv. 4, 9, 10), and "impute" (vv. 6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 24). The ASV more consistently translated the word as "reckon" in the entire chapter. There are also three other key passages with logizomai where the KJV has "account" (Gal. 3:6) and "impute" (2 Cor. 5:19; Jas. 2:23). Here again the ASV uses only the word "reckon."¹⁰

In Leviticus 7:18, it is noted that one not handling aright the peace-offerings "shall not be imputed [or credited] unto him that offereth it"; he that did not bring an blood sacrifice into the door of the tabernacle, "blood shall be imputed [held to his account] unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people" (Lev. 17:3, 4); Phinehas, priest of God, saved God's people and the tabernacle from sacrifices to idols defilement and the resulting plague from God, "And that was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Psm. 106:28-31; Num. 25:1-13).

Especially significant in our consideration is Paul's statement about Abraham, "For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3), a quotation from Genesis 15:6 (cf. Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23). This is important because not only was Abraham the father of the Jews (Rom. 4:1; John 8:33), but we as Christians are also "Abraham's seed," spiritually (Gal. 3:26-29). It shall be noted that whereas this is used by the Calvinists to teach their doctrine of imputed righteousness and "faith only," it is actually a potent refutation of those errors. So, what is actually affirmed by

Calvinists relative to transference, imputation, representation?

THE THREE TENETS OF CALVINISTIC IMPUTATION

The Calvinistic doctrine of imputation, according to the Calvinist John F. Walvoord, includes the following three elements: 1. "Imputation of Adam's Sin to Man"; 2. "Imputation of the Sin of Man to Christ"; and 3. the "Imputation of the Righteousness of God to the Believer."¹¹ Hodge described the doctrine thus:

The acts of imputation are given special prominence in the Scripture, and are implicated in the Scriptural doctrines of Original Sin Atonement and Justification, though not usually expressed by the words hashab and logizomai the term "imputation" has been used in theology [Calvinistic "theology" - CAC] in a threefold sense to denote the judicial acts of God by which the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity; by which the sins of Christ's people are imputed to Him; and by which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His people. The act of imputation is precisely the same in each case.¹²

McClintock and Strong speak of Calvinism's imputation doctrine in contrast to Scriptural teaching concerning imputation.

Imputation ... is employed in the Scriptures to designate any action, word, or thing, as accounted or reckoned to a person; and in all these it is unquestionably used with reference to one's own doings, words, or actions, and not with reference to those of a second person

The word imputation is, however, used for a certain theological theory, which teaches that (1) the sin of Adam is so attributed to man as to be considered in the divine counsels as his own, and to render him guilty of it; (2) that in the Christian plan of salvation the righteousness of Christ is so attributed to man as to be considered his own, and that he is therefore justified by it.¹³

Warfield described this theory of "imputation" [which was "firmly fixed" by the time of Augustine and "thoroughly worked out" in the Reformation] as follows:

In the developed theology thus brought into the possession of the Church, three several acts of imputation were established and expounded. These are the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; the imputation of the sins of his people to the Redeemer; the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to his people....the divine act called "imputation" is in itself precisely the same in each of the three great transactions into which it enters as a constituent part.¹⁴

Warfield described how vitally important and central to Calvinism this doctrine of imputation is:

What was important was to make it clear that native depravity was along with it the ground of our guilt before God....Thus it came about in the hands of the great Protestant leaders of the sixteenth century, and of their successors, the Protestant systematizers of the seventeenth century, the threefold doctrine of imputation – of Adam's sin to his posterity, of the sins of his people to the Redeemer, and of the righteousness of Christ to his people – at last came to its rights as the core [does that word sound familiar, dear reader?] of the three constitutive doctrines of Christianity – the sinfulness of the human race,

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the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and justification by faith. The importance of the doctrine of imputation is that it is the hinge on which these three great doctrines turn, and the guardian of their purity.¹⁵

Any number of false doctrines heard today grow out of these tenets of Calvinism. They include 1. one's absolute inability to keep God's law, 2. the necessity of a direct, supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit [some even espouse the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the believer], salvation by "grace alone through faith alone," 4. "umbrella grace" [grace covers all sins except unbelief], 5. the inability to overcome sin in one's life, therefore Christ's righteousness has to clothe the believer and supernaturally enable one to withstand the evil one and be saved. One can see the connection as the study continues into the three tenets of transference and representation.

In the first place, it is falsely averred that Adam's sin/guilt could be transferred to all mankind. This is the root heresy which precipitated the other tenets of Calvinism. One false doctrine leads into others, often times logically. Remove this little end of the taproot, and the whole poisonous religious plant dies. "Total hereditary depravity" and "original sin" are false assumptions, for never once does the Bible teach that "imputation" means that one person's sin is "transferred" to another or to others. Truly, God does "reckon sin" (Rom. 4:8), or count sin to the account of the one who commits it. He has never, though, counted the sin of one who misses the mark as lawless, to the account of another person - whether Adam or some other individual. Note that "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4). His guilt is upon himself, and himself alone.

Boettner averred, "Paul, Augustine, and Calvin have

as their starting point the fact that all mankind sinned in Adam and that 'all men' are without excuse, Rom. 2:1." [Of course the astute student observes that Boettner did not want to cite Romans 2:1, for Paul clearly is speaking of those who "practice the same things" which they themselves condemn]. Notice that term "starting point."¹⁶ Walvoord expressed the position thus:

The judgment "all have sinned" (Greek aorist tense) is based not on the individual experience of sin but on the imputation of Adam's sin to the race. Adam as the fountain of human life was representative of the race and his sin is the basis of divine reckoning of all men as sinning in Adam.¹⁷

In other words, when Adam sinned, all of his offspring sinned and are guilty before God; it is as if we personally sinned.¹⁸ Dr. A. A. Hodge, Calvinist, described it as follows:

"As a fair probation could not, in the nature of the case, be given to every new member in person as it comes into existence an undeveloped infant, God, as guardian of the race and for its best interests, gave all its members a trial in the person of Adam under the most favorable circumstances - making him for that end the representative and personal substitute of each one of his natural descendants."¹⁹

When Adam failed the test, we all failed the test in him; the nature of mankind was corrupted at the fountain.

"This we know to have included the instant withdrawal of the divine favor and spiritual intercommunication upon which men's life depended. Hence the alienation and curse of God; the sense of guilt and corruption of nature; consequent actual transgressions, the miseries of life, the dissolution of the body, the pains of hell."²⁰

In refuting this doctrine, brother Robert R. Taylor, Jr., wrote,

Numerous religious leaders have gone wild with this word imputed. (1) They want to impute Adam's sin to all of us and thus we have original or Adamic sin. This is back of the Calvinistic concept that every person is born a sinner, actually conceived in sin. Sin thus becomes an inherited thing. Another's sins are not imputed to us. No human being has ever been guilty of Adam's and Eve's sins in Eden except Adam and Eve.²¹

What are the implications of the "imputed sin" heresy?

In the Westminster Confession the doctrine of Total Inability is stated as follows: — "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."²²

Man is therefore is "under the curse of sin," "actuated by wrong principles," "wholly unable to love God," "wholly inclined to all evil," unable "to be willing to exercise holy volitions," unable to repent since he loves evil and hates God, possesses "a most obdurate blindness, stupidity, and opposition concerning the things of God," "uniformly prefers and chooses evil instead of good, as do the fallen angels or demons," "cannot even see the kingdom of God, much less can he get into it," "lacks all spiritual discernment of their [the Scriptures'] excellence," "cannot hear" Christ's Word, "cannot produce good fruit," cannot "perform any spiritual actions," "abominable, corrupt, and deceitful" from birth, et al.²³

Since every person suffered "primarily spiritual death in Adam" and since "Adam stood as the official head and representative of his people" and since Adam's sin is "immediately charged to the account of each and every one of his descendants from the moment he begins to exist, and antecedently to any act of his own," therefore "all men come into existence deprived of all those influences of the Holy Spirit upon which their moral and spiritual life depends," "entirely unable ... to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in effecting such a change."²⁴ He is speaking of the "supernatural" working of the Holy Spirit.

As a consequence of this depravity and corruption, one's "only hope of an amendment of life lies accordingly in a change of heart, which change is brought about by the sovereign re-creative power of the Holy Spirit who works when and where and how He pleases."

Regeneration is said to be wrought by that same supernatural power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:18-20). Man does not possess the power of self-regeneration, and until this inward change takes place, he cannot be convinced of the truth of the Gospel by any amount of external testimony.²⁵

The Word of God, therefore, is a "dead letter," incapable of bringing one to faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 6:17; Luke 8:11; Heb. 4:12; II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Thess. 2:14; et al.) In order to be converted, one must have a direct, supernatural working and/or baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thomas Boston, eighteenth century Calvinist, wrote,

So in regeneration, there is not a new substance created, but new qualities are infused; light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

2. It is a supernatural change: he that is born again, is born of the Spirit.(John 3:5) in regeneration nature itself is changed, and we become partakers of the Divine nature; and this must needs be a supernatural change. How can we, that are dead in trespasses and sins, renew ourselves, more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave? Who but the sanctifying Spirit of Christ can form Christ in a soul, changing it into the same image? Who but the spirit of sanctification can give the new heart? Well may we say, when we see a man thus changed: "This is the finger of God."²⁶

In summary, the teaching is that God transferred or imputed Adam's sin, guilt, and depravity to us as if we had committed the sin. Man became so depraved [not of his own doing] that the Spirit must supernaturally, directly impact the spirit of man to enable man to be saved despite that depravity; man is under just condemnation because of Adam's sin. It does not differ relative to Christ, since imputation is the same in each act of imputation.

In light of the Scripture, on the other hand, man is a free-will being. Only Adam was guilty of Adam's sin. "...the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (18:20). "For each man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5). Note that "the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him," not the wickedness of some other wicked person [Adam] be upon him. No question about it, God imputes sin for the one who sins, because he sins; if "we say that we have no sin; we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). However, I am not a

sinner because Adam sinned or because my father sinned. I have been guilty because the guilt came as a result of my transgressing God's law.

Relative to Calvin's theory of transference, the Calvinist Albert Barnes [in commenting on Romans 4:3] allowed scholarship to take precedence over his Calvinism when he wrote, having cited some fifty Old Testament scriptures,

I have examined all the passages, and as the result of my examination have come to the conclusion, that there is not one in which the word is used in the sense of reckoning or imputing to a man that which does not strictly belong to him; or of charging on him that which ought not to be charged on him as a matter of personal right. The word is never used to denote imputing in the sense of transferring or of charging that on one which does not properly belong to him. The same is the case in the New Testament. The word occurs about forty times, and in a similar signification. No doctrine of transferring, or of setting over to a man what does not properly belong to him, be it sin or holiness, can be derived, therefore, from this word."²⁷

It is to be regretted that whereas Barnes got it right relative to imputation, the strictly Calvinistic editor, Robert Frew, and the publisher of the Romans commentary saw the need in the republication after Barnes' death to add their own notes in small print under those of Albert Barnes. The Publishers' Preface says that the editor sought to "remedy these defects" in Barnes' notes by "Supplementary Notes" which they "added in several places." In other words, Albert Barnes repudiated Calvinistic "imputation." Sadly, some brethren have quoted the strict Calvinistic editor as

Addenda

if the supplementary notes were by Barnes himself, in defense of imputation of guilt or innocence. Keep in mind that imputation is "never used ... in the sense of transferring." For one to appeal to Philemon 18 to prove that Adam's sin was imputed to us is invalid reasoning. Paul stated to Philemon, "But if he [Onesimus - CAC] hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account ... I will repay it." "Account" (*ellogeo*) is found also in Romans 5:13, translated "imputed." Paul wanted whatever Onesimus owed to Philemon billed to Paul. But, by what right could Philemon charge to Paul in an arbitrary way what Onesimus owed Philemon? Notice the contrast between Adam's sin being imputed to us and Paul's request that what Onesimus owed be put on Paul's account. Albert Barnes, a Presbyterian, saw the folly in trying to make a parallel in Philemon 18.

When Paul, therefore, voluntarily assumed a debt or an obligation, what he did should not be urged as an argument to prove that it would be right for God to charge on all the posterity of Adam the sin of their first father, or to hold them guilty for an offence committed ages before they had any existence.²⁸

When Adam and Eve sinned, their sins separated them personally from God, as do our own sins (Isa. 59:1, 2). They were not as the result of sin made mortal, as Calvinism avers, because they were already flesh and bones (Gen. 2:21-25). They also ate of the tree of life and of the trees of the garden (Gen. 2:8, 9). An additional result of sin was that they were driven forth out of the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:22-24). Sin did not change the nature of their mortal bodies; it did separate them from the tree of life, the veritable "foundation of youth" which had kept the natural deteriorative effects of the flesh from taking place. Man

did not/does not inherit original sin, a sinful, imbecilic, depraved nature; however, man is born outside of the garden of Eden and consequently cannot get back to the tree of life; we thus suffer the natural deteriorative affects of the flesh and experience physical death.

In the second place, it is falsely averred that man's sin was transferred to Christ, or imputed to Him. Some brethren reject the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity and Christ's righteousness to us; however, they accept the imputation of our sin to Christ, quoting the same verses the Calvinists use. These Scriptures would include Isaiah 53:4-6, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows....he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.... and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"; II Corinthians 5:21, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him"; II Peter 2:24, "...who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree ... by whose stripes ye were healed." The theory is that Christ became as guilty as man, since imputation is the same in every instance; He became guilty of our sins just as we became guilty and depraved as a result of Adam's sin.

Brother Taylor powerfully refutes such heresy:

(2) They want to impute all our sins to Christ and thus make him the greatest murderer, liar, adulterer, drunkard, robber, etc., the world has ever known. It is true that Christ became our great sin-bearer and that the Lord laid on him the sins and iniquities of us all. But he was still the innocent Lamb of God becoming an atonement or sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus did bear our sins when he went to Calvary and by his stripes we are healed (I Pet.

2:24). The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us (Isa. 53:6)...Yet it was still the case of the just suffering for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18). He died for murderers but did not become a murderer; he died for adulterers but did not become a moral misfit; he died for drunkards but did not become a drunkard; he died for the violent but did not become violent himself. It is a monumental mistake to impute the guilt of our sins and make the immaculate Son of God into the greatest sinner of all time.²⁹

To have our sins imputed, or transferred, to Christ is neither necessary to salvation, defensible, nor scriptural. In no sense whatsoever are our sins imputed to Christ; the above cited scriptures simply state that Christ suffered death for our sins; He was our offering for sin; He took our punishment. The sins which were/are imputed to us were/are our sins; that is why they were/are imputed to us. Consequently the punishment was due us; they were "our transgressions," "our iniquities." Christ was "cut out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due" (Isa. 53:8). Those who affirm this point of Calvinism fly into the face of such scriptures as Ezekiel 18:20; He became our sin offering, but He knew no sin (II Cor. 5:21). The Lamb of God accepted sin's penalty and endured our punishment (Heb. 12: 1, 2).

Had man's sins been imputed to Christ, then Christ would have been as guilty as we are; He would have been as black and as depraved as Adam, since those sins would have been His own, properly assigned to Him; He would have been a true sinner. Since the principle is life for life (Gen. 9:3-7) and since Christ would have been as guilty as Adam and since having committed spiritual suicide He Himself deserved to die and suffer the penalty of spiritual suicide, therefore Christ would not have been the guiltless,

innocent Lamb of God who could take upon Himself the punishment which belongs to man. The vicarious suffering and death for man would have been impossible! If Christ's righteousness is supposedly transferred to us and thus we are righteous, and if transference, or imputation, is the same in all three points of Calvinism, then our wickedness and depravity being transferred to Christ would have made Him wicked and depraved. His death therefore would have been just punishment for His sin and depravity. The transference of our sin to Christ destroys the beauty and possibility of Christ's vicarious death for mankind, "Who through the eternal Spirit ["Or, his eternal spirit" - ASV margin; His own spirit - CAC] offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Christ was innocent when He was on the cross, the just suffering for the unjust (Acts 8:32, 33). Even the penitent thief who was forgiven by our Lord recognized the guiltlessness of Christ: "But the other answered, and rebuked him [the other thief - CAC] said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:40, 41). If, on the other hand, someone tries to affirm that Christ "is neither guilty nor a sinner,"³⁰ then the imputation of Adam's sin to mankind makes us neither guilty nor sinners! It also would follow that the imputation of Christ's righteousness to man would not make us righteous! Dear reader, you see that these three false averments are so interrelated that when one falls, they all fall. How can any Christian hold to any one of them with God's approval? He cannot live a life of righteousness; therefore,

In the third place, it is falsely averred that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. "...on account of the sinner's own inability either to see or appreciate the things of God,

only those are saved who are regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit."³¹ Calvinism says that man cannot live a life of righteousness; therefore,

...the requirement for salvation now as originally is perfect obedience, that the merits of Christ are imputed to His people as the only basis of their salvation, and that they enter heaven clothed only with the cloak of His perfect righteousness and utterly destitute of any merit properly their own.³²

Not only does transferred righteousness secure "the actual salvation of those for whom He wrought" [Charles Hodge], but it also guarantees one cannot so sin, as a Christian, as to be eternally lost:

The great Baptist preacher Charles H. Spurgeon said: "If Christ has died for you, you can never be lost. God will not punish twice for one thing. If God punished Christ for your sins He will not punish you. 'Payment God's justice cannot twice demand; first, at the bleeding Saviour's hand, and then again at mine.' How can God be just if he punishes Christ, the substitute, and then man himself afterwards?"³³

Does being "clothed only with the cloak of His perfect righteousness" remind the reader of the verse of "My Hope Is Guilt on Nothing Less" which states, "Dressed in His Righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before His throne"? The elect will always persevere, because the "supernatural life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever cause him to do that which is spiritually good."³⁴ Try as they might, the direct, supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of both saint and sinner folks cannot successfully deny that their teaching is Calvinistic.

The Scripture doctrine of the fall represents man as morally ruined, unable by

nature to do any good thing. The truly converted Christian comes to see his inability and knows that he does not make himself eligible for heaven by his own good works and merits. He realizes that he cannot move spiritually but as he is moved....His directing power is exerted through the agency of the Holy Spirit, through whom His purchased redemption is applied to all for whom it was intended....

One of the great short-comings of Arminianism has been its failure to recognize the necessity for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.

...sanctification is a process, ... is not fully completed until death, at which time the Holy Spirit cleanses the soul of every vestige of sin, making it holy and raising it above even the possibility of sinning.

In one sense, it [redemption] was complete when Christ died on Calvary; yet it is applied only gradually by the Holy Spirit. And since the Holy Spirit does thus effectually apply to the elect the merits of Christ's sacrifice, their salvation is most infallibly certain and can by no means be prevented.³⁵

They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end....The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace above. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.³⁶

Further, "mankind which fell through the act of a representative without personal guilt can be redeemed through the act of a representative without personal merit." "Unless we are fallen in Adam there is, in fact, no reason why we should be redeemed [through imputed

righteousness - CAC] in Christ.... These two doctrines are strictly parallel, and must stand or fall together. They cannot be separated without destroying the logical consistency of the Christian system.³⁷ But, imputation of Christ's righteousness to us "produces no change in the individual to whom the imputation is made"; it brings about no holiness nor does it "alter the moral character of men." Since men are not righteous nor can be righteous, thus "when God so ascribes and imputes righteousness, of which we are destitute ... we are treated as innocent and just." Faith which is imputed for righteousness, Charles Hodge says, "is not faith considered as an act, which is imputed, but faith considered as including the merit which it apprehends and appropriates." "...faith was regarded or counted as complete obedience to the law." Therefore, man cannot nor must he come with a reformation of life; God is pleased to accept faith alone - faith which is supernaturally imputed.³⁸ "What is imputed to a man, that he is not, but he is regarded and treated as though he had it. Abraham ... was only regarded as righteous."

But as what is said of Abraham is said also of believers under the gospel, since to them as well as to him righteousness is said to be imputed, it follows that believers are not really justified in this life.

Justice is satisfied, but the man is unchanged. There may therefore be guilt where there is no moral pollution, as in the case of our blessed Lord, who bore our sins; and there may be freedom from guilt, where moral pollution remains, as in the case of every justified sinner. When, therefore, God justifies the ungodly, he does not regard him as being other than he is [a depraved, ungodly sinner - CAC]. He only declares that justice is satisfied, and in that sense the man is just.... they are treated as righteous, not on the ground of their personal character ... it is as ungodly that those who believe are freely justified for

Christ's sake.... It never was ... that the imputation of righteousness affects the moral character of those concerned.³⁹

The Calvinists affirm a difference between justification and sanctification; the imputation of Calvinism is an "imputation to men of what does not belong to them"; men do not become personally righteous in life. We cannot in that sense please God, walking righteously before God. "It is not making men inherently righteous, or morally pure, but it is regarding and treating them as just." It has nothing to do with "personal character or works." It is "not in man but in God," Hodge stated.⁴⁰

Well, what saith the Scriptures? Not one time in all of God's Word is Christ's righteousness said to be imputed to us, put to our account. Brother Guy N. Woods points out many fallacies with transferred righteousness, including that the person receiving Christ's moral goodness and perfection would be as righteous as He and "will thenceforth be privileged to appear before God on the basis of merit rather than mercy." Man would not be judged according to his own works (contrary to Rev. 20:12; cf. II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12). Further,

Righteousness of God (or of Christ), is not the righteousness which they possess but which they "impute" (credit to) to those who comply with their will and thus which originates with them. Righteousness which is acquired in the process of salvation is exactly equivalent to justification. To make righteous is simply to justify (i.e., acquit), of charges formerly existing. Abraham was "justified" by being regarded in a right relationship with God.... Because we are expected to maintain the state of non-alienation between us and the Lord there is an extension of the idea of approval in the obedience required. In this

sense we work righteousness (Acts 10:34, 35)... working is essential to the continuance of the state of acquittal between us and God.

Still further,

There is immeasurable difference between the theory of the transference of Christ's righteousness (the Lord's own inherent purity) to the sinner, as some today teach and the biblical doctrine of the imputation of righteousness - the acquittal of those formerly alienated from God. Paul's point in Romans 4:1-8 is not what Abraham received in the imputation of righteousness - this is crystal clear from the meaning of the word - but how it came, whether by meritorious human works or by appropriation in compliance with the will of God. The former is denied, the latter affirmed and shown to be true in the fact that his faith was reckoned (put to his account) for righteousness.... he was justified "by works," the works, of course, being obedience to Jehovah's commands. The phrase is, literally, out of works (not as a means), since it is God who justifies - declares one just - but only when faith is proved to be valid.⁴¹

In affirming that God does not impute Christ's righteousness to us, brother Taylor wrote,

The righteousness of other people is not imputed to us. I am not a child of God simply because someone else is; I am not sober, righteous and godly because someone else is. I am not on my way to heaven simply because somebody else is. There is no coattail righteousness taught in the Bible. In the realm of politics a man might sweep into a lesser office by catching hold of the coattail of a much more

popular politician. No one is going to heaven by hanging on to the righteousness of someone else. Transferred or borrowed righteousness is not taught. The foolish virgins thought they could borrow righteousness, preparation and readiness from the wise in Matthew 25. They requested of the wise five what could not be transferred or transmitted.

It is also an egregious error, yet one widely held, that Deity transfers to us the personal righteousness of God or the personal righteousness of Christ. Were that the case, we would be as perfect as they. Bogard, the Baptist, once laid claim to being as perfect in his soul as was God himself. The consequence of this is that one would never fear falling, for absolute perfection does not fall. The step is very short between an acceptance of this personal righteousness of God or Christ imputed to one and his colossal claim of once-saved-always-saved. The two go together much like the proverbial horse and carriage.⁴²

The only begotten Son of God took on flesh in order to die on the cross and shed His innocent blood for mankind - all men (Heb. 2:9-18). Had He not been sinless, His death would have been no different from everyone else's, including the deaths of the two thieves crucified on either side of Him. He was "manifested to put away sin by sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26); consequently, He could "bear the sins of many" (9:28). Therefore, the obedient believer has been "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10). He is our great high priest through whom we "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (4:14-16). Note Christ's qualifications to sacrifice Himself in our place on the cross: "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from

sinners, and made higher than the heavens ... perfected for evermore" (7:26-28). By God's grace, Christ was "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime [by the faithful, obedient saints in the Old Testament], in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26). When we as penitent believers confess Christ and are baptized in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 22:16), we are "reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Because Christ became our sin sacrifice and thereby opened up the way of salvation in Him, we as obedient believers are reconciled to God, and thus God is "not reckoning unto [us] our trespasses" (II Cor. 5:19-21). Our sins are not reckoned to our account because they are forgiven, never again to be remembered (Heb. 8:12); it is as though they were never committed. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin" (Rom. 4:8); they are remitted (Acts 2:38). "God made man upright" (Eccl. 7:29); when the blood cleanses us, we are returned to that condition of uprightness, righteous because we have been forgiven through His blood (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13, 14; Rev. 1:5, et al.).

R. L. Whiteside correctly observed,

The Lord reckons, or imputes, sin to the person so long as he is a sinner, and because he is a sinner. But when his sins are forgiven, the Lord does not reckon them against him any more. The forgiven man is righteous, and hence the Lord imputes, or reckons, righteousness to him.

It has been erroneously assumed and falsely argued that to impute a thing to a person is to

put to his account something he does not have, or somewhat more than he has.... Righteousness belongs to character, and it is absurd to think that personal righteousness can be transferred to another. When by the power of the gospel a man has been made clean and free from sin, God reckons righteousness to him, because he is righteous. God does not pretend that a man is righteous when he is not.... And their doctrine discredits the gospel as God's saving power, and belittles the merits and efficacy of the blood of Christ, for it teaches that some corruption remains in the regenerate, but he is counted righteous because he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ. That is "play-like" theology.

But the gospel makes men righteous, just as a soiled garment may be made clean as if it had never been soiled, by carrying it through a process of cleansing. So the gospel takes the sin-defiled person through a process of cleansing that makes him as clean as if he had never sinned. The Lord does not "play-like" he is righteous; he makes him righteous by the gospel.⁴³

The Apostle John clearly states that "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (I John 3:7). The Calvinist says one is merely "treated" as righteous; the Bible says he "is righteous." We fear God and work righteousness (Acts 10:34;35). We deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-14). When we keep on walking in the light of God's Word, "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7); we walk in truth (II John 4; III John 3, 4), and the truth makes us free (John 8:32). The righteous shall inherit eternal life (Matt. 25:46). "For this know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor

unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. 5:5). "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). See Romans 12:1,2; Acts 24:25; Rom. 6:16-23; Phil. 1:11; Rev. 22:11).⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The false doctrine of "transferred righteousness" is one of three points of "imputation" which has been described as the glue which holds Calvinism together, those three points being 1. Adam's sin imputed to all his offspring, 2. Man's sins imputed to Christ, and 3. Christ's righteousness imputed to and clothing those whom God chose arbitrarily before creation to be saved. The theory is that man was/is born totally, hereditarily depraved, wholly inclined to do evil. Thus, he is saved solely by God's grace by faith alone, which is supernaturally imposed upon the elect. He maintains his wickedness but is "counted" as righteous.

This removes all responsibility from man to obey Christ (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21-23; Acts 2:38-40; II Thess. 1:6-9; etc.). It flies into the face of the command to "serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:74, 75) and the statement of Christ, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The Corinthians had been washed, sanctified, justified by obedience to Christ (I Cor. 6:9-11; Acts 18:8), and all Christians must maintain that righteousness in life to receive a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Calvinism is an insidious doctrine which threatens the purity of God's people in many places, by such teachings as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and imputed

righteousness. Let us not be deceived by such denominational, "holiness," Calvinistic fatal error.

ENDNOTES

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Bedford, Texas

The Second Incarnation: A Pattern for Apostasy (\$3.50)

This review of *The Second Incarnation* [Rubel Shelly/Randy Harris] by Curtis A. Cates is reminiscent of the *Review of Jeter* by Moses E. Lard in its penetrating analyses and thoroughness of exposure of the absurd tenets of this deliberate attempt to lead the saints astray. It is a total exposure of the doctrines *The Second Incarnation* advances. I commend it unreservedly.

—Guy N. Woods
Nashville, Tennessee

Worship: Heaven's Imperative or Man's Innovations? (\$3.50)

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Denton, Texas

The "Core/Bull's Eye Gospel" Concept Refuted (\$4.50)

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—Dub McClish
Denton, Texas

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

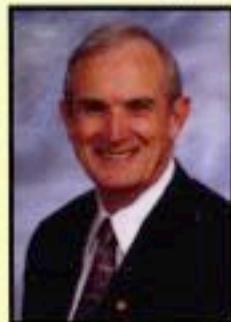
Curtis A. Cates, son of a Gospel preacher and father of two Gospel preachers, preached his first sermon in 1958. For almost thirty years he has been engaged in training preachers of the Word.

He has earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in Bible, English, science, history, and education from Alabama Christian College, Livingston University, and Samford University. He received a Master of Theology degree from Alabama Christian School of Religion (now Southern Christian University) and the Doctor of Education degree from the University of Alabama. He has done post-doctoral work at Abilene Christian University.

He has served as Professor of Bible and English at Alabama Christian College, Vice President of Academics at Southern Christian University, and Dean of the College at Columbia Christian College (Portland, OR). He has served as Director of the Memphis School of Preaching, Memphis, Tennessee, since 1983.

His considerable writing abilities have produced *The Yokefellow* (MSOP monthly journal, coeditor), the annual Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship books (editor of 16 volumes), a series of tracts, articles in numerous journals, and chapters in scores of lectureship books. Besides this book he has written six others: *The A. D. 70 Theology: A Religion That Overthrows the Faith and Undermines the Hope of Men*; *The "Core/Bull's Eye Gospel" Concept Refuted*; *The Second Incarnation: A Pattern for Apostasy*; *Worship: Heaven's Imperative or Man's Innovations?*; *The Noahic Flood*; and *A Comprehensive Study Of Unity*.

He is married to Annette Bingham Cates (M.L.S., University of Alabama). They have two sons, Curtis A., Jr. and Daniel Frazier, and one granddaughter and one grandson. Both of their sons are gospel preachers.



Commendations

Curtis A. Cates has produced a succession of invaluable books on crucial doctrinal issues over the past few years. His latest in the series, which you hold in your hands, is of the same high caliber and practical value as its predecessors. The reader will find this work painstakingly researched and thoroughly documented. It exalts the inspired Word as it opposes and exposes a dangerous strain of Calvinism that has made its way into the church. I am happy to commend this book to one and all as significant and essential reading.

Dub McClish, Denton, TX

Love for our Lord and Saviour, His church and the truth of Almighty God demands we teach the pure and powerful gospel to others, while defending and contending against error from without and within. Curtis A. Cates has willingly carried the torch of truth in this excellent study of this relevant and controversial subject. This detailed presentation of truth should be thoroughly examined by all. Lovers of truth will appreciate its accuracy.

Paul Sain, Pulaski, TN