Irresistible Grace?

By John Hobbs, PhD.
December 2000

The doctrine of Irresistible Grace is the fourth cardinal point in the Calvinistic theology. It is the "I" in the T-U-L-I-P acrostic. Irresistible Grace is also referred to as Special Grace or Efficacious Grace.

How the Calvinists Understand Irresistible Grace

Calvinists deny that Irresistible Grace is God forcing someone to come against his own will. Rather, say the Calvinists, Irresistible Grace makes the individual willing to come. Berkhof defined it thus: "By changing the heart it makes man perfectly willing to accept Jesus Christ unto salvation and to yield obedience to the will of God."

The Canons of Dort state that when God chooses an individual to be saved, He "powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit; …. He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart; … He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it … this is regeneration … which God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe."

John Calvin wrote about "the secret energy of the Spirit" and "the pure prompting of the Spirit." Calvin meant that the Holy Spirit would have to be sent to an individual to call him to salvation and once called he could not refuse. Calvin wrote, "As I have already said, it is certain that the mind of man is not changed for the better except by God's prevenient grace." Prevenient Grace is defined as "Divine grace that is said to

operate on the human will antecedent to its turning to God." In other words man's will is totally subservient to the irresistible call from God.

David Steele and Curtis Thomas state:

> *This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and God's grace in saving sinners as being 'efficacious', 'invincible', or 'irresistible'. For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ!*

Paul Enns states:

> *In the logic of Calvinism, God, through His Spirit, draws precisely those whom God unconditionally elected from eternity past and Christ died for. Thus the purpose of God is accomplished. He elected certain ones, Christ died for those very ones, and now through the Holy Spirit, God dispenses His irresistible grace to them to make them willing to come. They do not want to resist.*

Billy Graham wrote:

> *Being born again is altogether a work of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing you can do to obtain this new birth …. In other words, there is nothing you can do about it … The new birth is wholly foreign to our will. – No man can ever be saved unless the Holy Spirit in supernatural, penetrating power comes and works upon your heart. You can't come to Christ any time you want to, you can only come when the Spirit of God is drawing and pulling and wooing.*

James Boyce believes that for man it is “impossible for him to be delivered by his own acts, even if he had the will to perform them.” Boyce believes that God did not choose the “elect” because He foresaw that these individuals would be good and pious people; he believes that it was because of God’s unconditional selective choosing of the elect that the elect or chosen ones are led to believe. Boyce takes the position that salvation is not dependent upon “the choice of the elect” but solely upon God’s choice.

Thomas Nettles denies that an individual can contribute to his own salvation. He believes that man’s faith does not come from man’s willingness to receive the word but “only from God’s sovereign bestowal.” He says, “The Holy Spirit moves in such a way as to create willingness in the form of repentance and faith.” He denies that the New Testament commandments of repentance and belief imply that man has it within his own power to repent and have faith.

W. J. Seaton wrote:

> *What is meant by irresistible grace? We know that when the gospel call goes out in a church, or in the open air, or through reading God’s Word, not everyone heeds that call. Not everyone becomes convinced of sin and his need of Christ. This explains the fact that there are two calls. There is not only an outward call; there is also an inward call. The outward call may be described as “words of the preacher”, and this call, when it goes forth, may work a score of different ways in a score of different hearts producing a score of different results. One thing it will not do, however; it will not work a work of salvation in a sinner’s soul. For a work of salvation to be wrought the outward call must be accompanied by the inward call of God’s Holy Spirit, for He it is who ‘convinces of sin, and righteousness, and judgment. And when the Holy Spirit calls a man, or a woman, or a young person by His grace, that call is irresistible: it cannot be frustrated; it is the manifestation of God’s irresistible*

> *grace.*

Loraine Boettner defines Irresistible Grace as:

> *God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it.*

Man's Responsibility in the Salvation Process

Calvinism assumes that God has predetermined and foreordained certain ones to be saved, and that they cannot come to salvation until the Holy Spirit in a supernatural way works on the hearts of the elect. When the Holy Spirit calls the elect individual, he cannot resist. He has to respond, but he has to wait until the Holy Spirit calls him in some mysterious way. Also, if one is not one of the "elect," it will be impossible for him to be saved. Therefore, it is all the Holy Spirit's working. Man is a totally passive respondent in the salvation process, according to Calvinism, which denies that an individual can contribute to his own salvation.

In 1976, Robert Hudnut wrote the book Church Growth Is Not the Point. Hudnut is Calvinistic to the core. He writes,

> *We have been saved. It is not our doing. – No you don't even have to repent. Paul didn't. He was on his way to jail when it happened. He didn't do anything. – It is then we are driven to the passive action of repentance. You do not repent your way to God.*

Notice that Hudnut says repentance is passive. His theology is

corrupt. Man is told to repent in Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; and Revelation 2:16. In every verse cited, the Greek verb is in the active not the passive voice. Repentance is something man must do (Greek active voice); it is not what is done to him (Greek passive voice). There is not one case in the Bible of a person being passive while being saved. Even Paul was told what he "must do" (Acts 9:6). In Acts 2:38 repentance is tied to the remission of sins. If a man wants to be saved, then there is something he must do. Man does have a choice to make in his own salvation (Acts 2:40; Deut. 30:11-19; Joshua 24:15; Matt. 23:37; John 5:40). He must be involved. Without man's active role in the conversion process, he is lost.

The responsibility for man having an "honest and good heart" (Luke 8: 15), in order for the seed of the Kingdom to produce, lies with the person, not God. Man is told to "take heed how" he hears (Luke 8:18). The command in Luke 8:18 would be meaningless if man did not have a part in his own salvation. Why should one "take heed how" he hears if his salvation is a product of irresistible grace? Why "take heed" if the Holy Spirit is going to operate on the heart without a man's cooperation?

The Bible teaches man has a part to play in the salvation process. Notice these verses:

> *John 7:17, "If any man willeth to do his will"*
> *John 7:37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."*
> *John 12:26, "If any man serve me, let him follow me."*
> *John 12:47, If any man hear my sayings, and keep them not."*
> *Revelation 22:17, "He that is athirst, let him say, Come."*
> *Revelation 22:17, "He that will, let him take the water of life freely."*

The point of all these verses is that an individual must

“will” and “thirst” and “want to” come to the Lord. It is the responsibility of the individual to “will” – it is not God’s responsibility!

God creates “will” in any person with “an honest and good heart” through the preached word of the cross (John 12:32-33; 1 Cor. 1:18, 21; 2:2). The word is to be preached to everyone (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). To hold God responsible for creating the right “will” in a person arbitrarily and unconditionally makes God a “respecter of persons.” This is something he is not (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17).

Is Faith Totally a Gift From God?

John Calvin wrote:

> *Faith is a singular gift of God, both in that the mind of man is purged so as to be able to taste the truth of God and in that his heart is established therein. – This is why Paul in another place commends faith to the elect (Titus 1:1) that no one may think that he acquires faith by his own effort but that his glory rests with God, freely to illumine whom he previously had chosen. – Faith – the illumination of God – Faith which he (i.e. God) put into our hearts – Our faith which arises not from the acumen of the human intellect but from the illumination of the Spirit alone – Faith flows from regeneration.*

Thomas Nettles wrote:

> *Faith is a gift of God and is bestowed gratuitously by him. – Neither justification nor faith comes from man’s willingness to receive but only from God’s sovereign bestowal. – Belief is still the result of the effectual call and regenerating power of God.*

Millard Erickson wrote: “Faith is God’s gift,” which refutes this Calvinistic mistake.

He wrote:

> *Is this Calvinistic view that faith is totally the gift of God correct? No! Does an individual have to wait for the Holy Spirit to come in some secret way to infuse faith? No! There are several reasons:*
>
> *For God to give certain people faith arbitrarily makes God a respecter of persons. The Bible is emphatic that “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11, 10:12; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17). Salvation depends upon man exercising his freedom of will. If salvation depends totally upon the Holy Spirit and a man is lost, that man can blame God. But, that will not happen because the Lord has done his part; man must do his.*
>
> *Faith comes through the hearing of the word of God not through some secret mysterious sending by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 10:17; Luke 8:11-12; John 6:44-45; 20:30-31; Acts 4:4; 8:12; 15:7; 18:8; 20:32; Eph. 1:13). None of these verses indicate faith coming through a supernatural calling. Faith comes as we hear and study the evidence and then we ourselves decide to believe.*
>
> *Faith is our part in the salvation process (1 John 5:4; Rev. 2:10). We have a responsibility to save ourselves (Acts 2:40) and to build our faith Jude 20; Acts 20:32). This is something we must do. Passages like Hebrews 11:6 are meaningless if the Holy Spirit is going to miraculously infuse faith. Jesus said, “Ye must be born anew” John 3:7). The word “must” is in the active voice indicating we have a part to play in our salvation. We are not totally passive in the salvation process. Our active obedient faith is necessary for us to be saved (Heb. 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:8; John 3:36; Rom. 6:17-18; James 2:24-26).*

God purifies the heart by faith (Acts 15:9). Calvinists have the heart purified before faith. Alexander Campbell said, "Why do we preach the gospel to convert men, if, before they believe the gospel, and without the gospel, men are renewed and regenerated by the direct and immediate influence of God's Spirit?" Good question!

Calvinists teach that "spiritual darkness" refers to man's depraved condition and that God has to perform supernatural secret surgery by the Holy Spirit in order to bring men into "spiritual light." But, in Acts 26:16-18, Paul was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles to "open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." A careful study of the book of Acts reveals that the early Christians depended upon the word of God to change the hearts of sinners and produce faith. Nowhere in the book of Acts do we find someone being converted by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

One is never so "spiritually dead" that he cannot hear and understand and believe the word of God in order to have faith (Eph. 5:14; John 5:25; 12:42-43). The rulers of the Jews "believed on" Jesus but would not confess him. Did they believe? Yes! Their problem was a "want to" problem not that they were so spiritually dead they could not understand. Calvinists misunderstand 1 Corinthians 2:14. The "natural man" of 1 Cor. 2:14 is the man who does not care about spiritual things – not the man who cannot understand them. Calvinists say the unsaved man cannot understand spiritual truth. Wrong! The rulers of the Jews, who were unsaved, in John 12:42-43 understood the truth exactly. They just "did not want to" obey the Lord. Wayne Grudem, and Ralph Gore, and Millard Erickson, who are Calvinists, do not even discuss John 12:42-43.

Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, a professor at Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana – a Calvinistic school – believes that Ephesians 2:8 teaches that faith is a

> *direct gift from God and that man cannot do anything himself to get faith. The apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." After quoting this verse Montgomery said,*
>
> *Don't get the idea that you did it. You didn't do it. Faith is the gift of God. The word 'that' in Ephesians 2:8 refers to 'faith' because 'faith' is the closest antecedent to the word ' that.' Once a person is saved, he cannot properly accredit that to anything but the Holy Spirit.*

Faith is, in one sense, a gift of God because God has given us the Word which produces faith. Without the Word, we could not have faith. But, the entire Bible and especially Ephesians 2:8 do not teach that faith is a direct gift of God in which we have no part. The word "that" in Ephesians 2:8 refers to the salvation process. The salvation process is "the gift of God." We are saved "by grace through faith" which is the salvation process. But, this does not mean we have earned our salvation. We cannot boast of our salvation as if we have worked for it and earned it (Eph. 2:9). Jesus said even after we have done all that we are commanded to do we are to say, "We are unprofitable servants we have done that which is our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). James said, "Faith apart from works is dead" James 2:26).

Verses Misused by Calvinists to Support Irresistible Grace

John 6:37: "All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

WJ. Seaton said: "Note that it is those whom the Father has given to Christ -the elect- that shall come to Him; and when

they come to Him they will not be cast out."

Response: (1) All those with a submissive spirit will come to Christ. These are the ones whom the Father gives to Jesus and not one of these will he refuse (cf. John 10:26-29 where the verbs "hear" and "follow" are continuous action). One must come with a willing heart John 5:40; 7:17; Matt. 13:9; Rev. 22:17). (2) There is nothing here or in God's word that teaches that God arbitrarily chooses those who come to Christ. Jesus uses truth and love to persuade men to accept him John 12:32-33, 48; 2 Cor. 5:14-15). Calvinists are reading into the text an arbitrary decree that is not there! (3) The gospel is for all (Mark 16:15-16), but not all men will accept it (2 Thess. 1:7-10). Those who refuse to accept Christ do so because of their own willful rejection (Matt. 13:14-15; 23:37)- not because of some arbitrary decree. Paul Butler says, "Man's rejection by God is caused by man's rejection of God." (4) Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15). Jesus did not say, "The Holy Spirit will supernaturally open your hearts so you can believe." In Matthew 11:15 Jesus was teaching that man has a responsibility to have an "honest and good heart." That is not the work of the Holy Spirit. If a man does not have an "honest and good heart," he cannot and will not come to Jesus. (5) In context John 6:40 explains John 6:37 and 39. It explains who the Father has given unto Jesus: Those who "beholdeth" and "believeth" on the Son! Both of these verbs are present tense verbs indicating continuous action. Those who continue to behold and believe on the Son are the ones whom the Father has given unto Jesus. It is our own individual free-will responsibility to continue to believe. We are not forced or coerced against our will.

John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day."

John Calvin said: "But nothing is accomplished by preaching him if the Spirit, as our inner teacher, does not show our

minds the way. Only those men, therefore, who have heard and have been taught by the Father come to him. What kind of learning and hearing is this? Surely, where the Spirit by a wonderful and singular power forms our ears to hear and our minds to understand."

W.J. Seaton said: "Here our Lord is simply saying that it is impossible for men to come to Him of themselves; the Father must draw them."

Response: (1) Calvin assumes the drawing is a miraculous operation. We base truth on clear biblical teaching – not assumptions. (2) The next verse explains how God does the drawing and it is not miraculous. It is written that one must be taught (Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 54:13). One must hear and one must learn! This is not miraculous! God draws men through teaching. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The book of Acts is proof positive that Christianity is a taught religion – not a caught religion in the sense that the Holy Spirit must convert a man separate and apart from the word of God. The means and the method the Father uses to draw men is the preached word (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 4:4; 8:4, 12; 11:26; 15:7; 18:8; 20:20; 1 Cor. 1:18-21; 2:1-4; Col. 2:7; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:2; etc.). (3) Why did our Lord invite all men to come to him if he knew that it was impossible for some of them to come (Matt. 11:28)? That does not make sense. (4) Guy N. Woods said: "Some are not drawn, because they do not will to do so; it has been well said. that a magnet draws iron, but not all objects are drawn by magnets, because all are not iron! Similarly, one must be of the right disposition and have the proper response to the drawing power of the Father which he exercises through the gospel." (5) John 12:32-33 also teaches we are drawn to the Lord through Christ's death on the cross. Some appreciate his death, and sadly, some do not.

Acts 16:14: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God,

heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

John Calvin said:

> *Indeed, it does not so stand in man's own impulse, and consequently even the pious and those who fear God still have need of the especial prompting of the Spirit. Lydia, the seller of purple, feared God, yet her heart had to be opened to receive Paul's teaching (Acts 16:14) and to profit by it. This was said not of one woman only but to teach us that the advancement of every man in godliness is the secret work of the Spirit.*

Charles Hodge said:

> *The truth is compared to light, which is absolutely necessary· to vision; but if the eye be closed or blind it must be opened or restored before the light can produce its proper impression." Hodge tries to use the case of Lydia as proof of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion.*

W. 1. Seaton said:

> *One outstanding illustration of this teaching of irresistible grace, or effectual calling, is certainly the incident that we read in Acts 16. The apostle Paul preaches the gospel to a group of women by the riverside at Philippi; and as he does so, 'a certain woman named Lydia heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul.' Paul, the preacher, spoke to Lydia's ear – the outward call; but the Lord spoke to Lydia's heart – the inward call of irresistible grace.*

Response: (1) Calvin's admission that Lydia "feared" God before God "opened" her heart destroys his teaching of Total

Depravity. (2) It is a complete assumption that God opened her heart by a direct secret operation of the Holy Spirit. The text does not tell us what Calvin believes. Calvin gives us a classic case of eisegesis – i.e. reading into the text what is not there. (3) The word "heart" is used figuratively. Consider: John 12:40; Matthew 9:4; 13:15; Mark 2:6; and Romans 10:10. The word "opened" is evidently used figuratively – i.e. to expand or broaden the mind. Luke 24:45 states, "Then opened he their mind." Jesus "opened" the mind of the apostles by explaining the Scriptures to them not by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. The word "opened" was simply a way of saying that the person came to an understanding of, and a belief in, the message under consideration. It is analogous to Paul's statement in Ephesians 1:18, "having the eyes of your heart enlightened." (4) Acts 16:14 indicates that the Lord opened her heart through the things which were spoken by Paul. The Spirit's work in conversion is not something done directly upon the heart apart from the preached Word. (5) J.W. McGarvey said, "The assumption, therefore, that her heart was opened by an abstract influence of the Spirit, is entirely gratuitous and illogical, while the real cause is patent upon the face of the narrative in the preaching done by Paul." (6) Dr. Richard Oster said, "It is significant that this opening of the heart came only after she had heard what was said by Paul. Perhaps the method of opening her heart was the preached word (cf. Luke 24:45)." (7) The word "heard" is an imperfect tense verb which means continuous action in the past. Lydia kept on hearing Paul. The hearing occurred before the opening of the heart. Wayne Jackson states, "The implication here is the exact opposite of that demanded by Calvinism. That doctrine alleges that one cannot give honest attention to the Word of God until the Lord first opens the heart, but this passage actually demonstrates otherwise. She kept on listening and thereby her heart (understanding) was opened by God!" (8) The words "give heed" implies that Lydia had a choice in her obedience. Study: Acts 8:6-12; 20:28; Luke 8:18 and Hebrews 2:1-2. (9) There are many passages which demonstrate that God,

as a general rule, works through means and not directly (2 Kings 5:1-14; Matt. 6:11; 2 Cor. 9:10).

Romans 10:16-17: “But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah with, Lord, who hath believed our report? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” John Calvin said, “To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed. – By this, he means that only when God shines in us by the light of His Spirit is there any profit from the word. Thus the inward calling, which alone is effectual and peculiar to the elect is distinguished from the outward voice of men.”

Calvin believed that the Word of God could only produce faith in a heart of one already illumined by the Spirit of God. In commenting on Romans 10:17, Calvin admits that when Paul makes “hearing the beginning of faith he is describing only the ordinary arrangement and dispensation of the Lord which he commonly uses in calling his people – not, indeed, prescribing for him an unvarying rule so that he may use no other way.”

Response: (1) Calvin assumes his doctrine of total depravity is true. He insists they did not believe because they could not believe. The text does not say what Calvin believed. (2) If one must be regenerated before he can hear, then he is regenerated before he has faith. This contradicts many Bible passages (John 8:24; Acts 11:14; 16:14; Rom. 1:17; 5:1; Gal. 3:11). (3) Personal responsibility is definitely set forth in this verse. If anyone does not believe, it is because he does not “hearken” to the message preached – not because of inherited total depravity. Notice the parallel between “hearken” and “believed” with “glad tidings” – i.e. the gospel and “report.” To have a saving faith is to hearken – i.e. hear and obey. (4) Every case of conversion in the Bible involved a teaching situation. Christianity is a taught religion (John 6:45; Acts 4:4; 8:4; 11:26; 18:8; 20:20; Col. 2:7; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:2). There is no example in the Bible where the Holy Spirit supernaturally infused faith into an individual. A saving faith comes when an honest and good heart is taught

truth found in the word of God and then that truth is accepted and appreciated and appropriated.

Conclusion

There is not one passage in the entire Bible which directly or indirectly teaches Calvinism’s doctrine of Irresistible Grace. In fact, it contradicts God’s word. Calvinism would make God a “respecter of persons.” But, the Bible says He is not! It is God’s will for all men to be saved; therefore, salvation is conditioned only on man’s will. God is always willing for all men to be saved. Calvinism is false doctrine. Let us follow the truth in God’s word and reject the false doctrine of Calvinism!

4642 Royal Crest Dr.
Abilene, TX 79606

REVIVE US AGAIN

Leslie G. Thomas
January 3, 1950

One of the greatest needs of our day is a religious revival: not in the sense of a barn-storming, emotion-arousing type of evangelism, but a revival that will affect the whole man, and will result in nothing short of a religious revolution.

Any one who stops to think is aware of the fact that religious people everywhere are rapidly approaching a state of complacency; and unless something is done to stimulate their thinking, there is little reason to hope for much more progress toward perfection. (Cf Heb. 6:1-3).

When people become satisfied with themselves their intellects become dull, and they are content to have some one else do their thinking for them. Such people do not hesitate to accept practically anything that is placed before them, if they have confidence in the one who suggests it to them.

However, if we are to have an effectual revival – one that will lead us closer to God and to a greater and more perfect knowledge of his will – it must be characterized by certain basic principles, some of which we shall consider in this lesson.

The first one is:

A New Sense of Dependence Upon God

No one can read the New Testament without being impressed with the idea that God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, and that every good and perfect gift comes from him. · "I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in its own times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potenate, the King of kings, and Lord or lords; who only hath immortality; dwelling in light unapproachable whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen" (1 Tim. 6:13-16). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James 1:17).

Time and time again we are taught that our wills must be lost in his; and that if we would be free from those distracting influences which undermine the soul, we must make every effort to seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10b). "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things

shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

But, in the face of these plain statements of truth, how often do we find ourselves depending upon our own ideas and efforts, as if God did not exist, or had not said anything about these matters. “They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit. 1:16). (Read also Rom. 12:17-21; Psa. 37:1ff; Phil. 4:6,7).

A Re-examination of Our Religious Convictions

If one is not careful his religious thinking is liable to crystallize into a form which, for all practical purposes, will become his creed. And when this happens be will likely find himself using this creed, written or unwritten, rather than the word of God itself, as a standard for measuring any new ideas which may be brought to his attention. “For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of·them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding” (2 Cor. 10:12).

Of course no one should hold any religious ideas which he does not believe to be scriptural; but at the same time he should always be willing to subject that which he believes to be the teaching of the Bible to a rigid examination. In short, like Martin Luther, he should nail the things which he believes to the “church door,” and offer to debate them with all comers. Compare 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:1-5.

Any one who is acquainted with the history of Christianity knows that the greatest progress toward the knowledge of the truth was made during those times when religious debate was the order of the day. Alexander Campbell said, “A week’s debating is worth a year’s preaching”; and M. C. Kurfees

averred that “truth has always flourished in the soil of controversy.”

A Growing Interest in the Welfare Of Others

All Christians are members of the family of God, and, as such, they should be interested in the welfare of each other. “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common” (Acts 4:32). “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1,2). (Read also 1 Cor. 12-27).

People who are in religious confusion, or in a lost condition, deserve the help of those who are enjoying salvation and the light of eternal truth. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16: 15). “And if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:3-6). “And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 1:22, 23).

Finally, the Lord’s people should manifest a benevolent attitude toward all men. “So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially

toward them that are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

If we will allow the principles which have been set forth in this study to become a motivating force in our lives, there will be no doubt about the nature and the results of the revival which will follow.

Bruceton, Tennessee.

Limited Atonement?

By Dr. John Hobbs

The third cardinal doctrine in Calvinistic Theology is the doctrine of “Limited Atonement.” It is the “L” in the T-U-L-I-P acrostic. Most Calvinists prefer the term “Particular Atonement” or “Definite Atonement.”

What Calvinists Believe About Limited Atonement

> *The Canons of Dort, article 8, states, ‘It was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and only those, who were from eternity chosen to salvation.’*
>
> *Henry Fish, a Baptist wrote in 1850, ‘Did the atonement, in its saving design, embrace more then the elect? The elect only; for whatever he designed he will accomplish, and he saves only his people from their sins.’*
>
> *David Steele and Curtis Thomas wrote, ‘But He came into the world to represent and save only those given Him by the*

> *Father. Thus Christ's work was limited in that it was designed to save some and not others.'*
>
> *WJ. Seaton said, 'Christ died to save a particular number of sinners.'*
>
> *Lorraine Boettner said, 'The value of the atonement depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of the person making it; and since Christ suffered as a Divine-human person the value of His suffering was infinite … The atonement, therefore, was infinitely meritorious and might have saved every member of the human race had that been God's plan.'*
>
> *Ralph Gore wrote, "Christ died for the elect. The extent of the atonement is identical with the intent of divine election."*
>
> *Paul Enns wrote, 'If God is sovereign (Eph. 1:11) then His plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved then God's plan is frustrated.'*
>
> *R. B. Kuiper said, 'God purposed by the atonement to save only the elect and that consequently all the elect, and they alone, will be saved.'*

The question may be put this way: When Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who he knew would ultimately be saved? Calvinists would answer the latter group.

> *Wayne Grudem wrote: The term that is usually preferred is particular redemption, since this view holds that Christ died for particular people (specifically, those who would be saved and whom he came to redeem), that he foreknew each one of them individually (cf. Eph. 1:3-5) and had them individually in mind in his atoning work.*

The Foundational Basis for Limited Atonement

The doctrine of Limited Atonement is based on the concept of double jeopardy (trying a person twice for the same crime). The argument goes like this: If Jesus died for the sins of all men, then the sins of all men are paid for and one has already been judged for those sins. On the Day of Judgment, if God would bring a man into judgment and commit him to hell even though Jesus had already paid for his sins, God would be putting that person in double jeopardy. God would be unjust – something he is not (Deut. 32:4).

The argument is: Since we do not permit double jeopardy in our own legal system, surely we would not expect God to do something we would not do.

Calvinists argue therefore – Jesus actually died only for the sins of the elect, the chosen, the saved.

However, just because there is an analogy from a human viewpoint, this does not prove that it coincides with the truth of God's word.

Isaiah 55:8-9 states, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." We are warned: "Lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

We do not formulate doctrine by analogies or examples. They may illustrate doctrine, but they do not prove doctrine. We must determine truth from the Word of God and not human reasoning. There are some great truths of scripture which are beyond our comprehension and we accept because the Bible teaches them (such as, the Trinity, God's love, nature of sin,

and such like), and therefore are not proved by reason, but are known by revelation.

Scriptures Used by Calvinists to Support Limited Atonement

> *Matthew 1:21 states, "For it is he that shall save his people from their sins."*
>
> *Jesus "loved the church and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25).*
>
> *Romans 4:25 reads, "Who was delivered up for our trespasses."*
>
> *Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*
>
> *Romans 5:10 reveals, "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."*
>
> *Romans 8:32 declares, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."*
>
> *Acts 20:28 states, "To feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."*
>
> *In John 10:15 Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep."*
>
> *2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "Him who knew no sin he made to be [a] sin [offering] on our behalf."*
>
> *Galatians 1:4 says, "Who gave himself for our sins."*
>
> *Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."*
>
> *Titus 2:14 states, "Who gave himself for us."*

Calvinists use the above Scriptures as proof texts that Christ

died “only” for the elect.

Christ died for his people. That is the main point of these verses! However the Bible does not teach Limited Atonement – that Christ died “only” for the elect, “only” for a limited class.

Calvinists “twist” and “pervert” other plain Scriptures that clearly teach that Christ died for all men. They do so unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15-17). When we come to the Bible, we must take all of it to arrive at total-saving truth. Psalms 119:160 states, “The sum of all thy word is truth.” Matthew 4:4 says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” It takes all of Scripture for the man of God to be complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must preach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Christ died for all men. Christians appreciate the fact that Christ died for them. The verses used by Calvinists emphasize that point. Unbelievers do not appreciate that fact and therefore do nothing about it.

A True Story Concerning Hebrews 2:9

In 1980, I took second year New Testament Greek through Wheaton College at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas, Texas. My professor was Dr. John Werner, an outstanding world-recognized Greek scholar. But, he was a Calvinist through and through. One day we were reading the book of Hebrews in class. When it came my time to read, I was to translate Hebrews 2:9. I translated the verse, “But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death *only for the elect.”*

My professor and the class laughed. After the laughter

subsided, I added, “Excuse me – that should be – for *every* man.”

Brethren, if the grammar makes sense, anything else is nonsense. To deny that Jesus tasted of death “for every man” is to deny the plain and clear teaching of Scripture! Dr. Werner agreed that the verse should be translated “for every man.” But, he denied that is what it meant. He believed that it meant “every redeemed man” even though that is not what the text says!

We should not base biblical doctrine on “feeling” or “thinking.” Biblical doctrine is based on God’s Word!

If the Holy Spirit wanted to say that Christ died only for the elect, he could have easily done so. But, he did not do so. There is no “specific” passage in the entire Bible that teaches Limited Atonement.

Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, says, “Hebrews 2:9 is best understood to refer to every one of Christ’s people, every one who is redeemed.”

Grudem is reading the Bible with his rose colored glasses on and sees what he wants to see instead of what is really there! The text does not say that Christ tasted of death for every “redeemed” man. Grudem is reading into the text something that is not there. This is something that God’s Word explicitly forbids (Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:8-9; 3:15; 2 John 9-11; Matt. 4:4; Prov. 30:5-6; Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

The words *every man* in Hebrews 2:9 are translated from the Greek word *pantos* (in form it is a genitive masculine or neuter singular word from the adjective *pas, pasa, pan* meaning “all” or “every”).

Bruce says:

> *So far as the form goes, pantos might be masculine*

> *("everyone") or neuter ("everything"); but since our author's concern is with Christ's work for humanity, and not with cosmic implications of His work, it is more probable to be taken as masculine.*

Alford says, "The singular brings out, far more strongly than the plural would, the applicability of Christ's death to each individual man." Jesus died for each individual person (which equals all mankind). The singular *pantos* emphasizes his care and love and concern for every human being!

This fact is a strong factor for each individual person to give his life back to him and live a holy God-fearing life (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

This same Greek word, *pantos,* is found in Matthew 13:19 and is translated "when any one." It is obvious in Matthew 13:19 that the Greek word refers only to lost human beings.

It is interesting that the Greek New Testament uses the word *pantos* at least once specifically to refer "only" to condemned human beings. Calvinists say that the word *pantos* in Hebrews 2:9 refers "only" to saved "redeemed" people. If the word *pantos* in Matthew 13:19 refers only to lost people who will spend eternity in hell, does that mean that in Hebrews 2:9 that the same group is being considered? No!

Can the word *pantos* refer to all mankind including those who appreciate Christ's death for them? Of course! Christ "tasted of death for every man." It is important to understand that the meaning of *pantos* will have to be determined by the context. Therefore, we can conclude that in Hebrews 2:9, the Greek word *pantos* refers to all humans period – not just the saved, not just God's special people. Jesus died for all humans – those who are lost and those who are going to heaven. Calvinists deny the plain teaching of God's Word and add to it when they say Jesus tasted of death for every "redeemed" man.

An Examination of God’s Word and Limited Atonement

The Bible is very clear that Jesus died for the sins of “all men” and not just for “the elect.”

Consider these passages as to who Jesus died for:

1. John 1:29: “the one that taketh away the sin of the world” – i.e. all mankind
2. John 3:16: “the world” – i.e. all mankind
3. John 4:42: “This is indeed the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind
4. John 12:47: “I came … to save the world” – i.e. all mankind
5. Romans 5:6: “Christ died for the ungodly”
6. Romans 5:8: “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”
7. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: “he died for all”
8. 2 Corinthians 5:19: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” – i.e. all mankind. Those who believe in Limited Atonement say this refers to “the world of the elect.” Again, they are adding to the Word of God.
9. 1 Timothy 1:15: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”
10. Timothy 2:6: “Who gave himself a ransom for all”
11. 1 Timothy 4:10: “Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe”
12. Titus 2:11: “bringing salvation to all men”
13. Hebrews 2:9: “He should taste of death for every man.”
14. 2 Peter 2:1: “Denying the Master that bought them” – Christ provided redemption for the false prophets but they refused to accept it.
15. 1 John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” –

i.e. all mankind

16. 1 John 4:14 “The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind

A Study of 1 John 2:2

One passage that must be the focus of our attention is 1 John 2:2. Here John wrote, “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”

Vine defines “propitiation” as “a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.” The text is very clear that sin covering has been provided “for our sins” – that is, Christians’ and “for the whole world,” or all humanity. If there was ever a verse in the Bible that taught the possibility of unlimited salvation – this is it!

Brown says that the word “world” is the “sphere of human beings and of human experience.” The apostle John uses the word “world” several times to refer to all humanity (John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 12:46-47; 1 John 4:14).

It is sad that some people “twist” the scriptures from their true meaning (2 Pet. 3:15-17). The same basis for forgiving one man’s sins is also the same basis for forgiving the sins of all men – the death of Christ.

It is not implied or taught that sins are forgiven unconditionally. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of Universalism, i.e. all men will be saved. The Bible does teach that only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 2:10; 7:14).

> *Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, writes, “The preposition ‘for’ [in 1 John 2:2] is ambiguous with respect to the specific sense in which Christ is the propitiation “for” the sins of the world.*

> *The Greek word translated "for" in this verse is peri, and means 'concerning' or 'with respect to." It does not define the way in which Christ is the sacrifice with respect to the sins of the world.*
>
> *It is consistent with the language of the verse to say that John is simply saying that Christ is the sacrifice available to pay for the sins of anyone and everyone in the world."*

There are several problems with Grudem's twisting of Scripture:

(1) Grudem does not deal with the word *world* in his defense of Calvinism. It is obvious that John uses the word "world" in the verse and in the other verses cited to refer to all humanity. Jesus died for all mankind.

(2) It is true that the word *for* in the phrase *for the whole world* is the Greek word *peri*. I agree that it means "concerning" or "with respect to."

Robertson says that *pen* has a sense similar to *hyper* in the verse. The word *hyper* means "in behalf of." It must be pointed out that the word *for* in the phrases *for our sins* and *not for ours only* in 1 John 2:2 is translated from the Greek word *peri*.

The Holy Spirit inspired John to use the Greek word *peri* three times in 1 John 2:2. This word is sufficient to define the way Christ is the sacrifice "for our sins" but not "for the sins of the whole world."

Grudem says that the preposition *peri* "is ambiguous." He is straining the gnat and swallowing the camel in order to avoid accepting the clear truth. Grudem would say that its third use in the verse is ambiguous but not its first and second uses.

The emphasis in the verse is on Christ's "propitiation" – not the preposition "for."

John says Christ's propitiation is "for our sins" and "not for ours only" but also "for the sins of the whole world."

A Study of 1 Timothy 4:10

Paul wrote, "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe."

This verse is important to the discussion. Here the apostle clearly states the salvation of all men. He does not teach Universalism. But, he does teach that salvation has been provided for all men, i.e. all humanity. However, that salvation is appropriated and appreciated by those who believe. All men are potentially saved by Christ's death, but only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved.

Grudem says:

> *He [Jesus] is referring to God the Father, not to Christ, and probably uses the word 'Savior' in the sense of 'one who preserves people's lives and rescues them from danger' rather then the sense of 'one who forgives their sins,' for surely Paul does not mean that every single person will be saved.*

Grudem misses it again.

(1) No, Paul is not teaching that every single person will be saved. No New Testament writer ever taught that.

(2) There is no problem with taking the word *Savior* as referring to God the Father. He is the Savior of all men in that He sent Jesus to die for all men (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The Father and the Son are one in purpose, aim, plan, and design (John 10:30).

(3) For Grudem to say that the word *Savior* does not refer

to “sins” shows his theological bias. In Matthew 1:21, the child is to be called Jesus. Why? Because he will save his people from their “sins.” The word “Jesus” means “Savior.” Grudem does not want 1 Timothy 4:10 to refer to “sins,” so he denies it.

(4) God desires “all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Jesus “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6). Salvation for “all men” has been provided (1 Tim. 4:10). However, this salvation is “specially” for those who “believe.” This word does not imply that all will be saved. The Greek word *malista* translated “specially” is also translated “particularly” or “especially” in 1 Timothy 5:17 and “above all” or “especially” in 2 Timothy 4:13. Paul is saying that God is potentially the Savior of all men. For the individuals who “will” to come to the Lord, these individuals “will in no wise be cast out” (John 5:40; 6:37).

J.W. Roberts wrote, “He is the savior (potentially) of all men, but especially (or actually) of believers.”

Dr. J. C. Davis states, “God is the potential Savior of all men (John 3:16; Rom. 10:13; 2 Pet. 3:9). God is the actual Savior of believers” (Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:8; Rev. 2:10).

J. N. D. Kelly wrote, “Paul is no doubt giving expression to his conviction that the certainty of salvation belongs in an especial degree to those who have accepted Christ.” True!

1 Timothy 4:10 is like Galatians 6:10. Christians are to “work that which is good toward all men and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.” We have an obligation to do “good toward all men” (even the ones who have not named the name of Christ). But, we have a special obligation to help those who are Christians. Christ died for all men but especially for those who believe.

An Invitation Is Given to All Men

In Matthew 11:25, Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The church, the bride as it is called, and the Holy Spirit perpetuate that invitation as shown by John in Revelation 22:17:

> *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 of the water of life freely.*

The invitation is given to all men. Why offer salvation to all if that is not possible? The text says “whosoever” will.

God Desires All Men to Be Saved

In (2 Peter 3:9) we read:

> *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

God wants “all” to come to repentance! Boettner, a Calvinist, denies that it is God’s plan for all to be saved. Seaton, a Calvinist, asks, “The over-riding question must always be the Divine intention; did God intend to save all men, or did He not?”

The fact that God desires that “all” should come to repentance implies that God has provided provisions for “all.” Christ died for all men. This verse teaches that if a man is lost, it is against God’s will because he wants “all” to come to repentance and be saved.

In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul wrote, “Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Here again God’s Word is clear. God desires that all men be saved.

In (Ezekiel 33:11) we read:

> *As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

God desires that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live. God does not want or wish that any person be lost.

Paul Enns, a Calvinist, wrote, “If God is sovereign then His plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved, then God’s plan is frustrated.”

God is sovereign, but his plan involves the free will of man. His plan is that those who by their free will elect to believe and become obedient will be saved.

God is “frustrated” or “grieved” when men do not respond to his saving grace (Gen. 6:5-6; Mark 3:5; Luke 19:41; Eph. 4:30).

God’s desire and will is frustrated when men are lost. God wants “all” to come to repentance and “all men” to be saved. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11). “God is not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9).

But, some will perish – not because Jesus did not die for them. He died for each individual person to show his intense love. If an individual is lost, it is because he has rejected God’s intense love. God does not desire it that way. But, he respects the right of a person to make his own decision.

Pardon for Sins Can Be Rejected

It is possible for pardon and salvation to be offered and rejected. In 1829 two men, Wilson and Porter, were apprehended in the state of Pennsylvania for robbing the United States

mail. They were indicted, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks before the scheduled execution, President Andrew Jackson pardoned one of the men, George Wilson. This was followed by a strange decision. George Wilson refused the pardon! He was hung because he rejected the pardon.

Today, God has provided eternal salvation and pardon for all men. He has accomplished this by sending his one-of-a-kind Son to die for the sins of each and every individual person. However, this salvation can be refused.

If one chooses not to appropriate the blood of Christ over his sins initially and continually, he is refusing and rejecting the salvation which has been provided for him by God Almighty. While we can recognize the foolishness of such a decision, we must be aware of the fact that the majority of mankind will refuse their pardon (Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24). How sad!

Why Did God Create Man?

A lady asked me, “Why did God create man if he knew so many would be lost?”

This is a thought-provoking question. I answer this with two thoughts:

(1) Whatever God does is right and just. We may not understand what he does but that is because we are human and finite while he is divine and infinite (Isa. 55:8-9). Deuteronomy 32:4 states, “For all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.” God himself asked Job, “Wilt thou even annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?” Job attacked and condemned the present righteousness of God. Job sinned by doing this. Job later repented Job 40:35; 42:1-6).

(2) I think the answer to this tough question is that God respects our free moral agency. If a man is lost, it will be

his fault – not God's! God has done everything possible for the salvation of each person. God will not overtake one's will and force him to obey. Life is what we make it! We can avail ourselves of God's love or we can spurn it and reject it. The choice is ours (Deut. 30:11-15; Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:37, 40).

Seaton, a Calvinist, said, "If it was God's intention to save the entire world, then the atonement of Christ has been a great failure, for vast numbers of mankind have not been saved."

Seaton misses it. Christ's death was not a failure. The failure is man's free moral will. Man by his own free will chooses not to obey. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9; cf. John 3:36; Rom. 6:17-18; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17).

On the Day of Judgment if a person is cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity, it will be his own failure – not God's! The failure lies with man not with God.

Calvinists say they focus on God's sovereignty while we focus on man's free will. I say it is not an either/or situation; it is a both/and situation. Both of the these concepts are respected in the scriptures. We must accept both.

Conclusion

To deny the Bible teaching that Christ died for all is to make God a respecter of persons – unjust and unmerciful. The doctrine of limited atonement is false. All men are potentially saved. If a person refuses pardon, death is not the fault of the one who offered mercy, but of the one who refused to accept it.

> *(Editor's Note: The word atonement means to cover or conceal. It is an Old Testament word and is not found in the New Testament. The sins of people before the cross could be*

atoned, but after the cross the sins of the obedient believer were forgiven. There is a dramatic difference. Under Moses there was a remembrance made of atoned sins year by year [Heb. 10:3 – the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins]. The blood of animals could cause God to overlook sins while remembering them year by year, but could not remove the sins. This was atonement. The blood of the Lamb of God is able not to merely cover or bypass sins, but to remove every transgression and disobedience. To receive the forgiveness available in the blood of the cross, one must obey [Heb. 5:7-8].)

The Indwelling of the Spirit – a Figure of Speech

By Jerry Moffitt
Vol. 110, No. 11

For many years our brotherhood has disagreed on the mode of the indwelling of the Spirit. We have never divided over the issue because there have not only been good, sound men on both sides, but we have wise men on both sides of the issue.

As with many others, I have never felt that acceptance of the personal indwelling was a step toward the dangerous error of a special leading of the Spirit. And some of the best warriors against the charismatic movement and against a direct operation of the Spirit have been those who believe in the personal indwelling of the Spirit.

For more than 26 years I have puzzled over the mode of the indwelling and have felt that there was insufficient

scriptural evidence to settle the issue. God doesn't answer every question (Deut. 29:29). Still, in teaching on sanctification, from time to time, I felt I was being led by Scripture in a natural way toward what might be called an indwelling of the Spirit through the Word. Finally, I decided to put the Scriptures and such thoughts into a simple monograph.

Following are those Scriptures and thoughts.

Transformation

Paul told the Roman Christians to "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" (Rom. 12:2). Truly a transformation is to take place; other passages which seem to indicate the same thing in various figures are presented for your contemplation:

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? *But we have the* mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, *but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. 2:20).

"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until *Christ be formed* in *you*" (Gal. 4:19).

"To whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is *Christ in you,* the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, *are* transformed into the same image *from glory to glory,* even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

“And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, *and the day-star arise* in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19).

As we have seen, some of the verses (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27) talk of Christ dwelling in us. Others talk of God dwelling in us or his Word dwelling in us.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16).

“And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, *which also worketh in you that believe*” (1 Thess. 2:13).

“For *it is God who worketh in you* both to will and to work, for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

“I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because *my word hath not free course in you*” (John 8:37).

“In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*” (John 14:23).

Now, I believe all this is talking basically about sanctification. Paul said, “Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (2 Cor. 7:1).

I believe all these things happen much this way. A person hears the Word of God and of his free will and by obedience puts away bad traits and takes on good traits and holy characteristics. In doing so he resembles Christ more.

It can be said, figuratively, that Christ dwells in him. Christ is formed in him (Gal. 4:19). God has his abode with him (John 14:23).

The Word has free course in him (John 8:37).

It could be said he is full of the Spirit (Acts 6:3). It comes through obedience to the Word so the Bible attributes sanctification to the Word (John 17:17).

Now notice another passage. Paul said, “But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin” (Rom. 8:9-10).

Would not the concept of the Spirit dwelling in us fit well with all the passages above? Is it another way, by a figure of speech, of describing the transformation called sanctification which occurs in our lives by obedience to God’s Word? Why would the dwelling of the Spirit be literal and all the other indwellings be figurative? And if the “indwelling of the Spirit” is a figure which describes the reality of sanctification, like all the rest, what figure is it?

Metonymy

There is what is called the “metonymy of the cause” where the “cause” is put for the “effect.” Sometimes a person is put for an activity of that person. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 Paul says, “Quench not the Spirit,” when he seems to have in mind the gifts of the Spirit, especially in context “prophesyings” (Gal. 5:20). Acts 7:51 says, “Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit.” Bullinger says:

> *The testimony of the Holy Spirit as given by the prophets. Their fathers resisted the prophets and would not hear the Spirit’s voice in them and now they, like their fathers, were*

> *resisting the same testimony at Pentecost, and since then culminating in Stephen (see pp. 542-543 in Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, by E.W. Bullinger, published by Baker Book House in Grand Rapids, Mich.).*

Under "metonymy of the cause" and under "the person acting for the thing done" Bullinger has several whole categories involving the Holy Spirit. One is called the "Spirit for the gifts and operations of the Spirit" (p. 540). All examples he gives are worth considering. Could not the Holy Spirit (the Person) stand in the place of the thing he does (sanctification which comes through obedience to the truth [John 17:17])?

Could not the indwelling Spirit by "metonymy of the subject" stand for the fruit he bears in our life when we obey his Word? Metonymy of the Subject is where the subject is put for something pertaining to it, so it seems so to me. For example, notice 2 Corinthians 3:6: "Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but *of the spirit*." Bullinger says *spirit* stands for "the ministration of the Spirit, verse 8: the New Covenant as contained in the Gospel" (p. 543).

It seems clear there is a "metonymy of the cause" where sometimes the person acting is put for the thing done.

Again, I do not find the doctrine of the personal, literal indwelling of the Spirit distasteful, in and of itself, as long as one does not teach he does something to us separate and apart from the Word. That notion can contradict truth regarding free will and lead to the error of Calvinism. Too, so far I cannot prove the two concepts on the mode of the indwelling are mutually exclusive.

Some Scriptures might speak of one mode of indwelling while other Scriptures speak of another mode of indwelling. Yet, I still have not seen a personal indwelling proved, though I

desire to continue to study it with an open mind.

A Personal Opinion

All good sound brethren I have spoken to agree that the mode of the indwelling does not affect salvation and must never divide us. We have good and sound brethren on both sides of this issue. Our dispute must be with those who suppose the Spirit in you works on you or does something to you separate and apart from the power of God's Word. To save us, God chose the persuasive power of his Word. That leaves our free will intact. The error of a mysterious working on us apart from the Word of God cripples personal choice, weakens human responsibility, and violates the Word of God.

In an age when the denominational world says, "Christ paid it all," and "God does it all," and "You can't save yourself," those who teach direct leading of the Spirit without the Word are enemies of truth and in our battle with them we cannot take prisoners. Some of our best fighters in the fray, however, are those who differ with my indwelling and who believe in a direct personal indwelling. It is an honor to fight alongside them.

The Seal and Earnest of the Spirit (J. C. Brewer)

By Jerry C. Brewer
Vol. 114, No. 09

The application of the terms *earnest* and *seal* to the Holy Spirit's work belong to the apostolic period when the gospel

was being revealed in parts and portions and define two necessary aspects of the gospel scheme of redemption – revelation and confirmation. Purposed from eternity and hidden beneath the types and shadows of the old covenant, the scheme of redemption was a mystery that is now revealed.

> *…how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. (Eph. 3:3-4).*

The word mystery in the above passage does not mean "mysterious" or "mystical." It means unknowable through human reasoning and wisdom.

> *The word mystery in Revelation comports with the same meaning of the word as used elsewhere in the New Testament – that is, the spiritual truths not discoverable by human reason; understandable, but hidden from human knowledge until revealed. The word has the connotation of secret doctrine, hence prior to revelation it was a hidden thing; but when revealed, it was brought within human intelligence and understanding. …The word mystery did not mean mysterious. It meant that which could not be known until it was made known, or revealed, and it meant the gospel plan of salvation. The doctrine of the New Testament is, in this sense, called a mystery. (Foy E. Wallace Jr., The Book of Revelation, Sec. II, Part IV, p. 82).*

Undiscoverable by human wisdom, God's plan could be known only by revelation, which requires inspiration. Inspiration requires confirmation. The scheme of redemption was revealed in words, (1 Cor. 2:10-13), and confirmed by signs and wonders (Heb. 2:1-4). Inspiration was the means God used to reveal his plan. Miraculous gifts of the Spirit confirmed that those

through whom it was spoke the word of God. This was the function of the Holy Spirit whose work of revelation and confirmation is expressed in the terms “seal” and “earnest.”

The earnest of the Spirit relates to those gifts of partial revelation of which Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 13 and is used only in 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14. From the Greek word *arrhabon,* defined as, “a pledge, i.e. part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest: – earnest.” (James Strong, Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible, “Greek Dictionary of The New Testament,” p. 16).

That which was given as an “earnest” was not the Holy Spirit, but that which the Spirit gave – partial knowledge of God’s word, which blossomed into the perfect (complete) revelation of His will. The earnest of the Spirit constituted a partial revelation until the “redemption of the purchased possession” which was the completion of divine revelation.

> *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (1 Cor. 13:8-10).*

The partial revelation of the gospel, imparted to Christians in the first century, was an earnest or pledge of the full revelation to come. That partial knowledge would cease when those parts were gathered into the whole, which Paul styled “that which is perfect.” The revelation we now possess in the New Testament is the sum of the parts extant in the apostolic age. (The word *perfect* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 means “completeness” and when the parts of the mystery were gathered into the whole, the full price was paid of which the earnest was a pledge.)

The Holy Spirit was not the earnest in the hearts of men in

the first century, except in a metonymical sense where the cause was put for the effect. When Paul said God had "given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," he referred to that which the Spirit revealed, not the Spirit himself. Neither is the Holy Spirit an earnest in the hearts of Christians today. Many who so teach contend that the Spirit constitutes a "down payment" or "pledge" from God of eternal salvation. But the full purchase price of anything is paid in the same currency as the down payment. If the Holy Spirit is the pledge or earnest of salvation, then God is making his down payment with a currency other than that which he will issue as the balance of the purchase. Besides, to say that God must make a "down-payment" on salvation is tantamount to saying we cannot trust him to fulfill his pledge to us!

When Paul said God had "given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," (2 Cor. 1:21-22), he distinguished between himself and the Corinthians. The pronoun "you" in this passage refers to the Corinthians and the pronouns "us" and "our" refer to Paul and the other apostles. The anointing of the Holy Spirit was Holy Spirit baptism, which the apostles received. He made the same distinction in the Ephesians' epistle.

> *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:11-14).*

The Ephesians were sealed with the gift of tongues and given the earnest of prophecy when Paul laid hands on them after they were baptized (Acts 19:1-6). Paul explains the purpose of

the earnest and seal of the Spirit in the Ephesians in the following statement:

> *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened (Eph. 1:15-18).*

The earnest of the Spirit was revelation, which came through Holy Spirit baptism, and the seal of the Spirit was the confirmation of that revelation. When gifts of revelation were imparted through the laying on of the apostles' hands, they were accompanied by miraculous powers for confirmation.

The genuineness of the earnest of the Spirit, or the gospel that resided in inspired men, was attested by the Spirit's seal of "signs and wonders and divers miracles" upon them. From the Greek *sphragizo,* the word *seal* is defined as, "to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation …to keep secret, to attest. … The stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy or genuineness), lit, or fig. seal." (Strong, p. 70). This seal or sign of genuineness was a visible attestation of the authority by which inspired men spoke.

Those who claim this seal for Christians today cannot produce any visible sign of such seal. Their argument is the same one made for the direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit – "I know it because the Bible says I have it." But what is the purpose of a seal of authority? The great seal of a state attests to and confirms the genuineness of documents issued by the state's authority and is visible to all who read them. The seal of the Spirit was composed of the signs worked by inspired men of the first century and visibly attested to their authority from

God. The seal of the Spirit wasn't some invisible thing placed upon them for God's benefit. Why would God have to attest ownership of Christians to himself? Does he not know them that are his without having some sort of mark placed upon them? The visible seal of the earnest of the Spirit was what Paul called "the signs of an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12). That was the sign or seal of his apostleship and of all who had the earnest of the Spirit in the first century.

Apostasy

By C. R. Nichols
Vol. 114, No. 09

> *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, be is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned John 15:1-6).*

In this passage Jesus represented himself as the "true vine" and declared that his disciples were "branches." All the "branches" (disciples) are said to be in the "vine" – that is, "in Christ." Some of the "branches" in him are said to "bear fruit," and some of the "branches" in him are said to be fruitless. The Lord said: "Every branch in me that beareth not

fruit, he taketh away. …If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." To me it seems the lesson to be learned from the foregoing passage is too clear to be lost on the honest reader.

Those who teach that it is not possible for a child of God to so conduct himself as to be lost, in their effort to break the force of the passage we now study, declare that the non-fruit-bearing branches are not, in fact, in the "vine" (Christ); that they are no more than "water sprouts"; that they are only nominally in the vine, not in the vine in fact; that they have no vital connection with the vine. Is it not strange to you that the Lord did not have at his command language sufficient to express his thought? True, the Lord says the non-fruit-bearing branches are "in" him – in Christ; and to save a theory, here comes some teacher and declares they were not "in" the vine – that is, they had no vital connection with the vine. Indeed, if they had no vital connection with the vine, what is the necessity of taking them away? Would they not have withered and died without the necessity of being taken away?

The Lord says the branches that bore fruit were "in" the vine; and, too, he declared the branches that did not bear fruit were "in" the vine.

In Christ

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). "Salvation" is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). The non-fruit-bearing branches are said to be in Christ; and that being true, they were saved, for salvation is in Christ. They enjoyed the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14). But because some of these branches did not bear fruit, it is said they were taken away and cast into the fire and burned. The destiny of such branches will be the opposite of that which the righteous enjoy. In the face of this plain lesson in the word of God,

some insist that when one time a man becomes a Christian, there is no possibility of his failure to enter heaven.

Become a Castaway

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). The American Standard Version reads, "I buffet my body," instead of, "I keep under my body." The Greek word from which "keep under" is rendered is from a word which means to "strike one upon the part beneath the eye; to beat black and blue; hence, to discipline by hardships" (Bagster). "To beat black and blue, to smite so as to cause bruises and livid spots. …Like a boxer, I buffet my body, handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships 1 Cor. 9:27." (Thayer.) The word is derived from the practice of athletes training by subjecting the body to severe discipline to make it strong and able to stand great strain. It then came to have the meaning of treating harshly. Paul buffeted his body he brought it into subjection, he beat it down. Why? "Lest … when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." What is the import of the "castaway"? Among the ancients, as well as in our day, metals are tested; and if a piece of metal does not meet the necessary standard for a certain work, it is cast away – that is, it is rejected. The word is found in the following passages and rendered "castaway," "reprobate," "rejected":

- Romans 1:28: Gave them over to "reprobate mind."
- 1 Corinthians 9:27: "I myself should be a castaway."
- 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."
- 2 Timothy 3:8: "Reprobate concerning the faith."
- Titus 1:16: "Unto every good work reprobate."

In the chapter from which the verse we are studying is taken Paul is discussing games in which people in his day engaged,

especially contests in which physical supremacy was tested, and became the decisive feature, other things being equal. The prize awarded to the successful one in the contest was a crown of leaves – a crown or wreath made of pine straw, olive, or laurel leaves. Those who would contest for the prize were required to undergo a course of training for several weeks; they were required to make oath that they had trained the required length of time; that they were not guilty of crime; that they were freemen and upright in character. Each one who would compete in the arena was paraded before the crowd, and it was challenged to lodge against any of the prospective contestants any charge that would disqualify him from the games. If one of the participants did not "strive lawfully," he was disqualified, and at times such a one was chased from the arena in disgrace. Judges were chosen for the different divisions of the games, and for some time before the contests the ones who were to contend for the prize were required to train before the ones who would judge them. To these games Paul makes reference, saying: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" – lest I be declared a "reprobate" and rejected at the final day of rewards.

I was thoroughly disgusted at the only serious attempt I have heard by those who declare one cannot fall from grace and be lost. My opponent said:

> *Paul entertained grave fears that the opposition which was hurled against him, even from false brethren, would result in a wave of protest against him; that he would allow his body to fall into sin and bring about his rejection as a preacher; that his brethren would cast him out of the ministry, silence him as a preacher. He had no fears of his final acceptance with God; he was certain of his entrance finally into heaven; but he was fearful that some of those in the church who had questioned his authority as an apostle would bring to bear*

> *the weight of their influence and cause the churches to reject him – cast him away.*

Paul was not discussing the possibility of being misunderstood, nor of being misrepresented, and, as a result of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, being rejected by his brethren; but he was careful to conduct himself in such a way that he would not be rejected at the last day. He was alive to the necessity of buffeting his body, bringing it into subjection and keeping it into subjection.

In the Christian race, which Paul and all other Christians are running, it is necessary that we strive lawfully. One is not to allow the body full swing and meet its every demand, but to bring it into subjection, beat it down, lest the Judge, the Judge who awards the crown, finds fault and rejects you. But the Judge who is to reward the man striving in the Christian race makes no mistakes. Under him you are to train for the continued contest, and by him you will be rewarded at the last day. Paul declares he was making the effort to keep his body in subjection, lest be become a reprobate, lest he be rejected at the last day. Surely if one who saw the Lord, one who served as an apostle, preached so extensively, could become a "castaway," it is necessary for you also to take care.

Holy Spirit in the New Testament

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
Vol. 107, No. 02

- I. Introduction

- A. The writers of the Old Testament looked for a time when the Holy Spirit would do a greater work than was done in their day.
- B. They stressed the importance of words that would be spoken and written because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Consider the importance of the words of revelation.
    - 1. “The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified” (Isa. 61:1-3).
    - 2. The context of this passage shows these words were spoken to Judah before the Babylonian captivity and refer to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple but have a second and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus (See Luke 4:16-21). The message was from “the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah.”
- C. The power and importance of the revealed word is emphasized. The word heard, revealed, preached, believed and obeyed is dominant.
    - 1. Matthew 4:12-17 and Isaiah 9:1-2– Jesus began to preach.
    - 2. Matthew 11:2-6; Isaiah 35:5-10–gospel is

preached.
- 3. Matthew 12:15-21 and Isaiah 42:1 -4—Jehovah's servant shall declare judgment.
- 4. Matthew 13:14-17 and Isaiah 6:9-10— see, hear, believe.
- 5. Matthew 13:35 and Psalms 78:1-3— teach and reveal.
- 6. Luke 4:16-2 1 and Isaiah 61:1-3—preach good tidings.
- 7. John 12:37-41 and Isaiah 53:1; Isaiah 6:9-10—a message is to be believed.

- D. The Bible deals with the message more than the messenger. The real messenger was the Holy Spirit, and, being God, he is deep, inscrutable, and incomprehensible, but we can grasp the words the Holy Spirit revealed.

- II. The Holy Spirit and the Word in the New Testament
  - A. John the Baptist was a forerunner.
    - 1. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15).
    - 2. He was to prepare the way for Messiah (Isaiah 40:3).
    - 3. He would turn the hearts of the people to God (Malachi 4:5-6).
    - 4. He did his work by exhortation and preaching (Luke 3:18)
  - B. The work of Jesus was planned by God.
    - 1. "He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:34-36).

- a) Note: Jesus is the one God sent. Jesus spoke the words of God: for (the reason is) he (God) giveth not the Spirit by measure. Obviously, the one who spoke the words of God, is the one who received the Spirit without measure—Jesus received the spirit without measure.
- b) Others must have received the Spirit by measure; otherwise it does not make sense to say Jesus had an immeasurable measure of the Spirit.

- 2. Emphasis was put on the teaching (the words) of Jesus: "Never man so spake" (John 7:46).
  - a) "The multitudes were astonished at his teaching" (Matt. 7:28).
  - b) "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).
  - c) "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).
  - d) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that y, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock" (Matt. 7:21-24).
  - e) "It is the spirit that giveth life;

the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

- f) "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he that is from God, he hath seen the Father" (John 6:44-46).
- g) "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:42-47)
- h) "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth

> ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works" (John 14:7-10; Amos 1:1). Daniel said, ' 'heard I the voice of his words" (Dan. 10:9). Balaam said, ' 'The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num. 22:38).

Comments on the Outline

God instructs the people of earth through the medium of words. The Holy Spirit used words in instructing chosen leaders who repeated the words to the public. The words would sometimes come to the receiver through the eye, at other times through the ear, and occasionally the words were put in the mouth, but the message always came in the signs and symbols of ideas and was communicated to the people in words.

"The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel…." (Amos 1:1). Daniel said, "heard I the voice of his words" (Dan.lO:9). Balaam said, "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num. 22:3 8).

The Bible stresses the importance of inspired writings. The New Testament says the Holy Spirit influences human minds through a medium, except in some miracles—*miracles confined to*

the first century.

God made the world by the creative power of his spoken word. God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.” God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place.” God said, “Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so.” God spoke, and it was done. “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3).

“… It is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul’s argument is that the same God who called light out of darkness in the beginning, de- monstrated how weighty and mighty his word is, by giving the revelation of his gospel of salvation. We dare not ignore nor belittle it.

The force of God’s word is well documented in the Bible. The gospel is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). Still, some misguided souls call it “the mere word” and “the dead letter.” Those who faithfully follow the teaching of the Bible are called strict constructionists and legalists. These terms are used in derision and are not unlike the Jews’ calling Jesus a Samaritan to disgrace him. Jesus set the proper response pattern for us when he discounted their slap by saying they dishonored him and pointed out that he was doing his Father’s will, but they were not so disposed. The apostle argues we do not handle the word of God deceitfully. ..The gods of this world blind the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ…We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God” (2 Cor. 4:1-7). He calls the scriptures “the word of God…the gospel of the glory of Christ…a treasure…an exceeding great power.”

We do not war according to the flesh, but “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full” (2 Cor. 10:5-6).

Our obedience is to be full, complete, perfect. It is the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who gives to us divine revelation. “Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye shall hear his voice” (Heb. 3:7). “Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas” (Acts 1:16). “The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). “But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1).

The word of truth revealed by the Holy Spirit is sufficient and adequate to make sinners acceptable to God. We are not to follow the ambiguous leadings of doubtful feelings but are to submit to the absolute standard of scripture inspired of God.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

“Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth” (Matt. 6:10).

“The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalms 19:7).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith

which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:15-17)

"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, are life" (John 6:63).

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

"But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25).

"For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1:22).

"Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).

“For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

“Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth finished their God-given assignments through the power of words. The overriding importance of the message is prominent in the God-given scriptures (writings). As we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles of Jesus, certain disciples in the first century, and all the saved, we will understand more fully the Spirit’s work of revealing, confirming, and protecting the plan of salvation as given in the new covenant.

“Now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give {you} the inheritance among all them that are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Inexcusable Excuses

By Terry R. Townsend
Vol. 121, No. 09

Have you ever thought about what folks might say to God at judgment for their failure to obey him? It’s sobering, isn’t it, to know there’s a coming judgment – a day in which all men will give account of themselves to the Lord! Paul writes, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according

to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Let's consider a few inexcusable excuses.

Without question, millions of people will blame their lack of obedience on preachers. Unfortunately, millions today put more faith in mortal man than they do God. Yet, the Bible is abundantly clear that one must be a doer of the word and not a hearer only (James 1:21-25). False teachers are deceiving millions into thinking they have "peace and safety," when in reality they're on a collision course with destruction (1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Thus, it behooves us to test the spirits (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). Blaming false teachers at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

There will be many on the Day of Judgment blaming the weather for their lack of involvement in the Lord's work. When asked why they fail to participate in spiritual activities, many blame mother nature – too hot in summer, too cold in winter, too wet in spring, too windy in fall, etc. If truth be told, people will do whatever their hearts so desire! Inclement weather does not negate one's responsibility to serve God (1 Cor. 15:58). Blaming the weather at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

Undoubtedly, millions will blame their parents at Judgment for their failure to do God's will. How often have I heard non-members say the following in a Bible study, "I see what you're saying, but if what I believe was good enough for dad and mom, it's good enough for me!" But what if dad and mom were wrong? Will God still grant you entrance into Heaven despite your failure to obey that which you knew to be true? The Bible says that one must obey Christ above all else, including family (cf. Luke 9:57-62; 14:26-35). In matters of faith, who should we ultimately listen to? Parents or Christ? Obviously, the answer is Jesus (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:1-3). Putting the blame on parents for your lack of obedience will be an inexcusable excuse.

Others at Judgment will use the excuse of profession for their failing to do the Father's Will. I'm sure some will say, "I would have obeyed and served you Lord, but my job wouldn't allow it." Truth be told, millions are more interested in money than they are in God. Paul had it right when he penned, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (1 Tim. 6:9-10 ESV). Jesus said that we're to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). To blame one's profession at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

I'm sure that on Judgment Day some will use their lack of earthly substance (poverty) as an excuse for their failing to do the will of God. Some will probably say, "Lord, I wasn't as blessed as others; thus, I didn't do all I could." I wonder if God will have standing beside Him the widow who gave two mites as an example to those making such excuses (cf. Mark 12:41-44)? The Lord expects us to do what we can with what we have (Matt. 25:14 ff). Blaming our lack of service on poverty will be an inexcusable excuse.

Another excuse many will make at Judgment will be that of persecution. I can hear some now, "Lord, I would've served You, but I didn't because I feared persecution." But didn't he tell us in his word that Christians would be mistreated on occasion (cf John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12). Didn't he assure us his presence, protection, and panoply to help us overcome (cf. Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6; Eph. 6:10 ff)? Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Thus, fear of persecution as a defense for failing to obey God will be an inexcusable excuse on Judgment Day.

Finally, millions will offer unto God the excuse of procrastination; that is, many will say, “I wanted to obey You Lord, but I simply ran out of time!” I wonder if Felix will be among the masses who will make such an excuse (Acts 24:25)? The Lord is patient, and he gives men ample time to obey (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9-14); thus, to use procrastination as a reason for failing to obey will be an inexcusable excuse on Judgment Day.

Simply put, we can make all the excuses we want to as to why we fail to do God’s Will; however, on the Day of Judgment, God’s answer to such excuses will be this:

“Depart from me, ye that work iniquity!”

How Are Men Saved?

By Louis Rushmore

Out of boundless love, God the Father sent his son Jesus Christ into the world to die for our sins. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us was part of God’s grace and mercy by which we are saved. The sacrifice of Christ and grace permits a just God to grant forgiveness of sins; Christ’s sacrifice and mercy permits a just God to withhold punishment for sins. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians

2:8). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

Through grace God gives men what they do not deserve (salvation), and through mercy God does not give men what they do deserve (punishment). However, the grace and mercy of God which results in salvation is conditional upon man’s obedience to the Gospel.

With no less love for our souls, Jesus Christ willingly died for us. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). Through his shed blood Christ saves us. “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5). “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

Also, as mediator between God the Father and ourselves Jesus saves us. “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:4-5). However, Christ as mediator and his blood save men conditionally.

The Holy Spirit’s role in conversion relates primarily to the provision of inspired revelation (the Word of God). Second Peter 1:20-21 summarizes the way in which Scripture was communicated from God to man. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Holy Spirit, along with God and Jesus Christ, participates

with men in their conversion. “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” (1 Corinthians 12:13). That joint participation of the Godhead with us in the forgiveness of sins is non-miraculous and through the Word of God.

All that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have done to arrange for the forgiveness of sins is conditional upon man’s obedience to God’s plan of salvation recorded in the Gospel (the New Testament portion of the Bible). First, one must examine what the Bible teaches about salvation in order for faith to develop. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Without faith salvation is impossible. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6); “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

However, faith only is useless. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20). “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). Though men cannot earn salvation, God refuses to grant forgiveness of sins to men who refuse to obey him.

Faith is followed by repentance. All men are required to repent or perish. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

Profession before others of one’s faith in Jesus Christ naturally occurs next. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). One New Testament character worded

his profession: ". . . I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:38).

Baptism (immersion) is the point at which sins are forgiven. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Baptism, though, does not save without the Godhead's role in salvation as well as man's part in his own salvation (i.e., hearing, believing, repenting, professing).

God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit have done their parts toward saving men. However, man also has a role in his own salvation according to Philippians 2:12. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Man's role is summarized in the Bible as obedience. Speaking of Jesus, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Obedience is the conditional basis of the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit's roles in our salvation.

Men who do not obey the Gospel will be lost. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Dear Reader, are you saved? Have you obeyed the Gospel yet?

The Father Son, and Holy Spirit have done their parts toward your salvation. It only remains for you to fulfill your role in your own salvation.

Cotham's Comments on the Holy Spirit

By Perry B. Cotham
Vol. 108, No. 08

A misconception of the Holy Spirit and his work for man's salvation leads to all kinds of religious errors. All that we can ever know about the Spirit and his work comes from the Scriptures. It is tragic to see some turn away from what the Bible teaches in favor of an inner, mystical longing, which they mistake for information about God.

The Holy Spirit is a person. There are three beings in one Godhead (Acts 17:29; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). There is only one God (Deut. 6:4), but three beings possess the divine nature.

The Holy Spirit gave us the Holy Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; Eph. 6:17). The apostles were guided by the Spirit into all of the truth (John 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 1:3). In conviction, conversion, and edification the Holy Spirit operates on the heart of man only through the inspired Word of God (Psa. 19:7; Psa. 73:24; Psa. 119:50, Psa. 119:93, Psa. 119:105, Psa. 119:130). "The Gospel … is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The Spirit operates through the words of revelation, which are spirit and life (John 6:63).

The Bible plainly says that the Holy Spirit dwells within Christians. Paul wrote, “Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

How does the Spirit indwell the child of God? He indwells directly or indirectly. There is a difference in stating the fact and in stating the method (the how) of the Spirit’s indwelling. The Bible does not teach that the Spirit dwells in Christians apart from the inspired Word. Many religionists have the idea of a personal, direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the child of God. They think the Spirit gives the believer extra help besides the Word of God. This, of course, denies the all-sufficiency of God-breathed writing to make the man of God complete. Of course, this belief leads to all kinds of “experiences” and “feelings.”

Let us note some things: (1) God dwells in Christians (2 Cor. 6:16; 1 John 4:12-16). Does God dwell in his children directly or indirectly? It is indirect, through obedience to the word: “He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him” (1 John 3:24). (2) Christ dwells in Christians (Col. 1:27). But how does Christ dwell in us? Paul explains, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:17). “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). (3) The Holy Spirit dwells in Christians. The Spirit is in each faithful member of the church the same way that God and Christ are in the saved. Neither God, Christ, nor the Holy Spirit dwells directly, personally, in Christians. As the Christian obeys the Spirit’s message, the Spirit’s influences are in him, and he brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in his life: “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).

Comparing Ephesians 5:17-19 with Colossians 3:16 shows how the Spirit is in the child of God. To be “filled with the Spirit” is to let the “word of Christ” dwell in you richly. There is

no statement of Scripture saying the Holy Spirit dwells literally, directly, and personally in the child of God. If Jehovah the Father and Jesus the Son can indwell Christians indirectly and figuratively, the Holy Spirit can do the same.

Children of God cherish the Spirit's message and live by it, and in this way the Holy Spirit dwells in them and in the church. The teaching that the Spirit works directly – separate and apart from the Word of God in the heart of the alien sinner or the child of God, is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God … that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We have the Bible and it is sufficient to make us what God wants us to be.

The Seal and Earnest of the Spirit (E. Trimble)

By Earl Trimble
Vol. 107, No. 12

In its noun form the word *earnest* appears only three times in the New Testament (2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14). In both of the Second Corinthian verses the word is used in the phrase, *earnest of the Spirit.* In the Ephesians verse it appears in the phrase, *earnest Of our inheritance.*

Thayer defines the Greek *arrabon (translated earnest* in these three passages) as "a foretaste and a pledge of future blessedness" (p. 75). Interestingly, Thayer likens *foretaste* to "tasted" as found in Hebrews 6:4 ("tasted of the heavenly gift"), in Hebrews 6:5 ("tasted the good word of God"), and I Peter 2:3 ("tasted that the Lord is gracious"). The idea of

tasting is "to partake of, to enjoy, to experience."

An analysis of these three verses reveals the contextual usage of the word *earnest.*

2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:5
"Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."
"Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

Attention is called to three words used in these two verses as defined by Thayer:

1. Anointing *(chrisma):* "a miraculous gift"
2. Seal *(sphragidzo):* "to mark with a seal"
3. Earnest *(arrabon):* "foretaste and pledge of future blessedness"

Notice also the usage of the expression, an *anointing,* as referring to a miraculous gift in I John 2:20, I John 2:27:

"And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things … his anointing teacheth you concerning all things."

Brother Guy N. Woods (in his chart #20, used in his debate with Given 0. Blakely on the subject of the Holy Spirit) says (regarding the word *earnest),*

> *The word is used three times in the New Testament, but always in a figurative sense: in the first (2 Cor. 1:22) it is applied to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which God bestowed upon the apostles, and by which he might be said to have hired them to be the servants of his Son; and which were the earnest, assurance, and commencement of those far superior blessings which he would bestow on them in the life to come as the wages of their faithful services: in the two latter (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14), it is applied to the gifts bestowed*

> *on Christians generally upon whom, after baptism, the apostles laid their hands, and which were to them an earnest of obtaining a heavenly habitation and inheritance, upon the supposition of their fidelity.*

The contextual setting wherein the words *(anointing, seal, and earnest)* are used, show their relativity to the Holy Spirit as being the miraculous gifts that God bestowed upon the apostles and early Christians through agency of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, their primary application was to those of that age and not to us today. The word *anointing* is not applicable to us in any sense, who live in the post-miraculous era. The words *seal and earnest* could be said to apply to us today only in a secondary sense.

Ephesians 1:13-14
". . . ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's. own possession. . . ."
In commenting on Ephesians 1:13, J. W. Shepherd says, "They [the Ephesians] received the gift of the Spirit in its miraculous manifestation. We do not; but we receive it in our hearts and bring them in subjection to it" *(Gospel Advocate Commentary, p.* 27). Commenting on verse 14 (p. 28), he uses the meaning of Romans 8:16-17 to illustrate the meaning of the *earnest of our inheritance.* He says, "It is rather the very work of the Spirit himself." Then he explains how the Christian's godly life, as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), is the assurance of God's approval. David Lipscomb adds: "So much of real spiritual blessings as he enjoys is heaven already in his heart; what he has in the work and fruits of the Spirit is for him alike pledge and foretaste."

Is it reasonable that the Spirit, himself, given to Christians as a seal and earnest for confirming God's approval and guarantee (as some contend) would himself be dependent upon "outside evidence" (i.e., God's word) to confirm his

indwelling? It is the result of the indwelling, and not the indwelling itself, that serves as the seal and earnest. Testimony and confirmation by the Spirit is dependent upon action and not passivity on his part unless there was an effect, the cause would serve no purpose. Some, in contending for a direct, personal indwelling, are ready to admit to direct operations (miraculous manifestations) of the Spirit in the Christian's life today.

Actually the Spirit proves his indirect indwelling, not in being passive, but rather by being active in producing fruit iii the Christian as the result of his teaching. This work performed by the Spirit in today's Christian is accomplished indirectly through the medium of the all-sufficient, Spirit-empowered word (John 6:63, John 6:68; Acts 20:32; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12, et al).

The Blood of Christ (Outline)

By Victor M. Eskew
Vol. 111, No. 03

I. Introduction.

A. Jesus shed blood at Gethsemane, in the halls of Pilate, and at Calvary.

B. Christians remember his blood each Lord's Day.

C. Peter called it "precious" blood (1 Pet. 1:19).

1. The word precious means "dear, valuable, costly."

2. The blood of Jesus is invaluable.

II. The Precious Blood of the Lamb.

A. The blood was real.

1. While on earth, Jesus had a human body of flesh, blood, and bones (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 24:39).

2. Jesus' blood, like ours, was composed of red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. It was real blood.

B. The blood was royal.

1. He was of the house and lineage of David, whose dynasty continues to the end of time (Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32-33).

2. His kingship was mocked during his crucifixion (Mark 15:16-20).

3. Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on his eternal throne (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 2:32-36).

4. Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).

C. The blood was innocent.

1. Jesus did nothing wrong (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).

a. Judas said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood” (Matt. 27:4).

b. The wife of Pilate said, “Have nothing to do with this just man” (Matt. 27:19).

c. Pilate said, “I find no fault in this man” (Luke 23:4).

d. Pilate also said, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person” (Matt. 27:24).

2. The people who knew Jesus best could not convict him of sin (John 8:46).

3. If the enemies of Jesus could not convict him of sin, who can?

D. The blood was substitutionary.

1. Jesus gave himself for us (Titus 2:14).

2. Jesus “bare our sins in his own body” (1 Pet. 2:24).

3. Jesus “washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

4. Jesus' stripes heal us (Isa. 53:5).

E. The blood is satisfying.

1. God is holy (holiness is a general term for moral excellence).

a. "The Lord our God is holy" (Psa. 99:9).

b. "Holy and reverend is his name" (Psa. 111:9).

c. His pure eyes cannot behold evil (Hab. 1:13).

d. Men fear God because he is holy (Rev. 15:4).

2. The holiness of God demands that sin be punished.

a. God is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

b. God cannot tolerate evil.

c. God must judge and condemn sin.

d. God can justify sin only by the merit of a substitutionary sacrifice.

e. God can only be just if he forgives by a blood sacrifice, because "the blood of it is for the life thereof" (Lev. 17:14).

3. Jesus' blood satisfied the demands of divine justice.

a. Jesus was made a sin-sacrifice for us, though he knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

b. Jesus became an "offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

F. The blood of Jesus was effective.

1. It cleanses from sin (Matt. 26:28; 1 John 1:7).

2. It redeems from sin (Eph. 1:7).

3. It gives life to the dead (Eph. 2:4-5; 1 John 5:11).

4. It purchased the church (Acts. 20:28).

5. It was shed once, never to be shed again (Heb. 10:11-12).

III. Conclusion.

A. The blood of Jesus is precious.

B. His blood is real, royal, innocent, substitutionary, satisfying, and effective.

C. We remember his blood each Lord's Day.

Working the Works of God

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
Vol. 121, No. 08

The Bible teaches that works have nothing to do with salvation, and it teaches that works are necessary to salvation.

Still, the Bible does not contradict itself.

How can this be? How can the Bible say two things that seem to be diametrically opposed and yet not contradict itself? It would appear to be self-evident that works cannot be both necessary and unnecessary to salvation.

Since the Bible is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), it must be true and therefore cannot contradict itself. Truth, in

order to be truth, must be coherent. If two statements contradict, either one or both of them must be false, but there is no way they can both be true. How, then, do we deal with the fact that the Bible says works are not necessary to justification, and also says that we are justified by works?

Some assume a "take your pick" attitude and go blithely down the path not knowing how to reconcile the two statements – and, possibly, not caring. The honest person however cannot do this and must either reject the Bible or find a logical way to harmonize the two statements.

Various Works

To understand the Bible we must define its terms correctly. It is necessary to understand accurately how Bible writers use the word "works" (sometimes "deeds"), or we will be confused. A survey of how the Bible uses this word will help us to avoid the confusion of misunderstanding. A failure to understand something correctly leads to incomprehension and perhaps unbelief.

Following is a partial list of "work(s)" mentioned in the Old and New Testaments:

- The work God does – Gen. 2:2; Judges 2:7; Ps. 71:17; 1 Cor. 12:6; John 6:28-29; John 10:37; John 14:10
- The work man does in providing food and shelter – Gen. 3:17-19; Exod. 23:12; Exod. 26:1; Eccl. 2:4; Matt. 21:28
- The work man does in obeying specific commands of God – Gen. 6:13-22; John 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:58
- Work of iniquity (evil) – Ps. 6:8; Ps. 14:1; Jer. 1:16; Ezek. 33:26; Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27; John 3:19; Rom. 1:27; Eph. 4:19; Rom. 13:12 ("works of darkness"); Gal. 5:19-21 ("works of the flesh")
- Work of righteousness (good) – Ps. 15:2; Acts 10:35; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14; James 1:4; James 3:13

- Works that are worthy of repentance – Acts 26:20
- The mighty works (signs, miracles) of Jesus – Matt. 11:23-24; John 10:32; Acts 2:22
- Works of the Law of Moses – Rom. 3:20; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:2
- Greater works done by Jesus' disciples – John 5:20; John 14:12
- Good and bad works by which all men shall be judged – Rom. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12
- Human works apart from works of God – Rom. 9:11; Rom. 11:6
- Converts to Jesus – 1 Cor. 3:14
- Apostolic signs, and wonders, and mighty works – 2 Cor. 12:12
- Work of sinless perfection – Eph. 2:9; Col. 2:21-23
- The power that works in the saved – Eph. 3:20; Eph. 4:12
- The word of God that works in the believer – 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:21
- Works that justify – James 2:24; James 3:13
- Works of the devil – 1 John 3:8
- The ungodly works of ungodliness – Jude 1:15

This gives a sample of various "works" mentioned in the Bible. It is a mistake to suppose that the word work(s) always refers to condition of acceptance with God. It does not!

Even a casual glance at this list will convince the thoughtful Bible student this is a complicated subject, having many interrelated parts. It is difficult to deal with because of the need to take different relationships or points of view into consideration.

The mighty acts of Jehovah are works. Creation (Ps. 8:3-6; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 33:4; Ps. 92:5; Ps. 102:25; Ps. 104:24), redemptive acts in history like the Exodus (Judges 2:7-10).

Jesus is our perfect example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21). The

Savior went about doing good (Acts 10:38-39; John 4:34; John 5:36; John 10:25-38; John 15:24; John 17:4). His words and his works confirmed his authority and mission.

Humans are sinless at birth, seeing that Jehovah is the Father and Giver of the human spirit (Heb. 12:9; Eccl. 12:7). As the child matures it comes to understand that some things are right and other things are wrong, but chooses to do wrong things and ignore right things. This is called sin – sin of omission and sin of commission. This is the something a person knowingly does to himself. Iniquity separates a soul from its God (Isa. 59:2). Those who die in sin cannot go where Jesus is; they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God (John 8:21; Gal. 5:19-21).

In his infinite compassion Jehovah sent Jesus to offer himself sacrifice for sins (John 3:16; John 10:18; Matt. 26:28).

We access the grace of God and the blood of the Lamb of God through belief (John 8:24).

"They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29).

Saving belief is a work that includes other works. Faith is shown by works (James 2:18). "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). Abraham was justified by works produced by faith (James 2:21-22). Works make faith perfect (James 2:22). Sinners are justified by works and not by faith only (James 2:24). Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

Jesus said, "He that believeth (a work) and is baptized (a work) shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:22). In baptism the sinner, "is buried with Christ" and is "raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). In baptism we are

buried “with” Christ and we are raised “with” him believing that God will keep his promise to save “he that believeth and is baptized.” Peter tells us that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21). In baptism our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).

The spirit that is born again in the water of baptism (John 3:5) enters the kingdom of God, where faith continues to work, bringing glory to God (Matt. 5:16). The saved “work the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 16:10), abound “in every good work” (1 Cor. 9:8). Servants of righteousness “end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:5). The child of God is “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10); the saint is “fruitful unto every good work” (Col. 1:10). The Christian “works out his own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). Paul prayed that God the Father may “comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word” (2 Thess. 2:17). Women professing godliness are to adorn themselves “with good works” (1 Tim. 2:10). If a man desires the office of bishop, he desires “a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1). Widows to be enrolled are to be “well reported of for good works” (1 Tim. 5:10). The new covenant lauds the good works of some that are “evident, and cannot be hid” (1 Tim. 5:25). Those described as “a vessel unto honor” are “prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). “The man of God” is “furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). Preachers are to be “an ensample of good works” (Titus 2:7), “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Followers of Jesus are to “be ready unto every good work” (Titus 3:1). Paul desired “that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:8). “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister” (Heb. 6:10). “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Heb. 10:24). Our Lord Jesus “make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:21).

The “wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13). Behave seemly among the pagans, “that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:12). “My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18). Jesus knows and commends the works of his disciples on earth (Rev. 2:2, Rev. 2:9, Rev. 2:19; Rev. 3:8). Those who die in the Lord are blessed because “their works follow with them” (Rev. 14:13).

On the last great judgment day, God will render unto every man “according to their works, whether they be good or evil” (Eccl. 12:14; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12).

It is because of a present and future judgment that we must avoid the works of the flesh … the works of darkness … the works of the devil. Abstaining from all evil works is critical to the believer.

In the light of what the new covenant has to say about the importance of good works – works of faith – works that justify (James 2:24) – it seems strange that anyone would say that works have nothing to do with salvation … unless, of course, he is blinded by denominational dogma.

The Bible does warn us that we cannot live to maturity and be sinless (Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:2-6). “All sin and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). It also tells us the works of the Law of Moses cannot save us (Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:10). If eternal salvation could come by the Mosaic Law, then the death of Jesus was needless, because the people had that law for 1,500 years before Jesus was born of a woman (Gal. 2:21). We are also told that we cannot save ourselves by austerities (Col. 2:18).

Some honest person may be misled into wrongly supposing that

when the Bible tells us we cannot be saved by our own works because it is not possible for us to live without sin – sooner or later all will sin and fall short of God's glory, that it is saying that even works of faith and righteousness – works of God – do not save. Also some will read Bible passages which say that the works of the Law of Moses cannot save, and mistakenly conclude that works have nothing to do with salvation. This study should clear that up because it gives indisputable proof that there is no justification without works.

It is indisputably true that works are necessary to justification (James 2:24), but it is also true that some works cannot save – the work of living a perfectly sinless life – the work of devising our own scheme of redemption – the works of the Law of Moses – the works of darkness, which are the works of Satan.

So, it is true that works both save us and have nothing to do with our salvation, depending on what kind of works you are talking about.

It is not possible for a reasonable adult to be sinless and therefore, in this sense, one cannot save himself by his own works. We cannot be saved by the works of Satan, nor by the works of the Law of Moses, nor by any human invention. Such works have no power to save and many of them are an offense to God.

Still, it is true that the work of faith (the works produced by faith, see Rom. 1:5; Rom. 16:26), bring the sinner into a right relationship with his Creator, help to maintain that relationship, and will one day be the reason for his promotion to glory (Matt. 25:31-46). To say that works have nothing to do with salvation is to fly in the face of Bible teaching.

P.O. Box 690192
Houston, TX 77269-0192

It’s Up to Me and to You

By Hugo McCord
Vol. 116, No. 11

Many gifts from God, as our lives, as the air we breathe, are absolutely free. But whether or not we are (1) thankful to God and (2) live for him and for others is wholly in our hands. It’s up to me and to you.

Thankfulness

Some “believe that he [God] is” but are not “thankful” to him (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:21). To be thankful (says Webster) is to be “impressed with a sense of kindness received,” to be “ready to acknowledge it,” to be “grateful.”

To be thankless (says Webster) is “not feeling or expressing thanks, not acknowledging favors,” and Webster quotes Shakespeare, “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child.”

After Jesus had healed ten men of leprosy, only one of them, a Samaritan, “when he saw that he was healed turned back and praised God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at the feet of Jesus, giving him thanks” (Luke 17:16). Jesus was shocked that the nine Jews were thankless, and he asked, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was none found to return to give God the glory except this foreigner?” (Luke 17: 17-18).

A psalm written 3,000 years ago is timeless:

> *Shout joyfully to Yahweh, all the earth. Serve Yahweh with gladness. Come before him with singing. Know that Yahweh, he*

> *is God. He made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful to him, and bless his name, for Yahweh is good, his kindness is everlasting, and his faithfulness is from generation to generation (Psa. 100).*

Paul was grateful "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim. 1:15), "who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20), exclaiming about Jesus, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable [indescribable, inexpressible, unutterable] gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

All Christians are exhorted, "Always give thanks to God, even the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20); "Give thanks for everything, which is God's will in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

Living for Others

Jesus not only died for others (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15), but he is a prime example of living for others. "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

To believing, penitent hearts (Acts 16:31; 2:38), as their bodies are raised from the water of baptism (Acts 10:47; Col. 2:12), Christ is their everything (Col. 3:11).

Redeemed sinners ("all have sinned," Rom. 3:23) realize that if "one died for all, then all had died" (2 Cor. 5:14), "and since he died for all, the living should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:15).

Living for the Lord includes daily Bible reading (Col. 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:2), daily praying (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17), a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), a weekly

contribution (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and living for others as “living sacrifices” (Rom. 12:1), being “ready for every good work” (Titus 3:1, 8, 14).

No matter how selfish and self-centered a sinner was before his baptism, no longer does a Christian live “to himself” (Rom. 14:7). Every morning, as Jesus “went about doing good,” on the mind of every Christian is, “what can I do today to help somebody?”

Those who live for Jesus not only live to serve other Christians, but they look for opportunities to serve non-Christians, as Paul taught: “Therefore, as we have an opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10), “contributing to the needs of the saints, showing love to strangers” (Rom. 12:13).

The first ones at Corinth in A.D. 51, “hearing, believing,” and being “baptized,” were “the household of Stephanas” (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 16:15); apparently Stephanas himself and his wife had children old enough to believe.

Their conversion was more than “joining a church.” Theirs was a life-long commitment to live for Jesus and to live for others. Six years later (A.D. 57) Paul wrote of them: “They have set themselves to serve the saints” (1 Cor. 16:15). The KJV says that “they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” The word addict means to give oneself over to a thing, and generally, says Webster, in a bad sense. The word is used in reference to alcoholics or those given over to drugs. But the KJV used the word in a good sense, that the Stephanas family addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

Sadly, some Christians allow selfishness to take over, and live only for themselves. Phygelus and Hermogenes “deserted” Paul (2 Tim. 1:15).

Demas, who had been one of Paul’s “fellow workers” (Phil. 24)

“deserted me,” said Paul, “having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10).

On the other hand, most Christians crucify selfishness, living for their Lord and for others: “Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).

During Paul’s three years at Ephesus (A.D. 54-57) a Christian by the name of Onesiphorus “served” Paul in such a way that he could say to Timothy that “you know better than I the ways he served me in Ephesus” (2 Tim. 1:18).

Then later, during Paul’s last day in “chains” in the Mamertine Prison in Rome (A.D. 67-68), for some reason Onesiphorus was in Rome (2 Tim. 1:16-17), over 600 miles away from his home in Ephesus, and somehow he knew that Paul was there. The Mamertine Prison is a three-quarter cellar with a tiny window opening toward a cemetery.

In A.D. 67 Paul wrote, “When he [Onesiphorus] was in Rome, he searched diligently and found me. …He often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains” (2 Tim. 1:16-17).

Paul appreciated his good friend, and, apparently after Onesiphorus died, Paul penned two prayers about him in a letter to Timothy: “May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus,” and “May the Lord grant that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day” (2 Tim. 4:16, 18), and Paul asked Timothy to greet “the family of Onesiphorus” (2 Tim. 4:19).

An unselfish Christian lady in Bartlesville, Okla., a member of the Sixth and Dewey congregation, showed no self-pity when paralysis made her bedfast. She had never missed a Bible class or a church service until she became bedfast. Then she asked that the names of the Sunday morning auditorium Bible class absentees be sent to her every Monday morning. With her telephone in bed she called each absentee. I preached for the Sixth and Dewey congregation six years (195 1-57), and I am

sorry I have forgotten the name of the bedfast Christian of whom it could be said, “She has done what she could” (Mark 14:8). She was a good example for every church member.

I am thankful that the Lord, though he does not need it, has “a book of remembrance … written before him, for them who reverenced Yahweh, and who thought about his name” (Mal. 3:16), “whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:3).

In conclusion, “None of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Whether, therefore, we live or die, we belong to the Lord” (Rom. 14:7-8).

5535 E. Evergreen, #7505
Vancouver, WA 98661