

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT RECEIVED IN HIS FULNESS AT THE TIME OF CONVERSION?

By Peter Wiseman

Is the Holy Spirit received as the gift of God the Father (Luke 24:49) through His Son (Acts 2:33) at the time of the "new birth," or by a subsequent experience as to time?

Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:9, appear to be the chief passages used to support the former position.

There is no question concerning the fact that the Holy Spirit bears a close relationship to the regenerated person, for the "new birth" is of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-6), as is "sanctification" (Romans 15:16): but the question remains, what is that relationship? Does it include the gift of the Holy Spirit in His fulness? Much emphasis is laid upon the text in question, Galatians 4:6, to prove it does.

While there could not be any division in the personality of the Holy Spirit, it is well to realize that relationships with the same person may greatly differ. One may know Christ, for instance, as the Saving Christ, and not know Him as the sanctifying Christ or the healing Christ; one may know Him historically and not know Him experientially; and there are degrees of a more intimate knowledge of Him. In like manner, one may know the Holy Spirit in His regenerating office, assuring, and leading, and yet not know Him in the gloriousness of the gift of His fullness. A human analogy, though inadequate, we know, may be seen in the fact that a person may come to one country from another in quite different offices; as a private citizen, as a counsellor or as an ambassador with all the authority and power of his government and country which he represents. In Galatians 4:6: "Because ye are sons," may suggest the basis upon, or reason, why the Spirit was thus sent forth, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth His Spirit." Considering the context there is revealed a new aspect of the Trinity to the redeemed soul: "God sent forth His Son" and "God sent forth His Spirit" (vs. 4-6). So the Spirit's relationship is expressed in Romans 8:15, received as the Spirit "not of bondage again to fear," but of "adoption whereby we cry Abba Father." This chapter of Romans is a discussion on the Holy Spirit's work and office, and verse nine is one of the aspects of the Holy Spirit's relationship to a believing soul. If one has not the life-giving Spirit, he is none of His, if one has not the mortifying Spirit (v. 13), he is none of His: and so on

through the many relationships of the Spirit revealed in the chapter.

As to the gift of the Holy Ghost being for believers there can be no question. The band of apostles and disciples in the upper room was truly a band of believers, a noble band indeed. Our Lord's intercessory prayer, recorded in John 17, would prove this. There are at least ten proofs enumerated in this prayer in support of the vital and Christian experience of His apostles and disciples. The Spirit in which they went to the upper room (Luke 24:52-53) is truly Christian. When the Holy Spirit fell upon them, they were "sitting" (Acts 2:2), "praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53). The Ephesians, who received the Holy Spirit, were believers (Acts 19:1-4), so were the converts at Samaria (Acts 8:12-17), and the same must be said about the house of Cornelius (Acts 9:34-48), for "Cornelius was a just man and one that feareth God with all his house." He prayed to God always (Acts 10:2-22). His prayer was heard. He had memorialized the throne of God by "prayer" and "alms" (Acts 10:31).

An objection will, very likely, arise here on the basis of Acts 11:13-14: "Tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved." In chapter 10:3-6, the words of an angel to Cornelius concerning Peter were, "He shall tell thee what thou **oughtest to do.**" It seems to us that in view of what the Word says concerning the character of Cornelius and the fact that the blessed Holy Spirit was given to him and his group as He was given to the apostles and disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 15:8-9); it would be good exegesis to interpret Acts 11:14 in the light of Acts 10:6. Anyway, is it not a fact that there is such a thing as "saved to the uttermost"? (Hebrews 7:25).

Our Lord Himself was very emphatic on the distinction in question, when He said to His apostles and disciples, "Even the Spirit of truth whom the world **cannot** receive, because it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him" (John 14:17). The world can, if it would receive Christ, for it reads, "Whosoever will may come"; but it (the world) cannot receive the comforter. Indeed, it is a Biblical and historical fact that Christian believers, subsequent to their "new birth" experience, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of God

blessing upon the places where he was to preach the Gospel message.

The Church at Colosse was privileged to have such a prayer-warrior, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you"—he was then at Rome, visiting the imprisoned Apostle, but his heart burned for his brethren at home—"always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect in all the will of God." No more comprehensive objective is stated in the New Testament than the spiritual yearning of this man of God for his fellow servants, persistently and perseveringly presented before the throne of God.

Such a ministry results from close likeness to our great High Priest who, though absent in person from His brethren, bears them on His heart in unceasing supplication before the Mercy Seat on high.—The Alliance Weekly.

the Father for the world was His Son (John 3:16); the gift of God the Father (Luke 24:49), through His Son (Acts 2:33), as shed forth on the day of pentecost, was for the church. The unconverted **receives** Christ, the believers receive the Holy Ghost: "As many as **received** Him (Christ) to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). To the believers (brethren) at Ephesus, the question is, "Have ye **received** the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:1-2). The sinner receives Christ for salvation from sin, the believer receives the gift of the Holy Ghost for purification (Acts 15:8-9), guidance, comfort (John 16:13-14), power (Acts 1:8) and all that this glorious Paraclete brings to the human soul when He is thus received. After the people of Samaria had "received the Word of God" and were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," "they **received** the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:12-17).

Thus: The clearly revealed fact that whatever may be said about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the new born soul, the regenerated, the fact remains that believers may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in His glorious fulness for purity and power. The question for believers is, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:1-2). The order has been and still is, first, "birth" then "baptism." The order may be illustrated further from the statement of John, "I baptize you with water. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire" (Matt. 3:21). I give you the material baptism, He the spiritual. I **give** you the outward, He will give you the inward. I give you the sign, He **will** give you its true meaning. I baptize with water, He with the Spirit.

This distinction is what Dr. A. B. Simpson had in mind when he said: "Regeneration makes us the subject of the Holy Spirit's working but Sanctification makes us temples of the Holy Spirit's indwelling." In regeneration the Spirit is working upon us as the builder of the house; in sanctification He has become the resident of the dwelling and enters to abide as our guest, or, rather, as our host, while we dwell in Him in the fellowship of the Spirit.

"Regeneration comes to us through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour; sanctification comes to us through full surrender and faith in the incoming and indwelling of the comforter. It is as we yield ourselves to God and give Him the right of way, without a single reservation, that He accepts the offering and makes us His abode."*

WHO IS THE ARCHITECT OF YOUR LIFE

An architect complains that many of his clients come and ask him to design a house for them, only to let him speedily discover that they have already designed it for themselves. What they really want is the sanction of their own plan, and the satisfaction of seeing him draw on paper what they have fully in their own minds.

In very much the same fashion we often go to the great Architect with our lives. We ask for wisdom and guidance, like Solomon, but we have already planned how we will build our fortunes and shape our course; and it is not His way we are seeking but His approval of ours.—Selected.

TRAVAILING FOR SOULS . . .

Intense burden for the lost is a rare experience; yet it is this that makes the truly great pastor, evangelist, or missionary.

St. Paul wrote to the backsliding Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," referring to the deep earnestness of spirit with which he waited on God in prayer for their deliverance from the blinding errors by which they had been led astray.

John Welch would rise from his bed in the cold of the night, throw about him a plaid, and wrestle with strong crying for those in his parish who were resisting the truth. Charles G. Finney, during the most successful of his mighty campaigns of evangelism, was backed by individual intercessors of divine