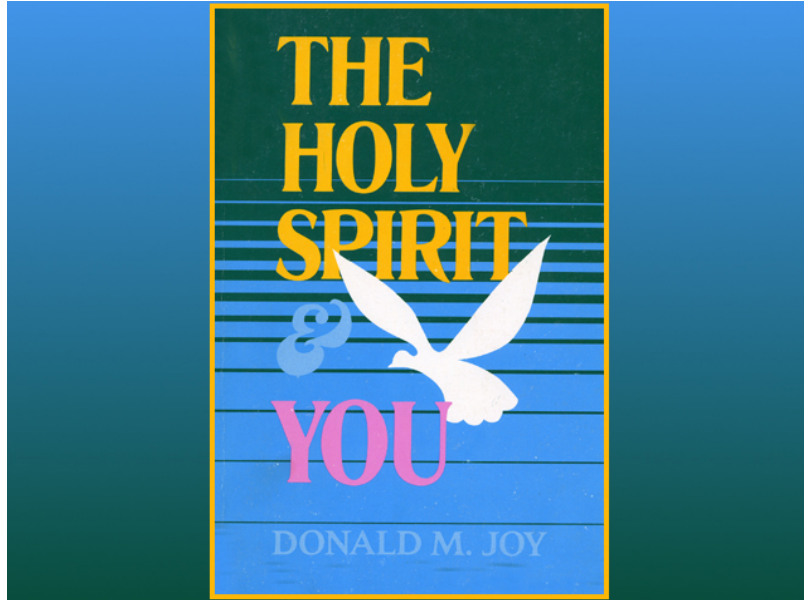


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**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU
By Donald M. Joy**



**Beacon Hill Press Of Kansas City
Kansas City, Missouri**

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Revised edition, 1978**

ISBN: 0-8341-0530-6

Printed in the United States of America

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ABOUT THIS DIGITAL EDITION

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BACK COVER TEXT

About This Book

"The Holy Spirit... did not enter history to haunt graveyards, or to commune with dead saints. He entered history to walk right into the hungry cavern inside men, and in doing so to change the world."

In these words, Dr. Joy states the thesis of his refreshingly written book on the Holy Spirit and His relationship to man. In armchair language he discusses such pertinent questions as: Where is the Holy Spirit? What does He do? What can He mean to us today?

About The Author

Donald M. Joy served the Free Methodist Church for several years in its curriculum development ministries. During that time he also presided over the multi-denominational Aldersgate curriculum development committees. More recently he has been appointed to the faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary as professor of human development and Christian education. He also directs the Center for the Study of Children, Conscience, and the Family.

* * * * *

DEDICATION

To My Parents, Marvin and Marie Joy whose example and instruction made "life on the track" both vivid and appealing.

* * * * *

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Anyone setting about to write a book could have no greater fortune than to have friends who are also critics. Helen E. Hull, Lloyd H. Knox, and D. Ivan Timm have played magnificently that dual role for me during the preparation of the manuscript for this book. I depended upon Miss Hull's journalistic acumen to keep me "communicating" page after page; she read each chapter within hours after the completion of the rough draft. Dr. Knox provided the critical eye of the practical theologian. Both he and Miss Hull are colleagues of mine; they are also honest. "Ike" is one of my finest links with "the generation that follows." Many refinements in the manuscript can be credited directly to his probing collegiate questions and his keen insights.

Don Ring and Alvin Denney, two other friends, furnished me with valuable suggestions. Don, a highly competent electronics technician, read the manuscript, judging its relevance and clarity for today's world. Representing that portion of the reading audience which is inquiring, Alvin gave the book a thoughtful and critical reading.

Roy W. Howell and Royal S. Nelson, two colleagues who encouraged me to write this book, were good enough to read the manuscript and to make suggestions for refinements. Harold C. Mason, my beloved seminary mentor, also read the manuscript and made helpful suggestions.

The line drawings which appear throughout the book are based upon artwork created by Allan Eitzen for illustrating a serialization of the manuscript in Light and Life Evangel. His skill as an artist and his sensitivity to Christian values combined to bring into existence the fresh concrete expressions of rather abstract doctrinal ideas.

Not everyone who read the manuscript was as helpful or as enthusiastic as those I mention; a few may have hoped that it would not be published. If so, I am sympathetic with them; sometimes I think I could have written better, myself.

*** * * * ***

INTRODUCTION

While driving through the city of Dallas to Oak Cliff one rainy night, I was fairly paralyzed to read a crudely lettered, but large, sign nailed to the side of a boxy, rundown church. The irregular letters, complete with an "S" scrawled backward, read, "REVIVAL: HOLY GHOST EVERY NIGHT." I recalled that only moments before, I had seen a lawn sign before an ivy-covered church. The sign had read, "LET'S OBSERVE PENTECOST." In a few minutes I was to be participating in a service in which the speaker would be telling us, "The Holy Spirit is what we need. Jesus knew we would need him; that is why God decided to send the Holy Spirit."

Now that may have been an exceptional night of exposure on the subject of the Holy Spirit, but I conclude from my further observations that what I saw and heard might have been noted almost anywhere in North America. Not only does there seem to be great popular interest in the study of the Holy Spirit, but more often than not those who discuss this important subject tend to get off center in one of three ways.

The cultic. "Revival: Holy Ghost Every Night" emphasizes some phenomenon which is believed to have crowd-drawing power. That emphasis completely misses the central truth about the Holy Spirit. The cultist promises observers a show. He uses the Holy Spirit (or some spirit at least) as a commodity to sell to a gullible

public. Shades of Simon the sorcerer! I could only guess what entertaining phenomenon the Dallas cult was advertising -- in Kentucky it might have been snake handling! One gets the idea that the cultist is a sort of soda jerk who at a divine snack bar dispenses, at the whim of his own will, the Holy Ghost.

The traditional. "Let's Observe Pentecost" tips the hat as an act of courtesy to the church calendar. Once a year we will listen to a sermon on the Holy Spirit, read a responsive selection from Acts 2, sing "Holy Ghost with Light Divine," recite in the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," and that will take care of that. The traditionalist is glad to devote one day of the year to the Holy Spirit, but he hopes that no one will raise embarrassing questions about scripture passages that describe the Spirit's work in the lives of believers. He might consider expanding Christmas and Easter observances to two weeks or more -- God was giving the gifts then -- but Pentecost demands that men surrender; let's keep the observance brief and quiet.

The superficial. "The Holy Spirit came after Christ left the earth" tends to compartmentalize history -- even the Trinity. The superficialist knows that something important needs to be said about the Holy Spirit. ("You can't go wrong when you preach on the Holy Spirit.") He often lacks the accurate knowledge of the traditionalist, yet he carefully avoids stooping to the shoddy concepts and sensational techniques of the cultist. The superficialist is likely to avoid Old Testament passages that speak of the Holy Spirit's coming upon prophets. He may comment about John the Baptist's being filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, "This is a problem passage. It doesn't seem that this could have been possible since the Holy Spirit had not yet come." The speaker's naivete, or ignorance, may give you the impression that he thinks of the Holy Spirit as a crash program invention -- or trick up the sleeve -- to get out of the jam created when Jesus met with a premature death.

You may object that I have overdrawn the off-center emphases. You are right. Yet you may have illustrations you could share which would make these seem pale.

In the chapters which follow, I am asking you to take a chair far enough back to get a wide-angle view of the Holy Spirit and his work throughout history. The unbroken line I want you to see extends from the beginning of time and on out into the future. The basic blueprint for man, I hope to show you, remains the same today -- since Pentecost -- as it was at the creation; history is all of one piece. I will provide few details, few theories or arguments for theories, but many word pictures to help you get into your head some of the same ideas that were in mine when I wrote. But remember that pictures are almost always weaker than the idea they illustrate.

All of what I will try to say will be cast in "living room" style, for many of the pictures were first conceived in fireside dialogues, sometimes long and late, with my young high school and college friends.

The total picture that will emerge as you read will provide for you only a perspective from which you may see -- and be compelled to accept it -- or fail to see the grand design. The gist of what I have to say is this:

From the moment that man became a living soul he has possessed a capacity for being filled with God's Spirit. When man, either racially or individually, has chosen to entertain in his inner capacity some unworthy occupant, he has been impoverished, lonely, and ignoble, or at best spiritually sterile. History unfolds the account of God's patient trek with mankind, the trek which made it possible for man to return at last to fellowship with God by means of the inner presence of the Holy Spirit -- to get "back on the track." Man is truly normal only when he is, in fact, the "temple of the Holy Ghost."

All else that follows will be a sort of commentary upon that statement.

*** * * * ***

01 -- WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

How can the Christian remnant recover an apostolic initiative in witnessing to the world?

Not by magic; not by a clever trick; not by mechanical techniques which call for a special conference at six in the morning and another at eleven; not by many of the ways suggested in American theological literature, with their emphasis on methods and techniques of worship and of invoking the Holy Spirit; not by mass organization simply. But especially by ardent prayer for the Holy Spirit to come mightily into the hearts of men. -- Charles Malik, "A Civilization at Bay"¹

Do people keep midnight appointments with the Holy Spirit as our childish minds once envisioned that witches and goblins met with phantom spirits in haunted houses? Where is the Holy Spirit? Who communicates with him? What does he do?

The Spirit of God, in some ways at least, is like the wind.² Jesus told Nicodemus that the person who was "born of the Spirit" would, like the wind, have a power that was recognizable to other persons, but whose source would be invisible. There is no "holy phantom" hovering behind haunted houses. If you get the point of what Jesus was saying, you will understand that the Holy Spirit would be more accurately described as a hidden dynamo than as a spooky phantom. What is more, there is no evidence that the Holy Spirit roams about the earth detached from humans. In fact, he is clearly related to human beings in all of his work.

God's Spirit is at work in the world -- in people and through people. Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit (the "Comforter" or "Counselor") would abide with believers forever, that he would dwell with them, and be in them.⁸ He did not

enter history to haunt graveyards or to commune with dead saints. He entered history to walk right into the hungry cavern inside men, and in doing so to change the men and to change the world.

A Paradox

When we look carefully at what Jesus Christ said about the work of the Holy Spirit, we see a paradox -- an apparent contradiction. Jesus said that the world could not receive the Holy Spirit -- that is, the unbelievers in the world could not receive him.⁴ Jesus also eliminated "the world" from those for whom he prayed,⁵ making it seem that he was not concerned about unbelievers. Yet all of Jesus' moving prayer in John 17 focuses upon one great concern: "That the world may believe," ⁶ and "that the world may know." ⁷ The solution to the apparent contradiction is not hard to find. The Holy Spirit works in and through believers; believers invade the world. When this happens, people will say, "Did you hear about Jones's speech last night at the town meeting? If he hadn't risen to the occasion, our city would have been badly hurt by the proposed recommendation." But Jones knows, and some of the people who know him do too, that the Holy Spirit was the real speaker at the town meeting. Or, you may find yourself saying, "I think something must be done to change the moral climate of our community. I'm not very influential, but by the power of the Holy Spirit whose presence I know, I will do what I can." And you will do something -- something effective.

Suppose you feel the great weight of the world's wickedness, and you are pained to think of the suffering that takes place in remote places on the globe. You may be tempted to pray, "O God, by the might of thy Holy Spirit, straighten out world affairs and relieve suffering in the world." But you would pray more in the mood of Jesus' teachings about the Holy Spirit if you were to pray, "Father, work today through thy children who are in strategic places in the world. Let them be effective instruments of thy strong Spirit." Jesus Christ, before he left the earth, told of three specific kinds of work the Holy Spirit would do, through Christians, in the world. To these tasks we now turn.

Pinpointing Sin

Of the three tasks Jesus mentioned in John 16:8-11, the first and, we may conclude, the most important one is the task of pinpointing sin. That is, the Holy Spirit, by making a diagnosis of a person's needs, will isolate the virus that is making him sick. What Jesus said about this task is simply that when the Holy Spirit comes into the world (in and through Christians), he will reprove (convince or convict) the world of sin because they believe not on Christ.^s Although this announcement sounds very simple, it is not an easy task. The annoying sins of people are their undisciplined speech habits and their acts of indulgence. It is not surprising, then, that a great deal of energy is spent by Christians trying to correct other people's vocabularies and restraining others from acts of debauchery. Of all people on earth, Christians should be expected to be the persons most sensitive to

the use of profanity, to low behavior, and to habits of dissipation. Yet, according to Jesus' clear words, the task confronting persons who are the instruments of the Holy Spirit is not that of reforming their friends, but of diagnosing their ailment. "Pinpoint their sin," it is as if Jesus were saying. "All sin, at last, is rooted in their rejection of their Saviour and Lord."

You may sometime be asked by an acquaintance, "Do you think that God will send me to hell for my profanity?" or, "Will I be damned for drinking beer?" or, "Will I be lost because I harvested my crops on Sunday?" The Holy Spirit's answer, through you, would probably be, "No, Frank (or Frances, or whoever), if you find yourself in eternity without God, it will not be because you swore (or drank, or violated the Lord's Day); it will be because you have rejected Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord." When a person's behavior is evil, it is because it springs from a rotten inner well. Offensive behavior (swearing, drinking, violating the Lord's Day) is a by-product of sin. The all-inclusive sin is rejection of the claims of Christ.

Consider what all of this means in your community. Suppose that you are a Christian, an instrument of God's Spirit in your community. Suppose, further, that your neighbor, Vic, has a vile temper, a voice like a fog horn, and a vocabulary learned at sea. Vic will probably make you uncomfortable by his offensive language and his outbursts of temper. He may lash out at other members of his family, demonstrating that he does not highly regard the worth and dignity of persons. He may disturb the quietude of the community and cause you and other neighbors to blush for his lack of discretion and civility. He may act out of a complete lack of respect for himself. Vic may leave no doubt that he defies the God whose name he shouts in anger. You may cringe at the thoughts that your children must hear his invectives. Yet, in spite of all of this, you will miss your real responsibility if you deal with Vic only about his temper and his profanity. These are mere symptoms of what is really wrong with Vic. Your responsibility is to give him Christ. You might say something like this to him: "Vic, have you ever thought about your responsibility toward God? I notice that you are familiar with his name. What have you done about responding to the claims he has upon you, and to the offer of new life he has made to you through Jesus Christ?"

If you had a rash of hives and went to your doctor for relief, he might prescribe medicine for the hives and tell you that he hoped you would be more comfortable. But, since the hives are only a symptom of some internal imbalance or disorder, you would lose respect for your physician if he ignored the real cause of your misery. Sin is something like that internal imbalance. It is a central disease which can be treated only internally -- at the point where man makes his response to Christ. Unfortunately, the outward evidences of that internal sin are easily seen and thus draw the attention of other persons. The symptoms bother other people more than the internal imbalance does. From the viewpoint from which God sees a man, however (if we can try to see things from that direction), the truly great tragedy is that a person would attempt to live in rebellion against God, or without

responding to Christ's invitation to live. The Holy Spirit brings the real trouble of men into clear focus: They have rejected Christ.

Upholding Righteousness

The second responsibility which rests upon persons who are instruments of God's Spirit is that they must convince the world of righteousness, because Christ has gone to his Father and is no longer seen by men? As long as Christ was physically present in the world for men to see, everyone who saw him got a clear revelation of what God was like. Jesus taught men about God, and he lived God's kind of life before those whom he taught. Jesus urged men to act out of motives of love, and he demonstrated love. In fact, the testimony of Christ's life as a true demonstration, or standard, of holy living is an integral part of his total task of saving men from sin and of restoring them to a right relationship with their creator. Christ was an effective example (although he was much more than that) because he was truly man. There were undoubtedly other ways in which God could have revealed himself, but no other way could have demonstrated how human life was meant to be lived.¹⁰

Because Jesus Christ was God's living yardstick in the world, Christ was concerned that some effective kind of yardstick be left in the world for the benefit of future generations. Now no phantom spook could be a yardstick for future generations of people. That role could be filled only by some flesh-and-blood yardstick -- one that could demonstrate the whole range of human capacities. This standard, yardstick, or example is part of the witness of the person in whom God's Spirit works. This phase of witnessing involves something different from talking; it suggests that the person is a living testimony of what God can do in a human being. All of this makes sense when you realize that "the world" is where the child of God lives, and that it is the same world which needs the yardstick that reveals what life at its best might be. So the Holy Spirit, in the Christian, offers to the world a reliable testimony of righteousness. This testimony is important in a world where few things are constant -- unchanging. The Christian -- the instrument of God's Spirit -- is like a compass upon which a lost man can depend. The Christian should be a reminder that life can have meaning, that a man who has rejected God can be transformed into a person whose life is pure and radiant. What is more, Christ's extension of righteousness as a standard in the world is multiplied (the potential is infinite) by the number of persons who are willing instruments of his Spirit. Imagine having such a compass -- like a streetlight or a city clock -- on every corner!

Sometimes you might think, however, that these Spirit-filled persons are found only in churches, seminaries, and special religious institutions. As a matter of fact, Jesus Christ seems to have made it quite clear that their task would take them into the world. Christians are to live in the world, though they do not share its scale of values (are not "of the world"). Jesus prayed not that believers be taken out of the world, but that they be kept from evil while in the world.¹¹ Whenever a believer withdraws from the life of the community, and thus from his contact with

unbelievers, he is violating the plan of Christ. The result is inevitable: He becomes ingrown and sterile. Likewise, any congregation or denomination that loses contact with the world forfeits its vitality.

Christ's kind of righteousness is worldly righteousness. Sometimes we recommend that a man change employment when he is converted "so that the environment will be better" or "so that he can be with Christians." Christ seems never to have recommended spiritual greenhouses for young believers. The witness of a man's transformation is for the benefit of the world. The entire burden of Christ's prayer in John 17 is "that the world may believe" and "know."¹²

The earnest believer, although he is Christ's continuing witness of righteousness, is rarely conscious of the fact that he is a yardstick in the world. And when this fact does break in upon him, he is overwhelmed by the thought of his responsibility as Christ's ambassador. He never "grandstands." He never parades. He has no time for polishing his armor. He shines as a light in the world, but this radiance is a by-product of his deep commitment to Christ and of his surrender to the purging and empowering work of the Holy Spirit in him. The radiant Christian, through whom the Spirit of God maintains a standard of righteousness in the world, disturbs men who try to live without God. His radiance and peace awaken a great restlessness in men who grovel in sin, rejecting Christ.

Proclaiming Deliverance

The third task which Jesus Christ assigned to the Holy Spirit was to proclaim the joyous news that men need not be slaves of Satan. Jesus spoke of this responsibility as that of proclaiming "judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."¹³ When you think of judgment, you usually think of punishment. But this kind of judgment is the kind which is "announced," not the kind that is "passed." This is news of a triumphant victory. Jesus is saying, to paraphrase the actual words, "Tell the whole world that sin has been exposed for the empty shell that it is because Satan has been defeated." That is, the final triumph of righteousness over evil is clearly a reality because Satan has been brought to a showdown and has been defeated.

When Jesus spoke those words about the defeat of Satan, "the prince of this world," they were a promise that had not yet come true. In fact, the three tasks which he assigned to the Holy Spirit (and believers) were tasks that were closely related to his approaching death, resurrection, and ascension. First, the sin of unbelief would emerge as the fatal, all-inclusive sin only after his saving work was finished. Up to the moment it was completed he could pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."¹⁴ Second, the need for a continuing standard of righteousness in the world would become necessary only after he had terminated his earthly ministry. And third, his victory over the "prince of this world" was not a completed fact until resurrection morning.

There was a power struggle on the darkest day in the history of the world. On that day Satan brought to the battlefield the deadliest resources available to him. Jealousy, greed, and hatred were used to the fullest possible extent. Deceit and infidelity were present. The whole earth seemed to stagger under the feet of men who violated every law built into the universe. The earth trembled; rocks were shattered.¹⁵ Justice was ignored. Life was cheap. On the lonely hillside blood ran down. Death, Satan's fiercest weapon, the one whose blows no man had ever survived, finally came to the scene.

Against such a display of power, the resources of heaven looked pale and weak. As you read the accounts of the events of that day, as recorded in the four Gospels, the situation looks hopeless. To that battlefield God brought love, kindness, loyal friendship, hope, and truth. But God brought more; he brought the best resource of heaven -- his Son, Jesus Christ. There was only one person in no-man's-land; it was Jesus Christ. He took the full force of the combined weapons of hell.

When, after three hours of darkness in the middle of the day, the light appeared, all of the evidence indicated that Satan had won the battle. All of the hope drained out of people who had once lived by hope. Love, which once had been real, in the face of thorns and crosses now seemed an empty idea. Hatred, anger, and cruelty were the real powers in the world. But God had not yet written the final chapter of the drama.

In Joseph's garden, in the quietness of early morning, without great display of noise or power, the stone door of a tomb rolled away from the mouth of a grave, and Jesus Christ came forth, bodily, alive forever.

The same hinged thumbs and toes, the same valved heart that -- pierced -- died, withered, paused, and then regathered out of enduring Might new strength to inclose.¹⁶

He conquered the last enemy of man -- death. Thus was climaxed a conflict between sin and righteousness. Sin had dogged the feet of man, bringing misery and enslavement, but One had come who had dealt a death blow ("bruise thy head") to Satan.¹⁷

"Tell the world," Jesus seems to be saying in John 16: 11, "tell those who stagger under a load of guilt and sin that they can lay down their load and walk upright as free men." Men who have been enslaved need no longer be slaves. This is the good news the Holy Spirit shares with the world through believers. Tell the world!

The Holy Spirit is the greatest resource available to Christians today. Although the Holy Spirit was given to believers, he works in them for the benefit of the world. This paradox is consistent with another paradox: Christians do not live

for themselves, but for others. In the world the Holy Spirit works through people to win other people from sin -- to bring them to a loving response to Christ. In the world Spirit-filled people shine forth as Christ's continuing standard of righteousness. And in the world Christians proclaim the good news that Christ is conqueror over Satan and that Christ can set men free from Satan, deliver them from their guilt of sin, and give them eternal life.

* * * * *

02 -- GOD'S DESIGN AND THE BREATH OF LIFE

Jesus said Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. -- Matt. 22:18-21, ASV

For good ye are and bad, and like to coins, Some true, some light, but every one of you Stamp'd with the image of the King. -- Alfred Lord Tennyson¹

What is the basis on which your most meaningful friendship rests? Chances are good that the basis is not chronological age, height, weight, or physical attractiveness. The best friendships are based upon commitment to similar values, aspiration for common goals, and the capacity to dream similar dreams. The intimate friendship in which you are involved bears at least a faint resemblance to the relationship that was established between man and God at the dawn of history.

Man in Creation

The first chapter of the book of Genesis gives us an account which places man in a significant place in the world. Only three times in that chapter is it recorded that "God created." First, God created the heaven and the earth. Second, God created living creatures and winged fowl. Third, God created man. God's other creative activities are described by the use of the verbs "made" or "said." Some portions of the creation were simply called into existence. The Hebrew word which is translated as "created" is used in the Bible only of God and implies something utterly beyond human imitation or comprehension.² And the three events which are associated with the use of the word "create" are acts of God which fall like roadblocks at points in the creation sequence at which distinctive characteristics appear. The first "create" accounts for the preparation of a planet habitable by living creatures. The second instance of the use of the term introduces moving forms of life, as distinguished from vegetation. The final "create" produces man and distinguishes him from all lower forms of life -- both vegetable and animal. Man was given responsibility for the management of his environment, for bringing the earth into productivity, and for populating the planet with persons.

Man's Kinship with the Earth

It is not surprising that when you look at man you see some traces of an identification which suggest that he bears a relationship to lower forms of life. Indeed, man is warm-blooded as are apes, horses, and dogs. Man has a central nervous system; is a vertebrate; uses senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell -- all of which are employed to some extent by many other creatures.

Man's common heritage with other creatures is clearly set forth in the Genesis narrative; all life is rooted in the earth. God called forth vegetation from the earth: "Let the earth bring forth grass." God called forth four-footed animals from the earth: "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind." And God "formed man of the dust of the ground."³ Man is related to the earth. He is involved in all life on this planet. Man depends upon the earth for his life. He carves out his existence from its surface. He earns his bread from its soil. He mines its ores and builds his civilization. He turns its resources into heat and power, Man cares for the earth, restores its natural resources, cultivates its vegetation, corrects its erosion, and rearranges its chemical balance to achieve productivity and to restore depleted soil. At last, man is swallowed up by the earth. God reminded the first man, "Thou [shalt] return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."⁴

If this were the whole picture of man, it would be a bleak one indeed. But it is only part of the description of man, and it is the smaller and least significant part at that.

God's Image and God's Breath

"So God created man in his own image."⁵ Many people have supposed that since God and man share the same image one need only to look into a mirror to see what kind of being God is. By this logic God is a flesh-and-blood person who walks about on two feet; is moderately hairy; possesses arms, hands, eyes, ears, and nose. Perhaps nothing could be further from the truth.

"And the Lord God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."⁶ It is easy for one to visualize this procedure as the original mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. That it was not the mere exchange of air hardly needs to be pointed out.

Both the "image of God" and "breath of life" are profound descriptions cast in word pictures understandable to humans; their meanings, however, lie far beyond what we normally see in the words "image" and "breath." As a first step toward understanding their meanings, you must observe that Genesis 1 and 2 describe the creation. The accounts report events from two different viewpoints. The first chapter speaks of sequence, order, and "days." Chapter 2 interprets the creation and sets man at its center and arranges all else about him. The concept of

"image" is the language of Genesis 1; "breath of life" is its equivalent in Genesis 2. Both terms pinpoint the distinguishing mark upon humans -- man is obviously different from other living creatures not because of his physical characteristics, but because he possesses God's image and God's breath.

If God's image is not what you can view in a mirror, what is it? We must conclude that it has to do with the nonphysical part of man. Dorothy Sayers suggests that when we look back within the verses of Genesis 1 to see what the writer of Genesis could have intended to convey by the report that man was made in God's image, "we find only the single assertion, 'God created.' The characteristic common to God and man is apparently that: the desire and the ability to make things."⁷ In the New Testament writings Paul mentions three further capacities which he identifies with the image of God. These are man's capacities for knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.⁸ It is an easy step, then, to conclude that for each of the moral and spiritual characteristics of God known to us there is a counterpart in man -- reflections of God's image. God is eternal; man senses that he is created for eternity. God is sovereign; man exercises self-determination. God is omnipotent; man is inclined to be a manager, to "have dominion." God is creative; man is a designer, an inventor, and a procreator. God is omniscient; man possesses capacities for memory, perception, and prediction.

The moral and spiritual capacities which God shared with man were a free gift. That is, God did not give man the power of intellectual activity and say, "You may have this so long as you walk with me in obedience and trust." Nor did God share his own creativity with humans on terms that were subject to cancellation. God did not say, "Be holy and I will light your imagination," nor, "Love me and I will give you the powers of sharing in creativity through reproduction." The magnificent powers God gave man were gifts with no strings. Their singular purpose was that they should be the basis upon which an intimate relationship with the Creator could exist. That purpose, however, could be ignored or rejected. Thus a human being might reject the claims of his Creator and yet possess intellectual brilliance, make a great discovery, invent an ingenious device, possess great artistic capacity, or perform with magnificent skill.

The "breath of life," while the equivalent of God's image in Genesis 1, suggests the means by which the "image of God" was imparted to man. Throughout Scripture, "breath" and "wind" are the word pictures used to describe the activity of the Spirit of God. God's inbreathing, then, is clearly the impartation of God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to man. Man, at the moment of God's inbreathing, "became a living soul."⁹ A creature, thus otherwise inextricably wedded to the earth, became a supra-physical being. Man is a physical being; but he is more than that -- he is a God-inbreathed creature. God's "breath of life" was so significant that man's true nature was made permanently supra-physical. A man's body undergoes change -- age alters it, perpetual renewal and restoration replace the body cells. Yet a man of thirty-five is essentially the same man he was at eighteen. His true identity remains with him. The permanent part of a man is the intangible part -- his character, his

moral foundation, his values, his commitments. These are, in the final analysis, the man.

Perhaps everyone, in some reflective moment, has suspected that his true identity lies somewhere beyond the reflection in a mirror or in the measurable quantity of cells that he places on the bathroom scales. Suppose that today you make a startling discovery, acquire additional mathematical skills, or have a severe fright. Yet tonight these real and "heavy" experiences and acquisitions will not be reflected in your weight or in your appearance. The moral and spiritual capacity implanted in man gives him the capacity for personality -- for being somebody. And that real person that is you is something deeper than the face you shave or the mass of molecules you put on the scales.

Yet many of the compelling attractions which come to you appeal to mere physical appetites. Indeed, most temptations which invite you to engage in behavior that is detrimental to your well-being appeal to physical appetites -- those capacities man shares with animals. The exotic advertising that calls you to Tahiti or Hawaii does not appeal to you on the basis that visiting those far-off places will stimulate you to moral excellence or contribute to your intelligence. Instead, the advertising commonly awakens lower appetites. The many voices of our culture cry out to modern man, "Come and be an animal. Forget that you were made for nobility, for excellence, and for communion with God. Slip out from under the responsibilities of being a human; follow your senses." When a man, originally meant to be a supra-physical person, responds to the invitations that thunder to his physical appetites, he may find in time that he has developed his animal side until his closest kinship is with the earth; his Godward side has shriveled and is all but gone. Of him it might truly be said, "He is a very fine, highly developed animal." But such a man has missed true humanity, for he was designed to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Values of the Very Good Life

The account of the creation closes with the creation of man and these words: "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."¹⁰ "Good," used in that sense, means complete -- fulfilling the purpose for which it was made. It does not mean that the creatures were behaving themselves well; it means they were complete, balanced, right for their environment. This kind of goodness is the equivalent of wholeness. Man's "image prints" from God had given him wonderful capacities, but in themselves they did not make man "very good." Indeed, men down through the ages have used God's gifts very badly. The imprint of God's image merely gives a man a capacity. That capacity may be turned to purposes that lead to tragedy or it may be filled with content that leads to great nobility, excellence, and contribution. A playwright may seduce audiences by his skillful weaving of a plot and by manipulating the emotions of the viewers; he is using for bad ends a capacity given him by God. Such a man is not the instrument of God's Spirit; he has completely missed the very good life, for the Spirit-inbreathed life is

distinguished by relationships that are full of meaning, that are enriching, and that make wholeness and holiness possible. The very good life which God designed is made up of three parts: a meaningful relationship to one's environment, enriching relationships with other persons, and a relationship of communion and communication with God.

The very good life is life that is thoroughly meaningful. God originally placed man in a position of dominion over his entire environment.¹¹ Then man had a clear sense of responsibility and purpose; but today man is frequently torn by a sense of frustration and meaninglessness. From any viewpoint, one of man's deep needs is for a sense of purpose. Perhaps half of the people today would admit that they are dissatisfied with their present employment. Social workers and clergymen working in the jungles of American cities report that boredom and meaninglessness are at the root of much drug addiction, prostitution, perversion, and crime. Meaninglessness eats away at university students, professional people, and factory workers. "I would be happy if I could just. . ." are words which hint at the deep restlessness of persons who hope to satisfy themselves by changing jobs or by buying some new gadget. Such persons rarely are able to diagnose their real need. If you were to say to a friend who was plagued by meaninglessness, "Would you rather have God's Spirit in your life or be given the keys to a new automobile?" he would probably take the automobile. The twentieth century list of "necessities of life" includes a couple of automobiles, but not "the breath of God." Yet by any thoughtful standard a sense of purpose and meaning to life is essential. The first man may not have been familiar with our gadgets, but his life was meaningful, and he had a sense of purpose in his environment. The very good life always includes the dimension of purpose.

Life that is very good includes a basis for right relationships with other human beings. In Genesis 2, where the account of the creation of man is expanded, Adam lives for a time in a state described by God as "not good." While he dressed and kept the garden, even after God created the other creatures, Adam was incomplete. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." While there is a great deal to be said about this in connection with marriage, perhaps the principal observation you should make is that Adam was incomplete (unwhole) without the fellowship of another human being. Every human being has a capacity that requires contact with other humans; every man needs to give, and every man needs to receive attention and enrichment from other persons. In that first state human relationships were based upon complete respect, trust, and love of each other. It was a naked society for a reason that we find virtually impossible to understand. Nakedness was symbolic of the fact that humans were complete, entire, and without need for any disguise. Men can never fully grasp or appreciate that symbol, for the race is indelibly etched with dangerous imaginations and lusts. A clothed, or disguised, society is one which symbolizes our distrust of other persons and of ourselves. Interpersonal relationships are a source of great enrichment for man, but they are also a potential source of great distress. In God's original design of the very good life, man would

have viewed other persons with great respect and trust, would have seen in them vast worth, and would have been sustained by his relationships with them.

The third aspect of the very good life, and undoubtedly the most significant, was that man lived in daily and intimate communion with God. That communion must have been the unimaginably intimate prototype of what we refer to as "the practice of the presence of God." In Genesis 3 we read of conversations with God while walking "in the garden in the cool of the day."¹² One gets the impression that God and man dreamed the same dreams together, envisioned together the happy task of developing this planet, and discussed abstract ideas in examining ultimate truth. This is the life that was; it was very good.

Today every man bears the "image-prints" of God, sometimes badly used and always marred. But men who live without God do not possess the values that make up the very good life. Their relationships with their environment, with other persons, and with God are defective with the result that they are plagued with great restlessness, frustration, and cosmic loneliness.

A young man described his sense of emptiness by saying, "I sometimes sit at a table in the nightclub looking into the full-length mirrors beyond where my friends are dancing. When I see myself in the mirror, I find myself wondering, Does everyone else here feel as empty as I do? Surely there is something missing in me; there must be something that would make sense and give purpose to my life."

In the grip of this deep hunger men grope for any available means by which to still the inner cry for satisfaction. Like victims of starvation, they consume content that is not even food, either not knowing -- or not caring -- that they are only compounding their distress. Many persons who are frustrated by a sense of meaninglessness turn to narcotics, drugs, and dope for temporary relief from the deep hunger that rises from the empty inner capacity designed for housing God's Spirit. Alcohol is undoubtedly the principal artificial spirit which men use to drown the pangs of emptiness, loneliness, and frustration. The apostle Paul observed the tendency of men to turn to inadequate sources for spiritual meaning when he wrote, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."¹³ Man, with his capacity for spirituality, will be filled with some Spirit -- either artificial or true.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection, he found them hidden away in fear. Although they had responded to his call to discipleship, they were obviously inadequate to meet the crisis that had come. In this intimate session with them, Jesus spoke a blessing of peace upon them, commanded them to be God's representatives in the world, and then "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."¹⁴ The whole event is remarkably like the inbreathing at the creation; it is the account of the re-creation of men after the image of God. Later, when a larger group was present, in fulfillment of God's promise through the prophet Joel that he would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh,¹⁵

there came "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. . . , and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."16

The presence of God's Spirit in man gives meaning to all of life; without that inner presence a man is certain to be frustrated. Not only does Scripture clearly record the fact that the Spirit of God comes to fill man, but also millions gladly acknowledge his presence as the filling, satisfying, driving force of their lives.

Man, formed of the dust of the earth and sharing a kinship with all life on this planet, is distinctively God's creature. When God imparted his own moral and spiritual capacities to man -- gave him the "breath of life"-man became a living soul. He is thus supra-physical.

God's imprint of his image upon man was a permanent act; the gifts were free ones. But when man expels the "breath of life" and sets himself up as his own god, all of life's relationships lose their value and their meaning; without God's Spirit life is essentially empty. Every person who is thus plagued by his frustration and emptiness, if he comes to a moment of true awakening, will cry out, "Thou hast made us for thyself; our souls are restless until they find their rest in thee."17

* * * * *

03 -- THE GREAT DISASTER

What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could "be like gods" -- could set up on their own as if they had created themselves - - be their own masters -- invent some sort of happiness [or themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history-money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery -- the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy. -- C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity1

Eden, "garden of delight"! That is the description of man's first home. Man had no electronic gadgets, no smartly designed furniture, no motor-driven machines; but he had what men of our generation rarely find -- man possessed fellowship with God. He performed daily tasks with sheer delight and lived in fear of nothing. This is the picture that emerges from Genesis 2. Genesis 3 introduces a different theme, a tragic one, into the history of the human race.

Seduction: "Yea, hath God said... ?"

It is ironic that it was a "beast of the field"2 which became the instrument of evil. Man's dominion was clearly over all beasts, yet out of that very kingdom over which he was to rule came one which would be the instrument of his enslavement. There is a sense in which this principle continues to plague us. Monstrous forces -- military, political, or moral -- are easier to oppose than are subtle inner tendencies

toward deterioration. You can knife down political heresy, or stab the temptation to lust or murder, more easily than you can resist participating in a slightly dishonest moneymaking scheme with your friend or letting your moral values slip little by little. Men and nations rarely are conquered from without; more often they collapse from within. In Genesis 3 the temptation was an "inside job," and was at once more effective and more disastrous than if some super-monster had swooped down to destroy man's Eden.

The logic was curvaceous and snakelike. How much more effective is insinuation than blasphemy! "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"³ How like the subtle persuasions of our teen-ager's friends, "Do your parents really expect you to be in by eleven o'clock?" The implication is, "Are they so prehistoric as that?" or, "You are being reared by rules out of the Dark Ages!" Insinuation plants uncertainty. Uncertainty is another word for doubt. We never entertain a temptation unless we doubt the necessity of living by the commands of God. This kind of doubt always goes one step further; it questions the right of God to require obedience of men. Perhaps it is true that before a man commits a sin he has to convince himself that in this case the act is right -- for him. Such logic is based upon a series of steps, the first of which is doubt.

The woman answered the serpent by rehearsing what she remembered of the command -- perhaps to see what God had really said. "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."⁴ She quoted the command a bit differently than it was given,⁵ and the command was given to man, not to woman. Yet she did not bother to consult the person to whom the command was given. (Perhaps Adam, knowing the feminine weakness for "window-shopping," had added the command not to touch the tree.) At any rate, the serpent, having already planted doubt, declared that God was lying. He then offered to tell her his version of the truth. "Ye shall not surely die."⁶ The alternatives were then clear. The woman could continue to believe in God and to demonstrate that belief by obedience to him; or she could place her faith in the serpent and demonstrate that faith by living within his framework of "truth."

The serpent's new scale of values really offered the woman nothing which she needed but did not have. She did not need the fruit of the tree for food. Beauty was not limited to one tree in all creation. Nor was wisdom something that had been altogether kept from humans, for her temptation had entered through her rationality. Yet these three reasons are the ones credited with causing her to violate God's command.⁷ But we can see that the real reason the serpent's words appealed to her more than did the words of God's command was that the serpent put the woman's desires at the heart of the new set of values. "Ye shall not surely die. . . Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods."⁸ This is the appeal of every heresy -- self-exaltation. Atheism is attractive to men who dislike the thought of having God at the center of their lives. Indeed, if you put your own desires at the center of your life, you are a practicing atheist. Evil always draws a person

downward, thus taking advantage of an internal sort of gravity. And evil appeals to a person's ego, promising self-exaltation. The combination of these two principles produces an effective force for seduction.

The woman became the instrument through which evil appealed to the man.⁹ Woman was God's gift to man -- a perfect companion -- and was the last means that man would have suspected of bringing him harm. She violated the command to not touch the tree, and he joined her in violating the command to not eat of the fruit of it.¹⁰ Thus they were each guilty of complete (not partial) violation of the command as they understood it.

Separation: "Where art thou?"

Only man, of all creation, was made for communion with God. This communion was apparently regular and intimate and informal. When "the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" Adam said, "I heard thy voice in the garden."¹¹ Man's most valuable possession in Eden was God's companionship. Who can imagine how this warm friendship must have given life and meaning to the garden? When you lament that your neighbor is caught in a web of sin, or that he cultivates offensive vices, remember that his greatest tragedy is that he is not living in fellowship with God.

What would happen if the evangelistic activities of the churches were directed toward this genuine purpose -- of bringing men into right relationship with God? How much of what you see by way of evangelistic activity is either denunciation of sins of the flesh or the call to moral renewal -- upgrading society through better manners? The one is often associated with conservative revivalism, and the other represents the liberal social gospel.

Man was created for this intimate relationship with God, and without that fellowship he is frustrated, lonely, and empty. But the relationship was designed by God not only for man, but for himself also. "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."¹² Were it not for this fact -- that God created man for his own companionship -- we might be left empty and seeking reconciliation with one who had no desire to enter again into a covenant. The fact is, God craves the companionship which he designed between himself and man. He is, therefore, always seeking men. God apparently initiated the daily communion in the garden, and when man was frustrated by his own nakedness, it was God who made "coats of skins, and clothed them."¹³ God lovingly evacuated them from Eden, lest in their trekking through the entire range of human experience, good and bad, they might "take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever,"¹⁴ thus fashioning a kind of life that not only was potentially wretched, but that was unending! Beyond this, God initiated innumerable overtures to mankind -- the covenant of the rainbow, the covenant of the law, the covenant of the kingdom, the messages of the prophets, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, and finally, he

"hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."15 The Father "jealously longs for the spirit He has implanted in us."16

How ironic it was that the original sin, which was supposed to remove all restrictions and inhibitions, had quite the opposite effect. Man became immediately estranged from God whose communion he had once enjoyed. But the relationship between man and woman was also damaged. Whereas they once had lived together in complete dedication to each other, they now became aware of hostility and selfishness within themselves. Woman was "an help" suitable for man, making man complete. "Each for the other and both for the Lord" was the original state of marriage, as it is today's ideal. Sex, with which God endowed man and woman for the enhancement of their relationship with each other, became a capacity for selfishness. (Sex, of course, was not the only human capacity that was immediately affected by sin, but it was perhaps the most evident one. Other affected capacities emerged almost at once as jealousy and murder came into the picture.) Clothing himself was man's first attempt to disguise his basic selfishness. A relationship that had been designed and established in complete trust and love was apparently turned into competition for self-gratification. Happily, the person who finds wholeness through Christ is capable of entering into a relationship based upon love, trust, and respect.

"Where art thou?" Man, trembling with the weight of his guilt for having disobeyed God, is hiding. What he thought had been an act of rational independence was, in fact, an act which produced the intense pain of shame. Besides this, his guilt has cut him off from his source of life and meaning in the world. He is cut off from God, and thus cut off he is only half a person. He might as well try to walk with one foot, clap with one hand, or recite wedding vows alone. Man estranged from God is subhuman, for we were designed for communion with God.

Treason: "What is this that thou hast done?"

The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible, although the "tree of life"17 is mentioned again in Rev. 2:7 and 22:2, where it is described as being "in the midst of the paradise of God." The Hebrew idea in the word translated "knowledge" is different from our understanding of knowledge as the acquisition of facts. The Hebrew idea is more that of experience and embodies some of what we mean by our word "wisdom." When we put together the bruises of experience and the facts of study, we come up with something better than either. The new product is mellow and useful in the future -- it is wisdom. The Hebrew expression which gives us the phrase "good and evil" is not limited to an understanding of morality -- knowing what is right and what is wrong. The man and woman already had some clear understanding of that. The phrase "good and evil" should include the idea of the whole range of human opportunity, good and bad. This, you see, suggests that the tree was the "tree of the wisdom that comes from exposure to all of life's experiences." You may have heard a young person say, "But

I want to find out for myself." Or, you have heard someone who wants to be known as "a broad-minded parent" say, "Experience is such a good teacher, I let my child do as he pleases." Yet you know that secondhand knowledge about the effects of drinking carbolic acid is far better than firsthand wisdom. And your young friend, or child, who, because he is helped to see the long-range effects, avoids even the experimental use of tobacco and alcohol has not forfeited any real values by his abstinence. He has learned by the experience of others.

God's first plan seems to have been that man would live by divine commands instead of by his own painful experience. God was ready to guide man around moral canyons and precipices, if man could resist jumping off just to see what was at the bottom. It is not difficult to imagine how our world might have been different if man had not invaded this area which God had set apart. Intuitive restraint could have kept man from self-destruction through experimentation with toxic substances in laboratories. Habit-forming narcotics would have been repugnant to us. A built-in recognition system would have spared us from experiencing anything but those things which would make us better persons and enhance our relationship with God. Our full energies could have been spent in the fulfillment of our destinies as God's stewards over creation. Instead of fighting destructive forces, we could have given ourselves entirely to inventiveness and creative management of this planet.

The fact is that man took for himself the responsibility of evaluating every experience available to him. Ever since, men have been determining what is right and what is wrong -- on the basis of experience. The penalty for the disobedience was clear, "Thou shalt surely die."¹⁸

When man took from God the right of sovereignty over himself, man committed the gravest of sins. It was not a sin of omission. Nor was it a mere missing of the mark, a falling short of the divine purpose. This sin was disobedience. In the terminology of the courts today it would have been called "sin in the first degree," that is, it was deliberate and premeditated. This was an attempt on the part of man to steal from God the right of sovereignty. This sin was more than a mere crime. For example, a man may commit a crime against the state--violate traffic laws, rob a bank, or steal from his neighbor -- but so long as he recognizes that the state has a right to make laws to govern him, and a right to capture and punish offenders, he is only a criminal (though that seems horrid enough). Suppose, however, that a man challenges the right of the state to make laws governing the movement of traffic or the protection of property. He is then, in fact, denying the existence of the state. Such a man cannot be punished, cannot pay his debt to society, cannot be rehabilitated and released into society. He is not merely a criminal; he is guilty of treason. Convicted of this, he loses his citizenship, not merely his freedom.¹⁹ Thus man, estranged from God, is condemned for treason, yet has to live out his sentence on the planet designed to have been his paradise but now cursed to be his prison.

"What is this that thou hast done?" Man has, by disobedience, acquired a guilt that will mark every descendant. Instead of envisioning God as "friend," man will fear God as "enemy." All men will be children of Eden's "man without a country." Since man has no citizenship of his own, his offspring are born with a homesickness for a country that would have been theirs but for their father's treason.

Perversion: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow"

Nothing was quite the same after man's sin. It was as if the scorching breath of hell blew across the creation, singed the living creatures, disfigured the landscape, and twisted man.

Every capacity of man that had potential for happiness and good at once developed a potential for unhappiness and evil. Even today the capacity for goodness or for evil, for happiness or for unhappiness, seems to bear possibilities of exactly equal length in each direction. Sex, for instance, may greatly enrich life, or it may greatly curse life. The image of God, since it is made up of moral imprints from God's nature, thus makes man capable of great nobility or of desperate wretchedness.

Man was made to have dominion, to be a manager. He was given capacities for rationality and imagination in order that he might manage well. His righteousness made him a good and noble manager. His capacity for love made him kind. But man, made to have dominion, became a dictator. Management without the controls of righteousness and love is certain to end in indifferent dictatorship, affliction, and brutality.

Man was created with a sense of righteousness and an inner quality of holiness. By his sin he exchanged his holiness for impurity and his righteousness for cruel justice. At his worst, man holds a rigid standard of justice as it applies to other persons, or when it is in his favor. The skeleton of God's implanted righteousness remains, but the heart and the quality are gone.

Man was fashioned as a rational being possessing knowledge, able to think God's thoughts after him, but today we tremble at the technological skills that have been developed by men who lack the moral quality to handle that knowledge in a responsible way. Knowledge without holiness is not necessarily a virtue; it may be a terror.

Man was made to love and to be loved, but sin turned that capacity within man into a cistern of selfishness. Thus what we often call "love" is really a lust to feed a selfish appetite.

Man was made to be inventive and creative, yet today man tends to spend vast amounts of money and invest his best intelligence in devising instruments by which civilization, and man himself, may be destroyed.

Man was placed on earth to reproduce himself in other persons -- his offspring -- and thereby to extend the image of God in the world. Yet that reproduction is accompanied by immeasurable pain; and, to judge from observation, offspring are often unwanted and are sometimes endured instead of being enjoyed as God's gift to the home.

Man, designed to reflect the image of God, bears on his face the marks of jealousy, of hatred, and of war. Made to have dominion and to be a master, man tends to be enslaved -- the victim of his sins.

Man, inbreathed by the Spirit of God, was capable of enjoying intimate communion with God, but that capacity in man has more often been inhabited by hostile spirits. In a way that is uncanny man is thus able to give himself over to an animal spirit, to a spirit of jealousy, to the spirit of pride, to evil spirits, to satanic spirits, to artificial spirits of narcotics and alcohol, or to the intoxicating spirit of the age. Created an essentially spiritual being, man is incurably a host to some spirit. That capacity, which can be our greatest blessing and the means of our highest fulfillment, can also be our most tragic curse, our worst taskmaster.

Man, created a living soul designed to inhabit eternity, by his sin became dying dust en route to the grave,²⁰ Man's loss of the breath of God ushered him into a state of mere existence. Once a being, related to God, he became a non-being, divorced from God. Man is ever and always a creature -- a dependent upon his Creator. Let this relationship be shattered and he is insignificant.

One ray of hope shines through the tragedy of Genesis 3. One will come, the offspring of the woman, who will reverse the tragic events. Man's loss is not permanent, nor is it without a remedy. Men, even in their pursuit of the full range of experiences available to the human race, will one day find that the Creator has invaded their planet with yet another experience which they may explore -- the experience of entering into a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, his Son, their Saviour and Lord.

Within man's own sphere of dominion, there arose one who became the instrument of temptation that led to man's sin. Yet man's sin was his own. It was deliberate, premeditated -- sin in the first degree. What was worse, it was the fatal sin of treason against God -- not a mere violation of a command or a falling short of God's best will. But the supreme tragedy was that man lost his companionship with God -- a companionship for which God longed, and without which our lives are empty and frustrated. It is clear that man has two problems: he is divorced from God, and he is suffocated by moral guilt.

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04 -- GOD'S REMEDIAL SCHEME

I think my soul is a tame old duck,
Dabbling around in barnyard muck,
Fat and lazy, with useless wings;
But sometimes when the north wind sings
And the wild ones hurtle over head,
It remembers something lost and dead
And cocks a wary, bewildered eye
And makes a feeble attempt to fly.
It's fairly content with the state it's in,
But it isn't the duck it might have been.

-- Kenneth C. Kaufman in Level Land1

Man is instinctively religious, or so many philosophers say. Yet man does not follow his homing instinct well enough to follow it to God and to salvation.

A Canadian goose follows its migratory instinct to a winter haven far south. But, to use the goose's migratory instinct as a parallel to man's inner hunger, man follows his hunger for reconciliation with God right up to the door of reconciliation, and then seems to turn about and stagger in the darkness. Trying to satisfy this hunger, he turns to trees, planets, carved gods, and stone and metal idols. Those of us who are more refined do not acknowledge any idol as our god; we worship ourselves, our ambitions, our successes, our money.

You can probably guess why men practically never follow their "instinct" all the way to God. Suppose that the Canadian goose arrived at his winter haven, and upon approaching his warm water lake, he discovered that the lake surface reflected an X-ray image of himself -- no feathers or down, only his internal structure. It would hardly be surprising if he were to retreat to some muddier swamp where he could live without the tormenting reminder of what he looked like when X-rayed. Similarly, when a man follows his hunger to the presence of God, the image of himself that he sees is not a pleasant one. The mirror of God's holiness reflects man's moral impurity. So he retreats to some more comfortable swamp and tries to live with an unchanged picture of himself. This is not easy, for the image he saw in God's mirror will make him restless forever after. His false religions will hint at just how much he saw in the mirror. The refined pagan -- the humanist, for example -- incorporates moral renewal, character-building exercises, a social conscience in his religion; but the primitive man turns to the sun or to a tree and bows down in wonder and awe. The impression that he got of himself merely frightened him, while his civilized brother actually felt pangs of specific guilt.

Man simply cannot get to God by himself. But, fortunately, God's attachment to man is even stronger than man's hunger for God. And God can do something effective about getting through to man. History is largely the account of God's attempts to bridge the gap -- to reach out through the mirror -- and bring man into fellowship with himself. Consider some of the steps which God has taken in history.

Promises and Covenants

God's first move toward man, of course, was when he created man as a being who could enter into communion with his Creator. I discussed this in the chapter on "God's Design and the Breath of Life."

Then, in the chapter on "The Great Disaster," I suggested that it was God, not man, who took the steps to mend the broken relationship after the great sin. The picture of God's effort is in Genesis 3. When man was frantic with shame and attempted to hide himself and his nakedness from God, "unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."² Think of the Canadian goose, afraid of its X-ray image. God was attempting to shield man from his own fright, for when a man is paralyzed with fear he cannot take the first step toward being reconciled with God. It is significant that God took this step toward the persons who were guilty of high treason against him.

A little later a man named Cain quarreled with his brother, Abel, about their offerings to the Lord. Cain killed Abel. The Lord then talked with Cain and announced a curse that would follow him throughout life. Cain recognized that he would be a hunted man. "My punishment is greater than I can bear"³ may refer not only to the curse, but to his guilt. At any rate, God entered into a covenant with a sinner. It was a covenant of mercy.

The race had got off to a very bad start. Yet Cain's descendants established a remarkable civilization. They developed a scientific agriculture, the art of making music, and they introduced an elementary mechanical technology to the earth.⁴ You might think that Cain's descendants would have acknowledged their dependence upon God or given thanks for their successes. But they did not. Indeed, instead of an attitude of humble thankfulness for their being spared, they demonstrated an attitude of arrogance and revenge. Lamech, who lived five generations after Cain, sang out to the women.

**You, Adah and Zillah, do listen to my voice;
You consorts of Lamech, give ear to my speech;
For any who wounded me, him I have slain,
Also the young man, who gave me a scratch.
If Cain be awarded revenge sevenfold,
Then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold required.⁵**

Their civilization was cut off -- a stern warning to another generation that tends to worship science, art, and technology. Not only were they cut off by the flood; before that they were cut out of the record of history. The author simply dropped them and introduced a new line, one worth following. The new line was the line of Adam through Seth to Noah. There is a significant description of Seth and his descendants: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."⁶ Thus, through Seth's line God chose to perpetuate the race. The covenant of grace⁷ which God made with Noah was, "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."⁸

Now these were all fairly elementary covenants -- one to shield man from his desperate shame, another to spare a man from revenge, and one to assure the race of no second flood. But God's covenant dealings with men became increasingly significant. They seemed to be suited to the immediate needs of men. It is as if the fall was so tragic that God had to begin with man on his knees before he could get man to his feet. The wings were to come much later.

God entered into a covenant with Abraham. We might remember it best if we called it a covenant of faith, but really it was a covenant of obedience and blessing. Abraham's response to God's call and to God's leading established him as a man of faith. God gave Abraham specific instructions about where he was to go and what he was to do. In exchange God promised to bless him and make him a blessing.⁹ But this covenant was clearly one within which God was revealing himself, first to one man, then to a family, and finally to a nation. As the people responded to God's commands, they received further insight into the true character of God. The result was that Abraham and some of his descendants lived in intimate communion with God.

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses,¹⁰ he was reaching out toward man in an attempt to repair a lost connection, to restore the lost fellowship. Even law can be a basis of fellowship. If you are driving your automobile on the highway within the speed limits and you come upon a state trooper parked at the edge of the highway, you can smile and wave to him easily. You may even remark to your traveling companions that it is good that law-enforcement officials keep the highways safe. But suppose that you drop over the brow of a hill doing twenty miles an hour above the limit, and that you find yourself speeding past a radar mechanism. You will not smile. You are uncomfortable in the presence of what you call "the law." Now, God's law is something like that. It provides a moral base upon which minimum fellowship can be cultivated. It marks boundaries beyond which fellowship must be forfeited. The covenant of law, although it was inadequate for restoring the high companionship God and man had once enjoyed, was a positive covenant step toward complete reconciliation. Paul told the Galatians that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."¹¹ So you see, the whole scheme of our redemption has been laid patiently and carefully, and God has initiated every move.

The writings of the Old Testament prophets project still another step in God's reach for man. In fact, each of the prophets adds another dimension to our understanding of God's love for us. You will find, as you read the prophets, that they stress God's love for his people even when they are wayward and belligerent. The prophets announced the terms under which God would receive men back into his fellowship, so you can trace a message of the importance of repentance alongside the message of God's love. The prophets also announced judgment. Unrepented evil brought certain consequences, so the prophets recorded military defeats, epidemics, and political enslavements. The prophets, in their total impact, impress you with the persistence of God -- that he is determined to get through to man and save him. The prophetic covenant is one both of judgment and of hope.

John the Baptist was, in one sense, an Old Testament prophet. Some of the other prophets had declared a message of hope that a new day was coming, one in which man and God would be reconciled. But John was the last of an era of prophets. "The voice" he was called.¹² God had spoken in Eden in communion, to Cain in mercy, to Noah by grace, to Abraham in a covenant, to Moses by law, and to generation upon generation through spoken words of prophets -- voices. John the Baptist was the end of that line, for "the voice" would give way to the Word.

The Invasion

After God had of old spoken to our fathers at various times and in many ways by means of the prophets, He has at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He has appointed Heir to all things and through whom He made the worlds. As the reflection of God's glory and the true expression of His being, He sustains the universe by His almighty word. And when He had effected our cleansing from sin, He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.¹³

Thus the author of Hebrews summarized the long trek of God after us.

After God had used skins of animals, a mark for protection, a rainbow, the numberless stars, the law, and a long line of prophets, at last God spoke in his Son. When God's full message finally broke through, it was fittingly called "the Word." God said what he had to say in the most convincing manner possible -- in his own Son. Jesus Christ's coming to the earth was, in a vivid way, God's invasion of the planet which he had designed. It is as if the earth had been enslaved by an alien dictator, and that now a beachhead is being established and the true Prince is landing to retake the planet for the King. The "prince of the power of the air" must be defeated. The Prince of heaven is enlisting followers in the underground movement. They are engaged in acts of sabotage as they press for the final takeover.¹⁴

This heavenly Prince is the Second Person of the Trinity. He has always been the "begotten of the Father," but this has nothing to do with the virgin birth. That is

quite another matter. "Begotten"¹⁵ refers to his relationship to God the Father in the sense that the Second Person is of the same substance, nature, and character as the First Person. Men are God's creation -- he made them; but the Second Person of the Trinity shares the Father's own nature completely; so the best way men know to express this intimate kind of relationship is to say that he was begotten of the Father. It is not difficult to see the difference between making something and begetting it. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, not just a part of his creation. True deity is implied by "begotten."

When the Second Person invaded this planet, he did so as a human baby. We call this the incarnation of God. This simply means that God came "in flesh." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."¹⁶ Now you have heard the story so many times that it may seem quite ordinary. But it is, in fact, most extraordinary. Imagine, for instance, that you like a kitten, or for that matter the whole species of cats. Perhaps that is easy enough. Then imagine that you loved them enough to deliberately choose to be born, not in a sanitized cat box, but in the flea-infested corner of a toolshed. (Or imagine entering into the life of a frog or a worm.) We think it is quite nice being human beings, but entering into our life was nothing that could have appealed to the Second Person. It was simply something that had to be done if the relationship between man and God was ever to be effectively mended.

Perhaps you object that if the scheme of sending the Second Person to earth in the incarnation was such a perfect one, and if the Second Person had existed from the beginning, why did not Cod happen on to the idea long before he did? Now on the surface this looks like a shrewd question. But redemption by means of the Saviour was in God's mind from the time of man's fall;¹⁷ indeed, Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."¹⁸ Man was in no position to understand or respond to the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ until God had patiently led him through covenants of mercy, law, grace, judgment, and hope.

The Reconciliation

The incarnation, God's appearing in human flesh, was God's way of communicating with man. It is also true that the risen Christ now has carried the incarnation the other direction -- back to heaven. God in Christ has perfectly entered into humanity. He knows what it is like to be a growing child, an adolescent, an adult, and what it is to pass through death. (It would be absurd to think that God had not known these things all along, but the incarnation is comforting to us because it gives us solid proof that God understands our problems and tragedies. The Second Person entered into the full life of humanity.) The gap in the relationship between God and man came about because man ran away from God. God had not deserted man. So, for all practical purposes, the coming of Jesus Christ was for one purpose -- to span the chasm and rescue man from his guilt, his impurity, and his loneliness.

C. S. Lewis pictures the incarnation as God descending in order to reascend.

But He goes down to come up again and bring the whole ruined world up with Him. One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated burden. He must stoop in order to lift; he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulders. Or one may think of a diver, first reducing himself to nakedness, then glancing in mid-air, then gone with a splash, vanished, rushing down through green and warm water into black and cold water, down through increasing pressure into the deathlike region of ooze and slime and old decay; then up again, back to colour and light, his lungs almost bursting, till suddenly he breaks surface again, holding in his hand the dripping, precious thing that he went down to recover. He and it are both coloured now that they have come up into the light: down below, where it lay colourless in the dark, he lost his colour too.¹⁹

Consider again the case of the Canadian goose. Suppose that in his colony in North America there appears one season a gosling, in every respect a Canadian goose gosling, yet different. In every skill or sensitivity in which Canadian geese excel, this one is superior to all others. When the time comes for the flock to turn south in obedience to the instinct to migrate, this young goose demonstrates the fact that he is better tuned than others to the call that beckons them to their safe home. In flight he is out in front charting the course. He is the true file leader. At last the destination comes into view. The built-in sense tells the geese that this is the place for which they were made. But as the geese prepare to rest on the surface of their haven, they discover horrid X-ray images of themselves, and are frightened back into the air. But the file leader has landed. As they circle they see through him the image of what they may become. He is one of them, but he has broken the power of the spell that would have driven them into the swamps.

When you are brought to the verge of finding the satisfaction of your deep hunger for forgiveness, for purity, for the inner presence of the Spirit of God and the resulting fellowship with your Creator, Jesus Christ, our "file leader," is solid proof that man can reenter an intimate relationship with God.

By his life, death, resurrection, and the sending of his Spirit to believers, Jesus Christ bridged the gap between man and God. The work of reconciliation was complete in Jesus Christ. At last, man may live as he was meant to live -- in constant fellowship with God. The infilling of the Holy Spirit, as promised and given by Jesus Christ,²⁰ completes the reconciliation of a human being with his Creator.

God worked continually from the time of man's fall to complete a perfect plan of reconciliation so that he could repair the broken relationship between man and himself. God went after man, making covenants and promises to men. He spoke through prophets.

At last, God spoke to us in his Son, Jesus Christ. In Christ God entered into humanity and bridged the gap. Communication and fellowship between man and God has been restored for those who enter into a personal response covenant with God through Jesus Christ.

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05 -- THE TRACED-OVER BLUEPRINT

To those who only know it outwardly, Christianity seems desperately intricate. In reality, taken in its main lines, it contains an extremely simple and astonishingly bold solution of the world. -- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin¹

When our planet was invaded by the Second Person of Deity, history was "put back on the track," so to speak. The human family had been badly derailed. Few humans even moved in the right direction, and when they did, it was with a painful sort of grinding along the roadbed, alongside the tracks. You must keep this kind of picture in mind, or God's work with man may look like something that he is making up as he goes along, as grandfathers sometimes make up stories for little children. Just the opposite is true; God has had "the track" in mind for humans all along. He started man out on it: one rail is his Spirit's presence -- the breath of life -- within man; the other rail is man's response of love and obedience. The track: fellowship. The design: greatness, excellence, nobility, holiness, and the mastery of the earth.

From Eternity

The Holy Spirit, then, is not a recent invention of God, although some folks talk as if he came along only after the time of Christ. And some narrow-minded people would make you think that he was the special property of a small segment of Christians -- usually an eccentric bunch at that! As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit -- the Third Person of Deity -- shares with the First and Second Persons the quality we know as eternity. He has always been. Indeed, when the earth was yet formless and still awaiting the major touches of creation, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" which covered this planet.² But, of course, in terms of time as we understand it, the Holy Spirit dates further back than the creation. "Eternity" does not mean "very old"; it means "having no beginning." And that is much older than you can imagine. For example, both Genesis and geology reveal that the deep rock formations in the earth are very old, yet an ancient Hebrew hymn says,

**Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
even from everlasting to everlasting,
thou art God.³**

The Holy Spirit is equal with God in his eternity; he is no recent discovery or development. There is also some special sense in which the Holy Spirit expresses both the First and Second Persons of Deity and, consequently, at once represents the two and yet is subordinate to them. That is, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father; he is also the Spirit of Christ. He is the full expression of each and of both. However, he has no expression which does not have its origin in the First and Second Persons; he is thus dependent upon them. The Holy Spirit has no message of his own; he carries out the work of the Father and the Son.

God breathed the Spirit into man and thus imparted to man his identification as a being possessing God's moral and spiritual image. It was God's way of sharing himself with man -- a gift that would have belonged to every other man thereafter had man stayed on the track. The point is this: The Holy Spirit's principal role was that of fulfilling God's purpose in man.

Throughout the bleak centuries between man's fall and Christ's reconciliation, God's Spirit sometimes invaded history by seizing men for special tasks. For example, God took the shape of history into hand when "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon."4 Gideon was used as the tool of God by means of the Spirit of the Lord. Throughout the Old Testament there are references to the Spirit of God coming upon men and equipping them for special tasks for which they would otherwise have been inadequate. In each case the Spirit is seen to be doing God's task in men.

If anything clearly emerges about the work of the Holy Spirit, it is that this Third Person of Deity has the special task of communicating God's message to beings made in God's image. The Holy Spirit delivers the communication effectively because he actually is capable of inhabiting human beings -- possessing them from within. It is as if the Holy Spirit works by means of a homing device that zeroes in on the "spirit chamber" blown into each man when he was inbreathed by God. (But I am taking you ahead of the story. I only want you to keep in mind the fact that from the dawn of creation God has been doing and wanting to do exactly what he wants to do today-inhabit people by inbreathing his Spirit.)

In the Teachings of Jesus Christ

Even before Jesus began to teach people about the Holy Spirit, the Spirit quietly carried out the work of God in a limited way in and through men by imparting God's message through special servants and prophets, such as Spirit-filled John the Baptist; by guiding authors of Scripture; and by implanting in a young handmaiden special protoplasm which enabled her to present the world with a man-child who was indeed God in the flesh, the Second Man and the Last Adam.

What we now know about the Holy Spirit and his work is based largely upon the teachings of Jesus Christ as they are recorded toward the end of the Gospel by John. Yet as you study what Jesus said there and reflect upon the Holy Spirit's

relationship to man at creation, you will probably be struck by the fact that they are all of one package. The same impression falls upon you when you consider the fact that Christ's teachings, his dying for us, and his rising again were remedial, not creative, and were necessary only to get the race back on the track where God had first put man -- the track of intimate fellowship between God and man. Seen in this light, what Jesus says in John 14-17 is not really new; it is only a traced-over blueprint of God's original design. But look at what it was that Jesus taught.

1. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit (the "Comforter" or Paraclete) to be with and within believers and to be the permanent helper they needed.⁵

When the Second Person invaded human society in Jesus Christ, he accepted the limitations of the arrangement. Theoretically, the Second Person of Deity might have lived on earth in a constantly renewing, never deteriorating, superhuman body and have been with us still after two thousand years. But if he had done this, he could not have experienced the full range of the human problem. Death, after all, has been the center of that problem.

How positively joyous is this news from Jesus Christ at the end of his work. He says that at the moment when redemption is completed, the Holy Spirit will take up the task God gave him in Eden -- abiding with and in persons who are living in fellowship with God.⁶ So the Holy Spirit may be said to be carrying on the work that Christ began; or you may turn the truth in another direction and say that Christ put things in order so that the Holy Spirit might be permitted to operate within man as the original blueprint specified.

2. The Holy Spirit exalts the message, the work, and the person of Christ.⁷

You may, at first, think that the idea of the "whole package" breaks down here. If the Holy Spirit had a task in Eden which is essentially the same now, how can that be the exaltation of Jesus Christ? The answer is simple, and the contradiction is only an apparent one. Jesus said that all of his own resources were derived from the Father.⁸ In other words, the entrance of the Second Person into the world was just God's way of sharing with man what he had had in mind for him all along. Jesus Christ (the Second Person made flesh) made concrete what was otherwise abstract. That is, he was entered in the court of humanity as exhibit A in support of a case that had for many centuries rested only upon certain theories and other evidences. Now you could handle exhibit A, weigh it, study its structure and the messages that came from it. And you could make your decision on the basis of some hard facts. Thus Jesus Christ turned out to be the one figure with which humans could identify themselves -- "He is one of us," they could say. The striking thing is that what Jesus Christ demonstrated in the flesh was no different from what God had been saying as long ago as the creation. So any way you look at it, everything is indeed of one package. But, since Jesus Christ is the bridge between man and God, the Holy Spirit is said to perpetuate the message, work, and person of Christ -- not because it is different from the message, work, and person of the

Father, but because all of it is more meaningful to man in the concrete than it is in the abstract.

What the Holy Spirit is to be saying in the world is not his own message -- it is Christ's finished message. It is a fully orbed message; nothing has been left out. No more books will be added to the Bible. Christ finished the work of redemption, and the eyewitnesses recorded it for us. The message included a definition of sin, the standard of righteousness necessary for believers, and the happy news that men may be freed from the enslavement of Satan. (See Chapter 1 for details.) The Holy Spirit leads believers into the truth of Christ, instructs them in the truth, and brings the truth to their remembrance.⁹

The Holy Spirit continues the work of Christ. That is, he extends it. When the claims of the gospel are laid upon the consciousness of a human, the Holy Spirit burns those claims deep upon that man. When a man wrestles with an inner core of rebellion against God's highest interests for him, the Holy Spirit wrestles to win the man to an undivided discipleship. When hatred, violence, lewdness, filth, disease -- depravity of any kind -- lays its claws upon a village or a nation, the Holy Spirit burns deep into the consciences of God's people and moves them to loose the place from Satan's hold. All of this is the work of Christ, and further back, the work of God.

The Holy Spirit exalts the person of Christ. Now and then you hear people say, usually with an inflection which denotes spiritual superiority, "This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit; you should pray to the Holy Spirit." They are blind to the clear state of things. The Holy Spirit draws no attention to himself. He does "not speak of himself."¹⁰ The Holy Spirit focuses all attention upon Christ. We may conclude that the best way to honor the Holy Spirit is to honor Christ. It is likely, also, that the clearest test to place upon any movement which attributes any of its work to the Holy Spirit would be to weigh the evidence to see whether Christ is receiving the total honor. Any person or movement, it then follows, which is exalting human personality, bizarre phenomena, or any other thing is immediately suspect. (The Holy Spirit is not the only spirit at work in the world.) The Holy Spirit works only in Christ-exalting situations. (See Rom. 8:9.)

3. Jesus stated that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in Christ's name,¹¹ that Christ would send the Holy Spirit from the Father,¹² and that the Holy Spirit would come unto believers.¹³

At first glance this might look like a confusing, if not contradictory, set of statements. That which emerges as you study the promises, however, is simply another confirmation of the unity of the whole picture. It is all of one package! Deity is in agreement; there is nothing else but unity. The Third Person comes forth at the will of the First and Second Persons; yet the Third Person comes easily, joyously, and naturally to fulfill his role as set forth in the great design from the foundation of the world.

4. The Holy Spirit is to carry out a ministry of reproof or conviction of the world,¹⁴ yet he does not act as a divine broadcasting station to spread the gospel of Christ.

This is a complex, though not impossible, paradox. The "world" Jesus had in mind was the unbelievers. A little later Jesus was praying and said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."¹⁵ The paradox is resolved when you discover that Jesus was doing something more important and effective than praying for the world. He was giving the world a host of witnesses. In fact, the entire burden of the prayer of Jesus in John 17 rests upon two almost identical petitions: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me," and "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."¹⁶ The world will know and believe because of the testimony of the believers who are sanctified, kept, and sent into the world as witnesses.

The Holy Spirit, however, resides within believers and works through them. The believers impart information and bear witness to Christ; then the Holy Spirit acts upon that information. His work is that of illumination -- making clear and burning the claims of Christ upon people. It is true that the Holy Spirit awakens a restlessness in all people -- no matter how darkened they are. A man may never even have heard of Christ, but he has a gnawing hunger deep down at the center of his being. This restlessness is universal. And it is conceivable that this deep hunger may now and then lead a person to some source of enlightenment, although it is probable that most of the people who are born in darkness with a hunger for God die without having that hunger satisfied. It is one thing to experience the pangs of hunger, but it is quite another to have that hunger satisfied with food. God simply does not broadcast the gospel of Christ as an act independent of human beings. God's full expression of redemption could be made clear to mankind only when that expression was clothed in flesh and blood. Similarly, flesh and blood witnesses, who are the instruments of God's Spirit, are God's means of spreading the news about that redemption provided in God's Son. Believers, "the body of Christ," are, in one sense, the missionary extension of the incarnation; they confront pagans with concrete evidence that humans can enter into a full and meaningful relationship with their Creator. The Holy Spirit will convict the world, but only as witnesses let the world know the good news of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Now all of this has been quite repetitious, but you simply must take it in. God's plan for us all along has been that we walk in fellowship with him and enjoy his inner presence by means of the Spirit of God. This fantastic arrangement dates back to the creation, is brought to contemporary reality by Jesus Christ's preparing the way for the Spirit's inner work, and is the normal (not the fanatic or eccentric) way of life for man. It is being "on the track."

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06 -- MAN'S RECOVERY: THREE STAGES

This is Daddy's bedtime secret for today: Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue! -- Eugene O' Neill in The Great God Brown¹

Suppose that you are suffering with a toothache. There has been an occasional flare-up of pain for several months. Now the pain is severe enough that you call on your dentist for some sedatives to help you endure the attack. Your dentist, knowing you and the nature of your problem, suggests removing the tooth, but you plead for something to relieve the pain. Thoughts of removing the tooth only add to your fears; an extraction itself would be solid pain. Your dentist is thoughtful for your comfort and helps you to meet that crisis.

The sedation gives you time to think about your health problem. You have begun to see, in fact you are convinced, that your real problem is not your pain. You should have that tooth removed. It is probably infected. The infection causes your body to recoil with pain, but the infection has other effects also.

You have developed a chronic pain in the neck and shoulders. Your physician explains that the bad tooth has spread its infection throughout your system, and that has probably triggered a case of rheumatism. This malady will require further attention and will cause considerable discomfort and annoyance. You may even have to learn to live with it; you recall that rheumatism has been an old family malady.

Now this pain, infection, and discomfort are roughly parallel to the moral guilt, infection, and physical defects that confront every man. Trace them in yourself as you consider their cure.

From Guilt

Apparently, every human being has a deeply ingrained sense that he owes something to Someone outside himself. (Is there some phenomenon by which a racial "memory" is transmitted from parent to child which reminds twentieth-century humans of their incredible origin in the creation?) This sense of responsibility to God, and with it the fact of moral failure which plagues every man, causes a savage to bring an offering to appease his idols while an enlightened man in "godly sorrow" repents of his offenses to God.²

Now it is obvious that this deeply ingrained sense of responsibility to God can be accounted for by the fact that God made man in his own image and breathed the Spirit of God into the center of his being. When the great disaster separated him from his Creator, man did not lose the image of God. Man still was charged with the responsibility of having dominion over, or managing, the remainder of creation. Man's freedom of choice was not withdrawn from him. God did not cancel the gifts of imagination and creativity. Nor did God remove an ingrained sense of justice and

a driving hunger for excellence and achievement. Man's capacity for intellectual activity was not withdrawn. If man had completely lost the image of God, he would no longer have been man, for the distinguishing mark that separated man from the remainder of the creatures was that he was inbreathed by God and was thus given moral and spiritual capacities which made fellowship with God possible. They were capacities which resembled the characteristics of God-capacities which were present in no other living creatures.

When Jesus answered the crafty priests and scribes on the question of whether it is one's duty to pay taxes to the prevailing government, he asked for a coin, examined its stamp, and gave them a profound answer, "Render . . . unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."³ The last part of the command had nothing to do with the question they asked, but it must have been clear to his listeners that Jesus was speaking about a currency which bears the image of God. That currency may be badly marred. The image may be completely unrecognizable, but the image is stamped deep into every cell of every human being. This racial mark accounts, in part, for man's memory that he is under obligation to God. But there are additional factors involved.

The general sense of fear, guilt, or shame which causes any man to want to do something to make friends with God, or to get away from him, must be supplemented by information (illumination) about how to get on good terms with God and by sufficient desire (motivation) to actually go through with it. The information comes to a man, if indeed he ever gets it, from another person who has found it or from the written source which outlines the necessary facts. If the information comes from the written source, the Bible, it is a case in which a book, prepared by men who were directed by the Holy Spirit, is used by the Holy Spirit to make clear to a desperate man what he must do to make peace with his God. In either case, then, the Spirit of God might be said to be the One who informs or illuminates the man who is looking for the way to peace with God.

Furthermore, the Spirit of God -- once the illumination is adequate -- employs the man's reason, engages his emotions, and calls upon his will (the part of man which makes decisions) to fully respond to the claim of God which he at first recognized only faintly. When a man is thus affected, he is often said to be "under conviction." That is, his guilt is brought to rest squarely upon him, and it makes him miserable. If, before, he only suspected that he might have offended God, he now knows that he has committed crimes against God. He knows that he is not only guilty, he is condemned to the gallows-unless he takes the incredible information seriously. God's Word says that a man who is a criminal can become free.

The criminal needs that freedom. Yet it cannot be a mere freedom from God. The offender would then still be a prisoner of society and of himself. He needs what no man would dare to dream of -- he needs a clean start, with his past erased. His freedom must be the kind that draws him toward God -- not one that releases him to run from God.

When a man recognizes that he is guilty of offending God, through acts of hatred, selfishness, or pride, for instance, he is preoccupied with the matter of getting forgiveness for those crimes. The pattern is much the same whether he is a city jailer who cries out, "What must I do to be saved?"⁴ or a young man running away from trouble, who pleads that his life be preserved, begs that he be restored to his family, and pledges a tithe of his income.⁵ A man's basic covenant with God is one in which he needs God's forgiveness and in which he makes vows about future obedience. This elementary covenant is always one into which a man enters knowing full well that he does not deserve to be spared. He is desperate or ashamed, or both. Like the man with the toothache, he wants relief. The fact that the tooth is permanently infected concerns him little; he must have relief from pain!

In Christ, God gave us the forgiveness we need. The Second Person of Deity, in Jesus Christ, took the full voltage of evil, momentarily became its victim, then snapped back as the obvious conqueror of evil. Or, looking at it another way, all of the weight of the crimes that any man, or all of us together, could feel was dropped onto the shoulders of Christ. He took the whole load, was crushed and apparently obliterated by it, then suddenly stirred and stood bolt upright on top of the load that seemed to have wiped him out. What he conquered, or survived, had always been fatal before. Any fraction of that voltage, or small portion of the load, was fatal. But Christ survived! Because he has gone through the ordeal, he is able to take our load, and the accumulated load of all who call upon him to do so, and to take the sting -- or the weight -- out of it.

That is what Christ does at your trial when you look frantically for some way to be made free from your guilt. He takes it from you and disposes of it. Because of what he has done, he can forgive you and thus relieve you of your load.

The result is that you are set square with your Creator -- you are justified, brought into line. You are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."⁶ This incredible possibility of being spared from capital punishment is made credible by the illumination God's Spirit gives you and by faith which God imparts to you. It is fantastic, but true. You have been "justified by faith" and "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁷ The phenomenon of receiving forgiveness freely in exchange for guilt is about as unbelievable as seeing a dead person come to life. Indeed, the person who experiences this forgiveness and justification enters into a new kind of life. Jesus described entrance into eternal life as being "born again" and as being born "of the Spirit."⁸ And the First Epistle of John makes repeated allusion to those persons who are "born of God."

When a man -- you, for instance -- feels the weight of his guilt and, in desperation, calls on God to save him, he has taken the first step toward the relationship with God for which he was made. When he confesses that he is guilty (a convict, rightly convicted), pleads for the mercy of God's Son, and exercises faith, he receives the gift of justification. His capacity for being indwelt by God is

awakened, the moral image implanted in him by the Creator is uncovered, he is born of the Spirit -- his recovery has begun.

From Infection

When a man's life hangs in the balance in a courtroom, he has little time to think about a disease that is eating away inside him, no matter how deadly its final effect may be. He wants to live now! He wants to be free from his certain gallows! But wait until he has been pardoned or, for our purposes, justified. He soon finds time to think about the infection that eats at him. Now that his attention no longer focuses upon whether he will live, he can consider his true condition.

I suppose that my sins -- my crimes against God -- rightfully claim my most urgent attention. Because I committed them, they are painfully mine. But when the crimes are forgiven, I find that there is an inner infection that is threatening to undo me from within. There is little prospect that I will survive if, along with resisting the external hooks of evil, I must fight an internal battle too.

Remember that I have inherited a memory that my origin was with the Creator. Although badly defaced, God's image is still in me. Having been inbreathed by God's Spirit, I have an inner capacity that can only be satisfied by the Holy Spirit. But I have inherited something else. The memory cells are scarred by the great disaster. Although I was made to commune with God, I am bent toward self-worship. I have an old infection which drags with dead weight upon every capacity in me that God designed for nobility and excellence. The old man in me, the beast in me, or the flesh in mere whatever you want to call it -- fights against me by appealing to the lowest appetites I have, by playing upon my tendency toward laziness. The infection always drags. The drag is always downward toward ignobility and shoddiness. So, while I rejoice that I have been freed from guilt, and I struggle to keep free from further crimes, I shudder lest I become a habitual criminal and at last must face the gallows I recently escaped.

In his novel *Ninety-three* Victor Hugo tells how the crewmen of a ship on the high seas take great pains to make their vessel safe during a raging storm. When the last tasks are finished, they are startled to hear dull crashing sounds rise from deep within the hold. They look at one another. They know. A great cannon which has been chained in the cargo section has broken loose and is crashing against the sides of the ship. Although the ship has been made safe to ride out the storm, deep within it carries a cargo that is certain to destroy it.

That ship is the picture of any man who puts himself in shape to live by making friends with God, only to find that he has in himself a cargo which is contradictory to his basic commitment and which is capable of destroying him. The dangerous cargo is our inheritance from the great disaster. Since our first parents' crime was treason-for the purpose of putting themselves up as their own masters -- the infection shows up in us in much the same way. Its symptoms are violent

independence, selfishness, self-assertiveness, pride -- anything which puts oneself on the throne. The symptoms are not difficult to recognize, but when they appear it is practically impossible to admit their real identity. Since they are self-centered, an accurate and honest self-analysis is almost out of the question -- but not quite!

Although a man may wish to save face before his friends or the public, he can at least be honest with himself. The Spirit of God who pressed the claims of Christ upon him, bringing him to repentance and obedience, also makes transparently clear to a man what his deep infection is. There is a remarkable similarity in the experiences of men across many centuries regarding the need for healing the racial infection. One young man struggled through the night until at daybreak, transformed, he received a new name -- the mark of a change of character-and rose up saying, "I have seen God face to face."⁹ From that time on he was a man of different attitudes.

Centuries later a blustery, impulsive man named Peter retired, probably in fear, to private rooms in Jerusalem. There, with other believers, he prayed. While they were deeply committed to Christ, these were men whose behavior had reflected great fear and obvious selfishness. Peter, perhaps more than any of the others, demonstrated defective attitudes. So they waited. Christ had promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon them to equip them for the task of witnessing to the world.¹⁰ In preparation for that actual moment of receiving the Holy Spirit, Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."¹¹ Then when the Holy Spirit came, in actual fulfillment of Jesus' promise, "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."¹²

The Holy Spirit's coming as recorded in Acts 2 was a pivotal event in the history of this planet. There is a sense in which everything between Genesis 2 and Acts 2 is a gigantic parenthesis -- a detour. In Genesis God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living soul: In Acts men were inbreathed by the wind of heaven and put back on the track so that they could be the men God designed them to be. But there is this awesome difference: In Eden man walked in harmony both with a human companion and with God: In Jerusalem men were realigned with God but lived among people largely hostile toward them and their commitment. Communion was their occupation in Eden. In Jerusalem it was communication. Once-fearful men became fearless spokesmen for God, with the amazing result that thousands of persons were converted to Christ.

The central figure of the first Christian Pentecost is the Holy Spirit. The obvious result of his coming upon the believers was that they were charged with effective power. It is impossible, however, to overlook the fact that the new power was released through persons who had undergone a thorough inner cleansing of motives and attitudes. This cleansing is hinted at by the appearance of a flame-like phenomenon which "sat upon each of them."¹³ John the Baptist had predicted that

one would come after him who was mightier than he. Said John, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."¹⁴ The completed work of Christ would clearly be one of purging -- cleansing. One of the symbols of the Holy Spirit is the flame, denoting the cleansing work performed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit thus carries out the continuing work of Christ.

When Peter wanted to make a simple analysis of the phenomenon of Acts 2 (and who could have been better qualified to do it?), he described it as an event of cleansing: "And God. . . [gave] them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."¹⁵ It is logical that the apostles and early Christians began at once to describe the inner cleansing as "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."¹⁶ "Sanctify" had for centuries denoted the act of making clean and setting apart in consecration to God.

But healing the infection, or cleansing the inner character of believers, is not an end in itself. A man has his tooth removed not merely because he wants his body to be free from infection, but because there is work he must do. The moral infection that plagues uncleansed believers keeps them from their real work -- taking the new life of Christ into their vocations, their day-by-day personal contacts, their choices, their speech, the books they write, into everything! The power released in the world is the important thing. The cleansing within is only a means to that end.

When the apostles proclaimed to pagans around them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,"¹⁷ they were not just piling up instructions (repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit); they were reciting history and announcing the pattern for a cure. Theoretically God could make a man whole by one stroke (recall Genesis 1 and 2). But the long road which God follows to get man back on the track takes turns upward only at the rate that a broken man can take them.

In the face of the infection within, the believer who hungers and thirsts after righteousness will gladly consider the provision of the remedy which Christ offers. Since the infection is essentially self-enthronement, the surrender will be painful, may take much study and prayer, and can be nothing less than complete. Yet the opportunity of responding to the call of Christ to be whole, to be the inbreathed instrument of the Holy Spirit, is profound, ennobling, and compelling.

The man who responds by surrender and by consecration is then cleansed from moral infection. Having already been freed of his guilt, he is indeed a whole man. God's image in him is visible in his appetite for that which enriches, by his attitudes which demonstrate his new center in Christ, by his choices which leave no doubt that his highest values have been transformed. He is meaningfully related to

his environment, to other persons, and to God. He is, in short, morally in balance. He is on the track. He is a man as God made a man to be. He is, however, still on this planet, which throughout his lifetime will be his testing ground. He is never free from attacks from the hooks by which evil would drag him down. Moral balance has not brought him immunity from temptation. Just as the first man was exposed, though fresh from the Creator, so will the new man be exposed.

From Defect

Now you may have developed rheumatism as a side effect of that bad tooth you had, or you may have inherited a chemical imbalance that could cause you to suffer with arthritis. All of us have varying degrees of deterioration at work in ourselves. This deterioration and the defects that turn up in us are contributing to our death.

Death is the result of sin.¹⁸ When an aged man dies simply from having worn out, it is the result of Adam's sin. When disease sweeps a community and leaves children dead in its wake, that disease is a means by which sin accomplishes its long-range purpose early. Every death, in its final analysis, is the result of crimes against the victims or of the scar upon the human race since Adam forfeited life for all of us.

What I have said about death being the end result of sin is true even about the person who has been delivered from his guilt and cleansed from his infection. No one misses the final blow. Because of disobedience the human race was denied the privilege of living forever in uninterrupted bliss.¹⁹

Death in all of its stages and forms -- disease, deformity, deterioration, defectiveness -- has stood as the last and the most formidable enemy of man. Since humans never qualified for endless life, it is not something that can be restored. Instead, it is a gift that, having been reserved for humans, may at last be presented to them.

The dream of endless life has haunted men throughout human history. I am not now referring to the idea of immortality of the soul which is present in most pagan religions. Nor am I speaking of men's ghosts or apparitions, nor of appearances of dead persons via extrasensory perception. And I am not discussing what is sometimes spoken of as "our capacity for survival." What I am saying is that men were created to live forever. The removal of the tree of life from man's reach after the great disaster makes it clear that a part of the blueprint for man had to be laid aside. But the memory of that blueprint, of which our first parents caught only a glimpse, has caused men to suspect that death is not God's ultimate goal for humans. So Isaiah, for example, takes a telescopic look toward the time when dead men shall live: "Together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out

the dead."20 There is nothing distinctively Christian about the doctrines of "survival" or of the "immortality of the soul."21

It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ that demolished this formidable last enemy of mankind. The first man forfeited, for the race, the privilege of endless life. The Second Man, accepting the limitations of that forfeiture, died but rose again, thus revealing the fact that the blueprint, once laid aside, awaits men beyond death. The resurrection took the sting out of death, grounded it, rendered it incapable of having the last word about man.22

Christ, then, is the threefold answer for man's threefold need. By him you may have forgiveness of your sins and thus find relief from your pain of guilt. By him you may be cleansed within, thus acquiring moral integrity and unity. And by him you may be resurrected, at last, free from the racial defects you have inherited and from the acquired deterioration and the resulting death. His resurrection now offers solid proof regarding the kind of existence that a man may know beyond death. Christ's life beyond Calvary was no mere survival, nor was he demonstrating the pagan doctrine of mere immortality. He walked on stony paths with heavy feet; he cast solid shadows; ate real fish; spoke with recognizable pitch, timbre, and volume.

Make no mistake: if He rose at all it was as His body; if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules reknit, the amino acids rekindle, the Church will fall.23

The Holy Spirit, by means of men who are his witnesses and by means of Scriptures written by men under his guidance, is at work bringing illumination to men who are unaware of their responsibility for entering into a living relationship with their Creator. When a man's attention is caught, the Holy Spirit brings pressure to bear upon his intelligence, emotions, and will to aid him in responding to the call to enter a new life. When he does respond in faith and obedience, the Spirit of God imparts to him eternal life -- he is born of the Spirit of God. With this done, the man is justified and is free from his painful guilt. The Holy Spirit then leads him, still by means of witnesses and the Word, into an understanding of his need for inner cleansing from selfishness and moral infection. The man's response to that call may lead him through struggle, but with surrender comes the moral purging of the Holy Spirit, who makes the man a whole man -- both free from guilt and pure from moral infection.

With man thus back on the track on which human history began, man still faces death, but he senses that he was made for endless life. Christ has conquered death in his resurrection. Death, then, is not the end. It is something through which we pass. For men who have gotten back on the track there is the assurance that at last "they may have right to the tree of life."24 Indeed, as every man passes through death he will only step further into endless existence. His responses to opportunities to be on the track designed for him will determine whether that

existence turns to perfect life or to endless deterioration and moral decay -- the stuff of which death is made.

* * * * *

07 -- LIFE ON THE TRACK

Saints come in assorted sizes, colors, and denominations.

Saints are earnest, sincere, "kind, and peaceable -- quick to help and slow to criticize.

Saints go out of their way to help, care little about personal comfort or convenience, but thrive on hard work, long hours and sacrifice.

They are not much for theological arguments, doctrinal quarrels, or gossip; yet they cannot be excelled in kindness, praise, praying, and giving.

Saints seem always to find time to be practical, down-to-earth men and women, sensitive to human suffering and sorrow and to the will of God.

When the record is opened, it will reveal that they were giving themselves as they did for one reason:

They belonged to God.

If there is a boy under fourteen in the house where you live, there is almost certain to be, or to have been at some time, an electric or a windup toy train. I used to wonder what might happen if you were to meet a real train in some unexpected place -- say around the next curve on the highway. And then one Christmas I got a train. After that I knew it was absurd even to think about meeting a real train anywhere except on the tracks. My toy engine couldn't move across the hooked rug in the living room, and it spun its wheels senselessly on the waxed kitchen floor. The whistle would roar and the headlight would twinkle, but the train simply wasn't any good anywhere except on the track. So I used the track for the train. It was a lot of trouble getting all of the sets of wheels snuggled down against the track, but if just one set of wheels was off the track, the whole thing would just grind along wasting power and getting practically nowhere.

Now if it is true that man, inbreathed by the Spirit of God, is thus created for the inner presence of God and for responding to God in fellowship, man is never at his best unless he is on the track. A man who is off the track may grind along and may indeed even demonstrate unusual gifts and skills. The engine, whistle, and headlight of my derailed locomotive performed perfectly, but the train was not being used as it was designed to be used. You may insert a high voltage light bulb into a low voltage socket. The bulb may glow, but you are perverting both the voltage

resource and the bulb. You may use an inferior motor oil in your automobile, or use water instead if you are completely dull. At best the mechanism will wear out months ahead of schedule; at worst it will fail within a few minutes. In either case you spoiled it, although you may have said you were using it. All of these observations simply confirm the phenomenon which you can see about you every day: Man is made for intimate fellowship with God, and he is really spoiling himself unless he is indeed "the temple of the Holy Ghost."¹ By contrast, the man who really is alive is the man who lives in a right relationship with God and enjoys the satisfaction of having his inner vacuum filled by God's Spirit -- his inbreathing.

A New Direction

All of us are in motion. Your direction is changed when you exchange your guilt for God's forgiveness -- when you are justified. Everyone is born with a tendency to move along the course of least resistance, which is downward. There is a moral gravity at work that tends to drag us away from excellence and toward shoddiness, away from honesty and toward falseness. Even in the arts this phenomenon is present. Poor grammar comes more easily than correct form. The high tones as well as the low ones are likely to go flat, not sharp. Drama easily excels in its appeal to the lower appetites but struggles to appeal to men's higher capacities -- honesty, courage, nobility, and holiness. We speak of this downward drag as being "natural," and indeed it is natural insofar as it is typical. But when we remember that man is broken, we will see that his inclinations are also broken. Many persons battle against the downward drag by sheer discipline; some of them are notably successful. When we listen to a great pianist whose skill has been developed only by trampling over natural laziness, by cultivating a high sense of perfection of style, by tortuous and repetitive practicing to achieve keyboard accuracy and competence, and by whipping himself to artistic excellence, we see the triumph of a broken being over the downward drag. But we also catch a glimpse of the kind of excellence which might have been natural had man never been broken. In that kind of society, instead of one thousand persons watching one performer who had outstanding skill, there might have been one thousand and one participants.

From where we stand, however, such a society is only a nostalgic dream of the past and a vision of the coming society which God has promised. Man's complete mending from his brokenness awaits the resurrection. When a man gains God's forgiveness, he enters seriously on an upward walk, a walk that is opposite to his former walk, and one that is composed of fellowship with God and obedience to God. The obedience is discipline which triumphs over the natural downward moral drag. With his inner moral infection still eating at him, however, he is under great stress. Paul described man's conflicting ways as walking in "the flesh" versus walking "in the Spirit."² The person who minds the call of "the flesh" is on his way downward to "sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worship of false gods, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, jealousy . . . orgies and things like that." But the person who walks in the Spirit produces "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

generosity, fidelity, tolerance and self-control."3 These persons, says Paul, "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."4

Since all men are in motion, either in response to a moral gravity downward, or in response to the call of the Spirit of God upward, the person who enters into fellowship with God not only experiences forgiveness but begins a trek upward. He climbs and grows. When his inner infection is cleansed by the purging work of God's Spirit within him, he not only experiences that cleansing but enters again an upward climb. Having stripped off everything that hinders, as well as ridding himself of the infection which sapped him, he sets out to run the race before him with patience, his eyes fixed on Jesus, the source and the goal of his faith.5 The life in the Spirit is a life of constant growing.

A man outside of Christ may determine, for reasons that have nothing to do with any commitment to God, that he must not be sucked downward by natural moral gravity. Suppose for a moment that a man's moral capacity and his behavior are like an automobile set on an incline, A man without Christ may grit his teeth and say to himself, "I simply cannot falsify the account because I will be found out sooner or later." Or on a slightly higher level he may even say, "I cannot do it because I could not be dishonest and live with myself." This man is, by sheer determination, bracing himself and pushing his auto enough to keep it from rolling backward down the incline, or enough, perhaps, to gain a few inches. The man who has been awakened to new life by an inner birth of the Spirit will say to himself, "I cannot cheat in my accounting because of what God has done for me; I would not care to go through that court process again." He is in the driver's seat; the motor is running, the machine responds to his steering; he chooses to drive straight ahead - - upward. The man who has been purged from his inner infection -- frictions in our symbolic auto -- says, "I cannot be dishonest, or even entertain thoughts about it, because of my responsibility to myself, to others who would be affected by my act, and to God." His auto operates at maximum efficiency; it is equipped with power assists and automatic transmission. All the while he is still responsible for steering the machine.

There is only one standard of morality for man's behavior-holy living. God's forgiveness (justification and regeneration) and his empowering (cleansing and charging with the Spirit) are his aids to bring achievement of that standard within range of man.

The principal quality of the life that is lived in this upward direction is charity, God's kind of love. Love is not a gift of the Spirit; it is the evidence that the Spirit is present within a man. Love is the way of life that emerges when God's Spirit has a man. Paul described many of the Spirit's gifts -- some of them of more importance than others -- but in conclusion he said, "And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way"6 -- the way of charity. First Corinthians 13 is really Paul's crowning argument about the evidence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

Hotline Communications System

From the moment you respond to the hunger deep down at the center of your being and begin to move toward the track God has in mind for you, you are in touch with God's communications center. The line is not always humming with conversation, but so long as you move toward God -- are obedient to his claims -- the line signal remains "live."

There are times when the system carries an intensive dialogue -- when you are in court sweating out your guilt, when you are wrestling through the night with the infection that plagues you. There are regular hours when the line is in use -- your daily devotions, communion before meals, family prayers, Lord's Day worship, Bible study. But the man who walks in the Spirit enjoys continuous direct line service to his Creator. This provides three values: (1) The line may bring in guidance as the Spirit impresses upon you God's will when you are confronted with choices. (2) The line is available to you in emergencies and in spare time for consultation and for communion as it is needed or is desirable. (3) The line serves as a constant signal system to keep you on the track.

The person who walks in the Spirit responds to a kind of radar guidance which God gives. Of the two legitimate choices he may make, he takes the one which leaves the signal system free of static -- or which does not bring on the warning "beep" of sonar alerting him that he is off course. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit"⁷ not only that we are the children of God but that we continue to be in a right relationship with him.

Maintenance

I have been in homes in which it was almost dangerous to try to walk across the living room. Drawers hung precariously from their cabinets; boxes, toys, and clothing lay on the floor like booby traps for feet. Debris -- most of it items of useful purpose, but out of place -- engulfed the room. I have returned to those same homes on the occasion of some notable family event and have found that everything was in order, though I had vivid imaginations of the ghosts that may have lurked within closets and drawers! In contrast, the house where I live is kept by a woman who instantly scoops up every out-of-place item and restores it to its niche. She also urges her three men to do the same -- but alas, I fear, with little success.

Obviously, in one's relationship with God, there is no satisfactory alternative to perpetual housekeeping. Purity is kept only as it is maintained. The Scriptures suggest that moral housekeeping is accomplished by one principal method. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."⁸ Our sanctification (cleansing) is impossible until we are familiar with and respond to God's Word; Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."⁹ He also noted, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have

spoken unto you."¹⁰ The Holy Spirit uses the Word in cleansing us in that great moment of being purged from our racial infection, but he also uses the Word to help us in our day-by-day housekeeping. No life will be holy that is lived without perpetual cleansing by the Word. (Note: [1] The Scriptures were written under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit. [2] The Scriptures have been preserved through the centuries under the providence of the Holy Spirit. [3] The Scriptures are used by the Holy Spirit to reveal to man his need and God's remedy. [4] The Scriptures are used by the Holy Spirit to cultivate Christian growth and maturity.)

Testing is necessary in maintaining the life in the Spirit. Indeed, testing in this case is not for the purpose of finding a breaking point, but for developing better moral and spiritual competence. One's faith and commitment emerge from testing "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire."¹¹ Jesus prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil . . . Sanctify them . . . As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."¹² The abrasive resistance of a society moving downward has a polishing and purifying effect upon its members which are being caught upward by the power of the Holy Spirit. It could even be argued that a person who avoids or otherwise lacks this abrasive resistance is thereby weaker than he might have been, just as plants which grow under the glass roof of the solarium are too fragile to survive the gentle breezes of a garden.

Additional filling with the Spirit is necessary to the life of the Christian. There is one baptism (the washing, cleansing, charging act), but many fillings. When, after their cleansing and empowering moment on the first Christian Pentecost, a crisis developed in which the disciples sensed a need for refueling to meet their pagan world, they prayed, and "the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."¹³ The filling was not a fresh cleansing but a refueling; perhaps it better represents the filling up of an enlarged capacity that resulted from their witnessing. As a believer grows toward God, his capacity for the Spirit's presence also might be said to increase. What fills a baby would not dent the appetite of a teen-ager.

Resource

Man's power for progress on the track comes from the Spirit. It is a power to witness to the ends of the earth.¹⁴ And the ends of the earth include the obscurest places close at hand, the apparently insignificant common task, the job that is routine. Wherever a man goes, if he is God's inbreathed man, he goes by the power of that inner Spirit. Paul coins a phrase that is full of meaning. He is confident that a desired objective will undoubtedly be brought about through the prayers of his friends, "and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."¹⁵ If a man has a deep vacuum that requires a great satisfaction and, having been once satisfied, still

increases in its capacity and its appetite, what more could he want than the unlimited "supply of the Spirit"?

The picture, then, of a man on the track is that of a man who lives as God meant him to live. He moves in a new direction. (Remember that he does move -- grows, advances, matures!) He lives in unbroken contact with his Creator -- sometimes the line is not busy, but it is "live." Man on the track perpetuates his happy and useful relationship with God by perpetual housekeeping, by undergoing the abrasive resistance of the world, and by continued occasions of being filled by the Spirit of God. God's Spirit in him is his adequate and abundant resource his fuel.

* * * * *

08 -- CENTURY 21 AND THE NEW MEN

Already the new men are dotted here and there all over the earth Every now and then one meets them. Their very voices and faces are different from ours; stronger, quieter, happier, more radiant. They begin where most of us leave off. They are . . . recognizable; but you must know what to look for. They will not be very like the idea of "religious people" which you have formed from your general reading. They do not draw attention to themselves. You tend to think that you are being kind to them when they are really being kind to you. They love you more than other men do, but they need you less They will usually seem to have a lot of time: you will wonder where it comes from. When you have recognized one of them, you will recognize the next one much more easily. And I strongly suspect (but how should I know?) that they recognize one another immediately and infallibly, across every barrier of colour, sex, class, age, and even of creeds. In that way, to become holy is rather like joining a secret society. To put it at the very lowest, it must be great fun. -- C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*¹

If Methuselah's life-span could be brought forward in history so that he were just now entering into his last half century, he would be able to recall events that occurred during the time of the Norman invasion in 1066 when he was a young man. But so accelerated is our modern rate of achievement that anyone today who lives for fifty years witnesses more progress and change in his society -- scientific breakthroughs and methods of occupying one's energies and earning a living -- than Methuselah saw in his 969 years.

Wonders and Horrors

This phenomenon of increased rate of achievement -- in which all of the past discoveries are multiplied by themselves and then by the resulting new discoveries to form a skyrocketing spiral that points to some moment of explosion -- is a moral one. That is, it has a capacity for evil as well as for good, and these capacities are in precisely equal proportion to each other. A lever, for example, might be used to

move stubborn stones in order to make way for a new road; or it might be used to move a stone off an overhanging ledge where it would crush or badly frighten an enemy below. The principle of the lever may be used in its limited way in either direction. By comparison, nuclear energy may be harnessed to provide power for lifting a communications satellite into the heavens, or it may be used to deliver atomic death to masses of people. Having great capacity for noble purposes, it has equally frightening potential for perversion. For every mountain peak there is an equally deep abyss beside it.

In our century the peaks and abysses stand higher and deeper than ever before. In each generation the stakes are higher -- there is more to be won, and there is more to be lost. Will our adventures in space contribute to moral excellence and to the spread of lofty values to other planets, or will we actually succeed only in contaminating other parts of the universe and planting there our perversions? Will our breakthroughs into the secrets of life lead to unimaginable cures and corrections for persons suffering from defects they have inherited, or will the fantastic discoveries be grasped by some despot who will artificially interfere with and fix hereditary factors in persons before they are even born?2

The Pivot

History turns upon the quality of the men who make it. A doctor in Umri or Springfield may live in almost constant fatigue as he imparts life, health, and faith to men; he is making history. A warped mind, a childhood full of disappointments, and a steady trigger finger combine to erase a human being in Dallas; a man shapes history. "The towering enemy of man is not his science," said Raymond B. Fosdick at the dedication of Palomar Observatory, "but his moral inadequacy." General Omar Bradley concludes that "humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by its moral adolescence. Our knowledge of science has already outstripped our capacity to control it Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."3

Now such a picture of man's responsibility may make the prospect of the future a very bleak one. Indeed, with the population explosion mushrooming and thus multiplying the millions of living beings whose natural (broken) inclination is downward, the bleakness is compounded. Carl Friedrich, professor of government at Harvard, spoke with concern about protecting the nation of Israel because he has observed something crucial about the role of Judeo-Christian culture in history. Only this strain of people, he says, has ever had a sense of purpose and destiny for themselves and for mankind in general. They have provided men with a concept of God's work with man and the idea that a worthwhile objective lies out in the future. Without a sense of such an objective, or goal, there can be no history. One cannot record where he has been if he has not had a sense of a goal toward which he was moving. Without purpose every day would be just like the one before it. If the Judeo-Christian strain should disappear from this planet, Friedrich concludes, history will have ended.4

Friedrich is right in observing that a relatively small number of persons are holding history together. He is wrong in supposing that by saving the physical offspring of any particular generation of that minority group you could thus prevent history from coming to an end. The way to shape history is to increase the size and the effectiveness of that minority group which is the glue holding things together. At about the beginning of the twentieth century, Friedrich Nietzsche and others talked of the coming supermen. Today's need is for supermen, but of a different kind from those Nietzsche had in mind. Our new men must be not physically superior but morally superior. They must be better, not bigger. They must be nobler, not tougher. Nietzsche and all his kind must be greatly disappointed that their kind of superman is never scheduled to appear on earth. If they had been present when God was enveloping this planet with life, they undoubtedly would have concluded after seeing the gigantic armored dinosaurs that the final controlling creature would be more gigantic, better armored, heavier, longer, and so on. How disappointed they would have been to note that the manager of this planet was a being who was small compared to dinosaurs, whose "standard equipment" limited him to temperate climates, and who had no armor whatever. God chose to grant dominion to a creature whom he would charge with intelligence, rationality, creativity -- his own characteristics.

In the first man, Adam, God revealed his plan: This planet would survive and respond favorably to men in whom his Spirit worked. In the Second Man, Jesus Christ, God reopened his blueprint to remind men of the master plan and to make it possible for any man to step into that plan -- by justification and by the sanctification of his Spirit. Every man is potentially the third man; all of us may become members of the new race -- men who are on the track, who live as God designed that they should live. The hope of the world and the stabilizing factor in history are in these third men. These new men are "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."⁵ Let me make it clear that they are not the third Adam. The first Adam and the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, stand alone as members of the race who were placed on this planet free from inherited traces of a twisted image. But they stand as the first and second instances of true men -- those who experienced what man was designed to be. Beyond them the line of third men is now forming.

God's plan for man is that we enter into perfect fellowship with him -- "that God may be all in all."⁶ Our Lord's earnest prayer for all believers was that he might be in us and the Father might be in him, thus bringing into union the Father, the Son, the believer.⁷ At first glance you might think that this is a discourtesy to the Third Person of Deity, the Holy Spirit, but you will think differently about it when you remember that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to inhabit the believer. He has made possible the realization of the highest goal for humans -- perfect union with God. Through Christ, God invades his inbreathed man and catches him up into intimate fellowship.

New Men at Work

As the peaks rise and the abysses sink ever deeper, men are confronted by the responsibilities of their times. An astronaut in orbit cannot for one moment give less than his best attention to his tasks; nor can one member of the gigantic ground crew responsible for his mission overhead. Just one fuzzy-minded space engineer could wreck a potentially immeasurable move forward in scientific achievement. The same kind of high responsibility filters down to the very last citizen in every country on the globe. Discipline and purity are not virtues which are cultivated as one might practice playing the piano or running the mile. They are essential qualities for our times. The new men are men who have responded to this call for moral excellence.

New men, because they are morally integrated and because they are at one with God by the inner presence of his Spirit, see their world -- their generation -- as it really is. They share the burden of guilt for its atrocities; they weep for the crimes against innocent people; they are stung to the core by senseless persecutions; they repent of the sins of their communities. At the same time they see every man as potentially a new man. Behind every face they see a person for whom Christ died, and envision him as he might become. They do not stop looking when they note the color of a man's skin, nor when they suspect that he is a pagan; they see all men as God's creatures, and as having immeasurable personal worth. Frank G. Jennings, speaking to educators, observed:

It is no longer possible for us to be comfortably ignorant of the problems of peoples beyond our borders. Our world is only ninety minutes in circumference and soon a pair of human eyes will be able to look upon a hemisphere. The mind behind those eyes must see more than topography, more than tactical vantage points. It must see people in all their variety, the commonality of their needs, the similarity of their aspirations. That mind must be educated in the discipline of compassion, the logic of brotherhood, and the literature of social hope Perhaps love is the key word to an understanding of the nature of the change we are undergoing.⁸

Only new men can love perfectly.⁹ Only new men can see other persons with true compassion, for of all men, only they have stepped down from the center throne of their lives and exalted the rightful Lord, by whom they are now able to see all things from an unselfish view.

The new men are in touch with, and communicate with, their world. They are aware of their responsibility to the world. They do not indulge in blind monologue to the world; they know that the ancient orator who spoke with his eyes closed deserved to have the audience walk out on him. Nor do they spend most of their energy talking to themselves, although it would be much easier to communicate with those who agree with them already. They are impelled to engage in dialogue "that the world may believe," and "that the world may know."¹⁰

The new men know that these are days in which they cannot afford to be anything less than alive, informed, alert, active, Spirit-filled Christians. They have a growing sense of responsibility for being prepared for any crisis and any eventuality that may await around the corner. The new men know that only those persons who are actively launching an attack for their faith will successfully withstand the attacks of false ideologies. They recognize that only those persons who live by deep and complete commitment to God have anything hopeful to say to their world.

Infiltration!

The earth is God's planet, but Satan has set up a temporary and illegal government here. Throughout the centuries God has attempted to reestablish control of the earth and to replace chaos with order and perversion with productivity. In these last times God has at last launched an invasion on this planet against the prince of the power of the air. He has sent the Prince of heaven, Jesus Christ, to establish a beachhead and to draw together an underground movement whose sole purpose will be to retake the earth for its true Owner.¹¹ The underground is bent on infiltrating every corner of the earth to spread the news that Satan has really been defeated by Jesus Christ, that his whole show of strength and his entire world empire operate illegally, and that his slaves are fools not to revolt and stand upright as free men. They need only accept the terms of the freedom-getting back on the track for which God has made them.

The conflict between the Prince of heaven and the prince of the power of the air, Satan, continues. When there is no battle, no conflict, an able-bodied civilian may be expected to move about leisurely, conducting routine business. But when enemy soldiers are on every corner, when the mass media bring brainwashing propaganda daily into every home, when the tyrant holds whole continents in his grip -- there is a call for recruits for the underground. Its ranks are made up of the new men who, although they are a minority group, place a leverage upon this planet all out of proportion to their numbers. The new men are at this moment spreading over the earth; inch by inch they are retaking this planet for the King. One day the Prince will return to bring the battle to a triumphant end. He who is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending"¹² will promote the new men of the underground into the ranks of "Omega Men."

* * * * *

09 -- THE FINE PRINT: DEFINITIONS

Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure, take this rule: -- whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; -- in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that

thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself. -- Susanna Wesley, in a letter to her son John¹

Words, of course, are symbols. That is, they bring pictures to the minds of the persons who hear the words. Written languages have developed from picture writing. Some Oriental languages have survived to the present time as obvious forms of picture writing. When we trade pictures for letter combinations, as we have in English, we immediately face the danger of bringing up more than one picture with a word -- depending upon the background of the hearers. If I should say to you, "Please take out the chesterfield," you might begin to look for a door large enough to permit the passage of a large piece of overstuffed furniture. Or you might begin to look for something else.

When we use words to describe our relationship to God, there are other reasons for choosing them with care. We do not want to give a wrong picture, to be sure, but we want to bring up a compelling picture and one that is technically accurate. Fortunately, the biblical terms which describe the deep life of the Spirit are adequate to give basic pictures regarding our relationship with God. Our task, therefore, is to use them in such a way that they are compelling pictures to those with whom we speak.

Suppose that you have a friend who believes that you drive an inferior brand of car. He wants desperately to communicate to you the great satisfaction that you might have if you drove a car manufactured by the company that made his. He might say to you, "George, you really should make financial arrangements and go down and buy a new car like mine." Now he is being realistic with you. The only way you can share his satisfaction and enthusiasm is to do what he has recommended, but he has made a poor beginning. Who could possibly become enthusiastic about making "financial arrangements"? He has described the experience by which you could enter into a deeply satisfying relationship (that of owning a superb auto), but he chose the least compelling words to express his desire for you. You won't buy the car.

Suppose that your friend has found the values and blessings of marriage and a Christian home to be almost beyond description. You are a young bachelor who has carefully avoided marriage. He comes to you in an effort to urge you to forsake your bachelorhood and to take a wife. He says to you, "George, you should really have a wedding. There's nothing like it. I'm glad I got married." Instead of helping you toward the establishment of a home and a family, he has probably given you a sizable setback. The wedding is very likely the thing you have feared above all else -- the formal clothing, the gaze of scores of people, the dread of having to repeat vows aloud for the benefit of spectators, the fear that somebody will break down and cry or that someone will trip and fall and that people will be amused, or sympathetic, or almost anything. The mere thought of a wedding causes you to break into a cold sweat! He should have invited you to his home to let you see the values he enjoys -- the companionship a wife offers, the pleasant surroundings she

can create, the meals she serves, the complete ease with which married persons enjoy each other's presence. You may be paralyzed at the thought of being the groom at a wedding, but you will not find it easy to resist the appeal of warmth and companionship which you see demonstrated in your friend's home. He should have talked about the abiding values of the home. Besides, a wedding is over in thirty minutes, but marriage goes on and on. Experience is important, but it only serves to launch or to enrich a relationship.

There are innumerable words and phrases used by people to describe their deeper life in Christ. Many of these have special significance only to the persons who use them. An elderly Presbyterian couple, having been taught that they could come into perfect fellowship with God only in "the hour and article of death," fell to praying for God to satisfy their deep hunger for his indwelling. They came into a wonderfully intimate relationship with God. Since they did not know what to call their experience, they called it their "sun porch experience," for that indicated the place where they entered into their deeper life with God.

The best-known word pictures used to describe the deeper life have their roots in Scripture. They tend to fall into three categories: (1) those which describe the experience of entering into the deeper life; (2) those which describe the relationship with God which the deeper life makes possible; and (3) those which describe the attributes or characteristics of such a life. Ordinarily you talk about your experiences, and you delight to tell of a satisfying relationship, but you practically never speak publicly of your own attributes of character! To draw another parallel with marriage, these three categories are roughly equivalent to the following statements: (1) experience -- "I had a wedding"; (2) relationship -- "I am married"; and (3) attribute -- "I am a devoted husband." Now consider the terms.

Sanctification

There is action in the verb "sanctify." It is clearly a word that speaks of experience. Old Testament festivals were sanctified.² Articles to be used in sacred services were sanctified,³ People were to sanctify themselves as a preparation for worship.⁴ Prophets were sometimes sanctified for their office.⁵ The word is rich in its meanings -- to cleanse, to set apart, to devote to God. Jesus prayed that believers might be sanctified -- made pure, set apart, devoted to God. This sanctification comes by the power of the truth, the Word of God.⁶ Paul was bold to recommend Gentiles to the early church executives on the basis of the fact that the Gentiles should be acceptable, "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."⁷ Young Timothy was advised that he should be a "vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use."⁸ The dominant meanings of the term "sanctify" are those of inner purification and dedication to God. Whereas regeneration is pictured as an exterior "washing,"⁹ sanctification is portrayed as an interior cleansing, and the description is often of the Holy Spirit who refines as with fire.¹⁰

Sanctification is begun at the new birth, the birth of the Spirit. It is the act of God (or experience of man) which lays the base from which the holy life springs. But while sanctification is begun with man's first response to God's offer of salvation, it is made complete, or perfected, later. Paul prays for the believers at Thessalonica, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly,"¹¹ that is, make you pure through and through -- make you entirely clean. And Christ's work of redemption is credited as having "perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us."¹² Thus entire sanctification is the technical (or legal) term which describes the deep moral cleansing which God, by his Spirit, completes within believers when they submit to the purging. Since entire sanctification is a technical and descriptive term for an act of God upon man, it has about the same compelling power for a young Christian as talk of a wedding does for a potential groom. It should be reserved for purposes of instructing those who have been persuaded that the benefits and relationship it will establish are worth any steps that could possibly be necessary to enter the new life.

Consecration

Almost everything said about sanctification applies to consecration. The expressions "consecration" and "sanctification" have sometimes been used interchangeably in Bible translation. Generally speaking, consecration describes man's action. When man consecrates, God then sanctifies. Entire sanctification may be said to include entire consecration, but entire consecration could not be stretched to include God's purifying act. Like entire sanctification, entire consecration describes an event, thus is an experience. Both terms are technical descriptions and lack the compelling attraction necessary to draw a person into a deep relationship with God.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist was thought by some people to be the Christ, but he gave them a description by which to positively identify the coming Saviour: "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."¹³ He went on to explain that the Christ would thoroughly purge men, separating the wheat from the chaff and burning the chaff with unquenchable fire. In spite of John the Baptist's prediction, there is nothing in the three-year ministry of Jesus that could be called his "baptism with the Holy Spirit." Jesus spoke of being "born of the Spirit,"¹⁴ but this new birth was clearly the entrance into a new kind of life, not the captivating, purging, empowering action of the Spirit's dynamic working. Toward the end of Jesus' earthly ministry he spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world as if it would be some kind of climactic event.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot

receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.¹⁵

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.¹⁶

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.¹⁷

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.¹⁸

These promises and predictions must have been pointing toward the baptism with the Holy Spirit of which John the Baptist spoke. The Holy Spirit's coming was remarkably like a baptism. On the head of each person present in that upper room there came down a flame-like image ("He shall baptize you. . . , with fire"). Everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit ("shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; . . . for he. . . shall be in you"). Those upon whom the Holy Spirit came began immediately to fulfill their responsibility to the "uttermost part of the earth" ("and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, . . . , how hear we every man in our own tongue?"¹⁹). You might get the impression that the two phases of Christ's complete work in those apostles were necessary only because their response to his claim which made them disciples (conversion, the "new birth") was on one side of Calvary and their response to his cleansing and empowering Spirit (baptism with the Spirit, entire sanctification) was on the other side of Calvary. The conclusion, then, might be that since his completed work on Calvary, only one response to him is necessary, both to arise in new life and to be cleansed and empowered for maximum performance as a Christian. (Review Chapter 6 if this theory seems compelling to you.) Throughout the book of Acts however, not to mention the testimony of the centuries since then, there is the clear inference that men who responded to the Christ of the cross and the resurrection later responded to the interior alteration which Christ's Spirit performs. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a relationship, nor an attribute. It is an experience which ushers in a new and dynamic relationship with God.

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

In the event recorded in Acts 2:1-4, when the Holy Spirit was outpoured on those present, they were filled with the Spirit, but that was only part of what they experienced. A new relationship was established between believers and God, and a new source of power was released in their lives. They were cleansed and brought into perfect harmony with God; then they were filled by his Spirit. But one "filling" would not last for a lifetime of needs. The picture in the book of Acts is that of Spirit-baptized witnesses who constantly returned to the refueling source. When

Peter was placed on the witness stand to reveal the source of the apostles' message and their authority, he was again "filled with the Holy Ghost."²⁰ In a prayer fellowship following their reprimand for speaking in the name of Jesus, the early Christians prayed, "Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word."²¹ The result was that "when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."²² Paul apparently thought of the Holy Spirit as the refueling source, for he spoke of his continuing relationship with God which was kept triumphant by the prayers of his friends and by "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."²³ The infilling of the Spirit is an experience which the child of God should return to again and again. There is one baptism, but many fillings. Although the experience of a wedding is over in thirty minutes, and a relationship is established, many experiences throughout a good marriage enhance the relationship and give it depth and permanence.

Christian Perfection

"Perfect" in Scripture consistently conveys the idea of wholeness, completeness, of being fully proportioned. Animal sacrifices had to be perfect.²⁴ With respect to men, however, perfection did not refer to physique, nor to the powers of judgment. The only perfection the Bible knows for men is moral perfection. Jesus required that believers be "perfect." Lest they should miss the full force of what he meant, he said, "Even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"²⁵ and that certainly does not refer to physical perfection. Jesus was speaking of perfection in love (for both "neighbor" and "enemy") which is a fruit that grows out of the moral root of man. The picture, then, of complete sanctification which gives rise to pure holiness testifies to the fact that a man's life may be perfectly related to God and man (including both "neighbors" and "enemies").

Although it may seem a bit surprising, Christian perfection, strictly speaking, is not an attribute or a fruit of life. Nor is it an experience. It tells about a relationship. "Perfect" tells what kind of a relationship should exist between a man and God, and it describes the kind of love that a man, when he is made entire or whole by God, may have toward other persons. A man may be perfectly related to God, and he may follow perfect motives in his behavior toward other persons. At the same time he enjoys these perfect relationships and lives by perfect motives, he may be very imperfect in his social manners, his use of English, his handling of algebra, or in his judgments. He is thus not a perfect man, but is perfectly related to God and others.

You may recall that I have been making the point that we do not talk about our attributes and that some of the technical descriptions of our experiences do not make good conversation either. (You would rather have a man tell you how much he enjoys good health than to have him share with you, item by item, the medical and

surgical record of how his health was recovered!) And now I must break to you the news that we are at the point of a dilemma. "Christian perfection" is not a good talking point either. It would be if people understood that it is a relationship instead of an attribute. But you can easily see that anyone who uses the term "perfection" to describe anything about himself would seem to be insufferably proud. I conclude that our dilemma may also be our blessing, for this perfect relationship does not so much need to be announced as lived. It is more in need of demonstration than of proclamation. The word "marriage," although it describes a relationship, is frightfully like "wedding." So if you are afraid of weddings, you would be more likely to be impressed if your friend said, "George, you've no idea what you're missing by living alone." (You see, marriage is best "sold" by stressing its values, not by selling it as a commodity.)

Perfect Love

Christian perfection is also expressed in another way as perfect love. Perfect love describes the kind of relationship that exists between a man and his God and between a man and other persons. "Perfect" in the term is the same kind of biblical word described above. Perfect love can be communicated perhaps better than any of the other terms yet considered, for when you hear of a person who holds you in complete respect, or perfect love, you are not offended. The term is outgoing, not self-centered.

One who loves God completely, or perfectly, is no offense to other people. This is the obvious purpose for man's existence. Perfect love is not something that a person experiences (unless you mean God's perfect love for man); it is a way of life. Perfect love is God's kind of love.²⁶ It is described in I Corinthians 13, and it is called "a more excellent way."²⁷ Perfect love is not a weak indulgent love. It lovingly takes its object through the depths of spiritual surgery in order to save that object; but all the while perfect love is love -- not judgment. Perfect love is consistent and patient; it loves whether or not there is returned love. Even when love is rejected -- as in the case of a person who rejects your offer of Christ to him - - perfect love loves him in his rejection and still envisions him as he may yet become through Christ.

Not only does "perfect love" describe the Godward and manward respect and appreciation that characterize a Christian, it also affects the Christian's view of himself.²⁸ All personalities, including his own, come into focus for the true values they hold. Self-respect, or recognition of one's own responsibility to God for caring for himself as a part of God's creation, is never fully realized until a man is perfectly related to God. Until then he never sees himself or any person in the light of his true significance as God's creature.

Holiness

Although we most often think of holiness as describing good behavior, its basic and most profound meaning is one that deals with relationships. God is holy; that is, he is peerless, majestic, perfect, morally excellent. He stands beyond, outside, and above men and is worthy of their praise, their reverence, their awe. When we pray "hallowed be thy name," we are not imploring God to cleanse his name; we are acknowledging that God, by the very nature and wonder of his power and majesty, can exalt his name -- set it forth before all mankind for their respect and worship. Holiness is an essential quality of Deity, but its principal expression lies in the area of God's relationship to creatures.

When Paul speaks of man as having been "created in righteousness and true holiness,"²⁹ he is alluding to man's relationship with God in that ideal intimacy which existed before sin broke down all of man's basic relationships. That relationship must be mended, for without holiness "no man shall see the Lord."³⁰ Holiness throughout Scripture is fundamentally a description of a relationship.

Holiness, however, is not without its ethical side; holiness is related to behavior. As you trace God's dealings with lost mankind, you will see him offering covenants to men. Unclean lips, as in the case of Isaiah,³¹ or moral impurity of any kind made a covenant relationship impossible. Thus holiness required purity, and "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."³² Keep in mind, however, that the principal feature of holiness is its relationship; a man may be essentially clean yet be unholy if he is unrelated to God. An established relationship with God is reflected in a man's morality, but a man's morality cannot elevate him to the relationship. The perfecting of holiness, then, does not refer so much to a sharpening of personal disciplines as it does to the cultivating of an increasingly intimate relationship with the Holy God. Holiness speaks of relationships; holiness is an attribute of God. The Holy God imparts his holiness to those to whom he gives himself in intimate fellowship. It is appropriate, of course, for us to talk about the holiness of God, and to recognize our responsibility for becoming holy persons, but one's own holiness does not make an appropriate talking point. Indeed, holiness is immediately suspected of being defective or counterfeit if it parades. Like humility, when it is genuine it is not focused upon itself: "For you can have no greater sign of a more confirmed pride, than when you think that you are humble enough."³³

Heart Purity

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."³⁴ This happy promise suggests that only those who have undergone an inner purification can truly think God's thoughts after him -- have the mind that was in Christ.³⁵ At any rate, true fellowship with God is possible only to those who are inwardly pure. The deep work of the Holy Spirit was credited, by Peter, with such an inner transformation of some of the first non-Jewish Christians. Peter explained to other early church leaders that "God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and

them, purifying their hearts by faith."36 Heart purity is an attribute of life which is present in the Christian who has surrendered to the deep work of Christ within the core of his being.

The deep life of the Spirit is one which is entered into by an experience. This experience may be called the baptism with the Holy Spirit if you wish to describe how it occurs and who does it. Or you may call it entire consecration if you want to describe what you do to prepare for the experience. Or you may speak of the experience as entire sanctification -- which stresses the cleansing and empowering work which is completed in the experience. If you wish to stress the dominant act and recurring event which the experience inaugurated for you, you may speak of being filled with the Holy Spirit, but this being filled is only part of the total experience.

Best of all, the Christian who submits to the refining fire of God enters into a deep and satisfying relationship with God. This new relationship is one of perfect love toward God and toward man. While the term "Christian perfection" sounds like an attribute of life, it really describes the perfect relationship which a man may enter into with God. In that relationship the transformed man is, therefore, "perfect, even as [his] Father which is in heaven is perfect."37

The deep life of the Spirit yields its fruit in heart purity and holy living. These are not experiences; they are the attributes of persons who have been made pure. These attributes are not things which saints practice; they are the spontaneous fruit of their lives.

* * * * *

10 -- QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim.

-- George Santayana¹

Separation

1. Since I have become a Christian and have separated myself from my former friends, I find it very hard to witness to them effectively. What should I do?

There is a verse in II Corinthians that reads, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."² Now this verse means everything that it says, but it does not say what many people try to make it say. This is a verse which Paul quoted from Isa. 52:11. (He was quoting from his favorite translation, the Septuagint, not from the Hebrew version.) Now there is nothing in the Old Testament that is contradictory to the New Testament. Its teachings suffer only from being

incomplete, not from being inaccurate. It is true that the person who comes to Christ must surrender his hold on all uncleanness -- profanity, erosive habits, gossip, dirty-mindedness -- if God is to receive him. That is what Paul was using the verse to say. In the Old Testament one does get the idea that holiness was largely a matter of isolation. (God also demanded that families, cities, and nations be wiped out to check the spreading infection, but that was before One came by whom all men, families, cities, and nations can be redeemed and thus saved!) In the New Testament holiness is for the world, for use on the street, in the office. While a Christian pursues only those occupations, entertainments, and recreations which are enriching, there is practically no place on earth where holy people should not go to bear witness to the transforming power of Christ.

Mary Alice Tenney suggests that the Christian -- you, for example -- should ask himself, "Which is uppermost in my mind: the distinctives of the Christian life that separate me from the unsaved, or the amazing gift from God which I feel impelled to share with them? . . . In a crowd of smokers or drinkers do I try to withdraw, or can I be natural and poised and friendly?"³ Your problem with your friends of former days may be because of your new way of life, your deep commitment to God, and the consequent loss of common interests. These values eventually determine which are lasting friendships. But your problem may be that you "dropped" your friends because you took II Cor. 6:17 to mean that you had to. There is no justification for a Christian to be discourteous to his friends. If they felt that you were, you will probably never be able to convince them that Christianity is what you know it to be. They have received another impression of it. Review Chapters 1 and 8 and read John 17, looking for the real burden of Jesus' prayer. It is stated twice. Get your holiness into the world!

Proof Scriptures

2. Some of the people I talk with about holy living insist on seeing verses of Scripture before they will accept any new idea about Christian living. Are there some verses that I could use with them?

By all means there are. There is a danger in using proof texts, however. Most of the people who have pet verses hot on their tongues are defending some point of view that is particularly comfortable to them. The normal response to such tactics is suspicion. The target person asks himself, If it is right, why does he get so defensive about it? Or he may say, He acts as if there isn't much evidence to support his theory, so he has memorized all of it. As a matter of fact, such honest suspicion is almost always right. For example, the man who uses Paul's "sinners, of whom I am chief."⁴ to build a theory that a man who is right with God continues to commit great sins is undoubtedly grasping for a sedative for his guilt.

There is a second danger in proof-texting. Most Bible verses must be understood in the light of their context-the surrounding verses. For example, if your friend quotes "ye shall never fall"⁵ as a proof that once a person is on the track he

will never be lost, he has badly perverted the verse. He has ignored the conditional phrase, "If ye do these things,"⁶ and its antecedents, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue . . . knowledge . . . temperance, . . . patience . . . godliness . . . brotherly kindness . . . charity,"⁷ and the resulting fruitfulness. Your best response to your friend would be to say, "Let's study the complete passage." When you have opened up the total teaching of it, you could say, "That is the kind of Christian security I believe in -- the scriptural kind."

Now that you see the dangers of using proof texts, let me tell you that the best kind of biblical persuasion is that which rests on the total argument of Scripture and which is reflected in history, logic, and common sense. The proof-text Christian tends to build his theology like an inverted pyramid which stands on tiny points. The biblical Christian builds his theology like a true pyramid -- the broad base supports the delicate points.

Now about scriptural support for holy living. The Scriptures are simply full of the teaching that a man needs forgiveness for his wrong deeds and cleansing from inner pollution. When the Bible speaks of an impure "heart," it is speaking of the racial infection. Use a concordance to study this concept of an inner-heart condition that needs a remedy. Many helpful passages are listed in footnotes for Chapter 6. There is perhaps no more profound passage than I John 1:3-10 in which to trace man's highest goal, his problems that keep him off the track, and the means of solving those problems.

Below is a diagram that will make the passage clear. In Scripture there are occasional passages which are constructed, as you would expect, from a Jewish pattern of logic. This pattern is one which begins with the goal and works backward, outward, or downward to things outside -- to the present situation. For example, the instructions for constructing the Tabernacle begin at the center with the ark of the testimony, the holy of holies, and move outward.⁸ In Western logic, you begin outside and work toward the center or the goal.

I John 1:3-10 is constructed in the Hebraic logic form. It begins with the ultimate goal -- life and fellowship with God -- and works downward to the situation of the man outside who has no relationship with God. By reversing the passage you can immediately see the logic from the Western understanding -- beginning with the man where he is and leading him up the stairs toward the goal.

On the Track

3 -- That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 -- And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 -- This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 -- If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

Infection Removed

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Violations Forgiven

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

In the passage do not overlook the difference between "sins" for which we bear guilt and must be forgiven and "sin" which is an infection from which we must be cleansed.⁹

Hypocrites

3. In some people who profess to being cleansed and filled by the Holy Spirit I see evidence of pride and selfishness. I am tempted to think that they are not sincerely involved in their relationship with Christ. Are they really hypocrites?

There are some hypocrites around, but many of the people whose behavior disappoints you are not hypocrites. Some of them are "babes in Christ" of various ages. Very often a person who has been converted has a second intimate experience with God in which he is deeply moved. Although the event may have been only a refreshing time of communion with God or a thrust upward of growth in grace, he may suppose that the impressive experience was the deep cleansing and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Such a case of mistaken identity is likely to occur among those who know that they may expect two distinct acts of God in bringing them complete spiritual recovery. If having an experience has been emphasized without clear teaching about the nature of the second phase of God's work in man, then a person tends to count the experiences instead of entering into the second distinctive relationship which God has made possible. Persons who mistakenly suppose that God has completed his work of cleansing in them must be frustrated indeed. Sometimes such disappointed people conclude that the only kind

of victory one can have over an inner twist is to disguise it -- hold it under control. They try to make the best of living at "halfway house."

Consider those who are really on the track. With their moral twist corrected and their inner vacuum filled by God's Spirit, they are still subject to temptation. Their threshold of temptation is at the point of the subtle doubts, jealousies, fears, and selfishness from which they have been delivered. You would not expect to hear that they were tempted to return to their old vices and habits, but now and then you may see a Christian passing through a severe temptation that involves his attitudes.

Backsliding

4. After I'm on the track, that is, I have been forgiven and cleansed and have walked in fellowship with God, is it still possible for me to sin and be lost?

Is it still possible? Certainly it is; no human being is ever in a state in which it is impossible to lose his fellowship with God and his ultimate salvation. The total argument of Scripture teaches this. Adam, the first man, fell. When we get back on the track we are in much the same position he was -- that of a person having intimate fellowship with God but also bearing responsibility for choices and behavior. Study the diagram on page 132 and note the three kinds of failure that can lead to separation from God -- to lostness. Write "unbelief" to the right of verse 10; write "pride and rebellion" alongside verse 8; and write "hypocrisy" alongside verse 6. These are the three kinds of crimes that attack a man at the three levels. All are fatal. The kind of sin which brings guilt and blame to a man is his deliberate neglect of walking with God or outright disobedience. Such neglect and disobedience are not a part of the regular life of the believer.

Do Christians sin? "No sin" is God's rule all the way from Eden to Revelation. God has made it clear, however, that there is a remedy available for the person who has fallen into disobedience. First John expresses clearly what is implied throughout the New Testament: "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."¹⁰ Because the person on the track is earnestly cherishing the relationship he enjoys with God, he will immediately repair that relationship by calling upon Jesus Christ, his advocate. This remedy is for emergency only. It is not a part of the equipment used day after day by the Christian. Instead of asking, "Do Christians sin?" ask "Do fires break out in homes?" The answer is yes, but anyone would hasten to add that a fire in a house is both abnormal and dangerous. Imagine having to call the fire department every day. Imagine living in unending debris brought about by flash fires. Christ is our standby for emergencies that may come, but God's standard and our only sensible kind of life is one that is not normally interrupted by disobedience or negligence and the resulting emergency.

You sometimes hear someone talk of his "besetting sin" as if everyone kept one vice as, a sort of pet brought over into the spiritual era of his life from the days spent in lower living. And you get the idea that everyone is entitled to at least one "besetting sin." Not only is the idea absurd, the use of the term is a contradiction of the passage which speaks of laying "aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us."¹¹ That sin is not plural sins, but the infection or twist which drags at the moral center of a man. It is not to be coddled but forsaken. It needs not forgiveness but removal, as a man who has been in training for a track event removes the lead weights he has worn in training so that he will have a sense of freedom and power to fly down the track.

What is the position of the person once on the track when he sins? Before I answer this question directly, I must tell you that the faithful believer is more sensitive to the cultivation of a holy life than is anyone else in the world. Because of this he may often confess his weakness, his ineptness in witnessing, his failure to perform with excellence as a representative of Christ, or his cowardice. None of these things would cause a nominal Christian to respond in any way; a pagan doesn't know such sensitivity is possible. In this sense the closer one walks with Christ, the more sensitive he becomes to his opportunities for an ever closer walk. This is related to the saying that "the more you know, the more you realize you don't know." Probably the most effective Christian you know spends time secretly before God confessing his need for more courage, more winsomeness, more compassion. But the earnest believer's confession of these needs for better discipleship is not the same as, or in any way related to, repentance for deliberate acts of disobedience.

No man can deliberately neglect his relationship with God or disobey God unless he has first inwardly defected. Suppose that such a man embezzles funds where he is employed, or has an affair with his secretary, or lapses into telling a lie. Before he was able to commit the act, he first had paved the road to it in his mind. The old master, self, crawled back on the throne. Had you been watching closely, you might never have known the precise moment when the transfer of central authority passed back to self and the infection was introduced again into his moral center. Now he is guilty of sin in the first degree, premeditated treason -- the original sin. This time it is not an inherited infection; it is his very own, and that is much worse! Thus infected, the man finds it is only a small step downward to the actual deeds of self-assertion, self-satisfaction, and self advancement. With deliberate acts of sin on his hands, he is then both guilty and infected. The way of the transgressor is indeed hard.

Depth

5. When the Holy Spirit cleanses a man from his inner infection, making him "whole" or "entire," does the cleansing reach to all of man's attitudes or only to those which he knows need the Spirit's cleansing?

We may conclude that the Spirit's purging from the old infection of self-centeredness (which spoils all of a person's attitudes and relationships) is a complete one. Paul's prayer for believers at Thessalonica was that the very God of peace sanctify them wholly -- literally through and through.¹² Consequently the man who has been put back on the track should not be surprised to discover that in addition to being cleansed from resentments, he no longer responds with jealousy to situations in which he would have turned green before. At the center of a man's life the basic responses have undergone cleansing. The spring has been purified deep down; its flow should be expected to reflect that purity in the various streams which emerge.

The deep cleansing of God's Spirit does not provide a man with infallible judgment nor with a set of perfect attitudes. Suppose, for example, that you have been reared in an environment in which your fellow citizens assume that persons of their own race are superior to persons of another color or race. You have been trained, perhaps by the mere impartation of attitudes, to believe that their assumption is indeed truth. The Spirit's cleansing may not erase a lifetime of training and impart a new body of knowledge which stresses the dignity of all creatures who bear God's image. In fact, in your ordeal of surrender and cleansing, racial attitudes may not even have occurred to you; yet you were cleansed of a basic sinful core which was the source of your self-centeredness. When, one day, you are confronted by your own incorrect view of race issues, you must pursue new information and form new attitudes which are inspired by, and compatible with, your deep life of the Spirit. Deep cleansing does not eliminate the necessity of Christian growth and learning.

You must remember also that the deep work of the Spirit will remove neither the scars of the first man's sin, nor the scars of your own life when you were disregarding the high purposes for which you were made. The first man's treason was self-enthronement. All men bear a gigantic scar which, even when free from actual infection, is a reminder of that fatal tendency in mankind. So also every man bears, in addition, his own scars which remind him of his close brush with catastrophe. The infection may be removed completely; wounds will heal, but they leave their scars. One who has brought on disease, perverted the delicate balances of his emotions, and acquired appetites which formerly enslaved him will continue to bear the marks of his dissipation. The delicate patterns which trigger his responses may never again approximate the wholesomeness of his early adolescence. He will walk in fellowship with God in loving obedience to his call to holy living; he will live in triumph over twisted appetites. But he will recognize that the marks of his old wounds may remain with him, and he will wisely take care that they are not reopened.

Halfway

6. What if a person doesn't want to get all the way onto the track; I mean, he wants only to be saved? Does everybody have to take the full course? What does "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"¹³ have to do with it?

The outline in Chapter 6 traces the normal desire of the person who is responding positively to the leading of the Spirit of God. First he wishes to be forgiven; second he yields his right to self-rule and receives the cleansing and empowering of God. None of this is compulsory; many persons never even find forgiveness. At each step of the path up to the track one may stop or turn around. Stopping, however, has the same general effect as turning around. Notice in the diagram of 1 John 1:3-10 that a man may forfeit forgiveness if he belligerently says, "I have not sinned" (v. 10). He may forfeit cleansing if he rebels in pride and says, "I have no infection -- sin" (v. 8). Even from on the track if he neglects his relationship until it wastes away to an empty shell, he may say hypocritically, "I walk with God," and be, in reality, a liar (v. 6).

The person, then, who does not want to get all the way onto the track is responding negatively to the call of the Spirit. It is safe to say that any negative response leads eventually back to guilt and to prison unless one recognizes and repents of it. From a practical standpoint the person who tries to live a lifetime at the first level -- forgiveness -- is up against a big order. Life will certainly be a fierce battle; he must live by sheer discipline, frequent relapse, and appeal to the Advocate. His moral center has never been cleansed and the complete lordship of Christ acknowledged. Suppose that you hear a disturbance in the garage and, going to investigate, find a burglar. You then wrestle with the intruder until you have him flat on his back on the floor. The burglar is under control; he cannot steal under those circumstances. But you have your hands full, too. You must get the burglar out of the garage before you can have any peace. Having him disarmed and prone is a relief, but sitting on him for the rest of your life would be absurd.

People who are sitting on a burglar usually do one of three things: (1) They call for help until they get the burglar out. (2) They make a deal with the burglar: "I know, and you know, I can't keep you out. I'll let you go if you'll promise only to come and go quietly and take only little things." (3) They lose their grip and are taken prisoner by the criminal.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"¹⁴ is the verse to which you refer. People are usually wrong when they quote it as a magic formula demanding that you must be entirely sanctified right now. Holiness and peace here are a relationship and a life quality, to be entered into and cultivated. The man who has just received Christ's forgiveness is following holiness and peace. At no stage of a believer's life are holiness and peace entirely absent. The Spirit's deep cleansing from the inner infection is the great event by which holiness and peace become the dominant characteristics of a man's life. But even then the following is only begun. On the track you continue to be confronted with

choices to which you respond either positively -- and move on toward seeing God -- or negatively.

Feelings

7. Although I have experienced forgiveness for my sins and have received the inner cleansing which the Holy Spirit provides, I have times of doubt and of feeling pretty low. What is the matter with me?

You may be putting too much stock in how you feel. You enjoy a relationship with God, not just an experience; there is a vast difference between the two. Suppose that you and a friend spend a few hours together one evening. After you have laid aside the coffee cups you fall into a discussion of "the aging process in outer space," or share impressions of a recent book each of you has read. Time races. You are each caught up in the exciting experience of discussing something equally interesting to both of you. You contribute insights to each other's understanding of the subject at hand. You are both enriched. A little later, say at nine o'clock, your conversation has reached its conclusion; you listen to records. There is no conversation, but you enjoy each other's company. Your bus passes at eleven, but at ten-thirty the records run out. The machine clicks and is off. Each of you is engrossed in a magazine. You are not certain, but you think your friend may have dozed for a few minutes. No matter; all evening you were thriving on a relationship that is made up of vivid experiences, common appreciations, and the pleasure of each other's presence.

Your relationship with God is established by your response to his gift of forgiveness and by your obedience to his leading. So long as you maintain the fellowship -- experiences, communion, companionship -- your feelings have nothing whatever to do with the relationship. Only disobedience or neglect can terminate your relationship with God. Review Chapter 7 and study the Bible passages listed in the footnotes. Give special attention to the discussion of the witness of the Spirit under the heading, "Hotline Communications System." Sometimes when you are having a black day you may have to check out the system negatively by saying, "There is no defect in the line; my service arrangements have not been canceled; my account is up to date; the 'live' signal is on the wire; I accept the fact that I am connected even if no messages are passing at the moment."

Tongues

8. I have heard that some groups teach that speaking in "tongues" is the proof of being filled with the Holy Spirit. I think I have even heard of people in old-line churches doing this. Are such "tongues" the evidence of being Spirit filled?

Back of your question are still other questions. One of the important ones is whether today's tongues phenomenon is the same as that which occurred on the first Christian Pentecost, or whether that original phenomenon was an inaugural

sign, a gift of foreign languages, bestowed upon the newborn church for communicating to foreign-speaking people who were present. Many of the respected scholars agree that the speaking "with other tongues" recorded in Acts 2 was a passing, inaugural sign which accompanied the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the church. And it is obvious that the phenomenon was a gift of languages. One is inclined to wonder why the additional inaugural signs of tongues of fire and the sound of rushing wind are not demanded by the cultists today as proof of the Holy Spirit's work.

You are confronted with still another problem when you try to determine whether the gift of tongues discussed in I Cor. 12 -- 14 is the same phenomenon as the gift of languages in Acts 2. Everyone seems to have his own particular view on the question. A few things are clear, however. (1) The tongues in Acts 2 communicated -- without interpreters -- to foreign-speaking persons; the other tongues apparently communicated to no one unless he had the rare gift of "interpretation." (2) In Acts 2 the church was advanced by the phenomenon; in I Cor. 12 -- 14 the tongues caused trouble in the church. (3) Of those present, and presumably participating, at Pentecost none is known ever again to have spoken "with other tongues"; the apostles apparently never used them in foreign missionary work; yet in I Corinthians some people seem to have been making a nuisance of themselves by demonstrating their strange art. (4) In Acts 2 the phenomenon helps to set the stage for a great evangelistic harvest for the church; in I Cor. 12 -- 14 and elsewhere, Paul ranks tongues at the bottom of the scale and intimates that they should be put away as childish.

Whatever you may conclude about reconciling Acts 2 with I Cor. 12 -- 14, it is quite evident that modern-day tongues, if they are related to either phenomenon, have more in common with the troublesome First Corinthians tongues than with those of Acts 2. Paul's advice to 20th-century believers would certainly be no less severe than that he gave the first-century church, "So, in your case, unless you make intelligible sounds with your 'tongue' how can anyone know what you are talking about? You might just as well be addressing an empty room!"¹⁵

Since tongues speaking is both reported as part of the historic material on the first Christian Pentecost and is also listed among spiritual gifts, thoughtful Christians today who take Scripture seriously cannot ignore the issue. Here are some criteria which may help you form a biblical position which you can hold with integrity:

a. Are tongues being practiced in order to overcome the natural linguistic barriers present because the hearers come from different language groups? Or are they being practiced for the pleasure of the speaker?

Ecstasy and religion are firmly married to each other. Voodoo priests in Haiti today and shrine prostitutes in Corinth in the first century have ecstatic language in common. The "language of the gods" across many pagan religions is unintelligible,

linguistic activity which ventilates the emotions of the individual in an act of devotion to his/ her deity. Tibetan monks have been observed in trance-like linguistic excursions in which they quoted long passages of literature from languages they have never studied.

While tongues speaking may accurately be described as being a religious phenomenon, it is clearly not exclusively a Christian one. As in so many other patterns in biblical theology, it may be that Christian reality displayed the pinnacle of what ecstatic communication could achieve: critically important communication on the day of Pentecost. All pagan expressions are egocentric and self-serving, and are pale gestures compared to the selfless, loving speech of apostolic witnesses. But the tendency certainly seems present in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians for Christian practice to lapse dangerously close to the glossolalia of the shrine prostitutes across the quadrangle. And the only admonition from Paul against women speaking in worship was in the context of Corinth where immorality and tongues speaking were pagan synonyms.

b. Are tongues being spoken openly for the benefit of the Christian community as a means of honoring God and exalting the name of Christ? Or are they being practiced privately -- hence understood neither by a hearer or by an interpreter -- or within an introverted and withdrawing subculture which exercises tongues with great secrecy?

It would appear that tongues speaking in Acts did not require a special emotional climate favorable to spiritual intimacy, and not until the Corinthian situation arose had tongues speaking become a fad and a status symbol which Paul sets about to correct.

c. Is someone making a priority issue of speaking in tongues? What priority did the apostles give it in their planning or proclamation at Pentecost? How are tongues ranked when they appear in lists of spiritual gifts? How did Paul rank tongues personally? Why is it so important to you to have the matter settled? Which consumes more of your energy: sharing Christ, or winning your position about tongues and recruiting carbon copy duplicates of yourself and your position?

The Unpardonable Sin

9. What is the "sin against the Holy Ghost," which the Bible teaches is unpardonable?

Many theories have been offered about what sin Jesus had in mind when he said, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, . . . but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness."¹⁶ Some have suggested that it was the use of the name of the Holy Spirit in verbal profanity. I once heard this theory supported by the story of a man who looked upward at the sky and shouted an invective against the Holy Spirit. He was reported to have

dropped dead on the spot. Now his crime was both tragic and silly, and it is undoubtedly true that he committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, but he had committed it long before he swore at the Third Person.

The real meaning of Jesus' words must be discovered by studying the situation in which he gave the teaching. Jesus was accused of working miracles by mysterious powers of the devil. The account begins in Mark 3:22. Following Jesus' teaching about the unpardonable sin, Mark adds, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."17

In the specific instance, then, the sin against the Holy Spirit was calling the Holy Spirit Beelzebub -- the prince of devils. In principle, the sin consists of calling good evil. A few persons may actually fall so low that they shout invectives or, like Milton's Satan, declare, "Evil, be thou my good," but their fatal sin occurred before they spoke. Any man who rejects God's salvation -- restoration of God's Spirit within him -- is saying, "For me, evil is good." Many persons who are not in Christ, of course, merely grope in blindness and emptiness. They recognize that there must be some good that could satisfy them. So long as the hunger and the desire to find that good -- God's salvation--remains, there is hope for ultimate finding.

In finding answers to all of your questions regarding your relationship with God follow these principles: (1) Discover everything you can from the Bible about what God requires, what he promises, and what you must do in response to his requirements. (2) Pray for the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit as you apply the truth of the Bible to your problem; the guidance of the Holy Spirit always confirms the truth revealed in Scripture.

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NOTES

01 -- WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

1. I quote Dr. Malik, former United Nations Ambassador from Lebanon, from his response to a question posed by the editor of Christianity Today, November 24, 1961.

2. John 3:8

3. John 14:16,17

4. John 14:17

5. John 17:9

6. John 17:21

7. John 17:23

8. John 16:8-9

9. John 16:10

10. C. S. Lewis quotes Athanasius as teaching that the Second Person of the Trinity (the Son) "is not only bodiless but so unlike man that if self-revelation had been His sole purpose He would not have chosen to be incarnate in human form." See C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 92, from Athanasius, *D. Incarnatione*, viii.

11. John 17:15

12. John 17:21, 23

13. John 16:11

14. Luke 23:34

15. Matt. 27:51

16. John Updike in "Seven Stanzas at Easter." 17. Gen. 3:15

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02 -- GOD'S DESIGN AND THE BREATH OF LIFE

1. From "The Holy Grail," lines 25-27.

2. W. M. Logan, *In the Beginning, God* (Richmond: Ioll Knox Press, 1957), p. 21.

3. Gen. 2:7

4. Gen. 3:19

5. Gen. 1:27

6. Gen. 2:7

7. Dorothy Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 34. © 1941 Dorothy L. Sayers. Used by permission of A. Watkins, Inc.

8. See Eph. 4:23-24 and Col. 3:10.

9. Gen. 2:7

10. Gen. 1:31

11. Gen. 1:28-30

12. Gen. 3:8

13. Eph. 5:18

14. John 20:22

15. Joel 2:28

16. Acts 2:2, 4

17. Augustine, Confessions, Book I, Chap. I, "Fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te."

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03 -- THE GREAT DISASTER

1. C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 39. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company and of Geoffrey Bles Ltd.

2. Gen. 3:1

3. Gen. 3:1

4. Gen. 3:2-3

5. Gen. 2:16-17

6. Gen. 3:4

7. Gen. 3:6

8. Gen. 3:4-5

9. Gen. 3:6

10. Compare Gen. 3:6 with 2:17 and 3:3

11. Gen. 3:9-10

12. Rev. 4:11

13. Gen. 3:21

14. Gen. 3:22

15. Heb. 1:2

16. Jas. 4:5. C. S. Lewis corrects the KJV, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), p. 34. See also RSV and Berkeley.

17. Gen. 3:22

18. Gen. 2:17

19. Compare with D. R. Davies, *Down, Peacock's Feathers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), p. 66.

20. Gen. 2:7 and 3:19

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04 -- GOD'S REMEDIAL SCHEME

1. By special permission of the survivors of the owners of Kaleidograph Press, Dallas, Texas.

2. Gen. 3:21

3. Gen. 4:13

4. Read about this in Gen. 4:19-24

5. Gen. 4:23-24, *The Berkeley Version in Modern English* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959).

6. Gen. 4:26

7. See Gen. 6:8

8. Gen. 9:11

9. Gen. 12:1-3

10. Exod. 20

11. Gal. 3:24

12. Matt. 3:3

13. Heb. 1:1-3, Berkeley

14. Here I am indebted to C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, p. 36.

15. John 1:14, 3:16, and elsewhere

16. John 1:14

17. Gen. 3:15

18. Rev. 13:8

19. C. S. Lewis, Miracles, p. 116. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company and of Geoffrey Bles Ltd.

20. John 20:22 and Acts 1:8

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05 -- THE TRACED-OVER BLUEPRINT

1. The Phenomenon of Man, translated by Bernard Wall (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 292.

2. Gen. 1:2

3. Ps. 90:2

4. Judg. 6:34ff.

5. John 14:16-17

6. John 14:17

7. John 15:26; 16:12-15 and surrounding verses

8. John 16:15 and elsewhere

9. John 14:26; 16:13

10. John 16:13

11. John 14:26

12. John 15:26

13. John 16:7

14. John 16:8-11

15. John 17:9

16. John 17:21, 23

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06 -- MAN'S RECOVERY: THREE STAGES

1. Act Four, Scene One

2. II Cor. 7:10

3. Luke 20:19-26

4. Acts 16:30

5. Gen. 28:20-22

6. Rom. 3:24

7. Rom. 5:1

8. John 3:3, 5

9. Gen. 32:24-30

10. Acts 1:8

11. John 20:22

12. Acts 2:2, 4

13. Acts 2:3

14. Matt. 3:11-12

15. Acts 15:8-9

16. Rom. 15:16

17. Acts 2:38

18. Paul calls death the wages of sin in Rom. 6:23.

19. Gen. 3:22-24

20. Isa. 26:19

21. Here I enjoy the company of C. S. Lewis. See his Miracles, pages 173-175 in the regular edition or pages 149-152 in the paperback edition. Those who cite I Cor. 15:53 as the basis of immortality as a Christian doctrine must be careful to notice that this is not "immortality of the soul" as the pagan Greeks taught it and as many funeral speakers proclaim it (heresy, of course!). Paul's immortality was something that replaced "mortality" and was "put on," not something that "survives."

22. I Cor. 15:51-56

23. John Updike in "Seven Stanzas at Easter."

24. Rev. 22:14

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07 -- LIFE ON THE TRACK

1. I Cor. 6:19

2. Gal. 5:16-25

3. Gal. 5:19 ff. From The New Testament in Modern English. Copyright J. B. Phillips, 1958.

4. Rom. 8:1

5. Here I follow the basic paraphrase of J. B. Phillips on Heb. 12:1-2.

6. II Cor. 12:31

7. Rom. 8:16

8. Ps. 119:9

9. John 17:17

10. John 15:3

11. I Pet. 1:7

12. John 17:15, 17-18

13. Acts 4:31

14. Acts 1:8

15. Phil. 1:19

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08 -- CENTURY 21 AND THE NEW MEN

1. From the chapter entitled, "The New Men," pp. 172-73 in Mere Christianity, used by permission.

2. Compare recent developments in this field with the horrifying prospect of living in such a world as imagined by Aldous Huxley in Brave New World (New York: Harper & Row, 1932).

3. Raymond Fosdick and Omar Bradley quotations are from a citation in Henry P. Van Dusen's God in Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 17-18.

4. Here I have summarized Carl Friedrich's "Israel and the End of History," an address reprinted in Land Reborn, March 1954, and published by the American Christian Palestine Committee.

5. Col. 3:10

6. I Cor. 15:28

7. John 17:23

8. Frank G. Jennings in "The New Dimension of Education," in Saturday Review, February 13, 1960.

9. Matt. 5:48

10. John 17:21, 23

11. Here I am indebted to C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, p. 36.

12. Rev. 1:8 and elsewhere.

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09 -- THE FINE PRINT: DEFINITIONS

1. Robert Southey, The Life of Wesley (London: Oxford University Press, 1925) I, 24.

2. Joel 1:14

3. Exod. 29:36, 44

4. Lev. 11:44

5. Jer. 1:5

6. John 17:17

7. Rom. 15:16

8. II Tim. 2:21

9. Acts 22:16

10. Luke 3:16

11. I Thess. 5:23

12. Heb. 10:14-15

13. Luke 3:16

14. John 3:2-17

15. John 14:16-17

16. John 16:7

17. Luke 24:49

18. Acts 1:8

19. Acts 2:4, 7-8

20. Acts 4:8

21. Acts 4:29

22. Acts 4:31

23. Phil. 1:19

24. Lev. 22:21

25. Matt. 5:48

26. Matt. 5:43-48

27. I Cor. 12:31

28. Consider this in the light of Matt. 22:39

29. Eph. 4:24

30. Heb. 12:14

31. Isa. 6:5

32. I Thess. 4:7

33. William Law, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948), p. 217.

34. Matt. 5:8

35. Phil. 2:5

36. Acts 15:8-9 37. Matt. 5:48

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10 -- QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

1. George Santayana, Life of Reason (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), I, 13.

2. II Cor. 6:17

3. Mary Alice Tenney, "Widening Your Witness," in Evangel, June 30, 1963, p. 6.

4. I Tim. 1:15

5. II Pet. 1:10

6. II Pet. 1:10

7. II Pet. 1:5-7

8. See Exod. 25-30. For an analysis of this Hebrew logic consult James G. Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1868), p. 205.

9. For further study on this passage see Delbert R. Rose, *Epistles of John and Jude* ("Aldersgate Biblical Series," Vol. 39 [Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1964]), pp. 13ft.

10. I John 2:1

11. Heb. 12:1

12. I Thess. 5:23

13. Heb. 12:14

14. Heb. 12:14

15. I Cor. 14:9, Phillips

16. Mark 3:28-29

17. Mark 3:30

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