

*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart
Toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest (Jer 31:21)*

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

Volume 7

Issue 7

**Devoted to the Defence and Proclamation of the Way of Life
in Opposition to the Dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom**

<i>Our Personal Angel</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>The Parable of The Sower</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Experience of Evil - a Corollary of Divine Service and Approval</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>The Little Horn of Daniel 8</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Bearing One Another's Burdens</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Special Study Section:- The TRUTH concerning the Holy Spirit</i>	<i>20</i>



*“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that
sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was
given unto him: and he went forth conquering,
and to conquer” (Rev 6:2)*

*“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ...” (Jas 3:17)
“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)*

Our Personal Angel

The Scriptures are clear as to the role of the Angels at Creation in response to the commandment of the Almighty:

“By *the Word of Yahweh* were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Psa. 33:6).

Yahweh gave the command, and the Angels obeyed. He said: “let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (cp. Psa. 33:9). So it was that the Angels (Hebrew: *Elohim*—see Psa. 8:5) were the agents through which the Almighty accomplished His Will in creating the Heavens and Earth. So it is that we read in Genesis chapter 1: “In the beginning, *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

But after the 6 days of Creation, the Angels still have a creative role to play, for during the 6 millennial days of the New Creation, their working in human affairs is essential for the development of those called out for the Name of the Lord. As we read in Hebrews, they are “all ministering spirits, *sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*” (Heb. 1:14). We, who have been called out from the world to become Sons of the Living God are the “heirs of salvation” if we remain faithful. So, the Word of Yahweh is clear: the angels are our ministers! Their purpose is to ensure the outworking of God’s Will both in world affairs but also in us as individuals. The Angels have the charge of ministering to us, and our needs.

Right from the beginning, the Angels have been intimately involved with Human Affairs. Genesis 1:26 reads: “and *Elohim* said, Let us make man *in our image*, after our likeness”. The reference to “our” in this place shows this point. We are made after the physical and moral likeness of the *Elohim*. Again following the sin of the first human pair “*Yahweh Elohim* said, behold the man is become *as one of us*, to know good and evil”. So by disobeying the command of God, man knew good and evil in an experimental sense, and became like the Angels. The implication of this is that the Angels themselves had been part of a mortal creation, and had also fallen from grace, causing them to “know good and evil” - in the same way as Adam and his wife— and therefore had been saved by a Divinely instituted way of redemption. In this way, they were intimately involved with man’s beginnings: he was made in their likeness, and like them, he fell, and experienced both good and evil. The Angels were then given the charge of ministering to those who took hold of the Almighty’s Plan of Redemption, keeping them in the way (cp. Exo. 23:20), bringing them through the trials of life (Gen. 48:16), that they might also attain to immortality, being made equal to them (Lu. 19:36) when restored to the friendship of the Deity.

As we have seen from Hebrews 1:10, the Angels are our ministers. That is, each saint has his/her own personal angel, which ministers to him/her. This is not merely a fanciful fairy story taught to children as the world would have us believe, but it is clear Scriptural teaching. Consider these words of Messiah:

“take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 18:10).

The disciples who become as children before their Father have their own angels. We must not despise one of these little ones, for their Angel stands in the presence of God in heaven.

The Lord had his own Angel, spoken of in the book of Revelation:

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by *his angel* unto his servant John (Rev. 1:1).

It is evident that the Apostles believed that they each had an Angel. When Peter was released from prison, he came to Mary’s house, and knocked on the gate. A young damsel “when she knew Peter’s voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, *it is his Angel*” (Acts 12:14-15). Thus, not believing that Peter had been released, in seeking for an explanation, they said “it is his Angel”.

ANGELIC DELIVERANCE

But, it might be argued, If we each have an Angel ministering to us, how is it that we experience problems, and difficulties in our lives? The answer to this lies in the inspired record of Jacob’s life. His life abounds with illustrations of the Angelic Presence, and recognising the work of his Angel, he said: “*the Angel which redeemed me* from all evil, bless the lads” (Gen. 48:16). Jacob was a man who went through many troubles, but recognised that it was his Angel that brought him through, and redeemed him from them all.

Similarly we are told that “*the Angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*” (Psa. 34:7). Notice this point: the Angel will not prevent the trouble from coming. It is necessary for us to be tried and tested, so that our characters might be moulded to fit us for immortality:

“For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ... but if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye illegitimate and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8).

If we are the sons of God, we *will* be chastised. We *will* experience evil. The same Psalm which speaks of the Angelic presence also states: “many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Yahweh delivereth him out of them all” (Psa. 34:19). In all of our suffering and travail, we have the Divine Assurance that we are not alone. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted (tried) above that ye are able, but will with the temptation (trial) also make a way to

escape that ye might be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13). His Angel, our Minister will stand with us, and provide a way to escape. He will be with us, and “deliver us from all evil”.

From the time that we become “heirs of Salvation”, we are give an Angelic minister to keep us from falling, and “deliver us from all evil”. What a comforting thought that is! Our Father will never leave us, nor forsake us, not for a moment, as our unseen ministers operates silently for our benefit. But let us beware! If we really believed the Angel was there, watching us, would we do some of the things we do? The Angel will keep us from falling if we trust in God for all things—but he does not remove our free-will. If we choose to stray from the path, the Angel will not stop us, and we will suffer the consequences of our own folly.

Only in the Kingdom will we fully appreciate the ministrations of our Angel. But until that time comes, let us be thankful to our Father that we are not left alone in this spiritually benighted age, and apply ourselves to the word of Truth, that we might learn to do His Will, and work with the Angel who watches over us, that we might ultimately enter into our Lord’s Rest.

Christopher Maddocks

The Parable of the Sower

It is often thought in the humanistic society in which we live, that men are all equal in terms of their ability to respond to the call of the Gospel. Such a belief is challenged by Messiah’s Parable of the Sower, which depicts the varying categories of men’s hearts in terms of their suitability for the growth of the Word-seed deposited there. The parable itself is well-known, even if the correct application of it is not understood. A Sower went out to sow his seed, and that seed fell upon four different types of ground. Some seed fell by the wayside and were devoured by the birds, some fell among stony places, and having no root, withered under the heat of the sun, some fell amongst thorns, which grew up and choked the growing seed, and finally, some fell on good ground, and yielded fruit in abundance. It is our purpose in this paper to consider the varying conditions of men’s hearts in relation the parable, so that we can more conscientiously consider our own standing, and our own reception of the Word of God.

THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD

The key to understanding the parable is to recognise that “*the seed is the word of God*” (Luke 8:11). That being so, the varying conditions of ground are the various types of human nature into which the seed is sown upon. The exhortation is given by James: “wherefore lay apart all filthiness and overflow of evil, *and receive with meekness the implanted word*, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21). Notice this point: contrary to the beliefs of some, there is no enlighten-

ment from within: human nature by it's very constitution is void of good. "I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" was the testimony of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 7:18). Human nature is not inherently good as some claim: both Scripture and experience teach that it is inherently bad. That which is good must of necessity come from outside, and we must have the meekness to recognise this, and our own otherwise hapless situation. Receiving "with meekness" the implanted word, we embrace a power that is able to transform our character, and save our souls. The importance of that power is illustrated in the first Epistle of John: "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; **for His seed remaineth in him:** and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 Jno. 3:9). The presence of the seed-word within a believer enables that "new man" of the spirit to grow and prosper, yielding fruit instead of rottenness, righteousness instead of sin, life instead of death.

SEED FALLEN BY THE WAYSIDE

The first type of ground into which the seed fell is typified by "the wayside":

"when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up" (Mat. 13:4).

This is where most of our seed tends to land in our preaching. There is no opportunity for the seed to even begin to germinate: as soon as it lands, it is eaten up by fowls. The interpretation is given:

"When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away

that which was sown in his heart.

This is he which received seed by the wayside" (Mat. 13:19). "The Wicked One" is the personification of the evil that lies in the world. Elsewhere it is styled "the god of this world", who "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). It is here, in the hearts of the unbeliever, that much of the seed sown is devoured without even germinating. It is not always so, however. The Apostle John refers to those who received the Word with meekness and belief, and who thereby overcame the wicked one "I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and **the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one**" (1 Jno. 2:14). It is possible therefore to drive away the vultures, and overcome the wicked one - through strength of character, and the power of the Word.

SOME FELL UPON STONY PLACES

The problem with this seed, is that landing upon stones it had no earth into which it could bed itself, to become well rooted, and able to withstand trials. These seeds sprang up very quickly, and from a cursory view, appear to begin with great zeal and earnest. But faith not put to the test is no faith: "because they had no root, they withered away" (Mat. 13:6). A similar principle is taught by Jude, in likening such a class of people as being "shooting stars" (Jude 13) shining very brightly to begin with, but which burn themselves out very quickly. Again, the same place speaks of them as "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." Great and mighty

waves of the sea foam out themselves upon the shoreline: starting up with great swelling growth: but disappearing to nothing at the last.

Israel of old are said to have had stony hearts:

“yet they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the Law and the words which Yahweh of Hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets” (Zech. 7:12)

But the days are coming when they shall undergo a change of heart, having a new disposition towards Divine things:

“and I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (Ezek.11:19; compare 36:26)

It is written that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). This is the class of those with stony hearts: the very nature of what they are prevents the Word to develop and grow. Though they may receive the word with great enthusiasm, their zeal quickly diminishes as soon as hardships come.

There seems to be an allusion to the parable of the Sower in this regard, in James chapter 1 speaking of the rich:

“... as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning

heat, *but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth:* so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways” (Jas. 1:10-11)

Here, men that trust in their own riches to save themselves fade away under the heat of the sun – the trials of life. Again, speaking more generally, Peter speaks of the same principle:

“all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word by which the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. 1:24-25)

Here is the state of the natural man. With no enlightenment from without, his glory is a rapidly fading one: withering as the flower of grass. Having no root, when the day of trial comes, he will wither as a tender flower under the heat of the sun. Such is the vanity of the flesh - though men of all walks of life come together in a common need for salvation, for those who have stony hearts there is no hope—they cannot allow the Word to grow and develop - and so shall faint under trial.

SOME FELL AMONG THORNS

The prophet cried out: “thus saith Yahweh to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns” (Jer. 4:3). The principle here is that a superficial reform is not sufficient: the ground has to be prepared, and the thorns removed before fruit can be developed. Here we see

the principles of this aspect of the Parable of the Sower: Thorny ground cannot yield fruit, for the thorns grow up and choke the developing seed. The word-seed, when it falls upon ground which contains flourishing thorns, will quickly perish, being strangled in its struggle for life and nourishment. Verse 22 provides the interpretation:

“he also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the Word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (Mat. 13:22).

The “thorns” therefore answer to the cares of this life. The Master speaks of these elsewhere:

“take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, **and cares of this life**, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Luke 21:34).

Notice how that in these things the “cares of this life” feature alongside the evil of “drunkenness” - such is the seriousness of the situation. The cares of this life are insidious, in that they take many subtle forms. In the hustle and bustle of today’s society, many things cry out for our attention, all too often to the expense of the cause of the Truth. Time for Bible Study is diminished, as the thorny cares of daily living exert a stranglehold upon the growing seeds of Bible Truth. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His Righteousness” (Mat. 6:33) is the exhortation of Messiah. All other things will be “added unto you,” he continues. We must continue steadfast in the Way, with all other considerations – neces-

sary though they may be for the practicalities of daily living – having a secondary place in our lives.

BUT OTHER FELL INTO GOOD GROUND

This is the state of men’s hearts which facilitate the growth of the embryo-word. The interpretation is given:

“he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit ...” (Mat. 13:23).

Notice the reference in this passage: men’s hearts that compare with this good ground are those who have *understanding* of the Gospel preached. In our day the importance of doctrine is often dismissed as being of little practical value – but this was not the case with the Apostle Paul. Colossians chapter 2 speaks of Paul’s desire for the believers:

“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of *the full assurance of understanding* ...” (Col. 2:2).

Again, notice the point here: “understanding” gives us “full assurance” of the things of God, so that we can trust in him for all things. Again, elsewhere the Apostle exhorts believers to have a mature understanding:

“brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Cor.14:20)

A good ground therefore, is fertile soil for the seed to grow and flourish. A fertile mind will permit unrestricted

growth – but the maintenance of this ground need diligent work. To keep the mind free from the thorns – AKA the cares of this life is a lifelong struggle, but it is an effort that shall be rewarded with life eternal in due course

BEARING FRUIT

Often, this aspect of “bearing fruit” is dealt with in a woolly sort of a way, without there being any specific definition of what the phrase means. The Scriptures are clear: consider Messiah’s teaching:

“... ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Mat. 7:16-17)

Here, the “fruits” are the characteristics by which a tree is identified. The production of grapes shows the plant to be a vine, and good fruit shows the nature of the tree to be good. Likewise, a corrupt tree will not bear useable fruit, being worthy only of being cut down and burned in the fire.

There are therefore, characteristics, or fruit, produced by the disciple of Messiah, which demonstrate his discipleship – the nature of the tree. So the Apostle spake:

“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ...” (Gal. 5:22)

This is the fruit developed from the sowing of the Word. Like a plant growing in fertile soil, even so The Word, when sown into men’s hearts is capable of flourishing and yielding fruits an hundredfold.

CONCLUSION

The parable of the Sower describes how that it is just not possible for the seed-word to grow and flourish in 3 states-of heart. Not that there is anything wrong with the seed; rather the conditions are hostile to its germination and growth so no fruit can be borne. For the true disciple of Christ however, the Word is able to work within them to produce an array of attributes which together comprise “the fruit of the Spirit”. Bearing this fruit, they are known to be Messiah’s brethren. The matter is laid before us: there are 4 types of men’s hearts described in the Parable, and it behoves us to determine which answers to our own condition and circumstance. Only by an inward consideration can we take action, and allow our heart to be fertile for the growth of the Truth.

Christopher Maddocks

The Word of God is only true. Get the fear of God into our hearts, and our whole being is thereby constrained in the direction of right. The hope of well being, the fear of evil, the love of excellence, all come into play with the promises and the threatenings. The difficulty is to get this fear implanted, because men habitually stand away from the only agency that can implant it. The Word is the agency.

Brother Robert Roberts

EXPERIENCE OF EVIL: A COROLLARY OF DIVINE SERVICE AND APPROVAL

The chapter we have read from Jeremiah is remarkable in more ways than one. It will be profitable for us to consider it for a few minutes, as affording us an opportunity of doing what James recommends when he says, "Take my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience." Jeremiah is more serviceable in this respect than almost any of the prophets, for we get closer to him, and observe the shades of his individual feelings in the various circumstances in which he was placed.

His prophecy is remarkable for the absence of all pompous introduction. Nothing could be more bald or literal than the preface which describes him as:

"Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth, of the land of Benjamin, to whom the Word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the 13th year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the 11th year of Zedekiah... unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the 5th month."

What a total absence is there here of any attempt to magnify the importance of Jeremiah and his writings. How unlike in this respect to all ordinary literary efforts; how indicative, amongst many things, of the genuine character of his communications from God. Then we have Jeremiah's extreme sense of unfitness for the work to which he was called. The first message to him is that he had been ordained a prophet before his birth, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." The natural corollary of this as a matter of human thought would have been one of two things, and perhaps both, first, that God would have made Jeremiah a strong, self-sufficient, impervious man, proof against all trouble, and secondly, that Jeremiah would at least have had a strong sense of his capacity for the work to which he was called. Instead of that, the very first response of Jeremiah is, "Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak for I am a child." This response could never have been written but for the sincere experience of the sentiment; and it never could have found entrance into a human conception of a prophet's mission. It is a characteristic that crops up very frequently in the history of God's use for men. Even Moses, the first and greatest of the prophets, raised a similar objection, a sense of extreme self-deficiency; and Paul confesses to the same feeling. Such a feature naturally belongs to the genuine employment by God of men for purposes of revelation. It is easy to understand that Omnipotence would employ weak human mediums in the revelation of divine purposes and wishes; human importances and self-confidences would naturally have been in the way.

Jeremiah appears very far from one in the position of self-confidence. At this very opening interview he is divinely exhorted to be strong, because he was feeling weak:

“Say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee shalt thou speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them” (Jer.1: 17).

BITTER FEELINGS

Thus authorized, Jeremiah goes forth to his work, and soon finds it the most painful work a man could have been called to; so painful that he wishes himself dead:

“Cursed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bear me be blessed. Cursed be the man that brought tidings unto my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad. Let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, because he slew me not from the womb. Wherefore came I forth to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?”

When we analyse his case, we find the reason of these bitter feelings. “I am in derision daily,” he says, “Everyone mocketh me. The Word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily.” Why this should be it is not difficult to see. The messages he was commanded to deliver were such as to excite the utmost resentment on the part of the populace. When we read his prophecies we find them one continuous condemnation of their ways and prediction of coming woe, such as:

“Behold I bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My Word, nor unto My law, but have rejected it. They are all grievous revolvers, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron, they are all corrupters. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them... Behold ye trust in lying words that cannot profit. They steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations. Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? I will cast you out of My sight.

Therefore pray not thou for this people...for I will not hear thee... Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked therein, therefore thus saith the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel, behold I will feed them with worm-

wood, and give them water of gall to drink, and will scatter them also amongst the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send a sword after them that shall consume them.”

It is no wonder that Jeremiah was detested. We have only to imagine such things addressed to people in our own day, to realise how inevitably it would stir hatred, and lead to that stubborn wrath that made Jeremiah feel it was no use speaking. He had really come to that decision at one stage of his work. “I said I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name.” However he was not able to act out his own feelings in this matter. When the Word of God is in a man, it is too strong for his natural control. “His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” And so he went on delivering in public places the various messages as they arrived. At last things came to a serious pass. The priests could no longer endure his reproofs. He had said, “This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant.” Priest, prophet, and people came in a violent mob against him in the court of the temple, and seized him (Jer. 26:8). They carried him before the princes, who had the executive power, and demanded his death. Jeremiah could only say in reply (v.12):

“The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which ye have heard. Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God. As for me, I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall bring innocent blood upon your heads; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words.”

The princes were touched by his modest and pathetic appeal, and refused to sanction his death, and for that time he escaped. Later on, however, even the princes themselves implored the king to give sentence for his death. The situation under which they did so was peculiar in this, that common sense seemed to be all on the side of the princes, and all against Jeremiah. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had invaded the land, and had laid siege to Jerusalem. The inhabitants were busy on every hand concerting measures for defence, and at such a time as this Jeremiah received a command to say:

“He that abideth in the city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; and he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live; for I have set My face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord, and it shall be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.”

The princes came to the king and said, “This man weakeneth the hands of the men of war in speaking such words, let him be put to death.” The king said, “Behold, he is in your hand.” So they took Jeremiah and gave him over to

death, as they supposed, by lowering him into a pit in which there was mire at the bottom, in which Jeremiah sunk.

Such a message was certainly an extreme test both to Jeremiah and to the inhabitants of the city; but if we can realise the divine point of view, we may see that it was admirably suited to the situation. The city was on the point of being destroyed, and was, in fact, destroyed within 18 months or two years; but here was a last opportunity, after generations of disobedience, for any amongst the inhabitants who feared God, to deliver themselves by faith and obedience (the two great conditions of acceptance always). To go forth into apparent death would deliver them; to stay in apparent security would destroy them. It was parallel to the words of Christ, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life shall preserve it." Many, in fact, did go out to the Chaldeans and were allowed to live, while those who tarried behind perished in the siege.

But think of Jeremiah, a messenger of God, sunk in ignominious mud and darkness, apparently a poor recompense for the delivery of his message; but, in fact, faithfulness was thus put to the test; for it requires no great faithfulness to do a work that is rewarded on the spot with honour and emolument. That horrible mud and the chills in his bones will be amongst Jeremiah's brightest memories when the work of God is complete. He will have no regrets about that pit when he is seen with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom. He could not have lived in such a situation; the time had not come for him to die, for his work was not yet done; so a friend was provided in Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian, who obtained the king's authority to bring him up with ropes. Look at Jeremiah just out of the pit, a sad sight for the servants of God, besmeared with mud, and chattering with cold. Let us learn that the service of God is not disapproved by being hard. Jeremiah would be quickly cleaned and re-clad, but his troubles were not over. The siege was in progress; the heavy thuds of the battering-rams could be heard against the walls.

Food was in great scarcity, and nobody was in good spirits. By-and-by the city was captured. God had said to Jeremiah that he would be cared for in the end, but this did not interfere with his being chained amongst an indiscriminate crowd of captives, and wearily marched to Rabbath, where Nebuchadnezzar was encamped. Arrived here, he was discovered by Nebuchadnezzar, and his release ordered, and money given to him, and permission to go back among his people. But not then was his trouble over. The people, seeing his words had come to pass, were naturally deferential to him, and applied to him for direction as to their future proceedings. They strongly wished to go down to Egypt, as a land of peace, to get away from the terrors of war, and they consulted Jeremiah on the subject. Jeremiah submitted the matter to God, and received instructions to order them to remain in the land; but this the people disregarded and went down to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. There we lost sight of him, except insofar as he makes himself visible in the "Lamentations," that were evidently written about this time.

These lamentations are deserving of being seriously pondered from this one special point of view, namely, the experience of evil as a corollary of divine service and approval. The natural man is so liable to assume that prosperity must necessarily accompany men divinely used and approved. This assumption is doubtless the natural result of the revealed fact that at the last it shall be well with them that fear God. The mistake lies in applying the finishing result to the process by which the result was reached. Jeremiah was a faithful servant of God, and yet he had to write this, "I am the man that hath seen affliction. He hath led me and brought me into darkness, and not into light. He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail. He hath set me in dark places, as they that are dead of old. He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out. He hath made my chain heavy. Also when I cry and shout, He shutteth out my prayer. He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone; He hath made my paths crooked. He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces; He hath made me desolate. He hath filled me with bitterness. He hath made me drunken with wormwood. Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace; I forgot prosperity. I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the lord, remembering mine affliction and my sorrow, the wormwood and the gall."

Tradition says that Jeremiah was sawn asunder by the Jews in Egypt. That would at least end his sufferings, and prepare him for the joyful release that awaits all the children of God at the appointed time. The sorrows and horrors of the night will all be forgotten when the morning dawns. For the joy of that morning the sorrows are a preparation, grievous while they last, but working a work that cannot be dispensed with. We may take the prophets as a lesson on the subject that it is eminently profitable to study. In this age our sufferings never can be like theirs, but still to the last it must and will remain true, that "many are the afflictions of the righteous." They are inseparable from the evil state of things through which the righteous are called to pass, and they are indispensable to the result that God proposes to work in them in preparation for the age of glory. We must, therefore, act on the advice that God gave to Jeremiah, and to many others besides, "Be strong and of good courage; gird up thy loins. Speak unto them all that I command thee. Be not dismayed at their faces. Set thy face like a flint. Contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the saints. Be faithful unto death." What if you have to wade through a sea of trouble? It is "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, may be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Christ."

Robert Roberts, "Seasons of Comfort" Volume 2

*Only have patience,
and all things will come right;
God doesn't allow us to put them right.
We cannot put them right if we would; it is impossible.
Christ will do it for us*

Brother Robert Roberts

The Little Horn of Daniel Chapter 8

Daniel chapter 8 recounts for us various particulars of the Medo-Persian and Greek empires. Symbolised by two beasts, each empire was mighty in power, and subdued territories under them. The Medo-Persian empire is depicted as a Ram, and it's twofold leadership by two horns possessed by the Ram. Of this Ram it is stated:

“I saw the Ram pushing westward, and northward and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great”. (Dan. 8:4).

But great though this power was, it was no match for the Grecian Goat:

“And I saw him come close unto the Ram, and he was moved with bitterness against him, and smote the Ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the Ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the Ram out of his hand” (Dan.8:7).

These two beast-nations are also spoken of in chapter 7 of Daniel's prophecy, but there in terms of a Bear and a Leopard. Daniel 7 also speaks of an unnamed fourth beast (symbolic of Rome—cp the Iron element of Dan. 2:40), superseding them, a beast from which would emerge the papal system, depicted by a “little horn.” Emerging from this Roman-Beast, this religious power persecuted the saints of old: “I

beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came ...” (Dan. 7:21-22).

A SECOND “LITTLE HORN”

Returning to Daniel chapter 8, we have a second “little horn” referred to - but notice, these are two distinct horn-powers in their own right, and we must be careful not to confuse the two. The Little Horn of chapter 8 again speaks of the Roman Power, but from a different aspect. Whilst chapter 7 seems to place an emphasis on the religious aspect, chapter 8 speaks of the same forces in terms of their military might. That this is so is apparent from what we are told concerning this horn:

“Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (Dan. 8:11).

It is evident that “the prince of the host” is Messiah himself, and the circumstances described here can only find a “match” in history in his day. It was the Roman power (albeit at the instigation of the Jews) that crucified Messiah. And it was this same Roman power that caused the sacrifices to cease by the destruction of the Temple and all of its arrangements. In this case, the “fit” proves the connection: this second Little Horn speaks of the Roman power—but not in terms of it's religion so much, as it's military power to put Christ to death, and destroy the Temple in AD 70.

THE ORIGIN OF THE LITTLE HORN

The Origin of the Little Horn as being ultimately derived from the Greek system is described thus:

“The he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it became four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

And out of one of them came forth a little horn which waxed exceedingly great toward the south and toward the east, and towards the glorious land” (Dan. 8:8).

There are important points to emphasise here: the Horn did not develop independently, but was derived from one of the 4 sections into which the Greek empire broke up.

DANIEL CHAPTER 11

Before we progress further with this thought, another relevant passage is Daniel chapter 11. Here, we again have reference to the break up of the Greek empire into 4:

“... a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, ***his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided towards the four winds of heaven;*** and not according to his posterity ...” (Dan. 11:3-4).

The rest of Daniel 11 progresses to trace the history (in advance) of the relationships between two of these divisions, describing them as “the king of the North” and “the king of the South” respectively. But the chapter does not only describe those things that have

subsequently become history from our standpoint: it also describes how at the time of the end there will be further developments between the two kings:

“And at the time of the end shall the ***king of the south*** push at him: and the ***king of the north*** shall come against him like a whirlwind ...” (Dan. 11:40).

The “king of the north” has long been identified as being the same power described in Ezekiel as coming from “the utter parts of the north” (Eze. 38:15), also known as the Gogian confederacy of nations. This is the power that shall overthrow Israel, and which shall subsequently be destroyed by the Almighty Power vested in Messiah.

THE LATTER DAY LITTLE HORN

We mentioned earlier that Daniel chapter 8 emphasises the military aspect: nations going to war. And it because of this fact, Bible students sometimes draw the conclusion that if it is the King of the North who goes to war, that therefore the latter references to the Little Horn in this chapter is speaking of the same power—the Gogian, or Russian power soon to war against Israel.

There are however, a number of difficulties with this interpretation. We emphasised earlier that the “king of the north” as well as the “king of the south” both find their identities and origins in the fourfold break up of the Greek Empire. But this “little horn” is not one of the 4 horns referred to: rather, it is ***derived*** from it. This is a big obstacle: if the Russian (Gogian) force is the King of the North - represented by one of the four horns, then the Little Horn cannot be the same power, since it was derived from, and was not one of those horn-powers.

Simply put, Gog is one of the 4 horns, and as the Little Horn is not, the two cannot be the same power.

We saw in Daniel 8, how that the Little Horn from it's infancy, speaks of the Roman military opposition to the Truth. What the present writer suggests, is that this is the same in it's latter day application. Daniel 8 does not specify a time-period at the end of which the Little Horn changes it's identity. Rather, it reads as if it is following on, providing a complete picture. Although the symbols are different, certain details are recorded, which parallel the description of the Roman system in Revelation chapter 17.

Verse 24 states: "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power". And Revelation 17 speaks of how the beast shall not stand in it's own power, but rather ten kingdoms shall "have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Rev. 17:13). Again, Daniel 8 states that "he shall also stand up against the Prince of Princes, but he shall be broken without hand" (Dan. 8:25) - and Revelation 17 states: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev 17:14).

A PRACTICAL EXHORTATION

Having correctly identified which power is symbolised in the second "little horn" of Daniels prophecy, we can see a feature which is most important for us to observe. Daniel 7, speaking of the religious aspect states: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, *until the Ancient of Days came*" (Dan. 7:21-22). It is plain therefore that the Roman system will continue to war with the saints until the coming of Messiah. But how so? In

our own day there is no open persecution present, as there have been in previous generations. Daniel 8 provides the answer:

"by peace [he] shall destroy many" (Dan. 8:25).

Not through violence and warfare, but insidiously through protestations of peace. In our age, peace and tolerance for those whose "views" are different to our own is advocated. With the Roman Catholic Church at the head of the movement, ecumenicalism is preached—and even those who should know better sometimes claim that we should be more welcoming of "other Christians" who "share a common heritage" with us, despite difference of practice and doctrine.

The Bible is plain however: those who are part of that great Harlot-system when Messiah comes, shall pass away with it. These are they "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". Disbelieving, and disobedient to the true Gospel, they place themselves outside of the scope of it's salvation, and instead ally themselves to a system which is in opposition in every way to the Truth concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.

In these things therefore, we see how the second "little horn" of Daniel's prophecy answers to the military aspect to Rome's opposition to Messiah—and we are also warned of the insidious way in which that power continues to prevail against the saints through methods of peace. Let us be warned therefore, lest we become beguiled, and lose the inheritance promised to those who overcome.

Christopher Maddocks

Bearing One Another's Burdens

*“Bear ye one another's Burdens,
and so fulfil the Word of Christ” (Gal. 6:2)*

Our opening citation illustrates the importance of assisting each other as we walk along our wilderness journey towards the land of God's promise. We are blessed in that our journey is not a solitary one: in this dispensation we are grateful for the help and support provided by those of like precious faith—and indeed, we try to reciprocate that same support to others.

At the time of the apostles, Judaisers advocated adherence to the rite of circumcision, and the traditions of men that had become attached to the observance of Mosaic Law. In doing this, they in effect imposed a burden upon the believers—a burden that even the Fathers could not bear: “to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15:10). Our Lord Jesus Christ likewise spoke of this class, in speaking of the Pharisees:

“... they bind *heavy burdens* and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Mat. 23:4).

This is something we must guard against. In our zeal to uphold the principles of the Truth, we can sometimes lose sight of the weakness of the flesh, and the failings common to us all. It is all too easy to scorn those of our brethren who may be failing in a particular aspect as they struggle to overcome sin—but that is not the Way of Christ. Christ taught the need to help each other—to bear each other's burdens, that we might inherit glory together in the kingdom to come.

There is a particular burden, however that we all have to bear. Whilst our opening citation can apply at a general level, as we shall see, they have reference to a specific burden that Christ's brethren must carry. Jesus himself taught:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mrk 10:21)

Very often these words are applied to the general difficulties of life, or a particular difficulty that an individual might be contending with. “we all have our cross to bear” is a familiar saying in religious circles. However, a little reflection will show that Christ is very specific in his words. The “cross” was a burden that Christ himself had to bear. It was the method of his execution, an emblem of his suffering. To “follow” Christ is to identify oneself with his burden. It is to “crucify the flesh” (Gal. 5:24), or as the Apostle said: “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31).

SIMON OF CYRENE

Simon provides an example of one who became identified with Christ, by literally bearing the cross of Christ:

“as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Syrenian, coming out of the country, and him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus” (Luke 23:26)

How wonderful it was, that Messiah did not have to bear his burden alone! Simon was a follower of Christ—literally, as he walked behind him, bearing the burden. And in this, we have an example of how to respond to the needs of our brethren and sisters. “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Mat. 5:20) is the principle. If a man bare the burden for Christ, even so we ought to bear each other’s burdens.

The comparison goes further than this: Simon had the cross laid upon him “that he might bear it after Jesus”. The idea here, is not that Christ put the burden down, and another carried it after he did. Christ never failed under any burden, being the Son of the Most High God, and the Word Made Flesh. Rather, what happened was that Christ carried one end, and Simon the other, supporting it behind, or after him. This passage helps us to understand another verse in Galatians which some find difficult:

“every man shall bear his own burden” (Gal. 6:5)

The question raised, is: “How is that if we all bear our own burdens, that others can also bear those same burdens for us?” The answer is found in the example of Christ. Just as Simon helped carry the cross, even so it is for each of us to individually support our brothers and sisters by helping them to bear their burdensome circumstances.

When compared with the wonderful weight of glory that is laid up for us, the circumstances of this life—however trying they may be—will at the last be considered as a “light” affliction (2 Cor. 4:17). See these words of Christ himself:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mat. 11:28-30)

Whether our burden appears light or grievous depends on what is our point of reference. Compared with the things of this life, they might appear heavy, and hard to bear. However, faced with the glories of the life to come, they will be just a fading memory. We must therefore always have that vision before our minds, to enable us to endure and overcome the difficulties that life brings—and to enable us to help others to overcome also.

Christopher Maddocks

Israeli Scientists Discover 'Self-Watering' Desert Plant

by Yehudah Lev Kay

(IsraelNN.com) Scientists from the University of Haifa has discovered that a rare desert plant “waters itself,” enabling it to receive 16 times the amount of rainwater that falls on it each year.

Professors Simcha Lev-Yadun, Gidi Ne’eman and Gadi Katzir investigated the desert rhubarb, *Rheum Palaestinum*, during a trip with students to the Negev. Unlike most desert plants, it has broad leaves with many grooves that channel rainwater straight to its roots.

Desert Rhubarb

Whereas only about 75 millimeters of rain fall on the rhubarb’s habitat yearly, the plant’s unique irrigation system provides it with as much water as if 425 millimeters were reaching its roots. And whereas rain generally only reaches about one centimeter into the ground, the rhubarb’s irrigation system takes the water ten centimeters under the earth to the deepest part of its roots.

The scientists explained that the series of grooves and notches on each leaf’s surface are a miniature imitation of the topography of the surrounding desert mountains and wadis, maximizing the amount of water flowing to the plant’s roots. In addition, they pointed out that the leaves have a wax covering which helps the water flow.

Leaf Grooves

“We know of no other desert plant in the world that does this,” the researchers said. Their discoveries were published recently in the journal *Naturwissenschaften*.

The serpents lie, the folly of evolution, belief in Creation in contrast to the theory of evolution is a foundation Biblical doctrine.

Forwarded by Bro Andy Peel

Vilification

*has been a well used implement in the hands of the malice.
Paul had his share of the experience.
He speaks of "evil report and good report"
as being alike his experience.
Why should we think it strange
if we have to taste the same?*

Brother Robert Roberts

*The Truth
Concerning the
Holy Spirit*

Special Study Section



Creative Activity

The Hebrew and Greek words rendered “Spirit” occur 465 times in Scripture, and that is not to mention where the word is translated something else. That it pleases Yahweh to provide us with at least 465 references to look through, implies that it is a subject important to Him—and indeed, important to us, if we are truth-seekers, looking to understand the testimony of the sure Word of God. What we shall see as we progress in our considerations, is that the word “spirit” can have several different, yet related meanings and applications. All must be discerned by examining the context, and by considering other passages that teach the same point, but perhaps in a more easy to understand way—a system that we call “comparing Scripture with Scripture”—the only way to examine and learn The Truth.

THE SPIRIT AT CREATION

The first reference to the Spirit in Scripture is to be found in the book of Genesis, in its description of the formation of the Heavens and the Earth according to the will of the Creator:

“ ... the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And *the Spirit of God moved* upon the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light:” and there was light” (Gen. 1:2-3).

We find that by implication then, the Spirit of God was the operative force by which the acts of Creation were performed. Evidence for this conclusion comes from the testimony of other related passages:

“Thou *sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created:* and thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psa. 104:30).

“Praise him ye heaven of heavens ... let them praise the name of Yahweh: for *he commanded, and they were created*” (Psa. 148:5).

“The *Spirit of God* hath made me, and *the breath* of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job. 33:4)

The Spirit of God “moved” upon the face of the waters; implying a readiness to engage in creative activity in response to the Word. This is an aspect which is not commonly investigated in religious circles. That which was created was made so by: **1.** The “spirit” of God, and **2.** the spoken Word. Indeed, the relationship between the Spirit and the Word is further illustrated when it is recognised that the word “spirit” in the original tongue literally signifies “breath.” Words spoken by the breath of the Almighty brought about the activities of countless angels in forming the Heaven and the Earth, to the Divine specification.

To further emphasise this point, it is written of Yahweh that:

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of Yahweh. **By the Word of Yahweh** were the heavens made; and all the host of them **by the breath of his mouth.**” (Psa. 33:6).

So then, “through faith we understand that the worlds **were framed by the Word of God ...**” (Heb. 11:3). The Word, being expressive of Divine Intention was inextricably related to the Spirit, or Breath (Hebrew) of the Almighty which carried the power to execute the Divine Will.

This is very significant when we come to consider the New Creation. Just as the first spoken words spelled out a command for Light to be present, even so Paul informs us that in the case of the New Creation, there is again a Light present—a light given by verbal command of the Almighty through His Son, and witnessed to by the works of the Spirit.

“God, **who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light** of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

It is a Divine principle that once sent out, Yahweh’s word shall not return void: it shall accomplish that which He Pleases (Isa. 55:11). The Spirit being the “breath”, the Word is that which comes as a consequence of it’s being sent forth, and which enlightens the hearers of the Divine Intention. Because it is the spoken Word that gives the command to the Angels to carry out Yahweh’s purpose (Psa. 68:11), the words that brings vocalisation to the Purpose, are accredited as having accomplished the desired operation (as in the above passages). All is the perfect Will of the Deity being exercised, through the Spirit and the Word.

When we consider the events surrounding the New Creation, we find the pattern repeated. There is the “Light” of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is given by the command of God (i.e. the spoken Word), and which enlightens the hearer. But then there was also the activity of the Holy Spirit which accompanied that Light in the form of the Gifts bestowed at Pentecost. Indeed, it is significant that when the Spirit was poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost, the first gift provided was the gift of tongues, enabling the gospel to be spoken:

“they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

Again, we read of the message of the prophets and apostles:

“prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: **but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit**” (2 Pet.1:21).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ...” (2 Tim. 3:16).

In this latter passage, the word “inspiration” in the literal Greek signifies “breathed,” and implies the breathing out of the Word by Yahweh through his Prophets and Apostles. Notice, the pattern is the same as with the natural Creation: the Spirit provided the inspired (breathed) Word, and was the means by which the Divine Purpose would be accomplished.

Conclusion:

The Spirit and the Word are inseparable in their relation to the outworking of God’s Will. The Revealed Word is a direct consequence of the breath of God expelled with Purpose, and the Angelic ministers do that which is commanded to make that purpose firm. The Word is a product of The Spirit, hence the Master declared: “... the words that I speak unto you, **they are spirit**, and they are life” (Jno. 6:63). This being so, the influence of the Spirit upon an individual is commensurate with the amount of the Word they have received, something we shall proceed to consider later in our considerations.

The Spirit—Conferring Abilities

We have shown above that the Holy Spirit was that power which accomplished the Will of God in bringing about Creation. And that the same power is used to bring about the New Creation in Christ Jesus. We need therefore to focus our attention upon the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to God’s people, who collectively form the New Creation (Col. 1:16).

The early chapters of the book of Exodus recounts the emergence of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and the events which followed in the erection of the Tabernacle to be a place of worship in the midst of the camp. Chapter 28 describes the making of “holy garments” for use by the priests:

“... thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom **I have filled with the spirit of wisdom**, that they may make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office” (Ex. 28:3-4).

The task of making such garments required a particular skill, which evidently was not possessed by anyone in the Israelitish encampment. Yahweh filled the garment-makers with “the spirit of wisdom”, the effect of which was that individuals were given abilities that they ordinarily did not have to make garments that they ordinarily would be unable to make. We read of this same principle again a few chapters later:

“See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri ... and **I have filled him with the spirit of God**, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (Exo. 31:1-5 see also Exo. 35: 30-31)

Again, the outpouring of the Spirit into Bezaleel was for the specific purpose of doing a work which required a particular ability that he did not possess.

Examples of this pattern could be multiplied. See the example of Samson. Again, Moses was given the Spirit in order that he could minister to the people (Num. 11:17). Similarly, it was given to Joshua for a like purpose (Num. 27:18). In each of these cases it is important to note that the Spirit was not given indiscriminately, upon each member of the congregation. It came upon those responsible for particular tasks in forming the national code of religion and worship, to give them the ability to do their job.

This Old Testament Spirit-bestowal was particularly important in the establishing of Israel as being a nation centred around the worship of Yahweh. In the beginning of the nation, individuals were chosen, and provided with the ability needed to erect the Tabernacle. Even so it is with the New Creation in Christ. Those who received the Spirit given at Pentecost were not endowed with some mystical and nebulous fuzzy feeling that is described today by those who claim spirit-possession. No, specific abilities were conferred, with the express view to establishing the First Century ecclesia. So we read that:

“there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ... to one is given by the Spirit the words of Wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit ...” (1 Cor. 12:4, 8-11).

Again, we read that:

“he gave some apostles: and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **for the perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a complete man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13).

So again, the Word and the Spirit come together in the forming of a people for the Name of Almighty God. Most of these abilities thus described are to do with *communication* - that is, the making known of the saving principles of the Gospel of Christ. But all worked together for the unity of faith—the principles of which faith we ought to hold forth in our day.

Conclusion

The bestowal of the Holy Spirit was to give individuals the ability to do things that they ordinarily would be unable to do: i.e. speak in different languages. It was given to individuals to enable them to make the things needed for the Tabernacle worship, and again to enable the formation of the 1st Century ecclesia. In both cases, after the need for those abilities ceased, these Spirit-Gifts were no longer perpetuated and were eventually withdrawn (1 Cor. 13:10).

The Spirit Imparted No Moral Qualities

Sometimes it is assumed that when a man is given the Holy Spirit power, this has some mysterious operation upon his mind to make him more morally aware, and to automatically obey the commandments of God. However, this is not taught in Scripture: possession of the Spirit or the Spirit gifts did not constitute a man righteous. Consider Judas; he was amongst other spirit-endowed disciples who were sent forth preaching (see Mat. 10:1). Yet, he has gone down in history as being the greatest betrayer, and a traitor to his Master's cause. Again, Matthew chapter 7 speaks of those who preached with the Master, yet who trusted in their own righteousness to save:

“Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done *many wonderful works*? And then will I profess unto them, ***I never knew you***: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:22-23)

Here is Messiah's rejection of salvation by works alone. Though these people may well have been possessors of the Holy Spirit, their faith was lacking. The apostle also speaks of those who had received the Spirit, yet went astray:

“it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, ***and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit***, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance ...” (Heb. 6:4-6)

Again, it is evident that the believers at Corinth were misusing the gift of tongues to elevate themselves (Cp. 1 Cor. 14). What this shows is that the possession of the Spirit-Power did not impart any moral quality in itself—only in the sense of the Word received and understood. Indeed, the prophets themselves, after they had received the Word, then had to sit and study, diligently searching out the meaning so that they could understand how it related to Jesus Christ:

“... of which salvation the prophets have ***enquired and searched diligently***, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ***searching*** what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1:10-11, see also Dan. 8:15).

Notice here, the Spirit operating within them is described as being “the Spirit of Christ” because it was the spirit testifying of Christ, something which we will come to again later.

Conclusion

The Spirit, whilst conferring specific abilities to men and women, did not in itself make them righteous. They, like us, had to give attention to the Word, and become justified through their faith in it (2 Pet. 1:11). Some of those who had been given the Spirit fell away, the classic case being that of Judas the betrayer.

Disposition of Thought

In addition to referring to the Deity's Power, the Scriptures also use the word "spirit" to describe aspects of a man's character, or disposition of thought. Consider the following testimonies:

"and it came to pass in the morning, that *his spirit was troubled*" (Gen. 41:8)

"when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had sent unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, *the spirit of Jacob their father revived*" (Gen. 46:27)

"They hearkened not unto Moses for *anguish of spirit*, and for cruel bondage" (Ex. 6:9)

"and they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every-one *whom his spirit made willing ...*" (Ex. 35:21)

If "*the spirit of Jealousy* come upon him ..." (Num. 5:14)

"I am a woman of *a sorrowful spirit*" (1 Sam. 1:15)

"Yahweh is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a *contrite spirit*" (Psa. 34:18)

"*spirit of holiness*" (Rom. 1:4)

In each of these places, it is quite plain that "spirit" is referring to the life-force of a man, speaking more particularly of the mental, moral and intellectual aspects of his character. Each verse cited demonstrates a mental disposition towards particular states of mind (i.e. sorrowful, contrite, holy). This is of particular importance in attempting to understand some "difficult" passages (2 Pet. 3:16)—we need to establish whether or not it is the Holy Spirit power being referred to, or the natural spirit, or disposition of the individuals. A case in point is Romans chapter 8:

Romans Chapter Eight

An often cited verse used by those who claim present day possession of the Holy Spirit is Romans 8, verse 9:

“now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his”

So, it is claimed that if a man does not possess the Holy Spirit, then he is none of Christ's. However, this claim is not as straightforward as it may seem: we need to establish what is being referred to: Holy Spirit possession, or a Christ-like Spirit? It is significant that the phrase is divorced from its context in this citation, and we submit that it is the context that determines the sense of these words.

Verses five and six of this chapter sets out the context:

*“they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For **to be carnally minded is death**; but **to be spiritually minded** is life and peace” (Rom. 8:5-6).*

We find then, that the immediate context is to do with *a disposition of thought*: to be carnally minded, or spiritually minded. Those who are carnally minded are related to death, are at enmity with God and are “in the flesh”, being unable to please God (verses 6 & 7). So the Apostle continues:

*“but ye are not in the flesh, but in in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. **Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his**” (Rom. 8:8-9).*

The context of the chapter therefore proves that the “spirit of Christ” which a believer must have, is a Christlike spirit, or disposition of mind, as distinct from being “in the flesh”, or having a fleshly, carnal mind. The Apostle speaks likewise to the Philippians: “let *this mind* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). The Scriptures are clear therefore: If we do not have the mind, or spirit of Christ, and “walk in the spirit” (Gal. 5:16-17) we are none of his.

Conclusion:

When considering passages that speak of a “spirit” within, or being part of a person, great care needs to be taken to establish from the context whether or not it is the Holy Spirit Power that is being spoken of, or an individual's own disposition of thought. As an example text, the context of Romans 8 demonstrates “the spirit” spoken of in this chapter is a Christ-like spirit, elsewhere described as “the mind of Christ” which a believer must seek to develop to be considered as one of His.

“You next refer to the spirit or mind of Christ being in us, or we are none of his. This is true; we cannot be Christians unless we have the mind of Christ, which is the mind of the spirit, unless we know what it is; and that mind has been revealed at different times in various ways, through the prophets and apostles. In order to be spiritually minded, we must know and attend to the voice of the spirit, in the word Deity has by His spirit, made known to man. He has given us to know that our origin is of the dust, and that through sin, man is condemned to return to the dust. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Rom. 5:12). “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). This is the teaching of the Spirit. To oppose this is to oppose the Spirit. Eternal life is the gift of God to those who understand and obey the Truth as revealed by the Spirit. Those who believe men are immortal, cannot believe that Christ is the Lord of Life, or the Resurrection and the Life; but have a mind, or spirit contrary to the teaching of Deity. Again, Abraham became heir of the world by faith (Rom. 4:13); and those in the Christ are heirs with him according to the promise (Gal. 3:29). Now, those who are looking for an inheritance beyond the sky have not attained unto the mind of the spirit. When John preached the baptism of repentance, many attended to it. Among them we find the Christ saying “thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;” thus our Saviour himself evidenced that he knew the mind of the spirit in the obedience of it. No man can be “spiritually minded” in the scriptural sense, unless he know the mind of the Spirit and do it. If he know and do it, then he has the mind or spirit of Christ; and if faithful to the end, will be heir with him”

The Christadelphian (1870)

EPHESIANS CHAPTER THREE

Another passage often referred to is the Apostles prayer for the Ephesian believers:

*“that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be **strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man**” (Eph. 3:16).*

So it is contended that the “inner man” is strengthened by some mystical Holy Spirit bestowal. The precise nature of the “strengthening” is not defined, neither is it possible to quantify or evaluate how or whether the strengthening has taken place.

The greatest weakness of this position, is that the verse itself does not define *how* “the Spirit” accomplishes such a thing. The claim that it is by the operation of the Holy Spirit directly influencing a person’s thought pattern is often made, but never proved. We have already seen that spirit-bestowal was to confer a particular ability not previously possessed—that is, for a very specific purpose.

Whereas those who claim spirit-possession in our day report a warm and fuzzy feeling in some nebulous and difficult to define way. Significantly, Ephesians 3 does not define a specific ability being imparted, but rather the strengthening of “the inner man” (which Romans 7:22 defines as being the “new man” begotten by the Word, as distinct from the old man of the flesh which believers seek to crucify daily see 2 Cor. 4:16). The question therefore, is How does God strengthen this “inner man”?

To begin with, it must be recognized that because we are His workmanship (Eph. 2:10), we are individually an ongoing work of God: the accomplishment of His Word breathed out (Isa. 55:11). The strengthening experienced by the “inner man” is not some nebulous warm feeling that makes one feel good, as some may think. Rather, it comes about by making use of those things that Yahweh has provided us with. He has provided, and it is for us to apply what He has given. The Word, as an expression of the Spirit, is a “power” (Ro. 1:16, 1 Cor. 18) which enables us “to will and to do” God’s Will (Phil. 2:13, compare 1 Thes. 2:13). Those who give attendance to the Word are said to be “equipped” (2 Tim. 3:17, Grk) to do Yahweh’s Will.

When the Word imparts a strength to the developing embryonic “new man,” or “inner man” it is a work of the Spirit inasmuch as the influential word is the spirit-word derived directly from the Spirit being sent forth, and causing a spiritual mind to be developed. Indeed, it might be accurately said that any of Yahweh’s works are of the Spirit, for this is the very means by which He accomplishes His Purpose. Scripturally then, the way in which the “spirit of Christ” dwells in, or influences individuals is not passive—that is, something that mystically “comes on” people that they have nothing to “do” anything about, but is active, requiring the subject to read and constantly cleanse their minds (Eph. 5:26) with the influence of the Word, so strengthening the “new” or “inner” man to produce those characteristics that please our Father.

Christopher Maddocks

“the new man is created by the formative influence of the Word of God, by the habitual renewing of the mind. It is “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” The formation of the new man is the result of a mental process in which a way of thinking is cultivated in harmony with the divine thought revealed in the Word. By the agency of the Divine Revelation God reforms a man’s thoughts, and a mental “image of God” comes into being ... it [the new man] is put on by the conscious effort to learn in a new way in opposition to habits of thought instinctively at variance of God’s thoughts ... the “new man” is revealed in a new way of life in which the divine character is expressed”

The Christadelphian (1956)

cited by John Allfree in “A Reply and Restatement of Christadelphian Belief”

Wrested Scriptures

The following was published in 1870 by our earlier brethren, to deal with some of those passages which, when wrongly construed might seem to support the evangelical belief of present possession of the Holy Spirit.

Heb 12:2 The faith of which Jesus is the “author and finisher” is not the act of mind by which we lay hold of the gospel, but the system of truth described as “the common faith” (*Tit 1:4*), “the one faith” (*Eph 4:5*), “the faith that should afterwards be revealed” (*Gal 3:23*). If the act of faith were due to the volition of Christ acting upon us, there would be no need for the exhortation contained in the very place where the expression occurs: “Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, *looking unto Jesus,*” &c. If a faithful state of mind were preternaturally engendered from without, after the manner of inspiration, there would be no need for those precautions and exercises which tend to preserve us “grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel” (*Col 1:23*).

Rom 12:3 In the apostolic era, gifts were bestowed according to a certain measure of faith, or divine principle of distribution. To one was given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit, &c.; to another, the gifts of healing, &c. (*1 Cor 12:8,9*). The object was “the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ” (*Eph 4:12*). Paul, in Romans 12:4, exhorts the possessors of those gifts not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but according as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith. “Having” says he (*verse 6*) “gifts *differing according to the grace that is given to us*, whether prophecy let us” &c. We must not confound this “measure of faith” with that without which it is impossible to please God (*Heb 11:6*) a faith which is not a spiritual gift, but the belief of which God has declared concerning himself and His purposes.

Jno 6:44, 65 True it is that no man can come to Christ except it is given him of the Father; but let us see where the “giving” begins, and what is the method of “drawing.” The first condition necessary to constitute a believer, is the possession of “good soil” or “an honest and good heart” (*Mat 13:23*). If a man have the brain of an idiot, he cannot be acted upon by the truth. If he have the honest and good heart that comes from a good phrenal organisation, he may, and this is “given” him, for truly no man makes himself. But there must be more than this before he will “come” to Christ. His “good ground” will bring forth no fruit without seed, and the seed is “the word of the kingdom” (*Mat 13:19*). If he never hears this, he will remain as far from Christ as an Hottentot; but let him hear this, and then the words of Christ apply: “He that received seed into the good ground is he that *heareth the word and understandeth it*, which also beareth fruit,” &c. Now, the hearing of the truth is ultimately to be traced to the testimony of God by the prophets and apostles, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing (for if a man speak the truth, it is because he has learnt it) by the word of God” (*Rom 10:17*). A man with a good and honest heart, hearing the truth, is drawn by it to come to Christ, and as God speaks in the truth and has fashioned the heart of man, it is God that draws. This is the explanation Jesus himself gives: for he adds, “*Every man therefore that hath HEARD and hath LEARNED of the Father, cometh unto me*” (*Jno 6:45*). If the drawing were a sort of mesmeric attracting, no fault could be found with those who, not being so acted upon, did not come.

Jno 7:17 Those who were disposed to do the will of the Father did on their acceptance of Christ, “know of the doctrine” whether it was of God or Christ’s own invention. How? By the evidence vouchsafed to such, for as Jesus said, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do, *shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do*, because I go unto the Father” (*Jno 14:12*). To apply this statement to any experience of which a man may be subject now, is a great mistake. There is only one rule to work by in our day; “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (*Is 8:20*).

Mat 16:17 It has been revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Messiah, and this revelation was the act of the Father; and not the information derived from flesh and blood in any form: but how was the revelation made? Not subjectively; that is, the Holy Spirit did not personally illuminate Peter as it did after the ascension of Jesus; for it is expressly testified that “the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (*Jno 7:39*). The Spirit was yet a matter of promise (*Acts 1:8, Luke 24:49*). How then had the revelation been made? By the witness which the Father gave to Christ. Of this witness, Jesus says; “I have greater witness than that of John: the works which the Father hath given me to finish, *the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me, AND THE FATHER HIMSELF, WHICH HATH SENT ME, HATH BORNE WITNESS OF ME* (*Jno 5:36,37*). Did there not come from the excellent glory, a voice: “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,” on the occasion both of the baptism and transfiguration of Christ? In all these ways, the Father revealed the truth to Peter.

Luke 11:13; 12:11 The promise of the Spirit was to the obedient believers of the truth, and not to unbelievers that they might become believers. Men had to believe and obey first.- (*see Acts 2:38, 39; also 8:12-17*). The promise was fulfilled in the experience of believers of the apostolic era. “The manifestation of the Spirit was given to every man to profit withal.” (*1 Cor 12:7*). It bestowed divers gifts that were extra to the powers of the natural man. These were necessary as a confirmation of the word preached (*Heb 2:4; Acts 5:32; 4:29,30,33*), and for the upbuilding of the community of the believers (*1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-16*). When this purpose was served, the manifestation of the Spirit subsided with the death of those possessing it. Would to God it were renewed: but let us not deceive ourselves with a fancy, and surely the notion that the Spirit animates Christendom, is a fancy of the most outrageous kind, as pointed out in brother Handley’s letter. The Spirit subjectively taught the persecuted believers what to say *in the very hour* of their arraignment before the tribunals. Is anyone similarly inspired now? If so, where is he? When he is pointed out, we must try him by the word, whether he is of God. Mere loquacity is no evidence.

Psa 27:11 David was taught the way of the Lord, for his “last words” are: “*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me*, and his word is on my tongue” (*2 Sam 23:2*). It would be a privilege to be taught as he was taught; but inspiration is not among our experiences in this Gentile night. We have, however, a “mighty deep” of inspiration, in which to bathe our souls continually, and that is the written oracles of the Spirit, which are able to guide us unto all truth, and shew us things to come. Let us keep close by the Bible, and not wander after the “will of the wisp” inspirations of modern superstition.

2Cor 8:16 If there was an earnest care in the heart of Titus, God put it there, for all things are of God, but please recognize *God's method of doing His own work*. God first brought Titus on the scene with a certain constitution of mind, then placed him in relation to the truth by hearing; and to the Corinthian believers, by acquaintance; and the result was a certain solicitude in his mind on behalf of the Corinthians. "Immediate," in the sense of direct bestowal of this solicitude, by the Spirit, is a clumsy suggestion. Mechanical benevolence of this sort would have been no pleasure to God, no refreshment to the Corinthians and no credit to Titus. God works widely, largely, wisely, and develops finer results than would follow the narrow ways ascribed to him by popular theology.

(The Christadelphian, April 1870)

GOD IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE – A SUMMARY

The following statement sets out Biblical teaching, in its positive and negative aspects. It is the Christadelphian position.

POSITIVE

SCRIPTURE TEACHES THAT:

1. The foundation of belief is the Scripture written by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and therefore an infallible and truthful guide.
2. This Scripture is the written record of the things God has done for our salvation, instructions as to how avail ourselves of that salvation, and prophecy showing how that salvation will ultimately be brought about.
3. The Scripture is the voice of God and His Son, and as such is powerful to change the characters of those who come to it with an honest heart.
4. It does not, however, reveal its secrets to those who are not prepared to read it in its natural sense. Those who expect hidden meanings to be divinely revealed will 'receive' varied and often extraordinary interpretations not obvious to a reasoned study.
5. Christ is formed in us through a careful reading of the record about him, and through keeping his commandments. In this way we can understand his character, his words and his works and so come to grow more like him. He dwells in our hearts by faith, i.e. through our belief in the things concerning him.
6. Of great importance in the altering of our characters is the knowledge that Christ will return bodily to the earth. Until that time we are guided as to right and wrong only by the Word.
7. We are, however, under the control and guidance of angels, who watch providentially over the lives of all believers, and control the circumstances of their lives. But within that framework of angelic control we are left to ourselves (with help and guidance from the Word) to deal with the situation.

NEGATIVE

SCRIPTURE DOES NOT TEACH THAT:-

1. There is a divine influence which, entering into our hearts, causes us to understand Scripture.
2. There is any influence received direct from God which improves a believer's character, or helps him to overcome sin.
3. Men are unable to do good even when they accept the Scripture until the Holy Spirit has acted upon them.
4. Men in our age receive the Holy Spirit directly, as in the First Century, either:-
 - (a) before they can repent
 - (b) after they repent
 - (c) when they are baptised
 - (d) when they are converted
 - (e) whenever they pray for it.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

John Allfree

Faith and Conversion, Bible Study Publications. Available from 1 Penrith Place, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG19 6NE.

John Allfree, Geoff & Ray Walker

Bible Teaching about the Holy Spirit, Bible Student Press. Available from 44 Colindeep Lane, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8EQ.

Aleck Crawford

The Spirit, Logos Publications.

Stephen Green

The Work of God on Men's Hearts, Bible Student Press. Available from 44 Colindeep Lane, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8EQ.

Stephen Palmer

Do We Need the Spirit to Understand the Bible?, *The Christadelphian*, January 1992, p. 15.

Graham Pearce

The Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Gifts, Logos Publications.

Robert Roberts

Christendom Astray, Chapter 6, Logos Publications.
The Ways of Providence, CMPA.

John Thomas

Clerical Theology Unscriptural, Logos Publications.