

Baptized by the Holy Spirit

“By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

—I Corinthians 12:13,14

JESUS WAS FIRST TO BE baptized with the Holy Spirit. This occurred at the river Jordan. His baptism in water by John the Baptist was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus as he came up out of the water. An outward manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a descending dove, enabled John to bear testimony concern-

ing it. John explained that the One who had sent him to baptize with water had said, “Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.”—John 1:33

Jesus received this baptism of the Holy Spirit of Truth from the Heavenly Father. From John’s testimony we learn that Jesus would, in turn, baptize

his followers with the Holy Spirit. After his resurrection, when he appeared to his disciples for the last time before his ascension, he said to them, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” (Acts 1:5) This was fulfilled at Pentecost. There Peter testified that Jesus, being at the right hand of God, “and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”—Acts 2:33

The Holy Spirit was neither seen nor heard at Pentecost. What the disciples saw and heard was an outward indication of that which had occurred inwardly. A similar demonstration was later given when Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was accepted into the family of disciples. Concerning this we read that while Peter was preaching, “the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word.” The Jewish believers present were astonished that the Holy Spirit should thus be poured out upon Gentiles.—Acts 10:44,45; 11:16,17

This special outpouring, or baptism, of the Holy Spirit upon a little group of Gentile converts was evidently designed to give assurance to all Gentile converts that they were not excluded from being followers of Christ, or from receiving the blessings which belong to all who follow him. This was essential, since the baptism at Pentecost was exclusively to Jewish believers. Paul seems to have had this in mind when, in our text, he explains that by ‘one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.’

To suppose that these outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s baptism should continue is not

scriptural. There is not an outpouring, or baptism, of the Holy Spirit upon each individual who accepts Christ and dedicates himself to his service. Individually, consecrated believers receive of the Holy Spirit's baptism as they come into the body of Christ.

The word baptize is a translation of the Greek word *baptizo*, which means to immerse, or bury—literally to “make whelmed,” according to *Strong's Bible Concordance*. In our text, Paul says that all who have been baptized by the Spirit are all one body. Jesus is the Head of this symbolic body, and his faithful followers constitute the other parts, or members. In II Corinthians 5:17, Paul says, “If any man be in Christ [that is, a member of his body], he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” This assertion indicates that Jesus the Head, together with the members of his mystical body, constitute a New Creation.

We read, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10) In chapter four, verses twenty-three and twenty-four, Paul admonishes, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And . . . put on the new man, which after God is created [formed, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*] in righteousness and true holiness.” Again, speaking of those who are members of the body of Christ, Paul writes, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” (Gal. 6:15) Those who are in Christ Jesus are New Creatures, members of a New Creation.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, then, is vitally associated with the bringing forth of a New Cre-

ation. We have seen that the original creative work of God was accomplished by his mighty power, his Spirit. In this work, God's Spirit functioned both as a physical force and as a creative, life-giving power. His Spirit then moved upon the face of the waters, and it moved everywhere throughout the entire universe. The Scriptures reveal that now his Spirit is operating to bring forth a New Creation.

How differently God's Spirit is functioning to accomplish this great purpose, than it did in the original Creation! Now it is operating in the realm of thought, and with the consent and cooperation of those who are being made a part of God's new spiritual creation. In this wise manner God is able to secure the cooperation of those whom he chooses to be a part of his New Creation, without it in the slightest degree interfering with their free moral agency.

In all the former creations of intelligent beings, they were first created and then tested as to their willingness or unwillingness to obey Divine law. This was true of the angels, some of whom failed under the test. It was true of man, and he failed, and through his failure death condemnation came upon the entire human race. But with God's New Creation it is different, for they are being tested as they are created.

The reason for this is obvious, for the completion of the work of creating this class will find each one in it on the Divine plane of life, exalted to immortality—therefore, death-proof. It would be too late to test these after they were fully created, because then the death penalty could not be applied to any who proved willfully disobedient.

BAPTISM—OBEDIENCE

It is this necessity for absolute obedience on the part of every New Creature in Christ that helps give vital meaning to the use of the word baptism in connection with those who become members of the body of Christ, the New Creation class. Since the word baptize means burial, or submerging, it suggests the burial of our wills into the will of God, as expressed through Christ our Head. Certainly no symbol could better emphasize wholehearted and complete obedience to the Lord. In Revelation 20:4, it is figuratively spoken of as ‘beheading.’ A person who has no head of his own cannot plan for himself. If his only head is Christ, then he has no plans and no will of his own. Such is the general thought of baptism. It is a burial, or submerging, and in this case it is the burial of the will that is accomplished in the lives of the New Creation class by the Holy Spirit.

THE CHURCH

In Ephesians 1:22,23, Paul speaks of the “church” which is Christ’s “body.” The word ‘church’ is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which simply means a calling out, or a called-out class. Jesus said to his disciples, “I have chosen you out of the world.” (John 15:19) All the true disciples of Christ are of this chosen, or selected, class. These constitute the true church of Christ, his body members, the New Creation class.

In Acts 2:47, we are told that, beginning with Pentecost, God added daily to the church. This is a significant statement; for it emphasizes that no one can be made a member of the true church of Christ

by human authority. It is God's work. The New Creation is his creation. The bringing forth of the New Creation is accomplished by the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of Truth that creates believers, calls them from the world, and invites them to accept the headship of Christ over their lives.

Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3) True, this refers to Jesus' sacrificial death, and the fact that we have the opportunity of dying sacrificially with him. But Jesus' sacrificial death was in conformity with the Father's will for him. It was Jesus' devotion to his Father's will, his voluntary yielding to the influence of the Holy Spirit of Truth, that led him into death as the Redeemer and Savior of the world. And it is the death of our wills, and the acceptance of the Divine will as revealed by the Holy Spirit of Truth, that will lead us into sacrificial death with Jesus. It is thus that we are planted together in the likeness of his death.—Rom. 6:4,5

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a collective one, and upon the entire church—all the called-out class—in order to participate in it we must individually be baptized into Christ by yielding ourselves in full surrender and devotion to the Lord. This is our part as individuals. We are "buried with him in baptism," writes Paul in Colossians 2:12. This does not mean a burial in water, but a burial of our wills in full consecration to do his will; even as Jesus buried his will when he said to his Father, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."—Ps. 40:7,8

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(Continued from page 31) Immersion in water is merely a symbol of the burial of our wills into the will of Christ. It is a very apt and beautiful symbol. In carrying it out, the candidate voluntarily places himself in the hands of the immerser, and by him is plunged under the water. How helpless the candidate is when held under the water! It would mean his actual death were he not raised from the water. So we present ourselves to the Lord, telling him to do with us as he will, and we thus surrender to God in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit of Truth that led Jesus to a sacrificial death also expresses the same Divine design for us.

It is not a case of saying to the Lord that we will do his will up to the point that it becomes too costly, or too difficult. There can be no conditions attached to an acceptable consecration to the Lord. A consecration that will assure us an entrance into the body of Christ, where we come under the influence of the Holy Spirit's baptism, must be a full, complete, surrender. And it is this, as we have seen, that is symbolized by water immersion.

Paul explains that those who are thus buried with Christ should walk in "newness of life." (Rom. 6:4) Actually, those who fulfill the terms of their consecration faithfully even unto the actual death of their humanity will be raised in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, to live and reign with him a thousand years. But when a consecration to be dead with Christ is wholehearted and sincere, there will be the beginning of a new life even while the outward man is perishing. And the resurrection to life with Christ, as well as the newness of life experienced now, are both beautifully illustrated in the

water baptism symbol by the candidate's being raised up out of the water.

The attitude of full surrender to the Lord is expressed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1, where he exhorts us to present our bodies a "living sacrifice." He explains that such a sacrifice is "holy"—through Christ—and is acceptable to God. Then, in the next verse, he admonishes us not to be conformed to this world, but to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

When one first makes a consecration to do God's will, he has only a general idea of what the Divine will is. He knows of Jesus' invitation to deny self, take up his cross, and follow him. He knows he is to renounce his own will and ways, but the details involved have to be learned as we continue to look to the Head for instruction and guidance. However, all the necessary directions are in the written Word, put there by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, and if our surrender is complete we will be guided by them.

Paul wrote that we should prove what the will of the Lord is, and then, through several chapters, beginning with Romans 12, he presents detail after detail of the Divine will. They are not in the Word just to be read and admired. They are there to help, together with all other instructions of the Holy Spirit, to transform our minds, to make us like Christ, more and more responsive to every indication of the Divine will as expressed through him. All of this is involved in coming under the baptism of the Holy Spirit of Truth.

“THAT THEY MAY BE ONE”

Because of Jesus' full obedience to the will of his Father, as revealed to him through the Spirit of the Truth, he could say, “I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30) Being solicitous for those who would become members of his body, accepting the Divine headship through him as the Head of the church—the called-out ones of the present age—he prayed for them. What a wonderful prayer. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”—John 17:17-21

The New Creation class is sanctified and made one with the Father and with Jesus, through the Word of Truth. One cannot thus be in full harmony with the Father and the Son without being fully obedient to the Divine will as revealed by the Holy Spirit of Truth. Those called out of the world, chosen by God to attain to this unity with him and with Jesus, are spoken of by the Apostle Peter as the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.” (I Pet. 1:2) Jesus prayed that these might be sanctified by the Truth. Peter says they are sanctified by the Spirit. The thought is the same, for the inspired Word of God is the Holy Spirit of Truth.

Peter explains that these called ones, the church, are ‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God’—that is, their selection is according to God’s foreordained conditions. The Apostle Paul explains what these conditions are. In Romans 8:29, we read that those whom God foreknew “he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” To be conformed to Christ’s image is to be like him, fully at one with the Heavenly Father, and fully obedient to the Holy Spirit of Truth that was ‘shed forth’ by him in the name of his Son, our Head, and the Head of all in the New Creation class.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

The unity of the body members of Christ with their Head, which is brought about by baptism, or immersion, into the will of God—as expressed through the Head—is further discussed by the Apostle Paul in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. He writes, “With all lowliness and meekness, [and] with longsuffering,” we should forbear “one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”—vss. 2,3

Paul continues, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (vss. 4-6) ‘Through all, and in you all’—compare this language with Jesus’ prayer as recorded in John 17:21-23. Paul adds, “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (vs. 7) To maintain the ‘unity of the Spirit’ it is essential to

realize that not everyone in the body is given the same office. Not all have the same work to do. As Paul explains in I Corinthians 12, some are as feet, some as eyes, and some as hands, in the body. But all are subject to the directions that emanate from the Head.

In verses eight and nine of Ephesians four, Paul reminds us of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and confirms the fact that when he ascended he “gave gifts unto men.” This is a reference to what occurred at Pentecost; only here Paul is explaining the very practical manner in which the baptism of the Holy Spirit is effective for every member of the church. He uses the word ‘gifts’—plural—and then explains what they are, “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”—vs. 11

How reasonable and practical! If the Holy Spirit had merely come upon the disciples as a miraculous display of Divine power, little would have been accomplished. But it resulted in their being the inspired apostles of the Lamb. Through their inspired teachings other servants became qualified to minister to the church. Through them all, each in his own capacity, the Holy Spirit of the Truth is diffused for the building up of the entire New Creation class. Paul explains that these gifts were provided “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 perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”—vss. 12,13

GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

When the church, representatively, was baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, that baptism carried with it certain miraculous gifts, such as speaking with tongues and the ability to perform miracles. These gifts came only upon the apostles, and could be imparted to others by the laying on of their hands. Those receiving these gifts from the apostles could not pass them on to others, so in due course they ceased.

They served a useful purpose in the Early Church. On the Day of Pentecost the gift of tongues enabled the apostles to witness the truth concerning Jesus to Jews gathered at Jerusalem from all over the then known world—Jews who understood only the language of the countries in which they were domiciled. The gift of tongues continued to serve a useful purpose until there were believers in each territory who knew the language there spoken. As the New Creation class spread out into the various countries, and the church became established, the need for the gift of tongues no longer existed.

The ability to perform miracles was also a great aid in connection with the establishment of the Early Church. Those early believers were in a very hostile world. They were scorned and persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles, and the miracle-working power of the apostles was a source of encouragement to all the believers, confirming their faith that the cause in which they had enlisted was the Lord's, and that the great God of Israel would not allow it to fail. Miracles also served to witness to an unbelieving and gainsaying world. But when the

church became better established, this gift also ceased to function.

The fruit of the Spirit is different. Paul wrote, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit [in the body of Christ which is controlled by the Holy Spirit of Truth], let us also walk in the Spirit.”—Gal. 5:22-25

After mentioning the various gifts that had been bestowed upon members of the Early Church, Paul concluded, “Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” (I Cor. 12:31) This is the last verse of the chapter, and in the first verse of the next chapter he begins to enlarge upon that ‘more excellent way,’ which he reveals to be the way of love. Love is an excellent way because it is the way of God, who so loved the world that he gave his Son to redeem mankind from sin and death. It is the way of Christ whose love prompted and encouraged him to lay down his life for both the church and the world.

If we are to remain in Christ, and be perfected as members of God’s New Creation by the Holy Spirit of Truth, the more excellent way of love must become our way. Thus we will be one with Jesus and one with the Father, even as they are one. May the Holy Spirit of Truth by which the whole body of Christ is baptized, continue to work in us for the accomplishment of this divinely fore-ordained condition of eternal membership in God’s New Creation! ■