

NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERS

Not only was the Holy Spirit the source of all spiritual power in Old Testament times; but He imparted power to John the Baptist, to the Son of God Himself, to the Galilean fishermen, and to all the great saints of New Testament times. By His death on the cross, Christ opened the way for God to pour His Spirit upon all flesh, which He did on the day of Pentecost, ushering in the more glorious dispensation foretold by Joel and other Old Testament prophets. Since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been convincing the whole world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment in a way that He did not do, except with a few individuals, in Old Testament times; and thus, in this dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the world has become more responsible to God because of its increased light and privileges.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

John the Baptist, the great forerunner, or herald, of the coming of Jesus, was specially anointed for His mission by the Holy Spirit. The angel, in announcing His birth, said, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord " (Luke 1:15-17). When he had grown to manhood, John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, proclaiming the coming of the Christ and commanding the people to repent. The multitudes were strangely affected by the preaching of this great prophet. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:5, 6). Even the proud Pharisees, the materialistic Sadducees, the despised publicans, and the hardened soldiers went to him for counsel and advice. And what was the secret of the wonderful power of this lonely preacher in the wilderness, which enabled him to thus sway the multitudes? Jesus said to the people, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet " (Matt, 11 : 7-9). John the Baptist was no "reed shaken with the wind," swayed by every breeze of public opinion, pandering to the people in order to please them. That was not what drew the multitudes to hear him. He denounced their sins, and rebuked them to their faces (Luke 3). Neither did they flock out into the wilderness to see his fine clothing, for he wore only a garment of camel's hair girt about him with a leather girdle. Neither did they flock to him to get something good to eat, for he lived on locusts and wild honey. But John the Baptist was the "voice" of God speaking to the people, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that was the secret of his wonderful power.

John the Baptist summed up the whole gospel in two brief sentences: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29), and, " He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16). One is the gospel of pardon for the sinner, and the other is the gospel of power for the believer. The gospel of pardon is also summed up in John 3 : 16, " God so loved the world," and so on. Too many lay great stress on the gospel of pardon while neglecting the gospel of power. Let us remember Luke 3 : 16 and i Corinthians 3 : 16, as well as John 3 : 16.

JESUS THE CHRIST.

Even the Son of God Himself was anointed for service by the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Him in the form of a dove after His baptism. The name Christ itself is from the Greek word for oil, *chrism*, and means The Anointed One. All through the Scriptures oil is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the Psalmist refers to this fact when he says concerning Christ, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Psa. 45 : 7, and Hebrews 1:9). The Holy Spirit was the "oil of gladness" with which Jesus was anointed. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Christ applied to Himself the prophecy in Isaiah 61: 1, 2, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4: 17-21). The apostle Peter also referred to this Scripture when he spoke of "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil: for God was with him" (Acts 10:38), Jesus was doubtless a better medium than any human being for the Holy Spirit to work through, and no doubt that was why the Holy Spirit wrought greater miracles through Him and was more manifest in His life than in the life of any human being. He "spoke as never man spake," all the sick who touched but the hem of His garment were made perfectly whole, with a few loaves and fishes He fed the hungry multitudes, and even the unbelievers of Nazareth "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Christ Himself said that all these miracles were wrought by the "finger," "hand," or "Spirit," of God (Luke 11:20, Matt. 12:28, and so on). Referring to the marvelous manner in which the Spirit of God wrought through Christ's ministry. Principal Gore, in *Lux Mundi*, Section VHI., says, "The Spirit anoints Him; the Spirit drives Him into the wilderness ; the Spirit gives Him the law of His mission; in the power of the Spirit He works His miracles ; in the Spirit He lifts up the voice of human thankfulness to the Divine Father ; in the Spirit He offers Himself without spot to God; in the power of the Spirit He was raised from the dead."

Christ is our great example and pattern, and His life was truly a Spirit-filled one. If the Son of God Himself was anointed for His ministry by the Holy Spirit, how necessary it is that we should be also!

PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE OF THE APOSTLES.

On the day of Pentecost was given the world's greatest example of God's power to transform the lives and character of men, so as to make the weak strong and powerful. Pentecost was the pouring out of the "former rain" of God's Spirit, just as in these last days there will be an outpouring of the "latter rain" (Hos. 6:3; Zech. 14:7; and Jas. 5:7). By His death on the cross, Jesus made so great an atonement for sin that God could safely pour out His Spirit on all mankind without the universe thinking that He was regarding sin lightly. It was the atonement of Christ therefore that purchased the great Pentecostal gift for the world. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Psa. 68:18, and Eph. 4:8). Before the ascension of Christ the Holy Spirit was not yet poured upon all flesh, "because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). Jesus told His disciples that it was expedient, or profitable, that He should go away, because if He did not go away the Comforter would not come (John 16:7). He must complete His great work of atonement for the world before the Comforter could come. And it was better for the followers of Jesus that the Holy Spirit should be poured upon them and upon the world than that Jesus Himself should remain with them. While in the body Jesus could be in only one place at a time, but the Comforter could be everywhere present to convince men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8). His three great offices are to convince men of sin, to show them the way of righteousness, and to warn them of coming judgment. He does this by influencing men's hearts and minds from without, or by coming to dwell within them. Upon those in whom He

dwells He bestows one or more of His seven different spiritual gifts. The seven different gifts of the Holy Spirit seem to be spoken of in Revelation as "the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 4 : 5, and 5:6). They were probably typified in the golden candlestick with its seven branches and seven lamps in the tabernacle and temples of the Old Testament. The apostle Paul seems to enumerate nine gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 ; but healing and miracles are probably the same gift, and tongues and the interpretation of tongues probably belong to the one gift, so that there are but seven distinct gifts mentioned.

Before Pentecost, Jesus said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12, 13). He knew that His disciples were only weak spiritual babes, even after all he had taught them, and He commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49, and Acts 1:4-8). He also said to them, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). If the disciples had not believed that promise there might have been no Pentecost. If they had said that they were already converted and that they were not looking for any deeper experience, the world might be still groping in heathen darkness. But their faith laid hold of the promise, and great were the results.

The disciples seem to have prayed together ten days before the promised Comforter came. One, two, three, four, five, then six days went by, and then a whole week, and still no Comforter came; but their faith did not waver. They tarried on in the upper room until the morning of the tenth day before the Comforter came. We know not why they had to tarry so long for the Holy Spirit, for there is no other Bible example of men praying so long a time before they received the Pentecostal gift. Perhaps they did not fully meet God's conditions before the tenth day, or He may have designed that they should be fully prepared and humbled by long and earnest prayer so that they would not be puffed up and exalted by the great blessing He was about to pour upon them. It is more probable, however, that the great reason why God did not send the Holy Spirit sooner was because He purposed to send Him on the day of Pentecost, or fiftieth day after the Passover (Pentecost means fiftieth), when multitudes of Jews from all over the world were present in Jerusalem. Pentecost was one of the three great annual feasts, or religious gatherings, of the Jews. It was a time of rejoicing over the first-fruits, and it was appropriate that on that day the "first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23) should be poured upon the world. It is estimated that in the time of Christ between one and two million Jews were in Jerusalem to attend the feast of Pentecost. The Bible tells us about Jews of every nation being present to hear the disciples witness to the outpouring of the Spirit. The Jews were still God's "husbandmen," or chosen people, through whom He was revealing Himself to the world, just as the Gentiles are now His chosen people; and by waiting until Pentecost to pour His Spirit upon them, He secured witnesses from every nation to testify to the outpouring of the Spirit.

Early on the morning of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with such demonstration and power that no one present could ever doubt the reality of His coming. "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance " (Acts 2: 1-4). Rev. William Arthur, in his splendid little book "The Tongue of Fire," suggests that the cloven tongues typified the new power which the disciples would receive to preach the gospel, and that is the generally accepted opinion. The cloven tongues may have typified the fact that their power of speech would be doubled, and also that they would not speak of themselves but that another would speak through them. When the Holy Ghost fell on them He gave them power to witness

for Christ When Jesus called the ignorant fishermen from the sea of Galilee to come and follow Him, He promised to make them fishers of men (Matt. 4: 19). On the day of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled, and they indeed became fishers of men. On that day the Lord enabled them to catch more men than they caught fish in the miraculous draught of fish on the Sea of Galilee. Peter and John, two of the Galilean fishermen, afterwards spoke with such boldness that the people, who knew that they were unlearned and ignorant men, "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Before leaving His disciples, Jesus had promised that they should do even greater works than He did (John 14: 12), and this promise was also fulfilled at Pentecost. During Christ's earthly ministry very few people seem to have been converted to God through Him. The greatest number of converts mentioned is "five hundred brethren" (1 Cor, 15:6). But after He ascended to the Father, and sent the promised Comforter, the disciples led three thousand converts to the foot of the cross in one day, and several days later five thousand more seem to have been converted (Acts 4:4). Surely these were greater works than Jesus accomplished during His earthly ministry! In a moment of time God changed the ignorant fishermen of Galilee into the world's greatest preachers. In a moment of time they learned more about Christ than they had learned in three years walking and talking with Him before they were filled with the Spirit, although He was the greatest teacher who ever appeared in human form. Although the apostles had been so long a time with the Son of God Himself, and had seen all His miracles and listened to all His teachings, they were only spiritual babes, and did not understand the first principles of the gospel, until the day of Pentecost They quarreled among themselves who should be greatest, they looked for Christ to immediately set up an earthly kingdom and subdue His enemies, some of them resorted to the use of carnal weapons, all deserted Christ in His trial and condemnation, Peter denied Him with swearing and cursing, and in many other ways the apostles showed their lack of spiritual power and understanding. But on the day of Pentecost this was all changed, and they received "power from on high." Poor, weak, vacillating Peter, who had promised to be true to Christ though all others should forsake Him and soon afterwards denied Him with an oath, was now transformed into another man. In the power of the Spirit he arose and preached such a sermon that three thousand persons were pricked to their heart, and cried out " Men and brethren, what shall we do?" All the apostles suddenly became spiritual grants, faced the enemy with courage, preached the gospel with boldness, and afterwards carried it throughout the world, and all except John seem to have suffered as martyrs for Christ.

The multitudes who gathered together to hear the disciples on the day of Pentecost did not believe that Jesus was Divine. They thought that they had crucified a mere man and not the Son of God. But the Holy Ghost, witnessing through the disciples, convinced them that Jesus was Divine, and that they had crucified the Son of God. Then it was that they were pricked to their heart with the arrow of conviction and cried aloud for mercy. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus, and show men that He is the Divine Son of God. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost " (1 Cor. 12: 3); but when the Holy Spirit lays hold of a man's heart he is soon convinced of Christ's Divinity. It is His work to draw all men to Christ. The great Spirit-filled evangelist Charles G. Finney said that wherever He went all forms of unbelief vanished when the Holy Spirit was poured upon the people. The Holy Spirit can teach men more about Christ in one hour than the greatest preacher can teach them in fifty or even in a hundred years without the Spirit enlightening them.

DEEPER EXPERIENCES OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

As Moses was the greatest leader and writer among Old Testament saints, so Paul was the greatest leader and writer among the New Testament saints. Persecuter, murderer, blasphemer, and "chief of sinners" though he was before his conversion, God completely transformed his life, and made him one

of the greatest examples of what Divine grace and power can do in and through a human being. On his way to Damascus to bind the saints and deliver them to death, he was suddenly smitten down in the road by a light from heaven far more powerful than the noon-day sun. Some of the destructive critics, or so-called "higher critics," who know little about the grace and power of God, have suggested that Paul had a sunstroke on his way to Damascus; and someone has rejoined that if a sunstroke can so transform the life and character of a man, it is a pity these so-called "higher critics" could not all have sunstrokes too. Paul seems to have been blinded by the glory and power of the light which shone from heaven, and after his conversion to Christ he had to be led into Damascus. Then God appeared in a vision to an earnest Christian named Ananias, and sent him to instruct and pray for Paul. Laying his hands on Paul, as was then the usual custom in praying for a person, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost "(Acts 9: 17). Paul's eyesight was immediately restored, and he was baptized. At this time he was doubtless filled with the Spirit, whether before or after his baptism we cannot say. Soon after this he went down into Arabia, and during the interval between the 9th and 13th chapters of Acts no mention is made concerning him. Conybeare and Howson, in their great work on the life and labors of St. Paul, and other authorities on the subject, believe that during this interval of about three years Paul was in the desert of Arabia, learning of God (see Gal. 1:17, 18). They believe that it was then that he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard things unlawful to be uttered (2 Cor. 12:4). However that may be, it is certain that he had such an abundance of visions and revelations from God as no human being could have unless they also had something to keep them humble. Mr. Moody, the great evangelist, used to say that if God had revealed anything more concerning heaven we would be so homesick to go there that we could not attend to our everyday duties on earth; and that if He had revealed anything more concerning future punishment in hell men would be so terror stricken that they would not be able to attend to their ordinary occupations. Perhaps that is what Paul meant when he said that it was not lawful for a man to utter what he had heard in paradise. Paul himself could not have borne the glory of these revelations, but for the fact that a "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan" was allowed to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations given unto him (2 Cor. 12 : 7). Three times he besought God to remove this "thorn," before he realized that the Lord allowed it for the purpose of keeping him humble. When at last he realized how God's strength was made perfect through his weakness, he said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong "(verses 9 and 10). In other words, he could say, "Lord, if I need afflictions and troubles to keep me humble when I have such great revelations of Thy glory, I will be glad to have such afflictions, so that Thy power may rest upon me." There are many different opinions with regard to the nature of Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Some think that it was a sin of some kind which he could not overcome, and they use this as an excuse for living in sin. But Paul represents himself as "free from sin" (Rom. 6: 7, 18, 22, and 8:2), as "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:2, 6, 11), and as more than conqueror (Rom. 9:37; 2 Cor. 2:14). Whatever Paul's thorn was, it certainly was not sin, for the apostle would not glory in sin, as he gloried in his infirmities. He said that charity, or love, "rejoiceth not in iniquity "(1 Cor. 13; 6). Some have thought that Paul's thorn was epilepsy, others that it was dyspepsia, and so on; but the most reasonable supposition seems to be that it was weak eyes. That would make his bodily presence seem contemptible (2 Cor. 10:10), and would account for him saying that the Galatian brethren would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him if it had been possible for them to do so (Gal. 4:15). It would also explain the fact that nearly all of his letters were 'Written by secretaries, and that sometimes two or three secretaries were employed in writing one letter (see notes at the close of his epistles, from Romans to Hebrews). One of the longest epistles written by Paul himself was the book of Galatians; and at the close of it he says, "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand " (Gal.

6:11); and yet the epistle is not a remarkably long one for so great a scholar to write if he had good eye-sight and nerves, for Paul was one of the greatest scholars of his time. Finally, at his trial before the high-priest, Paul seems not to have recognized him (Acts 23:5), although anyone with good eye-sight ought to have been able to recognize the high priest by his gorgeous robes. All these facts seem to point definitely to the conclusion that Paul had weak eyes; and some think that his eyes never fully recovered from the dazzling effect of the great supernatural light he saw on his way to Damascus. Whatever Paul's "thorn in the flesh" may have been, it was necessary to keep him humble when God was showing him so great revelations. None of us, perhaps, have had so great revelations as Paul, yet it may be that afflictions have been necessary to keep us humble also.

The power of the Holy Spirit was so manifest in the preaching of Paul that even the great Roman ruler Felix trembled when the little apostle stood before him and reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and King Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Like a fire-brand he went through Asia Minor and Greece, and finally to Rome also, kindling a mighty conflagration which soon enveloped the whole world. When Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica, all the city was in an uproar, saying, "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also" (Acts 17:6). Someone has said that they turned the world upside down and right side up for God. Truly the apostle Paul could say, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4). He also said, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thes. 1:5). And in another place he said, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4).

The apostle Paul had drunk so deeply from the wells of salvation (Isa. 12:3) that he longed for others to enjoy the same experience. We find him exhorting the Roman brethren to be dead indeed unto sin (Rom. 6 and 8), to bring forth fruit unto holiness (Rom. 6:22), to pray in the Spirit (Rom. 8:26), to present their bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12: 1), and to be led by the Spirit in everything (Rom.12:6-8). He wrote to them, "I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:29). Would that every one of God's children could say the same. He urged the Corinthian brethren not to remain weak and carnal, even as babes in Christ, but to become strong and spiritual (1 Cor. 3). He wrote to them, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Cor. 12:1), after which he devoted a great part of his letter to explaining spiritual gifts, without which the church would be like a body without eyes, hands, feet, and so on. In his second epistle to them he explained how the Spirit of the Lord changed people into the image of the Lord, from glory to glory (2 Cor.3: 18). In this epistle he urged them to be separate from the world (6:17), to perfect holiness (7:1), and to be perfect (13:11). He tells the Galatian brethren how he travailed in soul for them until Christ should be formed in them (Gal. 4: 19). He was so anxious for them to be like Christ that he was in a great agony of prayer for them until this should be accomplished, or until they should be transformed into the Lord's image. He told them to walk in the Spirit and they would not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 6: 17). In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul again and again urges them to "be filled with the Spirit" (5:18) He says, "I . . . cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph. 1: 16-19). He also says to them, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. That he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That

Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:14-20). He explained to them that spiritual gifts were for the perfecting of the saints, that they might become mature men, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Without these spiritual gifts in the church, Christians would never become strong and mature. Paul urged the Ephesian brethren to put on the whole spiritual armor of God, that they might be able to stand against every temptation (Eph. 6). With this armor they would "be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (verse 16). In like manner Paul prayed for the Colossian brethren to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col. 1:9); and he prayed for the Thessalonian brethren that God would sanctify them wholly, and that their whole spirit, and soul, and body might be preserved blameless until the coming of the Lord (1 Thes. 5:23). He urged both the Thessalonian and Hebrew brethren to follow holiness, without which no man would see the Lord (1Thes. 4:3, 7 and Heb. 12:14).. These are only a few of the many examples of Paul's longings and prayers that others might partake of the same deep, rich, full spiritual experience which he enjoyed.

DEEPER EXPERIENCE OF THE SAMARITAN DISCIPLES.

Among the men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" selected as deacons of the first Christian church, at Jerusalem, was Philip, the evangelist (Acts 6). In Acts, the eighth chapter, we read the story of how he went to Samaria and preached the gospel. There was a great revival in that city under his preaching. Many believed the things he preached, for Christ had prepared the way when He preached to the woman of that city and then to all the people (John 4). Great miracles were wrought, and there was great joy in the city. The people who were converted under Philip's preaching were baptized, both men and women. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8: 14-17).

In the nineteenth chapter of Acts, we read about Paul going to the city of Ephesus. "And finding certain disciples. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" If every believer had received the Holy Ghost, then Paul's question would have been a very foolish one. But these believers had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." This surprised Paul, for he thought that they must have heard about the Holy Spirit when they were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He said, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" They then told him, "Unto John's baptism." This explained why they had not heard about the Holy Ghost when they were baptized, for John only baptized unto repentance, and not in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," or with Christ's baptism, which was in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (verses i-6). Paul may have referred to this experience of the Ephesian disciples, and to other similar experiences, when he afterwards said, in his epistle to the Ephesians, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy

Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). The early Christian writers all refer to the filling of the Spirit as the "sealing" of the Spirit.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Most of the great Bible scholars and commentators, and most of the great church historians are agreed upon the fact it was the custom of the early church to pray for all believers to be filled with the Spirit. The usual custom was to baptize the converts, and then the elders would lay hands on them and pray for them to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The laying on of hands (in prayer for the Holy Spirit) is mentioned in Hebrews 6: 2 as one of the "first principles", or foundation principles, of the gospel ; and in the case of Paul, the Samaritan disciples, and the Ephesian disciples, we have examples of this early custom. The Holy Spirit came without the laying on of hands on the day of Pentecost, but some think that this was because there were then no Spirit-filled persons to lay hands on the disciples and pray for them to be filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit also fell upon Cornelius and his household and friends without the laying on of hands in prayer, and while Peter was preaching to them (Acts 10:44) ; but some suppose that this was because no Jew would lay hands on Gentiles to pray for them to be filled with the Spirit until after God poured His Spirit on Cornelius. The Scriptures say that the Jews were astonished when they saw that God had poured His Spirit upon the Gentiles also (Acts 10:45).) The great scholar and Bible commentator Dr. Lightfoot, tells us, in his Exercitations, on Acts 2: 17, that it was a maxim among the Jews "That the Holy Spirit is never imparted to any Gentile. "Cornelius also received the Holy Spirit before he was baptized, but some have thought that this was because no Jew would have baptized Gentiles until after God poured His Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends. Peter would doubtless have refused to preach to Gentiles had not God shown Him three times in a vision to do so (Acts 10). However this may be, it seems certain that the usual order in the early Christian church was first conversion, then baptism, then the laying on of hands in prayer for the Holy Spirit. Peter doubtless referred to this order of things on the day of Pentecost, when the people were pricked to their hearts with conviction of sin and cried aloud, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call " (Acts 2 : 38, 39). Several of the early Christian writers express the opinion that the Ethiopian eunuch was filled with the Spirit immediately after his baptism, and give this as the reason why he went on his way rejoicing after the Spirit caught away Philip, instead of feeling sad at the separation (Acts 8:39). This explanation seems to be a very reasonable one.

The laying on of hands in prayer was a very ancient custom, and the early Christians probably adopted it from the Jews. Jacob laid his hands upon the sons of Joseph when blessing them (Genesis 48: 14). Moses laid hands on Joshua, as the Lord commanded him to do, when praying for Joshua to be filled with the Spirit (Num. 27: 18, 23), the early Christians usually laid hands on the sick when praying for their recovery (Mark 16), Paul speaks of the gift given to Timothy by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, or elders (1 Timothy 4: 14; 2 Timothy 1:6), and so on. The custom of laying hands on ministers when ordaining them is practiced in the churches today; but the ancient custom of laying hands on all believers, and praying for them to be filled with the Spirit, is no longer observed by many of the Protestant churches. While God can, and doubtless often does, give the Holy Spirit without the laying on of hands, it might be well to restore this ancient custom. It probably is a means of strengthening the faith and concentrating the thoughts of the person prayed for. The Greek Church and other Eastern churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Church of England, and a few smaller churches, still retain a relic of the old apostolic custom of laying on hands in prayer for the

Holy Spirit in what they call Confirmation Services, although it is to be feared that these services are often little more than a mere form. In the confirmation services of all these churches the bishops, or priests, lay hands on the persons confirmed and pray for them to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The mere form, however, amounts to but little unless the Holy Spirit actually comes to dwell within. If He does this either with or without laying on of hands, there will be new life and power in the experience of the Christian.

The early Christian church believed in and prayed for the filling of the Holy Spirit, and this was the secret of its power. It lived in the Spirit, walked in the Spirit, prayed in the Spirit, and sang in the Spirit. Its meetings were conducted in the Pentecostal order, or manner; everyone praying, singing, or testifying as they were moved by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit prayed through them, spoke through them, sang through them, comforted them, anointed them, strengthened them, and enlightened them. Of the first church, at Jerusalem, we read, "And great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). Soon after Pentecost they were gathered together in prayer, and the Holy Ghost again came with such power as to shake the place where they were assembled together, and all who were not previously filled with the Spirit were now filled, so that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Concerning other churches in the Holy Land, we read, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied " (Acts 9: 31). The Gentiles as well as the Jews had their Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his household and friends (Acts 10), and after that Jews and Gentiles were all one in Christ (Romans 3:9; Galatians 3:22-28; Ephesians 2: 11-19). Some believe that Cornelius and his friends were justified, or saved, before the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and the words of Peter seem to indicate this (Acts 10:34,35). But if they were not justified before Peter spoke to them, they were both justified and filled with the Spirit while he was speaking to them (Acts 10:44). The Apostle Paul could say to the church at Corinth, " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16). And to Christians in general the Apostle John could write, "But ye have an unction, from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2:20). These, and many other Scriptures, show that the New Testament church was truly a Spirit-filled one. We read concerning the men chosen as deacons of the first Christian church, that they were "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3,5). One of these, Stephen, was so filled with the Spirit that his face shone like the countenance of an angel (Acts 6: 15). With such unction and officers, it is little wonder that the early Christian church went forth conquering and to conquer, and soon won the world nominally to Christ; a few Judean peasants overturning the entire fabric of paganism.

"Oh, for the Spirit's quickening power;
Oh, for a soul-refreshing shower;
Oh, for the Pentecostal power;
Lord! send it now!"