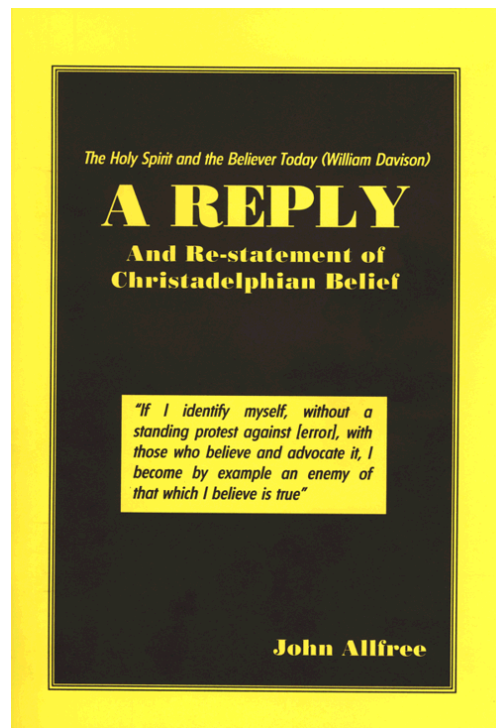


The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today (William Davison)

A REPLY

And Re-statement of Christadelphian Belief



John Allfree

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Preface

The appearance of the booklet *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today* by William Davison¹, distributed to most ecclesias in the English-speaking world, is but one more evidence of a desire on the part of an increasing minority to foist evangelical² beliefs upon the Christadelphian community. In addresses, books, articles, and comments on internet discussion groups, the contention that we cannot be saved and live the Christian life without in some way being directly influenced by the Holy Spirit is being increasingly aired, and, to our shame, for the most part allowed to go unchallenged. Because this view is unscriptural, all those who love the Truth will be fundamentally and irrevocably opposed to it.

The three pillars of evangelical theory that underpin *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today* are:

1. The gift of the Holy Spirit promised to the New Testament Ecclesia consisted of miraculous and non-miraculous gifts. The gift of the Holy Spirit, in its non-miraculous form at least, is still available to believers today.
2. Men and women can only be ‘born again’ and become members of the Ecclesia if they are influenced by the Holy Spirit to enable them to repent, believe and respond to the gospel.
3. The fruit of the spirit — the characteristics that the Christian seeks to cultivate — consists of virtues that are brought about by the activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women.

The principal aim of this *Reply* is to show these premises to be totally lacking in Scriptural support. I shall not consider it necessary to explain every Scripture used by William Davison to support his thesis. I shall, for the most part, content myself with setting out the clear Scriptural teaching about the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer as the basis from which explanations for the individual verses will readily flow. Occasionally it will be necessary to explain a passage but for those who find the

¹ I find it strange to have to refer to the author as *William Davison* — he is usually known as *Bill* in speech and in print. In this particular publication the change is unfortunate for it introduces a complication. In his bibliography he lists a work said to be by “Professor William Davison”. Since I shall find it necessary occasionally to refer to this work I shall use the correct bibliographic details which are W. T. Davison, DD. When I find it convenient to use abbreviations, I shall refer to William Davison as ‘WD’ and to W. T. Davison as ‘WTD’.

² In using the term ‘evangelical’ I refer to that loose association of Protestant churches that are noted for their emphasis on the part played by the Holy Spirit in the process of personal conversion.

remaining individual verses difficult to understand I suggest that ‘*Spirit*’ in the *New Testament*, (by Edward Whittaker and Reg Carr); *The Spirit - A General Exposition on New Testament Usage*, (by Aleck Crawford); and *The Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Gifts*, (by Graham Pearce); be consulted.³

Throughout the booklet, from time to time, I have given quotations from early Christadelphian sources. This is not to establish the case I seek to make, which stands or falls on Scripture. The quotations are to illustrate that the position I advance expresses a belief that goes back to the beginnings of the Christadelphian community; a belief that from earliest times was considered to be a fundamental teaching of Scripture. I have not seen fit to append names to these quotations but they are accurately referenced so that anyone seeking further information can easily find it.

The belief that God acts directly upon the hearts of men and women by the Holy Spirit is characteristic of all the denominations of Christendom. This is one of the principal differences between the Christadelphian community and Christendom, from which we feel it right to separate ourselves. I find it difficult to think that the author of the booklet, a brother of over 50 years in the Truth, was not fully aware that in publishing and distributing the booklet he was embarking on a course of action that could well have serious repercussions. Equally, I think it likely that those mature members of the community who are named — presumably with their approval — as his collaborators in the venture would also be aware that the material set out in the booklet is contrary to accepted Christadelphian beliefs and would not be acceptable to most. I make no apology to the author or to his helpers for challenging the teaching in *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today*.

John Allfree
Mansfield 2006

Acknowledgements

I would like to place on record my grateful thanks to those brethren and sisters who have encouraged me in the production of this *Reply* especially to JMA, AC, and PM, whose suggestions and editorial help have been invaluable.

³ Details of these can be found on page 38.

Introduction

The booklet *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today*¹ by William Davison claims to be “a Christadelphian Study”—it is not! There is nothing Christadelphian about it.² In a most comprehensive way it undermines Christadelphian teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and betrays a lamentable lack of appreciation on the part of its author as to what constitutes the new birth experienced by those who accept the truth, and as to the nature and purpose of the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on the early Ecclesia.

Although the author states his booklet is “an effort to look at the truth of the matter afresh”³ which he claims to have done “with some trepidation,” in fact there is nothing at all in the treatise that is new⁴—it is a rehash of evangelical teaching, which relies heavily on the work of other writers.⁵ And we look in vain for any signs of “trepidation” — he has not merely “venture[ed] onto holy ground”. Throughout the entire work he has unceremoniously trampled up and down over it as he uses one Scripture after another in a careless way with disregard for the context in which the words appear.

Christadelphians do **not** believe that “[Jesus’] coming by the Spirit into our lives is an essential element of the process of conversion.”⁶ The conversion experience for which WD argues throughout the booklet is not the Christadelphian experience; it is the experience described *ad nauseum* by the type of ‘born again christians’ to whom WD gave his testimony about his visit to Israel to be healed,⁷ and of those “messianic Jews” that appear to have made

¹ This will be referenced as *HSATBT_WD*.

² In the opening paragraph the author confesses his indebtedness to the late Brother Alfred D. Norris who also wrote a booklet with the title *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today*, which, as William Davison indicates, was originally published by the CMPA (in 1975, not 1985 as stated). What WD omits to mention is that the CMPA has withdrawn this publication. Although this work by ADN was, in my view, doctrinally unsound - an issue that he and I debated over a number of years - it is doubtful if he would have supported the extreme evangelical position set out by WD. Sadly, however, it could be argued that he laid the foundation upon which WD and others have built a more extreme edifice. My Reply to *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today* by Alfred Norris may be seen at:

http://users.chariot.net.au/~aleck/Web_folder_AWC/HSABTareplyg3.HTML

³ *HSATBT_WD*, page 1.

⁴ Although WD says that he has struggled and prayed over the issue for 50 years or more, he has advanced not a whit over the past 30 years. In 1973 he wrote “The Operation of the Holy Spirit” (*The Believer*, vol. 3, number 15, pages 19-21; number 16, pages 10-13). The ideas set out there are identical to those set out now in the booklet under review.

⁵ Such as that referenced in WD’s bibliography - W. T. Davison DD, *The Indwelling Spirit*, Hodder and Stoughton: London, 1911.

⁶ *HSATBT_WD*, page 3.

⁷ *HSATBT_WD*, pages 28-29.

such an impression upon him.⁸ This kind of experience is characteristic of those who reject the Truth, not of those who uphold it in doctrine and practice.

Simply stated, for Christadelphians, the conversion experience is the result of understanding the gospel message and believing it. For them **“the gospel... is the power of God** unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Romans 1:16). It appears to have escaped WD (who appeals throughout the booklet to the Greek text) that in the New Testament ‘belief and ‘faith’ are two English words for the same Greek word. ‘Belief is ‘faith’. But according to WD, “When we come to **believe** in him, the Spirit touches our hearts, convicts us of sin, and brings us to repentance, **faith** and spiritual maturity”.⁹ So as the result of our belief (i.e. faith) the Spirit gives us faith (or, belief)! For the Christadelphian, faith is simply **our response**¹⁰ to the gospel message graciously given to us, and because of our faith God by His grace counts us righteous. (Romans 10:17; 4:3).

It is interesting to note that when John Thomas was in the process of unearthing the Truth, one of the great stepping-stones along this way was the discovery that faith is not something given to men by the Holy Spirit, but simply an understanding of the gospel message and a conviction that it is true.

“The scrutiny of [the] testimony, and a conviction that it is true, is faith; and that faith so operated is the Lord’s “putting his laws into our minds, and inscribing them on our hearts;” it is in this way, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, written or spoken, that the world is “convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement;” and he who believes what is written, and obeys, may say with the Apostle, “We are built on the testimony of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the foundation corner stone. “Faith, then, results from the examination of testimony; not an infusion, and therefore, not wrought in the heart by any supernatural and indefinable process. Those who profess to have been the subjects of this process are credulous, and their theological system superstition.” Thomas, J., *Apostolic Advocate*, vol. 2 (1835-36), page 110.

⁸ HSATBT_WD, pages 12, 25.

⁹ HSATBT_WD, page 14.

¹⁰ Some will ask: Is it not the case, that 1 Corinthians 12:8-9 states that, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom... to another **faith by the same Spirit**... “? Does it therefore not follow that faith is a gift of the Spirit?

To argue thus is to confound things that differ. It is true that there was in the apostolic period a spirit-gift of faith to which the apostle in this Scripture alludes. However, the gifts of the Spirit were given only **to those who had already believed (i.e. shown faith)** and obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:38). But this *gift of faith* which was given after baptism, was given only to certain in the ecclesia — “to **another** faith by the same Spirit” —this is not that faith without which “it is impossible to please [God]” (Hebrews 11:6). It is one of those supernatural gifts that we shall show are not available today.

Section One:

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is my contention that WD takes many Scriptures out of their 1st Century context and seeks to impose on them a meaning for the 21st Century believer that is totally unwarranted. In this first section I shall seek to accomplish two objectives:

1. Show exactly what the Scriptures mean by “the gift of the Holy Spirit”.
2. Show that it is wrong for believers to expect to receive this gift today.

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Although I am wary of such unsubstantiated language as “the Book [of Acts] tells over 50 times of the coming of the Spirit to change the hearts of men and women, and enable them to witness for Jesus...”¹¹ WD is quite right to direct attention to the book of Acts for information about the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in particular to that Day of Pentecost when, according to Acts 2, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

The Jews who had assembled at Jerusalem out of the countries of the Diaspora to celebrate Pentecost were amazed to hear the believers proclaiming the gospel in their own native tongues. Some, unable to understand the languages, said that the believers were under the influence of “new wine”. At this point Peter delivered the speech recorded in Acts 2:14-39. The main thrust of the speech was that God had sent His Son Jesus to the Jewish nation (v. 22). They had rejected and crucified him (v. 23) but God had raised him from the dead (vv. 24-32) and exalted him to His own right hand (v. 33). It was the resurrected and glorified Jesus who was responsible for the disciples speaking in foreign tongues for Jesus had “received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, [and] he hath shed forth this, which ye now **see and hear**”¹² (Acts 2:33).

¹¹ *HSATBT_WD*, page 9.

¹² The promise of the Father, i.e. the gift of the Holy Spirit, was something that could be seen and heard.

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”

Peter had commenced his remarks by declaring that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was in fact the fulfilment of some words from the prophecy of Joel — “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...” (Acts 2:16). The words that follow are so important to a correct understanding of the rest of the chapter that we set the rest of the quotation out in full:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:17-21).

It should be noted that Peter said, “**This is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Peter proceeds to set out three things that would happen according to Joel’s prophecy:

1. The first thing highlighted was that in those “last days” there would be an outpouring of God’s Spirit upon “all flesh” — i.e. upon Jews and Gentiles — the beginning of which they were actually witnessing: “This is that...”
2. There would also be signs in heaven and on earth — the sun turned to darkness and the moon into blood. This is not the place to go into this in detail but simply to state that the nation to whom God had said, “Give hear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.” (Deuteronomy 32:1) was to be overthrown by the Romans less than 40 years hence.¹³
3. During those same “last days” another notable event would take place. The Gentiles would become recipients of God’s mercy so that it would be no longer the case that the Gospel would be preached exclusively to Jews but, “It shall come to pass that **whosoever** shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved”. Although Peter prepared

¹³ This is why the New Testament period leading up to the Roman invasion in AD 69-70, is referred to as “the last days”. They were the last days of the existence of Israel as a nation. So the Apostle wrote to the Jewish brethren: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things...” (Hebrews 1:2-3). For more on this see, Allfree, J., *A World Destroyed By Fire*, Bible Study Publications: Mansfield, 2006, pages 20-27.

the way, the Acts records that it was mainly the labours of Paul that brought about this change. He, too, spoke of it when he wrote to the Romans, using this same quotation from Joel: “For there is **no difference between the Jew and the Greek**: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:12-13).

These were the three events that would take place in those “last days”. Our concern is primarily with the first of the three promises taken from Joel — “It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit...”

The response to Peter’s preaching

Many Jews responded positively to this preaching of Peter. They said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter’s response was:

“Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto 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).

They must repent and be baptised. Peter was beginning to fulfil the commission given him by his Lord: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth [i.e. exhibits faith] and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). Some 3000 responded.

It should be noted in passing that at this time — before their baptism — the 3000 did not have the Holy Spirit; but they were quite able to repent and believe without it. The Holy Spirit was not then (and never has been since), necessary as an inner working influence, to bring sinners to repentance and faith.¹⁴

¹⁴ This is a good place to bring the light of Scripture to bear upon Romans 5: 5 which WD says “we by-pass” (page 1). These people on the Day of Pentecost realised for the first time that:

- a. God had sent his son Jesus (v. 22)
- b. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh - “which God did by him” (v. 22)
- c. It was God’s will that Jesus die - this did not mitigate the crime of crucifying Jesus (v. 23)
- d. By his death, Jesus destroyed death for himself and was raised from the dead (v. 24)
- e. The resurrected and glorified Jesus had been exalted (v. 32-33)
- f. Repentance, faith and baptism would secure remission of sins (v. 38)

Thus by this gospel message, preached by the apostle with Holy Spirit, the love of God (i.e. God’s love to them) became abundantly clear. So it could be said of them, as it was later said to the Romans, “the love of God [i.e. that he gave His Son to die for their sins] hath been shed abroad in

“Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”

Those who turned to God and were baptised were promised — “And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”. WD makes a very valid point on page 23 of his booklet where he sets out the grammatical reasons for understanding that what the repentant Jews were promised was “the gift *being* the Holy Spirit rather than the gift being *from* the Holy Spirit.”

But what exactly was this “gift of the Holy Spirit” given to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost and promised to the Jews who were baptised? WD maintains that for a few it involved the ability to work miracles (for a limited period of time) but for the vast majority it had “nothing whatsoever to do with visible miraculous signs”;¹⁵ for them it was (and still is for believers today) “an ethical (moral)” power whereby “Jesus works inwardly... [as] the empowering presence of God in our lives”.¹⁶

The evidence for this appears on pages 14-19 of his booklet. This comprises a collection of verses many of which quite definitely have to do with the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, and others refer to either the Spirit of Christ or the fruit of the Spirit, which, as will presently be shown, are not identified in Scripture with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Holy Spirit consisted of special abilities given to the brethren and sisters to help them in their witness, in fulfilment of the words of Jesus:

“Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49).

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

WD says concerning this, “The Book [of Acts] tells over fifty times of the coming of the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of men and women, and enable them to witness for Jesus...”¹⁷ He thus reads into the Acts record the view that the gift of the Holy Spirit took two forms: a miracle working power and a non-miraculous inward working power. This is a very

our hearts [by the gospel message] through the Holy Spirit [by means of which the gospel was preached] which was given us [on the Day of Pentecost]” (Romans 5: 5 RV). This is not to “bypass” Scripture. It is to explain it in a way that is consistent with the teaching of the rest of Scripture. Only a mind befuddled with Trinitarian mysticism would see in Romans 5:5 a reference to love being infused directly into a believer’s heart.

¹⁵ *HSATBT_WD*, page 13.

¹⁶ *HSATBT_WD*, pages 13 and 21.

¹⁷ *HSATBT_WD*, page 9.

important assumption that we shall now test by listing all the references to the working of the Holy Spirit in the Acts (only those passages which actually mention the Holy Spirit are listed; there are many others where it is clear that the Holy Spirit was being used but it is not mentioned):

“But ye shall receive **power**, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“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 Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance**” (Acts 2:3-4).

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will **pour out of my Spirit** upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall **prophesy**, and your young men shall **see visions**, and your old men shall **dream dreams**: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit: and they shall **prophesy**” (Acts 2:17-18).

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, 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).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 2:38).

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that **with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal**, and that **signs and wonders** may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together: and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness**” (Acts 4:29-31).

“And we are his *witnesses* of these things; and **so is also the Holy Spirit**, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, **full of the Holy Spirit** and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business... and they chose **Stephen**, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and **Philip**, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch...” (Acts 6:3, 5).

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, **ye do always resist the Holy Spirit**, as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51). [NB: Stephen was speaking to them by the Holy Spirit].

“Who, when [Peter and John] were come down, [they] prayed for them, **that they might receive the Holy Spirit**. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then **laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 8:15-17).

“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him 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 Spirit**. And immediately there fell from his eyes

as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptised" (Acts 9:17-18).

"While Peter yet spake these words, **the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word.** And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. **For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.** Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, **which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"** (Acts 10:44-47).

"And as I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning.** Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit. Forasmuch then as God **gave them the like gift as he did unto us,** who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:15-17).

"For he was a good man, and **full of the Holy Spirit** and of faith: and **much people was added** unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24).

"And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and **signified by the spirit** that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: **which came to pass** in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:28).

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said,** Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, **being sent forth by the Holy Spirit,** departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:2-4).

"Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) **filled with the Holy Spirit,** set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and **thou shalt be blind,** not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then **the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed,** being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (Acts 13:9-12).

"And the disciples were filled with joy, **and with the Holy Spirit"** (Acts 13:52)

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, **bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us"** (Acts 15:8)

"He said unto them, **Have ye received the Holy Spirit** since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit... When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when **Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them;** and they **spake with tongues, and prophesied"** (Acts 19:2, 5-6).

"Save that **the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city,** saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts 20:23).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which **the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers,** to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

“And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who **said to Paul through the Spirit**, that he should not go up to Jerusalem” (Acts 21:4).

“And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had **four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy**” (Acts 21:8-9).

“When [Agabus] was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, **Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle**, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles” (Acts 21:11).

In these 26 references to the giving and the exercise of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Acts, not one of them says, or even implies, that the gift was in any way a non-miraculous “coming of the Spirit to change the hearts” of its recipients. I can see that if one goes to the record with the idea firmly entrenched in the mind it might just be possible to read it into a few of the passages, but the overall teaching of the Scriptures quoted are so clearly concerned with the bestowal and exercise of a miraculous power, that it would be irresponsible to do so.

“Baptism of the Spirit, in all the subjects of it, was known to all observers *by the effects produced*. There could be no mistake in this. A Christian who said, “I have been baptised with spirit”, could prove his assertion to the conviction of all reasonable persons. He never undertook to prove such a baptism by an appeal to his own feelings; for what he might feel in himself was no demonstration to his contemporaries.” (*The Faith in the Last Days*, page 214.)

Summary

From all this it is plain that the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the First Century believers and exercised by them as described in the Acts, conveyed to the recipients abilities that they did not possess naturally. These consisted, as the Apostle sets out in his letter to the Corinthians, of the gift of apostleship, the ability to prophesy, the ability to teach, the ability to perform miracles, the ability to heal, certain gifts referred to as helps, and governments, and finally the ability to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28). Most of these can be seen at some point in the above list of quotations from the Acts. These were all special endowments given to help them in their work of witness and organisation of the ecclesias. Granted that some of these abilities were less spectacular in their exercise than others, but they all conferred upon the recipients powers that were not their own and were therefore miraculous. WD has not come anywhere

near to providing Scriptural support for his assertion that, “The gift (the giving) of the Spirit has many facets which have nothing whatsoever to do with visible miraculous signs”¹⁸—the evidence from the Acts is overwhelmingly against this.

“When Christ through the Spirit gave commandments to the apostles (Acts 1:2) to preach the gospel of the kingdom, he told them to wait for that same Spirit, which was to lead them into all truth (Luke 24:49; Jno. 16:7-13; Acts 1:8). And we find that when they received it, it brought Christ’s sayings to their minds (John 14:26), and taught them how to open the covenants of promise (1 Cor. 2:15). The voice of the Spirit spoke in the prophets (Neh. 9:30), and God witnessed by the same Spirit (Heb. 2:3). Languages that the apostles had never learned were by the Spirit spoken by them so as to be understood by those who knew them. By the same power, they could both kill and make alive (Acts 5:9; 9:40). Many miracles were wrought by them in confirmation of the truth they taught (Acts 14:3). The things they taught were able to make a man wise unto salvation (Romans 1:16). And those who kept in memory the things spoken by them, were saved (1 Cor. 15:2). In John 17:20, we see by the mouth of Jesus himself, that salvation comes through believing on Christ “through their word.” So that there wants no more revelation for a man to attain unto salvation. If there was anything more to reveal, then the spirit would be given to someone in order that it might be understood. The spirit was not given to make the apostles brethren of the Christ, but to enable them to speak and confirm the word of Deity, for the salvation of those who were ignorant.” (*The Christadelphian*, vol. 7 (1870), pages 121-122.)

To whom was the gift of the Holy Spirit promised?

Having shown from the book of Acts that the gift of the Holy Spirit and its exercise has to do with the supernatural and the miraculous, it is now necessary to further examine the words of Peter to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost. If they repented and were baptised they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, “For”, said Peter, “the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39).

¹⁸ *HSATBT_WD*, page 13.

“To you [Jews] and to your children”

It is customary for those who believe that Peter was promising an ethical, non-miraculous, gift of the Holy Spirit that is still available today, to scoff at the suggestion that these words of the Apostle — “unto you, and to your children” — limits the promise of the Holy Spirit to two generations. So WD states, “Peter is not, in any way, restricting the promise of the Spirit to one or two generations.”¹⁹

But such scepticism is unjustified, for:

1. The promise has to do with the gift of the Holy Spirit.
2. We have shown that the gift of the Holy Spirit throughout the Acts (and the same is true of the rest of Scripture) has to do with the miraculous — a non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit is a figment of the evangelical imagination.
3. Therefore it must follow that **either** the miraculous gifts are still available **or**, at some time they ceased.
4. WD concedes that he is not sure whether the miraculous gifts ceased. “After Pentecost the miraculous Spirit gifts appeared to wane...”²⁰ and, “This epistle [i.e. 1 John] was written about AD 90, when the miraculous gifts seemed to disappear, their usefulness being over...”²¹
5. The only way that WD can justify the view of continued Holy Spirit activity is to follow the rest of the evangelical flock and postulate a non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit that finds no place in Scripture.

It is worth noting in passing, that WD is quite definitely not talking about the same gift of the Holy Spirit as Peter, for:

- a. WD says, “The Spirit touches our hearts, convicts us of sin, and **brings men to repentance...**”²² — i.e. the Spirit does its work **before repentance**.
- b. Peter said, “Repent... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” — i.e. the Spirit was to be given **after men had repented** and been baptised.

¹⁹ *HSATBT_WD*, page 13.

²⁰ *HSATBT_WD*, page 13.

²¹ *HSATBT_WD*, page 14-15. It should be pointed out that WD is not too sure about this. He writes, “This [WD’s explanation of “that which is perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:10] would suggest that things ‘miraculous’ may not, after all, have totally ceased” (page 26). Also in his account of his visit to a police station (*HSATBT_WD*, page 11) he appears to be claiming that he has experienced the work of inspiration that was vouchsafed to the apostles in Luke 12:12.

²² *HSATBT_WD*, page 14.

6. Added to the above we shall presently show that the rest of Scripture combines to support the view that the gift of the Holy Spirit ceased some two generations after the Acts 2 Day of Pentecost.

“All that are afar off... as many as the Lord our God shall call”

Paul writing to the Ephesians said, “Now in Christ Jesus **ye who sometimes were far off** are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13). Those “far off” are the *Gentiles*, like the Ephesians. So Peter’s words constitute a declaration that some Gentiles too would also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

But, there is not in these words, as WD maintains, a reference to *time*; as though the Apostle had said, ‘The Holy Spirit will be given to all Gentiles throughout all ages’. Again the force of the references to the Holy Spirit in the Acts must be brought to bear: If Peter’s words mean, as WD says they mean, that Gentiles for all time would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, then the miraculous gifts ought to be in evidence, because that is what Peter meant when he referred to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The absence of the various manifestations of the Holy Spirit ought to make him at least consider the possibility that he might be wrong in his understanding of Peter’s words rather than joining the evangelicals in arguing for a non-miraculous gift of Holy Spirit.

These words of Peter are simply a restatement of the imminent fulfilment of the words of Joel that “it shall come to pass, that **whosoever** shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” — that Gentiles too would soon be sharers in the hope of Israel and they too would receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. But there is nothing in the words that define the period of time during which the Holy Spirit would be given.

The period of time during which the Holy Spirit would be given is, in fact, present in the context for those who are willing to let the Scriptures speak. The promise of the Holy Spirit was a promise for those “last days” (Acts 2:17), which terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Two generations of Jews from the time the Holy Spirit was given takes us roughly to the AD 70 period when Israel’s last days came to an end with the Roman invasion.²³

²³ Even if it were conceded that the phrase “you, and your children” (which corresponds to Joel’s “your young men... your old men” — Acts 2:18) does not itself conclusively limit the operation of the gift to two generations — that it may simply mean to you and ‘to your descendants’ — the fact that the context ties down the promise to “the last days” of the Jewish nation limits it essentially to their descendants of the next 40 years or so.

Peter makes the announcement that the outpouring would not be confined to Jews — Gentiles would receive the gift. But not all Gentiles; only “as many as the Lord our God shall call”. And not for all time, but Gentiles, as well as Jews, during those “last days”.

By the laying on of apostles’ hands

This way of looking at Acts 2 is confirmed by what we are told elsewhere in the Acts. After the outpouring on the Day of Pentecost (not forgetting what has been described as the Gentile Pentecost —the outpouring on the family of Cornelius in Acts 10) the Holy Spirit was passed on by the laying on of apostles’ hands:

“... they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit... Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that **through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given**, he offered them money...” (Acts 8:14-15, 17-18)

“And **when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them**, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6)

With the demise of the apostles, there being no one to pass on the Holy Spirit, the gifts ceased. Again the timing is right, for this would roughly have coincided with the end of “the last days” of the Jewish nation.

“In all the long series of ages and generations [i.e. since the close of the apostolic age] there are no gifts and no baptism other than that of water. The gifts answered their purpose, and then ceased; and nothing remained but “faith, hope and love,” the product of the word read and studied by the honest and good hearted.” (*The Christadelphian*, vol. 13 (1876), page 50.)

“Spirit concentrated under the Almighty’s will, becomes Holy Spirit, as distinct from spirit in its free, spontaneous form. In the one, we are in the domain of fixed law; in the other, God is in communion with us for words of wisdom or works of power, independently of fixed law. It is given to few to experience this form of the Spirit’s manifestation, it is given to none in the present day.” (*Christendom Astray*, page 124.)

Other Evidence That the Gift of the Holy Spirit Ceased

1. The Comforter passages

We have earlier mentioned WD's attempt to use John 16:8 to support his belief that "when we come to believe in [Jesus], the Spirit touches our hearts, convicts us of sin, and brings us to repentance, faith and spiritual maturity".²⁴ Such a misuse of Scripture introduces confusion into the process of conversion for it is arguing for the evangelical dogma²⁵ that men cannot come to faith unless they are first influenced by the Holy Spirit. Of course the Comforter was not given to bring its recipients to faith and conversion — WD following the lead of the evangelicals completely misses the point — the Comforter was given **to those who had already been converted and baptised**, to aid them in their ministry.

This is what the Comforter passages actually say:

"But **the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit** whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you**" (John 14:26).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me**: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27).

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, **he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment**. Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of

²⁴ HSATBT_WD, page 14.

²⁵ E.g. W. T. Davison DD, *The Indwelling Spirit*, page 127 - "The truth of the Gospels is made known, the message uttered and reiterated, it may be with eloquent lips, but it is of no avail till the Holy Spirit brings it home to the heart and enables the penitent believer to make it his own." Packer, J. I., *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1958, page 112 — "Without the Spirit's help there can be no grasp of the message of Scripture, no conviction of the truth of Scripture, and no faith in the God of Scripture."

Andrews, E. H., *The Promise of the Spirit*, Evangelical Press, Welwyn, UK, 1982, page 17 — "The Spirit of God... reproveth and convicts the careless sinner of his sin... Without the Spirit to stir our long dead consciences and empower us to turn from idols and our sin, there would be no repentance... Without His operation in our hearts, there would be no implanted faith, by which alone we may be saved."

These are the ideas to which WD is giving voice.

It should be noted that Christadelphians have always rejected this pernicious doctrine and it is included in the BASF as one of the Doctrines to be Rejected: "That a man may not believe without possessing the Spirit of God". (No. 25).

righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:7-11).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and **he will shew you things to come**. He shall glorify me: for **he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you**. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13-15).

Leaving aside the statements that make it clear that this was a promise specific to those disciples who had been with Jesus during his ministry — e. g. “Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (15:27) — what these verses promised was that “the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit” would:

1. Teach them all things (14:26)
2. Bring all the things that Jesus had taught them during his ministry to their remembrance (14:26)
3. Guide them into “all the truth” (16:13 RV and Gk.)
4. Reveal to them additional things from the ascended Jesus (16:14)
5. Give them prophecy that would show them things to come (16:13)
6. Enable them to witness concerning Jesus (15:26)
7. Convict the world:
 - a. of sin — because they had failed to believe on Jesus (16:8-9)
 - b. of righteousness — because Jesus had ascended into heaven (16:8, 10)
 - c. of judgement — because the time had come for the prince of this world to be judged (16:8, 11).

All these things have to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in giving to the Ecclesia further revelation and in helping the believers with their witness. The Holy Spirit did teach them all things, guide them into all the truth, and bring to the remembrance of the apostles all the things that Jesus had taught during their time with him. There was added to this, further revelation and prophecy. All of these things were written down and go to make up what we call the New Testament, and the truth revealed therein is styled by Jude “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (v. 3 RV). The Holy Spirit today is silent in this respect — Christadelphians do not believe that we need, or are given, further revelation today. In the Scriptures alone we find “the truth” into which the early Ecclesia was guided by the Holy Spirit. WD says, “We must not

stop our minds being developed... The influence of God on our minds is not a matter of ‘understanding’ but rather that of ‘experience’.²⁶ To go to the writings of evangelicals such as WTD, whose minds are befuddled with the mysterious working of their Holy Spirit third person of the godhead is the surest way to blind a person’s eyes to the truth. In addition to its work in giving revelation, the Holy Spirit was to assist them in their work of witness. It was to be a comforter, or (more properly) an advocate, in the legal sense of standing alongside them to assist them in their work — the work recounted for us in the Acts, in which, as we have seen, the gift of the Holy Spirit played such an important part. One primary aspect of the apostolic witness was to the Jewish people who had rejected Jesus. Jesus had said to the Sanhedrin, “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64) by which he meant that they would live to see him raised from the dead, exalted to God’s right hand and coming against them in judgement (using the Roman armies) in AD 70. These things were an important part of apostolic preaching to the Jews. So, for example, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter reproved the Jews:

- a. “of sin” — “Jesus of Nazareth... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain”; (Acts 2:22-23).
- b. “of righteousness” — “A man approved of God... God hath raised him from the dead... therefore being by the right hand of God exalted... he hath shed forth this”; (Acts 2:22, 24, 33).
- c. “of judgement” — “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood...” is a way of speaking of the judgement of that nation, which was a feature of the apostolic witness. (See Acts 3:22-24; Acts 5:28; Acts 6:14; Acts 7:56.)

Thus, all the things that Jesus said the Comforter or Advocate would do were accomplished in the lifetime of the disciples to whom the promises about the Advocate were made. Nothing was left undone. To twist and warp these passages in an attempt to make them apply to believers today only introduces confusion.

²⁶ *HSATBT_WD*, page 27.

2. Ephesians chapter 4

The teaching of this chapter confirms that the gift of the Holy Spirit, in all its various manifestations, was given to the early believers to assist them in the work of witness and establishing the Ecclesia. When that work had been accomplished, the Holy Spirit was withdrawn. The chapter also throws light on the “perfect” state of 1 Corinthians 13:10 which will help us when we look at that Scripture.

First we must summarise the message of Ephesians chapter. 4. Having set out the things that united the ecclesia — “one body... one Spirit... one hope... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...” (vv. 4-6) — the Apostle then turns to consider the gifts of the Spirit (v. 7 where, “to every one of us is given grace”, has reference to the gifts, of the Spirit, as the verses that follow plainly show). These gifts, he says, were given in fulfilment of Psalm 68:18, which, as well as looking forwards to the work of Christ, looks back to the way in which Spirit gifts were given to help the Israelites build the tabernacle.²⁷

The purpose of the gifts

“But unto every one of us is given grace [i.e. a gift] according to the measure of the gift of Christ [i.e. the gift of the Holy Spirit shed forth by the ascended Jesus]. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:7-8).

To this Paul adds a parenthetical comment:

“(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)” (Ephesians 4:9-10).

So looking at the Psalm as it pointed backwards to the tabernacle (see footnote 27 below) and forwards to the work of Jesus, and taking into account Paul’s inspired comment, we have:

²⁷ It is necessary to read through Psalm 68 to appreciate this. Verse 1 is a quotation from Numbers 10:35 which is about Israel breaking camp and taking down the tabernacle as they journeyed through the wilderness. Verse 8 reflects back on the way God had revealed himself to Israel at Sinai when He gave them the Law and told them to build the tabernacle. The purpose of the tabernacle was in the words of verse 18, “That the LORD God might dwell among them” which is clearly a reference to Exodus 25:8 where God said to Moses concerning the tabernacle, “Let them make me a sanctuary; that I might dwell among them”. It was for this reason, in the words of the Psalm, that God “received gifts for men” (verse 18) or as Paul quotes it in Ephesians, “gave gifts unto men”. The giving of the gifts in Exodus is detailed in chapters 31 and 35 where we learn that Bezaleel and Aholiab were “filled... with the Spirit of God” to be able to make the tabernacle (31:1-6; 35:30-35).

TYPICAL BASIS	PSALM 68 and PAUL'S COMMENTS in EPHESIANS 4	FULFILMENT IN JESUS
The angel of the LORD said, "I am come down to deliver them" (Exodus 3:2, 8). He led them through the depths of the Red Sea.	"He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9)	Jesus "taken, and by wicked hands... crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23) "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" (Isa. 53:9)
Israel led out of the bondage of Egypt – " He led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies" (Psa. 78:53)	" led captivity captive" or, "He led in procession a multitude of captives" (Psa. 68:18 Rotherham & Eph. 4:8)	" Deliver[ed] them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage " (Heb. 2:15)
The angel ascended up onto Mount Sinai and told them to make a sanctuary (Exod 24:16-25:8)	" Ascended on high " (Psalm 68:8 & Eph. 4:8)	"Being to the right hand of onto God exalted... " (Acts 2:33 RV)
Spirit gifts given to Bezaleel and Aholiab (Exod. 31:1-6; 35:30-35) – see footnote 27.	" Received gifts for men" (Psalm 68:18) " Gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8)	"Having <i>received</i> of the Father and promise of the Holy Spirit , he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33)

Familiarity with the Exodus background of the Psalm is very helpful as we seek an understanding of the nature and duration of the Holy Spirit gifts that were given to the New Testament Ecclesia. Note now the gifts that were given to the Ecclesia:

"**He... gave gifts** unto men. And he **gave** some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:8, 11).

Thus, we may now extend the above comparison still further:

REASON FOR THE GIFTS		
TYPICAL BASIS	PSALM 68	FULFILMENT IN JESUS
"Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them " (Exod. 25:8) "And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man... unto the work to do it" (Exod 36:2).	"Thou hast received gifts for men... that the LORD God might dwell among them" (Psalm 68:18)	"He gave gifts unto men... for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [i.e. building up] of the body of Christ" Eph. 4:8, 12)

So the gifts were given to establish the Ecclesia and bring it to maturity in exactly the same way as the gifts had been given to Bezaleel and his companions to build the tabernacle.

The duration of the gifts

Clearly, once the tabernacle was completed, the need for the gifts ceased, and the tabernacle was ready to proceed on its long wilderness journey to the Promised Land. So, too, with the Ecclesia — the gifts were given to perform the work of building up the Ecclesia, and once that work was completed the need for the gifts ceased and they were withdrawn.

Regardless of whether or not the exposition of Ephesians 4 briefly set out above is correct, this is the inevitable conclusion of the words of Paul:

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers... 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** [*i.e. the maturity of full-grown manhood*²⁸], unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

The gifts were given “**TILL**...” This proves they were temporary. They were given until the purpose for which they had been given was accomplished — until the Ecclesia’s knowledge and understanding was complete and the one faith had been delivered to the saints. The purpose for which the gifts were given was largely accomplished by the time Jerusalem fell in AD 70. The Ecclesia had been guided into all the Truth; they had been shown things to come; all the things that Jesus had taught during his ministry had been recalled by the Apostles; early problems in the ecclesias had produced the apostolic guidance recorded in the epistles. All these things had been written down to make up what we now call the New Testament. Armed with this the Ecclesia, organised by the apostles and the gifted brethren, was ready to begin its journey through the wilderness of time. Its members were henceforth:

“No more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine... But speaking the truth in love [were able to] grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ...” (Ephesians 4:14-15)

If this conclusion be denied, and it be argued that the Ecclesia has not yet attained the “perfect man” (i.e. mature) state, then it follows that there should still be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the ecclesias, for these gifts were given **TILL** the Ecclesia reached the maturity of full-grown manhood.

²⁸ Bruce, F. F., *An Expanded Paraphrase of the Epistles of Paul*, Paternoster Press: Exeter, 1965.

“The spirit... bestowed upon certain of the saints to qualify them officially, that they might exercise the gifts for the public benefit—for the building up of the body of the Christ.” Paul tells us how long this arrangement was to continue. “Till,” says he, “we shall come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God—into a perfect man; into a measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ.” This limits the gifts to the above apostolic saints; that is to those contemporary with the apostles, but who may have nevertheless outlived them many years.” (*The Christadelphian*, vol. 13 (1876), page 7.)

3. 1 Corinthians chapter 13

This, too, is the teaching of 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Paul’s argument is that at the time he wrote the letter, by virtue of the Holy Spirit gifts — prophecy, knowledge, tongues, and, by implication, all the other gifts he has been talking about in the previous chapter — the Ecclesia was split up into parts. “We know *in part*, we prophesy *in part*” (v. 9). But that situation was going to change. The gift of prophecy would fail; the gift of tongues would cease; the gift of knowledge would vanish away (v. 8). These things belonged to the infancy of the Ecclesia (v. 11) but the time would come when, as in Ephesians 4:14 they would “be no more children” and they would “put away childish things” (v. 11). This stage when the Ecclesia “became a man” (v. 11) is described as the time “when that which is perfect is come” (v. 10). This word “perfect” is the same word used in Ephesians 4:13 in the phrase which Bruce renders “the **maturity** of full-grown manhood” — it means simply ‘mature’.

WD’s assertion that the perfect state “seemingly refers to the Lord’s return”²⁹ is not sustainable. “That which is in part” was not to be done away until the perfect state arrived. Thus if WD is correct, since the Lord has not come, we should still see evidence of the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge (and all the other gifts too) dividing the ecclesias into parts. Since this is not the case, it follows that the perfect state cannot refer to the Lord’s return.

Further, WD has completely missed the point when he reads into the writings of Paul his own preconceived idea that the Holy Spirit consisted of miraculous and non-miraculous gifts. “Tongues” he says, “was the least of all the gifts in the Christian life, not to be compared with those of

²⁹ *HSATBT_WD*, page 26.

faith, hope and love. ‘Tongues’ pale into insignificance before these everlasting gifts from God.”³⁰ Paul nowhere teaches that faith, hope and love are gifts of the Spirit; they are virtues to be cultivated by the saints as will be seen in the section on the fruit of the Spirit. But notice what Paul does say to the first century believers: “Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). That way is the way of faith, hope, and especially love, as he explains in chapter 13. But faith, hope and love were things **more excellent than the best gifts**. If they were **more excellent than the best gifts** of the Spirit, clearly they were not themselves gifts of the Spirit.

When the Spirit gifts had been withdrawn at the point of Ecclesial maturity, the ecclesia continued solely under the influence of faith, hope and love. Love is the greatest of the three for, among other reasons, when Jesus returns, faith will give way to sight, and hope to realisation; but love will continue eternally.

Summary

From the Acts of the Apostles, the Comforter passages in the Gospel of John, Ephesians chapter 4 and 1 Corinthians chapter 13 we have seen the consistent teaching that the gift of the Holy Spirit in its various miraculous manifestations was given for the purpose of imparting new revelation, aiding the believers in their witness and in bringing about the establishment of the Ecclesia in the First Century. The purpose for which they were given was accomplished and saw the completion of the Scriptures and the establishment of ecclesias throughout the Roman world. As we have seen (page 13), with the death of the apostles the ability to pass on the Holy Spirit ceased and the gifts faded from the scene.

Those who know the Truth will not concern themselves with WD’s empty evangelical appeal to “let the Holy Spirit take over your life: *Breathe on me breath of God, fill me with life anew; That I may love what thou dost love and do what thou wouldst do*”³¹. It is sad that after over 50 years a Christadelphian, WD cannot see this for what it really is — a prayer to the non-existent third person of the trinity to perform a work of mystery, the likes of which is not so much as hinted at in the Scriptures of truth.

³⁰ HSATBT_WD, page 25.

³¹ HSATBT_WD, page 8.

“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.” (*The Christadelphian*, vol. 7 (1870), page 124.)

“If the early churches, consisting of men and women fresh from the abominations and immoralities of heathenism, and without the authoritative standard of the completed Scripture which now exists, had been left to the mere power of apostolic tradition intellectually received, they could not have held together. The winds of doctrine, blowing about through the activity of “men of corrupt minds,” would have broken them from their moorings, and they would have been tossed to and fro on the billows of uncertain and conflicting report and opinion, and finally stranded in hopeless shipwreck. This catastrophe was prevented by the gifts of the spirit. Properly qualified men, as to moral and intellectual parts, were made the repositories of these gifts, and empowered to “speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.” They “ruled” the communities over which they were placed, feeding the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3). In this way the early churches were built up and edified. The work of the apostles was conserved, improved and consolidated by the voice of inspiration, ... But it must be obvious that the case stands very differently now. There is no manifestation of the Spirit in these days. The power of continuing the manifestation doubtless died with the apostles...” (*Christendom Astray*, page 127-128, 1922 edition)

Section Two:

THE NEW BIRTH

We must now examine in some detail WD's approach to that vital teaching of the Scriptures that has to do with the process of conversion. WD writes: "His [i.e. Jesus'] coming by the Spirit into our lives is an essential element in the process of conversion, referred to in John's Gospel as *being born again*."³² I suggest the reader peruse carefully WD's comments on John 3:2-8 on pages 3-4 of his booklet. In summary he says:

1. Entering the Kingdom of God depends on being born of water and spirit.³³
2. This refers to one birth (of water and spirit) not to two (a birth of water and a birth of spirit).
3. The water is the symbol and the Spirit's activity the outcome.
4. The invisible Spirit of God breathes into the hearts of men and women. The result is a changed life dedicated to God and His Son.

The thing that shocks me about this — and, indeed, about the greater part of WD's treatise — is the way that the process of conversion takes place with little, if any, contribution from the Word of God. When WD refers to the Scriptures it is usually to wrest them in an attempt to bolster his preconceived view of the way in which he perceives the Spirit to work in the hearts of men.

What is the new birth?

We start with two fundamental statements from the Apostle:

"I am not ashamed of **the gospel** of Christ: for **it is the power of God** unto salvation to everyone that believeth..." (Romans 1:16).

"The word of the cross is them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved **it is the power of God**" (1 Corinthians 1:18 RV).

The unambiguous teaching of these two Scriptures is that the power that produces salvation is the message preached — the message that consists

³² HSATBT_WD, page 3.

³³ It is salutary to note that an unscriptural view of the nature of the new birth soon leads to further unscriptural teaching. So we find WD commenting on Romans 14:17: "This is the here and now aspect of the kingdom of God" (page 17). It is my experience that wherever the belief in the present activity of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is espoused, it is not long before the idea of the kingdom as Christ reigning in the heart is also adopted.

of “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12), and which is referred to as “the gospel”. In the record of apostolic preaching never, ever, do we find men and women being exhorted to open their hearts to the direct influence of the Spirit. The message was, “Repent...”, “Believe the gospel”, “If thou believest...”, “Believe on the Lord Jesus...” There is never, anywhere, the slightest hint that unless the Spirit first touched their hearts, repentance and faith would be impossible.

“When in the exercise of [true religion] men and women are moved to action, they are acted on by an intelligent and earnest conviction of the truth. This is the instrumentality by which He rouses men to religious exercise - by the spirit which is the truth (1 John 5:6)” (*Elpis Israel*, 15th edition, page 175.)

1. The Planting of the seed

The Scriptures present the process of conversion as “being born again.” This new birth, like any birth, is indeed a process. It commences, as far as the individual is concerned,³⁴ with the planting of the gospel seed. Jesus gave expression to this when, admittedly employing a different figure, he said in the parable of the sower, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11).

Peter is very clear when he writes:

“[we are] **born again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever... and **this is the word which by the gospel is preached** unto you” (1 Peter 1:23, 25).

James says,

“Of his own will **begat he us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

2. The seed takes root and grows

The response to the preaching of the gospel is also mirrored in the Parable of the Sower. Some seeds never take root. Others find lodgement in stony ground or among thorns and begin to develop but never come to maturity for one reason or another. Our interest is in that seed that falls on good ground.

³⁴ This is not the place to consider the way in which, often unseen and at the time unrecognised, circumstances are divinely manipulated so that at exactly the right time in a person’s life the gospel seed is sown. With hindsight it can be clearly seen and we delight to describe with amazement the circumstances that led to our accepting the Truth. This is an angelic work - See SECTION THREE, “Ministering Spirits”, page 36.

Whether a person is stony ground, thorn and thistle infested ground, or good ground, is not due to some outpouring of Holy Spirit, or lack of it. It is entirely dependent on how the individual responds to the word preached — the choice rests with the individual. He either responds with belief and obedience, or with unbelief and rebellion. This is the teaching of some of the simplest verses in Holy Writ:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. **He that believeth** and is baptised shall be saved; but **he that believeth not** shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth** in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Thus belief, or faith as it is also called, is **the response of the individual** — it is not something that is infused into him by the Spirit. As the apostle testifies:

“If thou shalt **confess with thy mouth** the Lord Jesus, **and shalt believe [i.e. have faith] in thine heart** that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For **with the heart man believeth** unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation... So then **faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**” (Romans 10:9-10, 17).

3. The new man brought forth

The final act in the process of a birth is the bringing forth of the baby. The final act in the new birth process is the bringing forth of the “new creature”, which is done by the act of water baptism. This is the public manifestation of that which has been conceived and developed in the mind of the individual by “the word of the truth of the gospel”. Only when a person has been baptised is he said to be “in Christ”:

“For as many of you as have been **baptised into Christ** have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptised into Jesus Christ** were baptised into his death?” (Romans 6:3).

Having been baptised into Christ the process of new birth is complete:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Born of water and Spirit

It is easy to see in baptism, the ‘water’ aspect of the new birth. But according to the Scriptures set out above the Holy Spirit plays no part in this process. So how can we harmonise them with the teaching of Jesus

when he said that for a man to enter the kingdom he had to be born “of water and spirit”? The passage quoted from 1 Peter 1:23 says that we are “born again... by the word of God... which by the gospel is preached unto [us]”. In the same chapter he explains how, in those days, they “preached the gospel... with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” (v. 12). Whilst the phrase ‘spirit word’ is not found in the Bible, it cannot be denied that the Scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21; John 14:26; John 16:13), and before those Scriptures were completed the gospel was preached by Spirit inspired apostles, evangelists and teachers. Since the Word produces the new birth, and since the Spirit produced the Word, it follows that the new birth is in that sense brought about by the Spirit.

“When the heart is the subject of renewal it is by the knowledge of the written testimony of God, or the word. “God”, says Peter, speaking of the Gentile believers, “purified their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9); and Paul prays, “That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17). Now, faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17); in other words, it is the belief of God’s testimony concerning things to come, which are not seen (Hebrews 11:1); and without which, it is impossible to please Him (verse 6). When a man is renewed by the truth, he is renewed by the spirit, and not before.” (*Elpis Israel*, 15th edition, pages 55-56.)

“The Holy Spirit renews or regenerates man intellectually and morally by the truth believed. “Sanctify them by the truth,” says Jesus; “thy word, O Father, is truth” (John 17:17). “Ye are clean,” said he to his apostles, “through the word which I have spoken to you (John 15:3). God’s power is manifested through means. His Spirit is His power by which he effects intellectual, moral, and physical results. When he wills to produce intellectual and moral effects, it is by knowledge revealed by His Spirit through the prophets and apostles. This knowledge becomes power when received into “good and honest hearts”; and because God is the author of it, it is styled “the Knowledge of God” (2 Pet. 1:2), or “the word of truth” (James 1:18), by which He begets sinners to Himself as His sons and daughters.” (*Clerical Theology Unscriptural*, 1887 edition, page 17.)

The reality of the new birth

The new creature that comes into existence at baptism is a new man of the mind. What those whose thinking is clouded by evangelical teaching do not always appreciate is the reality of this new birth. By the willing and eager acceptance into the mind of the truth about Jesus and the

kingdom something is created that did not exist before — new values and ideals; new hopes; a new focus in living. In short there has been created within the mind a mental and moral likeness of the One who has begotten him by the word of truth. The New Testament refers to this variously as “the new man” (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10); “a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17); “Christ... in your hearts” (Ephesians 3:17); “the Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9); “the Spirit” as opposed to “the flesh” (Galatians 5:17); “the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23); “the inward man” (Romans 7:22).

This new mind — “the Spirit of Christ” — is produced by the incorruptible divine seed called by Peter “the word”. The new creature therefore is produced by God through the instrumentality of the Word. It is this new creature to which the Apostle refers when he says:

“Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of **our spirits**, and live?” (Hebrews 12:9 RVm).

When WD writes “*The Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are one and the same Spirit*”³⁵ he confuses, as his evangelical sources do, that which is created in us by the Word (the mind or spirit of Christ), with that power from God which caused men to speak his word and which was given, in its various manifestations, to the New Testament Ecclesia.

“The result of an intelligent apprehension of what the word of God teaches... has its seat in the judgement, and lays hold of the entire mental man, creating new ideas and new affections, and, in general, evolving a “new man”. In this work the spirit has no participation, except in the shape of *the written word*.³⁶ This is the product of the Spirit — the ideas of the Spirit reduced to writing by the ancient men who were moved by it. It is, therefore, the instrumentality of the Spirit, historically wielded: the sword of the Spirit by a metaphor which contemplates the Spirit in prophets and apostles in ancient times, as a warrior. By this, men may be subdued to God — that is, enlightened, purified, and saved, if they receive the word into good and honest hearts, and bring forth fruit... By this they may become “spiritually minded” which is “life and peace” (Roman 8:6).” (*Christendom Astray*, 1922 edition, page 129)

³⁵ *HSATBT_WD*, page 22.

³⁶ It is to be regretted that the wording here has been changed in more recent editions so that the meaning is ambiguous. That given is from the 1922 edition and is faithful to the original.

The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ are not the same

The record in Acts chapter 8 tells how Phillip went to Samaria and preached Christ to them. We are informed that many of them accepted the truth:

“When they believed Phillip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptised**, both men and women” (verse 12).

This being so, since they were baptised, they were “in Christ” for the Apostle says:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptised into Jesus** Christ were baptised into his death?” (Romans 6:3).

Since they were “in Christ”, they belonged to Christ, for the Apostle also says:

“For as many of you as have been **baptised into Christ** have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And **if ye be Christ’s**, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 2:27-29).

Also, since by baptism they were Christ’s, as the apostle says they were, then on the basis of remarks he makes elsewhere, they quite definitely **did** have the Spirit of Christ, for, says Paul:

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9).

But these Samaritan believers, who had been baptised into Christ, belonged to Christ and therefore had the Spirit of Christ, **did not have the Holy Spirit**. For it was only when the apostles Peter and John came down and “laid... their hands on them, [that] they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17).

Thus we have confirmation from this record that ‘the Spirit of Christ’ and ‘the Holy Spirit’ are not different terms for the same thing. What they had as a result of accepting the gospel message was the Spirit of Christ — the mental and moral likeness of Jesus created in them by their ready acceptance of the Word preached, which thus for them became “the power of God unto salvation”. What they received from Peter and John was the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the New Testament Ecclesia.

“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, and we cannot have this 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*, Vol. 7 (1870), page 122.)

Section Three:

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

We come now to Scriptures that have to do with the fruit of the spirit, which WD seems to equate with the gift of the Holy Spirit — it is to him “the Spirit... in... its ethical (moral) working”.³⁷ Of this he writes: “The gift (the giving) of the Spirit has many facets, which have nothing to do with visible miraculous signs as can be seen plainly from the following remarkable passages of Scripture... *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law*” (Gal. 5:22-23).³⁸ Again he comments: “Tongues... was the least of all the gifts in the Christian life, not to be compared to those of faith, hope and love. ‘Tongues’ pale into insignificance before those everlasting gifts from God.”³⁹ Finally, “May the Lord empower us with the Spirit, to melt hardness, subdue selfishness and quicken service; may our hearts be continually filled with God’s love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness; and may he grant us self-control.”⁴⁰

From all this it is evident that WD sees the fruit of the Spirit as gifts that are given by God in response to prayer. Progress in the development of the Christian character comes by simply submitting oneself to the influence of the Spirit, as WD has written elsewhere — “We do not require determination in the overcoming of our sins, but so Romans 8 declares, the resignation of self to the operation of the Spirit.”⁴¹

What is the Fruit of the Spirit?

“The spirit of Christ”, the “new man”, the “new creature”, “Christ in you” — or whatever Scriptural term we use to describe that which is conceived and developed by the word and brought forth at baptism — like all babies needs to be fed and nurtured if it is to survive. So the Apostle writes to those who had been “born again”:

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, **that ye may grow** thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

³⁷ HSATBT_WD, page 13.

³⁸ HSATBT_WD, page 13, 19.

³⁹ HSATBT_WD, page 25.

⁴⁰ HSATBT_WD, page 28.

⁴¹ *The Believer*, vol. 3 (1973), No. 16, page 12.

The object of it all — the new birth and the feeding on the milk of the word — is that the believers, as God’s special people, “should shew forth the praises [i.e. virtues, AVm] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

These virtues are elsewhere referred to as “the fruit of the spirit”:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Perusal of this 5th chapter of Galatians shows that Paul is using “spirit” as the antithesis of “flesh”:

“This I say then, Walk in **the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of **the flesh**. For **the flesh** lusteth against **the Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh: and **these are contrary the one to the other**, so that **ye cannot do the things that ye would**” (Galatians 5:16-17).

In the letter to the Romans he makes the same point when he says:

“The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do... I delight in the law of God after **the inward man**: But I see **another law in my members**, warring against **the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the **law of sin** which is in my members” (Romans 7:19, 22-23).

This is the situation that results when a person has been born again. Before he was born again sin reigned supreme, but with the creation of the new man — with the bringing into existence of the Spirit of Christ — sin’s dominion is challenged and the believer is exhorted to henceforth:

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield yourselves unto God**, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:12-13).

The virtues described as “the fruit of the Spirit” are not gifts of the Spirit; they are the results of a faithful walk in the truth. This is the oft repeated testimony of Scripture:

“Ye are my friends, **if ye do whatsoever I command you**” (John 15:14).

“[God] will render to every man **according to his deeds**: To them who by **patient continuance in well doing** seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and **do not obey the truth**, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But **glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good**, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile” (Romans 2:6-10).

“But **put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14).

“But ye have not so **learned Christ** If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That **ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, And that ye **put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness**” (Ephesians 4:20-24).

“**Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children**, And **walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us**, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Ephesians 5:1-2). “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, **I press toward the mark** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12-14).

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**. Those things, **which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do**. and the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:8-9).

“**Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth**, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But **now ye also put off all these**, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And **have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him**” (Colossians 3:5-10).

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that **as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more**. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 4:1-2). “But thou, O man of God, **flee these things**, and **follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness**. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:11-12).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts**, we should **live soberly, righteously, and godly**, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13).

“Be ye **doers of the word**, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

“And beside this, **giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.** For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall **neither be barren nor unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence to make your calling and election sure:** for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:5-10).

We have quoted at length on this point to show that there is an overwhelming emphasis on the need for the individual to allow his mind to be renewed by the Word, to live as he has learned Christ, to put on the new man, to patiently continue in well doing, and to exert himself in denying the flesh and diligently cultivating the divine character by obeying the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. There is nothing in these Scriptures that remotely suggests that if we are pliable enough God will touch our hearts by His Spirit and give us an infusion of those virtues that are described as the fruit of the Spirit.

“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 with God’s thoughts... the ‘new man’ is revealed in a new way of life in which the divine character is expressed.” (*The Christadelphian*, vol. 93 (1956), page 248.)

The call to the Christian is the call to follow Jesus who “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8) and those who would be with him in the age to come, have to learn the lesson that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Characters have to be built. God has graciously given us the means (the necessary instruction in His Word and the supreme example and sacrifice of His Son); He has provided us with the motive to succeed (to glorify His name now and to be pleasing to the Lord at his return); and He provides us with the circumstances in our lives where our faith can be tried and we can (albeit so often falteringly) put into practice the things that we learn from the Scriptures. But without our response there will be no building of character; no fruit of the Spirit.

Faith, hope, brotherly kindness, patience, forbearance, love — all these things are **the believer's response** to the grace of God; they are not gifts of the Spirit. Of course where we fail “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). But there must be always the pressing toward the mark (Philippians 3:14). This is the teaching of Scripture and it has always been Christadelphian teaching.

“Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections, exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the Gospel, but is by no means completed thereby; it takes a lifetime for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment. The mind is naturally alien from God and all his ideas (Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14), and cannot be brought at once to the Divine Likeness. This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means which God has given for the purpose; viz., the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of Truth. Spiritual-mindedness, or a state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, as displayed in these writings, can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded.” (Introduction to *The Bible Companion*.)

“Popular theology has reduced the commandments of Christ and his Apostles to a practical nullity. It has totally obscured the principle of obedience as the basis of our acceptance with God in Christ... The rule or standard of obedience is to be found in the commandments of Christ. Christ speaks very plainly on the subject... They are summed up in this saying of his — “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.” (Introduction to *The Commandments of Christ*.)

The teaching set out by WD is a trivialising of the true Christian calling. It is founded on false premises. Firstly, that man is unable to understand spiritual truths and respond to his Creator unless he is first acted upon directly by the Holy Spirit⁴² — this is one of the foundations of evangelical protestant theology. Secondly, that once a man has been influenced by the Spirit to understand and believe the gospel, he is unable to live the Christian life unless the Holy Spirit continues to work with him enabling him to live the Christian life.⁴³ These two fundamentals of

⁴² This initial act of the Holy Spirit is frequently referred to as ‘prevenient grace’.

⁴³ The technical term for this is ‘continuing grace’.

evangelical theology permeate WD's treatise. They are denied throughout the Scriptures and should be vigorously opposed.

Nowhere is the folly of evangelical theology better illustrated than in the record about Abraham. Consider the sequence of events:

1. God made great and precious promises to Abraham.
2. The record says that "Abraham believed [i.e. exercised faith in] God" (Galatians 3:6; Romans 4:3; Genesis 15:6).
3. Because Abraham showed faith, God counted him righteous (Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6; Romans 4:3, 9, 18-22).

There is not the slightest hint anywhere in the record that Abraham was incapable of showing faith until God had acted on him by the Spirit. Abraham believed of his own volition, and because of his ready belief God graciously counted him righteous.

4. Further, Abraham then manifested the reality of his faith by setting out **in obedience to God** to the unknown destination. There is again not the slightest hint that God **enabled** Abraham to be obedient by acting on his heart by the Spirit.

How foolish to think that God made promises to the patriarch; then by His Spirit He enabled him to believe the promises; and then because Abraham had believed, He declared him righteous; and then God acted on his heart to move him to obey; and during his long pilgrimage as a stranger in the land influenced him by the Spirit to show faith, patience, and endurance. To argue thus is to reduce the dealings of the Almighty with Abraham to a charade. Abraham is the pattern for all who accept the gospel that was preached to him (Galatians 3:8). Like Abraham they are required of their own volition to believe and respond. God does not do for them what He expects them to do for themselves.

There is one other serious implication of the views set out by WD in his booklet. The distorted, unscriptural, teaching of what amounts to salvation by infusion of Holy Spirit minimises the importance of the Scriptures. It is granted that WD accepts that the Scriptures have a part to play in the process of salvation. But his emphasis on the work of the Spirit, of necessity leads to him losing sight of the central, necessary role of the Scriptures as "the power of God unto salvation".

“It is wise, therefore, though disagreeable to repudiate the popular claim to the possession and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is a false claim and a mischievous one. It leads people to look to the wrong direction. It leads them to attach great importance to the changing moods and tempers of the human mind, which are as useless for spiritual guidance as the flicker of sheet lightning is to the mariner nearing land at night. On the other hand, it leads them practically to make light of and neglect the Bible, which is the only safe and sure guide.” (*Further Seasons of Comfort*, page 50.)

Ministering spirits

Finally in this section, it is necessary to emphasise that the Scriptures place great emphasis on the fact that as we seek to respond in faith and obedience to the will of God set out in His Word, our lives are looked over by the angels of whom the apostle writes:

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14).

The varied circumstances of our life that are so necessary for the development of our characters as we seek to follow the Lord Jesus, are provided by the angels. There is no doubt, as WD says, that Jesus is now superior to the angels “as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4). However, the apostle’s desire to convey to the Hebrews the superiority of the resurrected Jesus over the angels has nothing to do with their “elaborate system of angelology,”⁴⁴ and everything to do with the fact that the New Covenant arrangement established by Jesus is superior to the Old Covenant that was established by angels. Peter writes, “[Jesus] is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Peter 3:22). The angels whose work is to control the movements of men and nations as the purpose of God moves forwards, are now under the jurisdiction of the Son of God. It is one of the privileges of our calling that we have become associated with “an innumerable company of angels” (Hebrews 12:22). **The work the angels do is not inferior to the work of Jesus.** The work they do **is the work of Jesus** and no aspect of their work is dearer to the heart of the Lord than the way in which the angels “minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Jesus warned, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you,

⁴⁴ *HSATBT_WD*, page 20.

That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10) — what a consolation!

The importance of the work of angels and their involvement in the lives of saints is indicated by the way in which Paul charged Timothy, “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21).

This work of angels on behalf of the saints is mentioned throughout the Bible. The words of Jacob at the end of his life, as he blesses the sons of Joseph and looks back on all the tribulations of his pilgrimage, are wonderful:

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, **the Angel which redeemed me from all evil**, bless the lads...” (Genesis 48:15-16).

That is the experience of all the faithful who have the assurance:

“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psalms 34:7).

This is not to give them an easy passage through life; but to look over them in all their ways and bring them through all the evils of their pilgrimage, including death itself, to the blessings of the Kingdom.

From the way in which WD dismisses the activity of the angels who do the bidding of the Lord Jesus, it is clear that he does not appreciate the significance of their work.

“The doctrine of angelic supervision... is not a mere drapery of description, but the revelation of a literal fact in which the children of God are invited to place their faith, and of which God has vouchsafed numerous palpable illustrations in the ages that are past, and of which he is about to grant the most striking of all exemplifications in the return of the Lord Jesus, with a multitudinous retinue of the glorious host... The eternal Father fills and discerns all space and its incidents by his Spirit. He is the possessor and the head of all things: to Him our prayers must be addressed in the name appointed—the name of Jesus; but the working out of his will toward us is committed to the hands of vigilant immortal beings, whom we are not permitted to see in this our probation in the days of Gentile ascendancy.” (*The Ways of Providence*, pages 19, 21)

Appendix:

BRIEF EXAMINATION OF VERSES QUOTED

This is a list of verses referred to by WD that have not been looked at in the main text of the *Reply*. It is not intended to be an exposition of the verses. It will be sufficient to show that the verses are quite capable of being understood in a way that is in harmony with the principles set out in this *Reply*. To give them a more detailed examination would only duplicate the work of others and would make this *Reply* unacceptably long. Any one desiring a more thorough treatment will find it in Edward Whittaker and Reg Carr, '*Spirit*' in the *New Testament*;⁴⁵ Aleck Crawford, *The Spirit - A General Exposition of New Testament Usage*;⁴⁶ and Graham Pearce, *The Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Gifts*.⁴⁷

Luke 11:13 — "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

This was a promise to the immediate disciples of Jesus who already had experience of spirit gifts (9:1-2) and in the future would experience that greater outpouring of spirit gifts at Pentecost.

John writes, "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to his will**, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14). To ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit in these days is to ask amiss.

Luke 12:12 — "For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

Fulfilled in the experience of the apostles, e.g. Acts 4:8-12, 19-20.

John 20:22 — "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

This had to do with the forgiveness of sins (verse 23) and relates either, (a) to an ability given to the disciples to recognise when men had been forgiven⁴⁸ — something that would have been very useful in the confusing days after the crucifixion; or, (b) to an anticipation of Pentecost.

⁴⁵ Testimony: Norwich, 1985. Order on:

<http://www.testimony-magazine.org/Publications/spirit.htm> or from Mrs Thelma Marshall, The White House, Lynn Road, Castle Rising, Kings Lynn, PE31 6AA.

⁴⁶ View on line at <http://www.christadelphia.org/books/spirit/index.html> . May be ordered from the author at 6 Ingomar Court, Hallett Cove, South Australia, 5158 or by email: replies@chariot.net.au .

⁴⁷ Logos Publications: Findon, South Australia. Ordering details from ed@logos.org.au .

⁴⁸ NASB renders verse 23: "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven [NASBm "i.e. have previously been forgiven"] them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

The disciples had other gifts of Holy Spirit before Pentecost, e. g. Matthew 10:8 which involved them being able to heal the sick. These gifts were temporary; there is no evidence that they continued independently of the Pentecostal outpouring.

Romans 8:13-14 — “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Galatians 5:16-18 — “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Spirit is here being used in contrast to flesh — the inward man (Romans 7:22) conceived by the word (1 Peter 1:23) and nourished by the word (1 Peter 2:2) in contrast to the old man of the flesh. We are led of the Spirit if we are led by the power of the Spirit given Word.

Romans 8:26-27 — “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

The one who does the “groaning” is the believer — “we ourselves groan within ourselves” (v. 23). The believers have the “firstfruits of the Spirit” (v. 23), which in the context is that which has been conceived and begotten “by the word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). During our probation this is a mental and moral new creature. It is this “spirit” man — “the inward man” of 7:22 — who groans saying, O wretched man that I am...” (7:24). “He that searcheth the hearts” is Jesus (Revelation 2:23) and he intercedes for us when we find it difficult to put into words what we want to ask (verse 34; Hebrews 7:25). NB. Matt. 6:8 - what was true of the Father during the ministry of Jesus, became true of the Son after his resurrection.

Romans 14:17 — “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

The Romans were agitated over the question of meats offered to idols. When the kingdom for which they were supposedly looking is established they would not be concerned with meat and drink but with righteousness and peace and joy in that age that will be dominated by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:16 — “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

Paul uses the figures of him being a priest, the Gentiles are his offering; the Holy Spirit was the means whereby the gospel was preached being attested by signs and wonders (v. 18-19).

1 Corinthians 2:14 — “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The fulness of God’s revelation had been made known to the Holy Spirit gifted brethren “by the Spirit” (v. 10). Only those minds that had been influenced by the “word of the cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18 RV) were in a position to evaluate the deeper revelation given to, and taught by, the apostles.

1 Corinthians 3:16 — “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

1 Corinthians 6:19 — “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

2 Corinthians 6:16 — “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. “

NB. “Ye [plural] are the temple [singular]. This is the Ecclesia in and through which the Father and the Son were active by means of the Holy Spirit gifts. Note that 2 Corinthians 6:16 contains a quote from Leviticus 26:11-12 which reads: “I will set my tabernacle [i.e. will dwell] among you... and I will walk **among** you...” 2 Corinthians 6:16 should therefore be rendered “I will dwell among them, and walk among them...” (Cf. Revelation 2:1).

1 Corinthians 6:11 — “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

This cannot mean that they were sanctified and justified by the Holy Spirit because men are sanctified by the Word of truth (John 17:17) and they are justified when they believe the word (Galatians 3:8). The Holy Spirit was given after men had believed and been baptised (Acts 2:38). However, it is quite right to argue that they were sanctified and justified when they believed the gospel which was preached “with the Holy Spirit” active in the preachers (1 Peter 1:12).

1 Corinthians 12:3 — “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.”

This was the criteria by which those who claimed to be inspired should be judged — by the words they spoke. Thus John says, “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1). We today must use the same test when assessing the words of those who claim to have the Holy Spirit: “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 — “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

The Holy Spirit gifts constituted the evidence that the believers were doing God’s work, and they were the pledge of the greater blessings of the Kingdom. Paul describes the gifts as “the powers of the world to come” (Hebrews 6:4-5).

Ephesians 3:16 — “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man...”

This is one of the most frequently quoted Scriptures to ‘prove’ that we need the Spirit in order to become spiritually strong. It is part of a prayer for the Ephesians in which the Apostle makes known his desire that those with the gifts of the Spirit in the ecclesia might minister faithfully to the needs of its members, so that they might have the inner man strengthened. The means of strengthening that which has been “born again by the word” is by them feeding on “the sincere milk of the word” (1 Peter 1:23; 2:2). In those days the Word was provided by spirit-gifted brethren. This must be the way to understand this Scripture because the result of them being strengthened was “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (verse 17) and we know that “faith cometh by hearing... the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

Ephesians 4:30-32 — “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

See 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 above. Refers to those gifts which had been given by the ascended Jesus (Ephesians 4:7). This is an appeal not to misuse the gifts.

Ephesians 5:18 — “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit...”

The parallel in Colossians gives the meaning — “Let **the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). The Word was given by the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:18 — “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints...”

Either a reference to the ecclesia praying by the exercise of spirit gifts (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:13-16) or an exhortation to pray in harmony with revealed truth (1 John 5:6).

Philippians 1:19 — “For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...”

Paul was in prison. He asks for the prayers of the Philippian believers and expresses his confidence in what Jesus would do by the Spirit — note especially Luke 12:12.

Philippians 2:12-13 — “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

The whole work of salvation is of God. He has graciously given His Word. He arranges, angelically, the circumstances that determine when the gospel seed is sown. But the means whereby He performs His good work in us is the Word. As Paul wrote: “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, **the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe**” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

1 Thessalonians 1:6 — “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit...”

The rejoicing of the Thessalonians was “of the Holy Spirit” because the gospel had been preached to them “with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12) as it operated in the Apostle and his helpers. Our joy at becoming aware of the good news derives from the Word of God which was also given by Holy Spirit.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 — “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth...”

1 Peter 1:2 — “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

In both cases the words in the Greek are, “in sanctification of spirit.” The spirit that is sanctified is the spirit, or mind, of the individual. Sanctification comes from accepting the gospel — “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17), or as the Thessalonians quotation has it, “belief of the truth”. In the good ground person this leads to “obedience” in the waters of baptism when the individual becomes the subject of the “sprinkling of the blood of Christ”.

2 Timothy 1:14 — “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.”

Timothy had Holy Spirit gifts (e. g. 1:6; 4:5) but he seems to have been a bit too timid. He was therefore exhorted by Paul to exercise his gifts in furtherance of the Truth.

1 John 3:24 — “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

1 John 4:13 — “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit witnessed to the fact that they were indeed the children of God. Cf. Romans 8:16.

Concluding Statement

The teaching set out in *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today* by William Davison should be rejected and opposed:

- Because it is unscriptural.
- Because it will lead to a denial of the power of God's Word and will reduce the believer's dependence upon it for strength and guidance.
- Because it will lead to a lack of appreciation for the need to keep God's commandments and produce in consequence a moral decline.
- Because it will encourage reliance upon human, subjective feelings as the basis and evidence of our religion.
- Because it will lead to the delusion of "instant salvation" as seen in the evangelical churches.
- Because it will change the gospel of the Kingdom, as Christ and the apostles preached it, from a literal Kingdom on earth to one which is mystical here and now — thus leading to "another gospel."
- Because it will blind men to the importance of miracles in God's outworking purpose.
- Because it will detract from the doctrine of angelic supervision of the lives of saints.

God in the believer's life — a summary

The author of this *Reply* believes that the following is a true statement of the Christadelphian position in its positive and negative aspects.

He appeals to all those who love the truth to make their voices heard on its behalf. Individuals and ecclesias espousing the evangelical ideas are becoming more widespread and increasingly tolerated. They should be resisted by plain statement of the Truth.

Positive

1. The foundation of belief is 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 to 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 contextual and historical 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 that 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.