

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 1999



WINTER SPECIAL

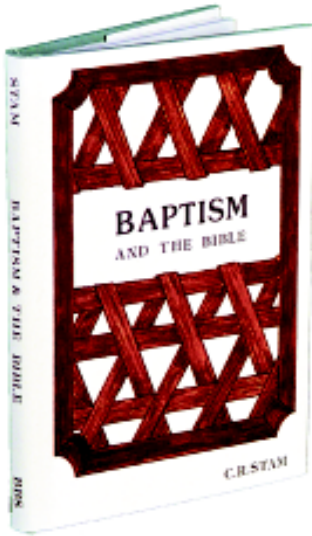
Baptism and the Bible

By C. R. Stam

There is no other subject that has caused more confusion in the Church than "water baptism." Since God is not the author of confusion, the problem unquestionably lies with a faulty system of interpretation. Pastor Stam isolates the problem in this work and presents a simple solution to the matter that the Church has overlooked for generations.

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The Lord's Supper and the Bible

By C. R. Stam

In seeking the *truth* as to the Lord's Supper we must go to the Word of God alone. Here man's opinions and preferences are valueless and worse, for these are exactly what caused the confusion on the subject in the first place, and have perpetuated it in many quarters to this day.

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

Some years ago there was a dear Christian brother who contributed generously and faithfully toward the ministries of *Berean Bible Society*. In addition, he informed us that it was his intention to leave the Society a sizeable amount in his will. But—he neglected to carry out this intention, with the result that when he went to be with the Lord, not only did the Lord’s work fail to receive that which might have been used to reach many others with the message of grace, but his regular contributions were

immediately cut off, so that the work actually suffered loss.

If you have not yet prepared your will, do so *without further delay*, and have an attorney make it legal and binding. If you do not know of an attorney you can trust, we suggest you go to the nearest reliable bank. They will have one of their officers draw up a will according to your directions. This is often the safest of all and they are familiar with the procedures so that the cost for this is not great. In fact, it may be wise to appoint the bank as your executor. Banks operate under the watchful eye of the Federal Government and this is an important safeguard.

Indeed, there has been many a case in which some seemingly trustworthy individual was named as executor but, for whatever reasons, never even submitted the will to probate. Thus the testator’s declared will to leave his estate, or part of it, to the Lord’s work was not carried out. This would please our adversary well, but not the testator, whose earnest desire it was to continue serving the Lord in this way even after his departure from this world.

How rewarding it is to feel that should the Lord call us home, our funds, or at least a portion of them, will be used to make known to others the wonderful message of God’s wonderful grace! This is one way to ensure that your *legacy* will be used to the glory of God. Should you wish any more information along this line, or about other ways to invest in the Lord’s work, we will be glad to help as we can and to send you our brochure, *To Prove the Sincerity of Your Love*. This booklet suggests seven different ways to invest in the Lord’s work. Simply drop us your request and we’ll be happy to send you a copy free of charge.

May the Lord richly bless you and yours this coming year as we labor together to make know the wonders of His grace.

Pastor C. R. Stam

Pastor Paul M. Sadler

From North Carolina:

"Thank you for making the Word of God, rightly divided available. I often wonder how I was so blessed to know and accept the precious message of grace—there are so many who don't want the truth and cling to tradition that denies the truth. I'm staggered that God has allowed me to know the truth and accept it. What grace that is!

From Canada:

"It was so nice hearing from you and also receiving the *Berean Searchlight*. The mailbox would be very empty without the *Searchlight* and *Amazing Grace*—once again, many thanks! The good Lord bless you and all the staff."

From Illinois:

"The tract *God's Insurance Policy* is excellent, another of the wonderful materials you put out. We would appreciate having about 30 of these. Enclosed is a contribution for your ministry. Keep up the good work." (Thanks to Brother Reynolds, additional copies are available free of charge upon request. Maurie's a good example that you're never too old to serve the Lord. He'll be 84 this year! Ed.)

From California:

"I do appreciate your *Searchlight* along with your brilliant defense of the faith *grace delivered*. Thanks for the writ on Mrs. Stam and a 1,000 of your [other] articles."

From Pennsylvania:

"God bless you as you bring forth the Word of truth, rightly divided."

From Michigan:

"I know it's been quite some time since you have heard from me but I haven't forgotten you and the work of *BBS*. I continue to pray for you and also for the school being carried on. I've always enjoyed the *Searchlight* all these many years since its beginning. I enjoy the new look also. I'm enjoying Pastor Stam's commentary on *Galatians*."

From Texas:

"My thanks to everyone for the *Berean Searchlight*. The Lord Jesus and God my Father have used it in my life for fifty years. Now, my children and grandchildren read it and are blessed also. The Lord has been so good to my family." (There's no generation gap here! Ed.)

From New York:

"I am enclosing my offering for November. The articles in the *Searchlight* have been a great blessing. We are using the different articles as our morning devotions. We started with the ones on *Marriage*. Thank you for them.

From Tennessee:

"I really enjoy the *Searchlight* and thank you very much for it. I have been studying the Bible with Pastor David Dowell, a dispensationalist, and finally the Word of God is starting to fit together for me. May God bless and keep you always."

From Iowa:

"Enclosed is our offering to your work. We pray that God will supply all your needs and that many will hear the gospel and be saved. Sorry to hear of the death of Pastor Stam's wife. We pray that God will bless and comfort him at this time. We know Pastor Stam personally. He and my father were good friends."

From Wisconsin:

"Enclosed please find the damaged cover of the November 1998 *Berean Searchlight* minus the blessed messages inside. What a disappointment, but now we have hopes that we shall receive a replacement which will be complete. As we examined the damaged issue, thoughts come to mind of the importance of a proper message enclosed in a wrapper. How much lacks if we do not get the proper message. Thank you for your diligence and faithfulness in your furtherance of this precious message. May it redound to the glory of God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

From Canada:

“I want to tell you all at *BBS* how much I’m enjoying the new *Searchlight*. I like the easier large print and more reading material. The series on *Marriage* by Pastor Sadler was excellent and much needed.”

From New York:

“The main purpose for writing you is to provide you with an address change so I may continue to receive the *Berean Searchlight*. I have received your periodical for many years now and look forward to the next one. Currently I am in no position to help support your organization, but as soon as I am on my feet, I would like to send a gift. I am not aware of any religious organization that does not charge a subscription price. All the more, I am moved to help with printing and postage.” (For nearly 60 years we have been able to send forth the *Searchlight* free of charge, thanks to the generosity of the Lord’s people. Ed.)

From Pennsylvania:

“I have talked to our chaplain here at the prison to contact the *Berean Bible Society* for literature and tapes. My prayer is that men here will receive the gospel of the grace of God and grow in the full-knowledge of the mystery revealed through the Apostle Paul.”

From New Zealand:

“Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* being sent to us in Bluff. These God-given messages are being passed on to others eager for the Word.”

From Iowa:

“I am enclosing my check for this month’s contribution to help get the message of Christ’s love for mankind out to the world. I am now re-reading my copy of *Things That Differ* and always find something I overlooked before. My prayers are including you, Pastor Stam, and *BBS*.”

From Florida:

“Thank you for the wonderful series recently in the *Naples Bible Church*. How they blessed me. I ordered the tape and video for Friday’s lesson to send away as well as the video for myself. That lesson bears listening to many times.” (We’ll be praying that the Lord will use this series to the praise of His glory. Ed.)

From Ohio:

“I enjoy your booklet very much each month. The messages are so uplifting. I’ve gotten your paper for many years but haven’t written much and I felt led to write.”

From North Dakota:

“We enjoy the *Berean Searchlight* and the larger print. My wife and I are on a small Social Security income so we cannot always give to things we want to support, but we pray and pray for your good work and hope God will supply your needs though those who are able to give on a regular basis.”

From Illinois:

“Enclosed is a cover of your publication with my old address. I love the *Searchlight* and how much I have learned and grown from your ministry. Could you please send your publication to my new address.” (If you plan to move this year don’t forget to send us your change of address. We recently received a letter from a family informing us that the *Searchlight* wasn’t to be sent to their sister any longer—“she’s been dead for twelve years!” Ed.)

From Wisconsin:

“I pray that you continue in the work of equipping the saints. False teaching can be challenged and defeated in the minds of people through sound teaching. I know our small gift will be used to do just that and we are blessed by being able to share in the work.”

“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

The Supernatural Gifts of the Acts Period

By Paul M. Sadler

As we strive to present our bodies "...a living sacrifice, holy..." and acceptable unto God, our spiritual experiences are going to be many and varied. However, our walk should never run contrary to the known will of God. Thus, to maintain our spiritual equilibrium we must consistently *rightly divide* the Word of truth. Once again, may we bring before you the timeless saying, "While all of the Word of God is for us, *it is not all written to us*, nor is it all about us." One might well be Scripturally correct, but dispensationally far afield. A dear friend recently sent us a newspaper clipping which shows the peril of this type of inconsistency.

These remarkable claims were made in regard to a well-known faith healer: "Minister, healer, and one who sees through God. Many call her a miracle worker...She has a gift of prayer and healing. God reveals to her your past and future, by using her gift from God. Her religion is holiness, known to some as Pentecostalism. She anoints her hands with oil and asks God to give her a message...[Furthermore], she has traveled all over the world preaching, praying and healing, and also gives prophecy readings...."

Sadly, there are some troubling trends that are taking place in the Christian community today. Many sincere believers, though misguided, are being swept into an emotional frenzy that God is pouring out His Spirit. Consequently,

those of the Charismatic persuasion claim that God has brought us full circle; therefore, they cry, "Back to the day of Pentecost!" This explains why we are hearing more and more about signs, miracles, and wonders. While many Charismatics know and love the Lord, they generally fail to make the proper dispensational distinctions.

In these last days the "laying on of hands" is sweeping across Christendom like the black plague of Europe. Televangelists are flooding the airwaves boasting that hundreds have been healed of every type of infirmity known to man. Contrary to a clear line of *dispensational* teaching, they boldly assert that legs have been lengthened, spinal injuries reversed, and cancerous tumors miraculously removed. Interestingly, some of these same individuals are actively involved in building hospitals. Pastor J. C. O'Hair placed his finger on the heart of the matter when he stated: "Let them say what they will, but the death rate is still one a piece."

THE DANGER OF PLACING OUR FAITH IN EXPERIENCE

The moving of the Spirit almost seems bizarre at times when we hear about puppies being raised from the dead, washing machines miraculously repaired (the Maytag repairman won't be happy to hear this) and gas tanks somehow being supernaturally filled. As

absurd as the foregoing may seem, our Charismatic friends often ask searching questions that have thrown many into a spiritual tail-spin. For example: "Have you received the second work of grace?" "Do you speak in tongues?" "Have you been slain in the Spirit?" Each of these questions strongly implies that only those who have followed in their form of doctrine are truly spiritually minded. Thus, their rule for measuring spirituality is *experience*.

Peter teaches us a lesson in regard to experience that we would do well to heed.

"Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

"For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (II Peter 1:15-19).

In other words, Peter had been through the mother of all *experiences* when he and the other

apostles beheld the transfiguration. They were literally given a *preview* of the coming glory the Lord will have in the kingdom. Nevertheless, fearing lest his hearers might begin to follow experience, he wisely instructs them that they have a more sure word of prophecy that they would do well to observe.

You see, the prophets of old had long ago prophesied about the glories of the kingdom. Consequently, Peter wanted their faith to rest upon the sure foundation of the Word of God, and not on *his* experiences, or anyone else's for

that matter. Experience is sometimes an uncertain guide, which has led many astray.

Since it is contrary to God's nature to lie, if we have placed our faith in His Word we can be assured that what has been written will always come to pass at its appointed time. In time

past, God revealed to the prophet Daniel there would be three great Gentile *world* kingdoms that would succeed one another—Babylon, Media-Persia, and the Grecian Empire. As we know, history bears out the accuracy of this prediction. So then, shall we place our confidence in the fallible word and experiences of men or in the infallible Word of God, which is the anchor of our souls?

The Apostle Paul warned us that in the last days *deceivers* would come among us deceiving and being deceived. "Now as

"The Apostle Paul warned us that in the last days *deceivers* would come among us deceiving and being deceived."

Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (II Tim. 3:8). Jannes and Jambres were the magicians who opposed Aaron and Moses. When Aaron supernaturally turned his rod into a serpent, Pharaoh summoned his miracle workers, who turned their rods into serpents to the amazement of everyone present. But the folly of these Egyptian evildoers was soon exposed. And the apostle makes it quite clear that the present day deceivers shall also be laid bare.

The defense against this form of deception is a knowledge of St. Paul’s distinctive apostleship and message. In fact, in this same context Paul instructs Timothy: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience” (II Tim. 3:10). In short, if we follow what Paul taught on these matters and observe his manner of life it will be a deterrent to being drawn into Satan’s web of trickery.

THE SIGN GIFTS OF THE ACTS PERIOD

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant....Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (I Cor. 12:1,4).

It is important to differentiate between the *temporary* sign gifts of the Acts period and those that are classified as the *permanent* spiritual gifts. Here it should be remembered that there are times when we must also rightly divide Paul’s epistles. While the apostle

addresses both groups of gifts in his epistles, only the permanent spiritual gifts remain in operation today. These gifts include ministry, teaching, counseling, helps, governments, administrations, etc.

The temporary supernatural sign gifts, such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophesying, discerning of spirits, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues have *ceased* with the close of the transition period. Thus, when Paul states to the Corinthians: “Now concerning spiritual [Gr. *pneumatika*, *spirituals*] gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant,” he primarily has in mind correcting the *misunderstandings* and *abuses* of the miraculous signs gifts.

For example, a number of the Corinthians were clamoring to exercise their use of *tongues* all at the same time without an interpreter being present. There was so much confusion over the practice that Paul concluded that the unlearned and unbelievers among them would think they had gone off the deep end (I Cor. 14:23). In order to resolve the problem the apostle instructs them in the following manner. Only two or three should exercise the gift of tongues during the course of any given gathering. In addition, so that everything might be done in an orderly fashion, only *one* was to speak at a time and only if there was an interpreter. If an interpreter wasn’t present they were to be *silent* (I Cor. 14:27,28).

According to Paul’s gospel there was a twofold *purpose* for the sign gifts during the early part of this

dispensation. First and foremost, they were a *sign* to Israel that God was doing something new and different among the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11; 15:20 cf. I Cor. 14:21,22). God always spoke to His chosen nation in signs and wonders. In fact, she came to expect them from the hand of God (Judges 6:12-18 cf. Isa. 8:18). Secondly, these miraculous manifestations drew attention to this new creation called the Church, the Body of Christ. These supernatural gifts gave almost instant *credibility* to Paul's apostleship and the other members of the Body of Christ who performed these wonderful works. (Acts 19:11-20; 28:1-10; I Cor. 14:25). Of course, once this two-fold purpose was accomplished, by the grace of God, these miraculous manifestations gave way to three crowning graces. More will be said about this later.

During the Acts period the sign gifts were normally dispensed *collectively* by the Spirit of God (Acts 2:1-7; 4:28-35; 10:44-46). These gifts were not prayed down, nor were they based upon one's spirituality. Rather, they were *freely* given to *all* believers in accordance with the sovereign will of God (I Cor. 12:4,7,11). Therefore, they were empowered to perform these wonders simply because it was the *operation of God* at that time.

The possession of these gifts had nothing to do with the measure of their faith or performance. Surely, the Corinthians were far from being spiritually minded; in fact, many of them were living in *carnality*. Nevertheless, they were given these miraculous

manifestations and in some cases many of them possessed more than one sign gift (I Cor. 12:31 cf. 14:23,24,26).

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues” (I Cor. 12:8-10).

Paul's reference here to wisdom, knowledge, and healing is in the context of the *sign gifts*. In other words, he is speaking of the *supernatural* gift of wisdom, the *supernatural* gift of knowledge, and the *supernatural* gift of healing, etc. Interestingly, these miraculous manifestations were inseparably linked *together*, as we shall see later.

Those who are supposedly endowed with power from on high today want to pick and choose which gifts are the most convenient that they might more easily deceive their audiences. However, when these gifts were practiced, they were practiced as a *unit*. Perhaps a few illustrations from the Scriptures will help to demonstrate our point.

Wisdom: In the days of King Solomon, Solomon sought the face of the Lord for *divine wisdom* so he could more effectively lead the nation Israel. As we know, God honored His request and Solomon came to be known as the wisest man who ever lived.

During his reign, you will recall the story of the two women who dwelt in the same house. Both

had been blessed with newborns, but the one mother accidentally smothered her child during the night. In the morning when the handmaid saw what she had done she secretly switched her dead child with the living one. Of course, when the other mother awoke she immediately knew that the dead infant wasn't her child.

As the two women came before King Solomon to resolve the dispute they both presented convincing arguments. But how would Solomon resolve this delicate matter? The King merely instructed his chief captain to divide the child in two and give half to one woman and the remaining half to the other. Of course the *true* mother pleaded with Solomon to spare her son and give him to the other woman. At that point, Solomon knew this was the real mother. "And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the *wisdom of God was in him*, to do judgment" (I Kings 3:16-28). This same wisdom was given in the form of a *gift* to the early members of the Body of Christ.

Knowledge: The gift of knowledge enabled the recipient to *know* the will of God, and it also gave the *authority* to act upon it to the glory of God. Perhaps the best example of this gift is found in Peter's encounter with Ananias and Sapphira. In accordance with the Great Commission, the kingdom saints were to sell all their

possessions and share everything in common. Ananias and Sapphira had sold a piece of property, but they kept back part of the capital gains. By laying a large portion of their wealth at the apostles' feet it appeared that they had given their all to the Lord.

Little did they realize that the Holy Spirit had *supernaturally* revealed their unseemly plot to Peter. Thus, Peter inquired of Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after

it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him."

About three hours later Sapphira came in totally *unaware* of what had happened to her husband. Apparently, she had been out shopping, spending some of the proceeds that she and her husband had *conspired* to withhold from the church. Undoubtedly, she inquired if anyone had seen her husband. Peter intervened and said, before I answer that question, "Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much." Sapphira

"By laying a large portion of their wealth at the apostles' feet it appeared that they had given their all to the Lord."

plainly put the noose around her own neck by lying to the Holy Spirit.

“Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead,

and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband” (Acts 5:1-11).

Not only had Peter exposed the sin of Ananais and Sapphira, he also *knew* that it was the will of God to pronounce judgment upon these co-conspirators. This is a clear indication that judgment will be swift and sure in the coming kingdom!

To be continued!

PSALM 90

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psa. 90:12).

The main purpose of the psalm is revealed in the prayer with which it concludes (verses 13-17). This prayer is prefaced by a meditation on the frailty of man (verses 3-12), in the light of the eternity of God (verses 1,2). By this backward method of analysis we gain a concept of the general scheme of the psalm which now enables us to take the three movements in their orderly sequence.

The eternity of God is described in three stages. First, as measured by the history of His people, He has ever been their dwelling place. Secondly, as measured by creation, He was before all. Finally, whether the mind travels backward or forward to the vanishing point, He is still God.

In this light man is seen in the frailty of his being. To God a thousand years are comparatively nothing, and in every millennium men appear and pass in a sequence as orderly as that of the grass, but in a life as transitory. This frailty is the more feeble because man is a sinner, and therefore out of harmony with God. Yet this very eternity of God is the hope of man in his frailty and sin, and the heart is lifted to Jehovah in a prayer that the mornings, the days, the years of brief life may all be set in true relation to Him. Satisfaction, gladness, success in work must all come from the right relation of man in his frailty to the eternal Lord.

—G. Campbell Morgan

Eternal Life Begins At Calvary

By Dennis A. LaMotte
Grace Campfire Ministries

What does it mean to be forgiven by God? Almost four years ago, a very troubled lady of seventy two years asked me a question.

If I was to take my life, she said; will I ever see my baby again? I knew Nannie's spiritual condition, having been led of the Lord to minister to her husband, who at that time was suffering from terminal cancer almost two years. I said: no Nannie, you would never see the baby you lost at birth for you do not belong to Christ. Then God opened to me a door of utterance to breathe over the phone God's wonderful plan of Salvation.

Nannie later told me that the night I called she had a handful of sleeping pills and a glass of water and was ready to end her life, but then I directed her to the cross of Calvary. I told Nannie how I was saved some thirty years ago, that I had reached rock bottom, an all time low in my life, and through reading a little Bible study magazine called *The Berean Searchlight* I suddenly saw, through it's pages, God's Word describing me and my lost and sinful condition. Totally depraved, filthy and undone (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 2:1-5). Then I read of the grace of God and the love of Christ who willingly went to the cross and died for me as my substitute (Rom. 5:6-10)...the just for

the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (I Pet. 3:18).

I then and there fell on my knees, humbling myself before the foot of the cross to Him who died for me, and begged Him to forgive me and to save my soul (Eph. 1:7). And Nannie, when I rose up I actually felt as if a weight had been taken off my shoulders, and I began to feel different about life, I began to see beauty in God's creation that I had missed, I had begun to think of spiritual things, and for the first time in my life I began to be able to understand the Bible. I had realized that I had been saved and born again into the family of God.

My sins had been forgiven and I was now a new creation in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). As we continued to speak, Nannie poured the pills down the drain and went into the bedroom, and called in her heart upon the Lord to save her also through the precious blood of Christ. Nannie is now with me and is our chief artist here at Appalachian Bible Plaques and Grace Campfire Ministries, and is a missionary at age seventy six. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works; lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).

**"We owed a debt we could never pay,
He paid a debt He did not owe."**

The Wonders of His Grace

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

—II Cor. 9:8

Anne Steele, whose hymns have helped so many people, encountered much pain and sorrow as she journeyed through life. The evening before her wedding day, while waiting for the arrival of her betrothed, she received the message that he had been drowned. She retired to her room; and when the first violent shock had passed away and her soul had somewhat recovered strength, she wrote a hymn which has brought healing to many a wounded spirit.

“Father, whate’er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies;

“Accepted at the throne of grace
let this petition rise:

“Give me calm and thankful heart
from every murmur free,

“The blessing of Thy grace impart
and let me live to Thee.”

—Selected

In preparation for an article on the subject below, we had listed and considered *every single occurrence* of the word “spirit” (Gr., *pneuma*) in the New Testament Scriptures, whether used with or without the definite article, and had written voluminous notes on the subject. Since the Greek is so deeply involved, however, we feared that an examination of any great number of these passages in this article might make it too “heavy” for the average reader. Hence we deal with the subject here only in a simple, basic way. We pray that it will prove a blessing to you.

The Holy Spirit

DOES HE INDWELL THE BELIEVER?

By Cornelius R. Stam

At the turn of the century Dr. E. W. Bullinger gave a negative answer to the above question in his book, *The Giver and His Gifts*. Since that time, periodically, some who have read the book have accepted its proposition that the Holy Spirit—the *Person*—does *not* indwell the believer. They, with Bullinger, hold that it is rather the gift of *holy spirit*, or “power from on high,” that indwells us.

First, let us point out that while *any* departure from the truth should be considered a serious matter,¹ the above teaching is *not* a denial of any of the fundamentals of the faith. Dr. Bullinger believed firmly in the *deity* of the Holy Spirit, only he denied that the Holy Spirit *indwells believers*. Years ago the late Dr. James M. Gray wrote in *Moody Monthly*:

“Bullinger would be called a fundamentalist were he now on earth, for he was an able defender of the inspiration of the Bible, the deity and virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the premillennial coming and all that. But he was an extremist,

some would call him a faddist, on dispensational truth, and he was unscriptural as we believe, on future retribution. Because of these last-named errors, *The Monthly* has not felt free to advertise Bullinger’s books, certainly not all of them, and yet the writer of these lines owes one of his richest spiritual blessings to that great teacher, for a truly great teacher he was. No one ever set before us from the Word of God so clearly as did Bullinger, the profound mystery of the Body of Christ, and we always shall be indebted to him.”

We believe that the Holy Spirit’s presence in His people is a precious truth to be cherished, and that Dr. Bullinger was in error on this subject. Hence this article.

FALSE PREMISES

It is more than a cliché that a false premise must lead to a false conclusion. Many a convincing argument has fallen like a house of cards when it has been demonstrated that it was based on an unsound premise. We believe that this is the case with Dr. Bullinger’s 224-page argument

that the Holy Spirit does *not* indwell the believer.

In his book, *The Giver and His Gifts*, Dr. Bullinger provides “a classified list of every *usage*: i.e., every *sense* in which the words are employed in Scripture...whether with or without the article” (pg. 8), and this long list is supposed to prove that the Holy Spirit does not indwell the believer. But the whole argument collapses when it is seen that it is based on *two* false premises.

1. Dr. Bullinger held that in Acts 1:5 the words “Holy Spirit” (Gr., *pneuma hagion*, or “spirit holy”) refer, not to *the* Holy Spirit, but to *holy spirit*: not to the Giver, but to His gift of “power from on high” (Luke 24:49), since Acts 1:4,5 and Luke 24:49 are linked together by the phrase “the promise of the Father” (See pg. 27).

But we object that this premise is unsound. Luke 24:49 does not say that “the promise of the Father” *is* “power from on high.” It says:

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

How explicitly our Lord had promised His disciples that after His departure His Father would send the Holy Spirit. And here in Luke 24:49 He reiterates this promise, indicating that *at the coming of the Holy Spirit* they would be “endued with power from on high.”

This meaning is clearly confirmed in Acts 1:8, where our Lord says to His apostles:

“Ye shall receive power AFTER that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.”

He did not say: “Ye shall receive power, that is, *holy spirit*.”

Dr. Bullinger read a meaning of his own into Luke 24:49, rather than holding to what the passage *says*.

Thus this premise is proved unsound. Yet, in discussing the passages involved, Dr. Bullinger repeats it again and again, as though the premise proves the conclusion drawn from it!

2. Dr. Bullinger’s second false premise was that the definite article, *the*, should be omitted from the English if it is not used in the Greek, save in exceptional cases.

This premise too is fallacious, and we believe that the great majority of Greek

scholars are right in rejecting it.

It is a well-known fact that the definite article is used differently in different languages. This writer is keenly aware of this fact, for he is of Holland extraction.

To illustrate: In English we might ask a person, “Do you believe in baptism?” and this would make good sense—in *English*. But in Dutch we could not express this thought without using the definite article. Thus a Hollander would ask, “Geloof u in *den* doop?” or “Believe you in *the* baptism?” i.e., in the *doctrine* or the *practice* of

“How explicitly our Lord had promised His disciples that after His departure His Father would send the Holy Spirit.”

baptism. Indeed, in Greek, Dutch, and English (and in other languages) there are situations in which the article may correctly be either used or omitted. In English it is perfectly in order to say either, "In Greek this passage says....," or "In the Greek this passage says...."

The Greek appears to omit the article more often than we do in English, so that some passages which *omit* the article in Greek *demand* it in English. In most cases the context must decide, and we believe that with few exceptions the translators of the *King James Version* were correct in supplying the article where they did, and in using capital letters where necessary,² to convey the true meaning in English.

All this places a large question mark opposite Dr. Bullinger's statement on page 26, where he states that *pneuma hagion* "is never used of the Holy Spirit, but always of what He does; it is never used of the Giver, but always of His gifts and operations."

Thus *both* these premises laid down by Dr. Bullinger are illegitimate, and led him to the false conclusion that the Holy Spirit does *not* indwell believers.

THE NATURE OF SPIRIT

Dr. Bullinger insists that the "gift" referred to in Acts 2:38 is "holy spirit," and that God does not "give" *the* Holy Spirit. But this gift is said to be "the promise of *the Father*" in Acts 1:4 (Cf. Luke 24:49). Why, then, could not the Father give the Holy Spirit? He *gave* His Son, did He not?

Further, Dr. Bullinger argued that such terms as "fallen upon,"

"poured out" and "filled" cannot have reference to *the* Holy Spirit, but *must* apply to His gift of *holy spirit*. "How can a person be 'poured out'?" he asks (pg. 34).

But does this not at least indicate a failure to recognize the nature of spirit? Our Lord is several times depicted as the *bread* of life (John 6:35,48, *et al*), and the *water* of life (I Cor. 10:4, *et al*), and the *stone* which the builders rejected—and which shall "fall upon" them (Matt. 21:42-44, *et al*). How much more appropriately, then, may such terms as "fallen upon," "poured out," and "filled" be used with reference to the Holy Spirit! It is because "God is Spirit" that He can "give of" Himself.

Acts 10:44 clearly states that "the Holy Spirit [Lit., "the Spirit, the holy"] fell upon all them which heard the Word," but Dr. Bullinger's explanation of the article in such cases is that the articles here refer us back to Acts 2:4. Does not this seem rather like "a way out"? This approach *may appear* to be justified in Acts 11:15, where the articles precede the phrase "as on us at the beginning," but this is not the case with Acts 10:44. Indeed, his argument is at least *weak* where even Acts 11:15 is concerned, for if it was merely *holy spirit* that fell upon the Pentecostal believers "at the beginning," why should not Acts 11:15 read simply: "And as I began to speak, *holy spirit* fell on them, as on us at the beginning"?

OTHER PASSAGES AFFECTED

At I Corinthians 6:19 the good doctor really goes far afield. The

passage reads: “*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you...?*” Here, confronted with the article in the Greek as well as in the English, he says: “In spite of the article, it is not the Giver, but the gift [i.e., *holy spirit*] which we ‘have of Him’” (pg. 124). So far does he go in his attempt to prove that *the Holy Spirit* does not indwell the believer!

We suggest that the very word “temple,” in this passage, implies the indwelling of *deity*, not the presence of an abstract “power” or influence, for a temple is not an ordinary house; it is the habitation of God, or a god (if pagan), a place of worship.

At Ephesians 3:16, where Paul prays that his readers might be “strengthened with might by His Spirit [Gr., “the Spirit of Him”] in the inner man,” Dr. Bullinger comments that here it is *the Spirit* who is referred to. If he is correct, and here he surely is, does not this passage prove that it is *the Holy Spirit*, not merely “holy spirit,” that indwells and operates in and through “the inner man”?

His note on I Thessalonians 4:8 is amazing. The passage reads: “...God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit [Gr., “*the Spirit of Him, the holy*”].” Here he writes: “In spite of the fact that the articles are used here, we take them as referring back to the gift of *pneuma hagion*...” (pg. 168). The only argument he gives for this, apart from his own premise, is that “the words *pneuma* and *hagion* are separated by the pronoun ‘His,’ thus breaking up the expression, which would hardly be the case if the Person

were meant” (ibid). Concerning this last clause, we can only object: “Why?” Read the phrase as it is in the Greek, above, and we are sure you will ask the same question. How does the “breaking up” of the phrase by the insertion of the words, “of Him” (i.e., of God), make the words “*the Spirit, the Holy*” mean merely “holy spirit”?

The *arrangement* of the words in this passage is merely a matter of translation. For example, the Greek in Titus 3:4 reads literally: “*The love to man appeared of our Savior God,*” but this would be difficult reading in English, thus the translators rightly “broke up” (as Dr. Bullinger calls it) the phrase “love to man,” and placed the words “of God our Savior” between, so that it reads: “*the love of God our Savior toward man.*” This in no way changes, it rather correctly expresses, the sense of the passage.

It should be remembered that on page 26 of his book Dr. Bullinger states that *pneuma hagion*, holy spirit, “is *never* used of the Holy Spirit, but *always* of what He does; it is *never* used of the Giver, but *always* of His gifts and operations” (our italics). With the words “never” and “always” emphasized by repetition in this statement one would think that Dr. Bullinger would stand by it at Ephesians 3:5, where we read that “the mystery” had now been “*revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit* [Gr., “*by Spirit*”].” But knowing full well that it was *the Holy Spirit* that revealed the truth of Paul’s revelation to these “apostles and prophets,” Dr. Bullinger violates

his premise *from the opposite direction!* As he arbitrarily *removes* the articles in I Thessalonians 4:8, so he arbitrarily *adds* the article here in Ephesians 3:5, explaining that it is "*latent after the preposition*" (pg. 153, our italics), which simply means that it is implied—as indeed it is in so many cases where it does not appear in the Greek!

In his comment on Ephesians 2:22, where likewise there is no article in the Greek, Dr. Bullinger again violates his twice-repeated "never" and "always." The English reads: "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit [Gr., "*through Spirit*".]" Is it possible that the Holy Spirit is *not* referred to here just because the Greek does not use the article? In such a case it would mean that we are made "*an habitation of God*" merely "*through spirit*"!

Recognizing this problem, Dr. Bullinger simply *added* the article in brackets "[the]," and said, "it is latent after the preposition, and is not *required* by the grammar" (pg. 153, italics ours)! The simple fact is, though, that while the Greek does not contain the definite article, the English requires it," a proposition which Dr. Bullinger's "never, never" and "always, always" does not allow.

Again violating his own premise at II Thessalonians 2:13, Dr. Bullinger concedes that believers are chosen "*through sanctification of the Spirit*" (our italics), even

though the article does *not* appear in the Greek, and explains again that the article is "*latent after the preposition.*" Right! It *is*! And thus Dr. Bullinger's premise crumbles further.

We could go on and on examining particular passages which prove the fallacy of Dr. Bullinger's premises that the Greek "*pneuma hagion*," without the article, refers to *holy spirit*, rather than to *the Holy Spirit*, to the gifts rather than to the Giver, and that this "holy spirit" is nothing more than "power from on high," or "the new nature." We will, however, add just one more example.

Titus 3:5 reads, in our English translation: "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost* [Gr., "*holy Spirit*".]"

The KJV translators correctly supplied the article here, but since the Greek does not contain it, Dr. Bullinger, we feel arbitrarily, renders the closing words, "the washing...of a new birth, *even* [the] new creation of *pneuma hagion*." But this is a flagrant violation of what the passage says. It says nothing whatever about the *creation* of "holy spirit" or of anything. Just as the word "regeneration" (Gr., *palingenesia*) means to be born again, so the word "renewing" (Gr., *anakainosis*) means to be thoroughly renovated or "renewed," *just as KJV has it*. This word is

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...."

nowhere used of creation. Did not Dr. Bullinger know this?

Anyway, how could “holy spirit” be a new creation? It could be only if you make it mean the new nature in the believer, *one* of the meanings Dr. Bullinger imposes upon it. But nowhere in Scripture is the new creation in us called “holy spirit,” or is “holy spirit” called a new creation.

Dr. Bullinger’s argument that it is only *holy spirit* that indwells believers took some “bending” of definitions. At the outset he uses Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:5 to support his statement that the Greek “pneuma hagon,” or *holy spirit*, is merely “power from on high,” but further on, where this meaning would be untenable, he makes the words *holy spirit* refer to “the new nature.” But “power from on high” is not the same as “the new nature.”

Dr. Bullinger evidently thought he had come upon a simple technical procedure by which to determine when and where *the* Holy Spirit is referred to in Scripture, a procedure which would practically exempt us from carefully studying the context in each case. But we feel he was wrong in concluding that the mere presence or absence of the definite article would settle the matter in all, or even in most, cases.

Just before urging us to “rightly divide the Word of truth,” the Apostle Paul warns us *not* to “strive...about words, to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (II Tim. 2:14; cf. I Tim. 6:4). Thus this writer has long made it his earnest prayer: “Lord, help me to understand the *sense* of Thy Word.”

When the Pentecostal believers received the Holy Spirit they did indeed also receive “power from on high,” and gave abundant evidence of this. But this was a dispensational matter. Today all believers, while possessors of *the* Holy Spirit, surely do not necessarily evidence much, or any “power from on high.” According to Dr. Bullinger’s argument this would mean that they do not even possess “holy spirit”!

Would it not be strange if believers were indwelt, as we are, by God, the Father, and by Christ, the Son, but *not* by the Holy Spirit? May grateful thanks fill our hearts, then, that the Spirit *does* dwell within His own, to guide and empower, to bless and use.

Endnotes

1. But who of us teaches all truth and no error?
2. The Greek rarely uses *any* capital letters to denote deity, or even proper nouns.



**These are written, that
ye might believe...
and...believing...have life
through His name. John 20:31**

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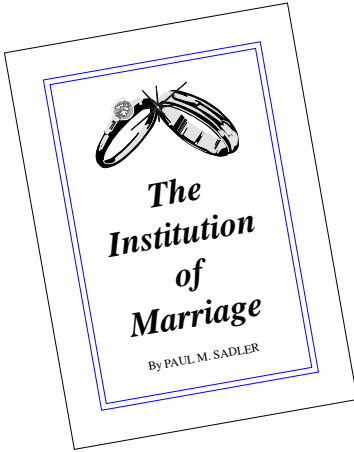
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CONGRATULATIONS: In addition to his responsibilities here at the *Berean Bible Society* and the *Berean Bible Institute*, Pastor Havard has agreed to be the interim pastor of *Berean Grace Bible Church* until they are in a position to secure a full-time pastor. The assembly is currently meeting at the *Pleasant Hill School*, 175 South Barker Rd., in Brookfield, Wisconsin; with Sunday School classes at 9:30 a.m., followed by the Worship service at 10:15 a.m. All are welcome!

A GRACE STUDY GROUP is now meeting weekly at the home of Bob and Peggy Jones in Grove City, Pennsylvania. For additional information, please contact: Mr. & Mrs. Jones, 140 Overhill Street, Grove City, PA 16127 or phone: (724) 458-6564. May God richly bless these dear folks as they faithfully proclaim the riches of His grace.

ADVANCE NOTICE: The dates for *Rocky Mountain Grace Camp* this year are July 12-17, 1999. If you would like more information, please contact: Pastor James Harley at (303) 452-9148. More next month!

The picture of the *lighthouse* which graces the front cover this month was taken by Jennifer Mepsted's (BBI Student) parents, George and Jane Dowling, while vacationing in Alaska. The lighthouse is located in Sitka, Alaska.

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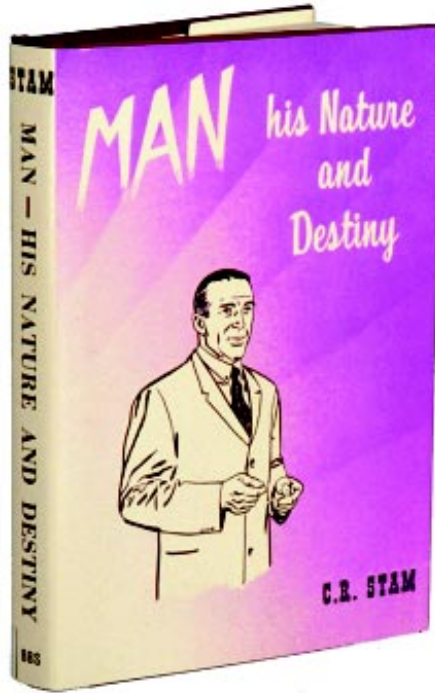
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