

Present Truth

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A magazine dedicated
to the restoration
of New Testament Christianity
in this generation

Sola Gratia Solely by Grace
Sola Christus Solely by Christ
Sola Fide Solely by Faith

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Present Truth

Present Truth is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is especially committed to upholding the great Reformation truth of *justification by faith* in this time when that truth is being threatened by humanism, Pentecostalism and ecumenism.

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Lately I have been looking through a variety of "Protestant" journals. It is amazing how they are almost totally preoccupied with religious experience. Everyone seems to be lusting after "a satisfying Christian experience" and making that the central point of concern. Says one of these publications: "The gospel is about an experience of Jesus Christ in your own heart." Another declares: "Righteousness by faith is simply a real, vibrant experience with the Lord." Another proclaims: "The gospel is about a mighty inward change of the heart and an experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The gospel that was proclaimed by the apostles and recovered by the Reformers was an objective truth completely outside, beyond and above our experience. It was about God's liberating act in Jesus Christ (see Rom. 3:24, N.E.B.). While the whole world was lying in sin and rebellion, God did something for all men. In the person of His Son, God satisfied the claims of the law for us, put away the sins of the world, satisfied justice, opened the floodgates of mercy, defeated Satan, destroyed death and opened Paradise for the most guilty of Adam's race. In the words of Martin Luther, "Christ has vanquished! This is the joyful news! And we are saved by His work, and not by our own."

The Christian religion is the only religion that bases its message of salvation on objective historical events rather than on subjective experiences. Our salvation was secured by historical events outside the realm of our own experience — that is, by the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ. Acting in Jesus Christ, God did something for us two thousand years ago. "He has taken us into His favor in the person of His beloved Son." Eph. 1:6, Knox. "In Christ our release is secured and our sins are forgiven."

Editorial: Protest or Perish!

R.D.B.

Eph. 1:7, N.E.B. And there is an empty tomb to prove what God has done for us. Good news! Good news! Ring throughout the world!

It is unquestionably true that faith in this good news brings to us a new experience of joy, for we have become conscious of something already in existence. There is cause to be exceedingly glad, for our salvation does not rest on our experience, but upon Christ's experience for us. The prophet says, "By His knowledge [that is, by His experience of doing and dying] shall My righteous Servant justify many." Isa. 53:11.

Certainly the gospel is related to human experience. Its acceptance renews, transforms and sanctifies lives by the power of the Holy Ghost. **But the gospel must never be confused with Christian experience.** This is the essential error of Romanism, mysticism and Pentecostalism.

To exhort people to draw nigh to God is not preaching the gospel.

To call men to repentance is not preaching the gospel.

To urge men to believe on Christ is not preaching the gospel.

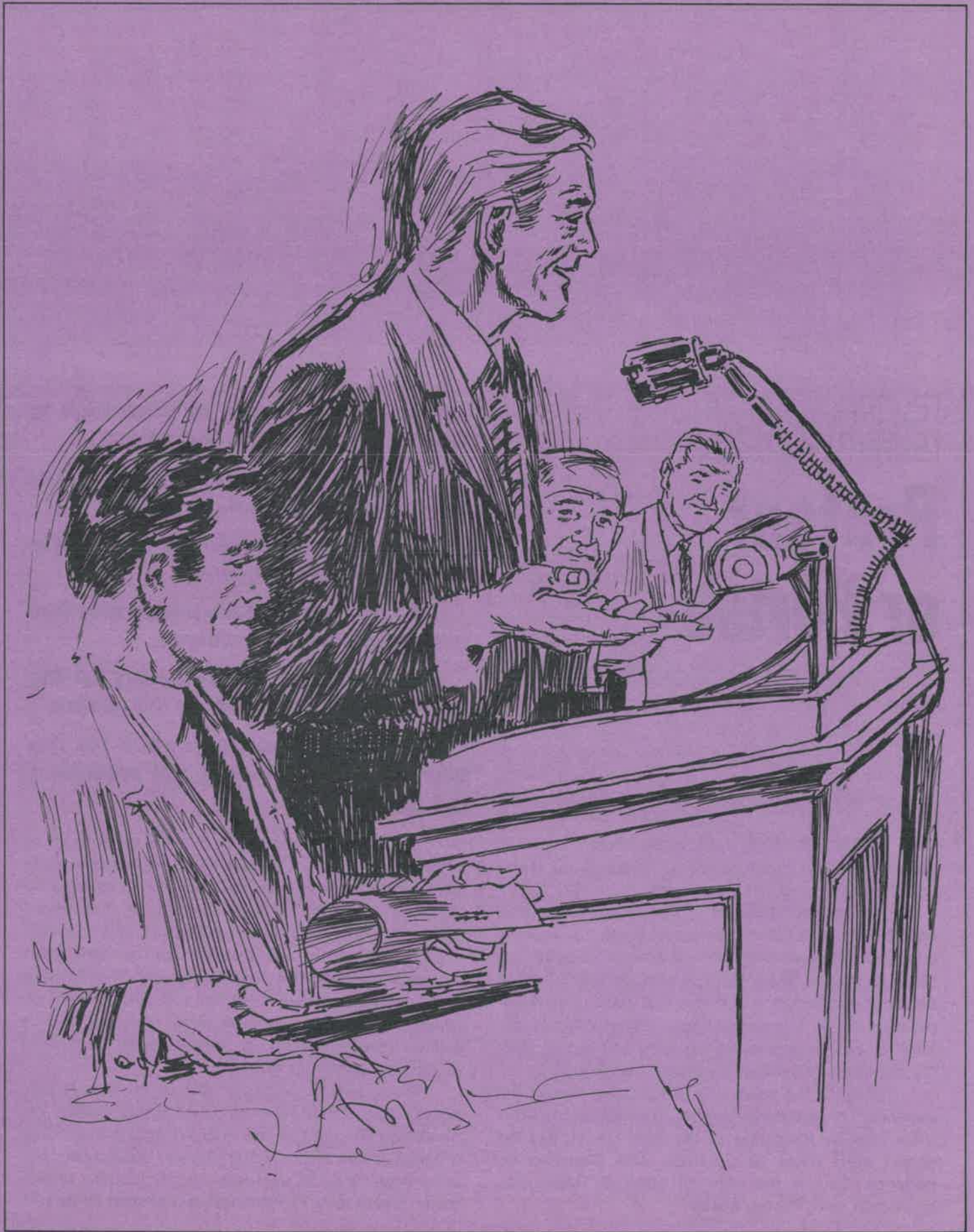
To tell men to make peace with God is not preaching the gospel.

To proclaim the necessity of the new birth is not preaching the gospel.

To invite people to seek for the baptism of the Spirit is not preaching the gospel.

All these things have their place and should be preached, but in themselves they do not constitute the gospel. For the gospel does not tell us to do something. It proclaims what God has done. The gospel does not tell us how to get to God. It tells how God gets to us. It is not man's way to God, but God's way to man. When sinners hear the gospel, the Spirit is present to draw them to Christ and to give them repentance, faith and a new birth. Yet the Spirit's activity in human lives is not the gospel and must never be substituted for the gospel.

Protestantism was born out of protest. It protested against that great medieval system which extinguished the light of the New Testament by putting Christian experience in the place of the gospel. The same error is with us today in the modern charismatic movement. **Protestants must protest or perish!**



Is the Charismatic Movement Catholic or Protestant?

A Forum on Pentecostalism

Editorial Note: We believe that our readers will be interested in reading a transcript of a forum on Pentecostalism which was held recently in Brisbane, Australia. The hall of the Canberra Hotel was packed by clergymen and informed lay Christians to hear a panel of speakers from the U.S.A., New Zealand and Australia discuss whether the charismatic movement belongs to the Catholic or Protestant stream of thought. For most of those present, it was a new approach to the challenge of neo-Pentecostalism. The panel consisted of a teacher from New Zealand (Mr. John Slade), a doctor from the U.S.A. (Jack Zwemer), an evangelical Anglican and principal of a Bible College (Mr. Geoffrey Paxton), and the editor and his brother (Robert and John Brinsmead), who are Australians.

The Chairman, Mr. John Slade

The modern Pentecostal movement made its appearance early in this century in the United States. In 1900 a young Methodist minister, Charles Parham, joined with forty other persons in Kansas to seek for the Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit. After several

days of persistence in seeking the blessing, one by one was visited with an overwhelming experience which became known as the "baptism of the Spirit." Speaking in tongues marked their experience. Parham's ministry was attended with power from that time forward. W. J. Seymour led out in California, and the characteristic manifestations of the early Pentecostal meetings broke out simultaneously in many different religious communities.

In the years that followed, the Pentecostals were not accepted by the established churches. In spite of opposition, however, they continued to grow until they numbered about eight million members by 1960.

Since 1960 there has been a most remarkable growth in the Pentecostal movement. In the past decade the denominational barriers which have kept Pentecostalism separated from the churches have been tumbling down. What Pentecostalism calls "baptism in the Spirit" has become popular among thousands in the conservative Protestant churches and also

in the Catholic Church. With great enthusiasm the leading sponsors of the experience say that the Holy Spirit is breaking down the denominational barriers.

Men of talent, money and influence are joining the ranks of those who have received the "baptism." Interdenominational groups, such as The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, are very active in spreading what is being called today "the third force" or "the third arm" in Christendom. Religious commentators also are beginning to recognize the charismatic movement as the third great force in the Christian world.

The current deep interest in the Pentecostal movement should lead us to follow the Apostle John's counsel to Christians: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1. We are challenged, therefore, to examine the basis and nature of this movement and measure it by the Word of God.

There are two streams of Christian thought — Catholic and Protestant. In which stream does Pentecostalism belong? What were the great issues of the Protestant Reformation? Does Pentecostalism affirm or deny the principles of Protestantism?

Our first speaker this evening is Robert Brinsmead, who will discuss the role of grace in redemption.

Robert Brinsmead

The New Testament presents two aspects of God's redemptive activity:

Number 1 — God's work for us in Christ.

Number 2 — God's work in us by the Holy Spirit.

Number 1, God's work for us in Christ, is the gospel. It is the declaration of what God has done in His Son for the human family. As Paul declares, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. He has taken us into His favor in the Person of His beloved Son. For in Christ our release is secured and our sins are forgiven (Eph. 1:6, 7, The N.T. from 26 Translations).

God's work for us in Christ may also be called Christ's work. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:3. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25. It is important to notice that the gospel is the record of what God has done. It is not

the record of what God has done in us; neither is it the record of what God will do in us. The gospel is the record of what God has done **outside** of us. He did it in the Lord Jesus Christ. While we were yet sinners, when we were His enemies, while we were going from Him more and more, God did something for us in Christ (see Rom. 5:6-10).

In Romans 5, Paul presents the contrast between Adam and Christ. Through the disobedience of Adam, the whole human race was constituted sinful in the sight of God. When the devil conquered Adam, he conquered the whole human family. God redeemed the human race by giving us another Head, a new Father to stand at the head of the human race (Isa. 9:6). And in Christ, God redeemed the human family. He bought us with the precious blood of Christ. In Christ, He put our sins away on the cross. In Christ, He gave us a perfect righteousness (Rom. 5:18, 19). Thus the gospel is the record of what God has done, not in us but outside of us, even in His Son Jesus Christ while we were yet sinners.

Now we turn our attention to the second aspect of God's activity — God's work in us by the Holy Spirit. The relation between Number 1 and Number 2 must be clearly understood. Number 1 is the gospel; Number 2 is the fruit of believing in the gospel. To confuse them is the very essence of Roman thought; to see no connection between them is the essence of antinomian thought. Faith in God's work for us (i.e., faith in Number 1) brings the Holy Spirit to us. The Scripture is clear that faith in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ brings the Holy Spirit to the believer in order that he may be filled and baptized in the Spirit (see Gal. 3:14; John 7:37, 38).

The relationship that exists between Number 1 and Number 2 is very important. True Christian experience finds its joy, its fulfillment and its satisfaction in Number 1. This is because Number 1 is an infinite work. God's work for us in Christ is a complete work. Our acceptance with God is grounded upon it. Our right standing with God is based upon what He has done for us in Jesus. It is Christ's experience that has merit rather than our own. Isaiah 53:11 declares, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many." The word "knowledge" means experience. That is to say, "By His wounds, by His suffering, by His holy living, by His sacrificial dying and His triumphant resurrection, shall My righteous Servant justify many."

True Christian experience finds its joy in something outside of itself — the experience of Jesus. God mercifully took our history and imputed that to His Son; but He takes the history of Jesus' infinite life

and reckons that to us through faith.

The words of Jesus in Luke 10:17-20 are very significant. They record how the disciples returned to Christ with great satisfaction after a successful mission of healing, preaching and casting out devils. Jesus said to them, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not. . . but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." What wonderful instruction we find here! Jesus was telling His disciples not to find their joy, fulfillment and satisfaction in what God was accomplishing in them, but He said, Rejoice rather in what has been done for you. Through My merit your names have been written in heaven. We must not seek to find our fulfillment, our satisfaction and our joy in Number 2 — the inward work. Love does not look inward, for love seeks not its own (1 Cor. 13:5). Nor does love rejoice in its own. To look inward for our fulfillment and our satisfaction leads to the greatest pride — the pride of grace. To make one's own experience the center of his concern is the very negation of the gospel. It is the worst form of spiritual perversion.

I want to use an illustration that may show the relationship between Christ's work for us and Christ's work in us. No doubt you have tried this simple balancing trick. (The speaker begins to balance a broom on his finger.) It is not hard to do if one simple principle is followed. What is the secret of balancing this broom on my finger? If my eye is focused on the top, I can balance it. My finger underneath is moving. It may be engaged in considerable movement, but I am scarcely conscious of it. Now, if I focus my attention on what my finger is doing, it is impossible to maintain the balance of the broom. So we must look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. It is by finding our satisfaction in Him, it is by beholding what He has done for us and what He is to us, that we maintain a successful Christian experience. But if His work in us becomes the center of our concern, we shall sink as quickly as Peter sank when he turned his eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what happened to the early church. The history of the falling away is a most fascinating one. The early church lost the great truth of justification by faith as it became more and more concerned with the subjective aspect of faith. God's work in Christ became subordinated to God's work in man. Justification was subordinated to sanctification. Finally the medieval church taught that instead of a believer being acceptable in God's sight on the basis of what Christ had done, a man was acceptable to God by virtue of

what the Holy Spirit had accomplished in his life. Thus, men looked to themselves and to their experience for their acceptance with God.

The great issue of the religious struggle in the sixteenth century was this: Is man justified in God's sight by what grace does in him, or by what grace did in Christ? On one side stood the medieval church; on the other side stood the Reformation. At least both lines of thought claimed something in common. The schoolmen taught that a man was justified, that is, accepted in the sight of God, by God's work of grace. The Reformers also taught that a man was justified, or accepted in God's sight, by God's work of grace. Thus far both streams of thought were the same. But what was the essential difference between the medieval and Reformation thought? The medieval church laid down its premise that a man is justified, or accepted, in God's sight by God's work of grace in him, in his life. In contrast, the Reformers laid down the great apostolic principle that a man is justified by God's work of grace, not in his experience, but in Christ.

One stream of thought is man-centered; the other is Christ-centered. One is subjective; the other is objective. One looks inward; the other looks outward. When we analyze all the religions of the world, we find they have one thing in common — man's experience is the center of concern. The gospel of Christ alone is different. It looks outward and upward.

In this light we ask these questions: In which stream of thought is Pentecostalism? In which stream of thought is the prevailing current of the Jesus Revolution? And what is the center of concern in your religious thinking?

The Chairman

Another important feature that distinguished the two great branches of thought in the Reformation is the question, Is a born-again Christian a sinner or a saint? Mr Geoffrey Paxton, what is the nature of a Christian man?

Mr. Geoffrey Paxton

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my responsibility over the next few minutes to outline the basic difference between the Roman Catholic concept of the Christian man and that of the Reformers in the sixteenth century.

First of all, at the time of the sixteenth century the Church of Rome believed that a man was accept-

able before God because of an inherent righteousness. That is to say, a man's acceptance before God was on the basis of a righteousness within man — an inherent, intrinsic righteousness within the believer. This is the first difference. In contrast to this, the Reformers taught that a man is accepted before God, not on the basis of an inherent, intrinsic righteousness in the believer, but rather on the basis of a righteousness which is outside the believer and alien to the believer — namely, the righteousness which is in heaven in Jesus Christ before God's throne. I repeat, this is the first great difference — acceptance by virtue of a righteousness within the believer versus acceptance by virtue of a righteousness outside of the believer in Christ.

The second important principle in regard to the Christian man is this: In the Council of Trent (a very famous Roman Catholic Council in the sixteenth century) there are five causes listed by the Roman Catholic Church for a man's acceptance with God. A man is accepted by God, said the Roman Catholic Church, on a fivefold basis. For instance, the instrumental cause is said to be baptism. Baptism is the instrument by which a man becomes accepted with God. But it is interesting to see the context that the Roman Catholic Church gave the death, or the passion, of Jesus Christ. It listed Christ's passion among those five causes — namely, the meritorious cause of a man's acceptance before God. The believer is accepted because of an intrinsic righteousness, says Rome; and this inherent righteousness takes place because Jesus died. That is to say, because of the death of Jesus, man is able to receive a righteousness through baptism.

Of course, the Reformers were horrified at this. They were horrified that the death of Jesus stood in no closer relationship to a man's acceptance with God than being a meritorious cause. Rome said, Because Jesus died, baptism could take place and a righteousness be infused into man. Why, that is monstrous! declared the Reformers. And here is the second basic difference. The death of Christ does not make salvation possible in the sense that it provides the basis for an intrinsic righteousness; but the death of Christ, said the Reformers, is that by which man is accepted. That is to say, Christ's death is not a meritorious cause, but **it is our salvation**. Jesus is our Saviour by nature of what He is and by nature of what He did. So the second difference is the place of the death of Jesus.

The third important contrast between the Roman church and the Reformers is this: The Roman church taught that baptism was that event in which and through which a righteousness was infused into, or poured into, the believer. And this was able to take

place because Jesus opened the door, so to speak, with His death. But from baptism on, it was the responsibility of the believer to ensure that he maintained his acceptance with God. If he fell through a moral error, or even through an intellectual error, he had to make good use of the means of grace which God had provided in order to come back into God's favor. In other words, the third great difference is this: The Roman Catholic Church presupposes the inherent ability of man to maintain his own salvation and, indeed, to do good works which merit God's acceptance. The Reformers said, Not so! God has granted to us an ability, said the Reformers, but this ability is always to work and to live as an object of the divine grace. It is never an ability which enables us to perform good works which will make God happy with us and therefore continue to give us salvation or give us salvation afresh. No, man is not inwardly able to perform good works which make God happy, said the Reformers. The good work has been performed for us, and any work God does in us and through us is the result of that good work done for use. Whatever man does, he always does as an object of divine favor, and never as a subject to bring about God's favor. Therefore, there is a fourth point of difference:

Implicit in the Roman Catholic teaching is the doctrine of perfectionism. If a man is able to go on because of the good start God has given him, if he is able to maintain his salvation and to do things which will make God happy, this must presuppose that while he is doing that and making God happy, there is nothing in man which makes God unhappy, i.e., he is perfect. And this is implicit in the Roman teaching. On the other hand, the Reformers said, No! No! The Christian man is not perfect. He is still a sinner by nature. He was a sinner at his conversion, and he will retain that corrupt nature until he dies. Luther had a very, very famous saying: "At the one time righteous and a sinner, at the one time just and unjust, at the one time saved and lost."

Let us summarize these four points of difference:

1. A righteousness in man; a righteousness outside of man.
2. The death of Christ making possible salvation on the basis of an inward righteousness; the death and resurrection of Christ being our salvation.
3. The inherent ability of man to do good works which will make God happy; no ability to do meritorious good works.
4. Perfectionistic; not perfect, but a sinner — a sinner at conversion, a sinner at death. Luther

said, "I will need my Saviour as much the day I die as when I was converted."

I have briefly outlined four areas that I believe give us a basis for examining the modern Pentecostal emphasis. Mr. Brinsmead has already spoken about the emphasis on the work in us. I want to ask, Does Pentecostalism draw attention to the work outside of us, or does it place its main emphasis on the work in us?

The second question I want to ask is this: How does Pentecostalism view the death of Jesus? Is it a death which makes possible the ultimate baptism of the Spirit? Is it the death which has brought about the fundamental fulness of the believer in Christ? Or does completion or the fulness have to be brought about by man on the basis of what Christ has done?

The third question I want to ask is this: Does Pentecostalism presuppose that the believer is able to do meritorious good works which will make God respond with the fulness of the Spirit or with any other blessing?

And the fourth question I want to ask is this: Can Pentecostalism speak about the fulness and total surrender and total abandonment without implying perfectionism?

The Roman Catholic Church repudiated the concept that Romans 7:14-25 referred to the believer. Oh, no, said Rome. That does not refer to the believer. That refers to the unregenerate man. On the other hand, the Reformers, without exception, said, No. Romans 7:14-25 describes the actual conflict and tension within the believer. Now, where does Pentecostalism stand in regard to these passages? This brings us to the point I mentioned last, i.e., perfectionism. Is perfectionism implicit in Pentecostalism? Is perfectionism implicit in the preaching of the established churches? And in regard to the Jesus Revolution and those young men and women who have sought to abandon the cultural structure of our church society, could it be that one of the things that has put them off and aggravated them not a little is the inherent hypocrisy and the inherent self-righteousness and the inherent perfectionism of so many of us in the established churches?

The Chairman

Thank you very much, Mr. Paxton. Now, what is the true function of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? John Brinsmead, can you answer this question for us?

John Brinsmead

In Romans 1:16, 17 the Apostle Paul declares: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." In the fourth chapter of this same book, the apostle tells us that this righteousness provided for us in Jesus is an imputed righteousness, a reckoned righteousness, an accounted righteousness.

What is the relation of the Holy Spirit's work to this gift of righteousness? Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come. . . . He shall glorify Me." John 16:13, 14. The great object of the third Person of the Godhead is to magnify that incomprehensible, infinite righteousness of God Himself, revealed to the human family and for the human family in Jesus Christ. The Spirit's work is to glorify Jesus' perfect obedience, His spotless merits, His sinless life. Christ was uplifted on the cross as a display of God's righteousness. The Spirit's work is to show that to men. For without the Spirit we are dead in sins; our eyes are blind, and we cannot see. By nature we cannot understand even the plain things of God's Word. So the Holy Spirit operates through the preaching of the gospel. It is the Spirit's work to create faith — saving faith in the merits of Christ. The Spirit points sinners to the great covering of Christ's righteousness and teaches them to run under this shelter of the Almighty. The creation of faith is not our work. Faith is not a mere mental assent or intellectual belief. It is the Spirit's conviction and persuasion that when Jesus hung upon the cross, He hung there in my place, He hung there in your place. Faith is to know with assurance that He "loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20. The Spirit will create faith in the hearts of all who will not harden their hearts through unbelief.

Oh, the atonement of Jesus is a magnificent thing! He has embraced the whole human family. The cords of divine love have included us all — rich, poor, high and low. No one has been left out. Christ has bound humanity to himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save by the choice of man himself.

The Christian life begins in faith; it will end in faith. It is faith from start to finish. This faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5). This is what the Bible calls "righteousness by faith." God gave us His Son. The Son gave us His righteous life. The Spirit gives us faith. Thus, salvation is the saving action of the Trinity.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make us Christ-conscious, and not Spirit-conscious. He does not come to testify of Himself. Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come . . . He shall not speak of Himself." John 16:13. He never bears testimony to Himself. The life of Jesus of Nazareth was a revelation, not of Himself, but of the Father of glory. So the other Person of the Godhead only comes to reveal Jesus, to make us conscious of what He has done for us and what He is to us. He inspires faith in Christ, the divine remedy for sin. The Spirit makes us utterly dependent upon that righteousness which is outside of ourselves, even that righteousness which is in the Person of Christ, who stands at God's right hand for us.

Much less does the Spirit make us experience-conscious. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, his face was radiant with the glory of God. Yet the record says that he was unconscious of it.

The book of Acts records how the Spirit was poured out when Jesus Christ was uplifted (see chs. 2, 10, 19), when the death and the resurrection of Jesus were preached. The Spirit glorified Jesus. He did not come upon men after a sermon on the Holy Spirit. He was manifested in power when Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was uplifted.

Another office of the Holy Spirit is to teach the believer the Word of God. The Word reveals Jesus — His infinite merits and righteousness. The Word alone is the supreme judge of all experience and all doctrine. In Protestantism the Word of God is the only infallible rule of conduct and religious doctrine. But in the other stream of thought we have the dependence on miracles, visions, sacraments — on something apart from, or outside, the Word. The modern charismatic movement also looks to audio-visual evidence of the Spirit's work.

Another great work of the Holy Spirit is to write God's law in the hearts and the minds of His people. Then His people bring forth fruit unto God (Heb. 8:10; Rom. 7:4), not in order that they might be accepted of God, but because they have accepted their acceptance in Jesus Christ.

Finally, we must always remember that our right to heaven is not based on what the Holy Spirit does within us, but upon what God has done outside of us in Christ. Our title to heaven is founded on what the fulness of the Holy Spirit has done for all of us in Jesus. John 3:34 says, "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." In Christ was manifested all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). He was the complete revelation of God's righteous-

ness. That is our only right and title to be with Him where He is and behold His glory. Every religion which is not of divine origin teaches men, either initially or eventually, to look within their experience for standing with God — to look for some great miracle, some change, some fruit.

There are basically only two streams of religious thought — Protestant and Catholic. All humanity is divided here. It does not matter what creed we claim. Are we pointing to, glorying in and rejoicing in what God has done through His divine Spirit in the one Man, Jesus? Is that our vital testimony to the world? Or are we down in the realm of the subjective, glorying in and testifying to what we imagine the Holy Spirit is doing in us?

The Chairman

Thank you, John Brinsmead. Now, friends, let us bring things together. We have looked at two streams of thought this evening on three major areas of New Testament teaching. Dr. Zwemer, where does the modern charismatic movement lie in relation to them?

Dr. Jack Zwemer

This evening we have sought to establish three fundamental points as they relate to the only two systems of religious thought which exist. One system is the Protestant Reformation ethic; the other system is the ethic of the medieval church, which will yet be shown to embrace all other religious forms. The three points made this evening are these:

1. Reformation thought declares that man's acceptance with God depends on the absolute and infinite righteousness of man's Substitute, his Representative — the Man Christ Jesus, who stands in the presence of God for us. That is the Protestant ground of acceptance. For that Man only is pleasing to the Father.

The other system of religious thought declares that God is pleased and satisfied with an inherent, an acquired righteousness, a borrowed goodness in man.

Thus, the Reformers looked outside themselves for righteousness that inheres in their Substitute before God's throne, while the other system looks downward upon man and within man to find an exhibition of something that might be pleasing to God.

2. The second point tonight relates to the nature of the Christian man. The Protestant always re-

gards himself as a sinner — “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” As the Apostle Paul came to the end of his life and said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief,” so the Christian man in Reformation thought regards himself as a sinner. He freely admits it. As he progresses in the Christian pathway, he becomes increasingly conscious of the fact that he is a sinner in himself. This, of course, impels him to look out of himself and upward to where his Righteousness is.

On the other hand, the medieval schoolman looks within himself and regards himself, not as a sinner, but as a saint. This he freely admits, and he becomes increasingly unconscious of any sinfulness inherent in him. And so we have the second great divide in Christendom.

3. The third point concerns the Spirit and His work. Reformation thought declares that the Holy Spirit is freely given that men might see their own utter moral and spiritual bankruptcy and then flee out of themselves to Jesus Christ, in whom inheres righteousness and infinite goodness. To these the fruits of the Spirit are abundantly given — faith, hope, charity and all good works. When they come up to the Final Summons, they ask, “When did we do this? When did we do that?” They are unconscious of what they have done. They are conscious only of their utter sinfulness and the infinite righteousness of their Substitute.

On the other hand, the medieval system of thought sees in the gift of the Spirit a benefit derived by superhuman effort, which conveys an experiential and ecstatic thing and a confidence within oneself. It is Spirit-conscious and self-conscious as opposed to Christ-conscious.

These three points divide the religious world into two incompatible and disharmonious camps. So we speak to our dear friends and neighbors who are Pentecostals, who perhaps belong to the Jesus Revolution or to any system centered experientially in man. Many of you perhaps have recognized the deadness and spiritual lack in the established bodies and have sought fulfillment in some of these other movements. We must, however, say to you that these are not founded upon, nor do they embrace, the great fundamental doctrines of the Protestant Reformation and that gospel so fully given to the Apostle Paul.

Now we will read some comments in the literature regarding this. I quote from recognized leaders of thought. One of the leaders of the Pentecostal movement, Donald Gee, declares that the central attraction of the Pentecostal movement consists “purely of a powerful, individual, spiritual experience.” — *The*

Pentecostal Movement, p. 30. Another authentic leader of the charismatic movement, Edward O’Connor, declares:

“But the essential configurations of the movement from a theological point of view seem to lie in a lively and convinced faith in the Holy Spirit, the experience of His powerful action and the reappearance of His charisms.” — Edward D. O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*.

We pass from the self-view of Pentecostal thought to the Protestant view, and I quote Frederick Bruner, who writes briefly as follows:

“Pentecostal experience, then, is distinguished by precisely the emphasis on experience. In a word, the theology of the Pentecostal Movement is its experience, which is another way of saying that its theology is pneumatology.” — *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, p. 32.

We could read further, but we pass on to a view of the charismatic movement made by Catholic observers. We read as follows:

“Although they derive from Protestant backgrounds, the Pentecostal churches are not typically Protestant in their beliefs, attitudes or practices.” — O’Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

“From the point of view of the Catholic Church, it cannot be assumed that the Pentecostal movement represents an incursion of Protestant influence.” — *Ibid.*, p. 32.

“Catholics who have accepted Pentecostal spirituality have found it to be fully in harmony with their traditional faith and life. They experience it, not as a borrowing from an alien religion, but as a connatural development of their own.” *Ibid.*, p. 28.

“. . . the spiritual experience of those who have been touched by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal movement is in profound harmony with the classical spiritual theology of the Church.” — *Ibid.*, p. 183.

“. . . the experience of the Pentecostal movement tends to confirm the validity and relevance of our authentic spiritual traditions.” — *Ibid.*, p. 191.

“Moreover, the doctrine that is developing in the Pentecostal churches today seems to be going through stages very similar to those which occurred in the early Middle Ages when the classical doctrine was taking shape.” — *Ibid.*, p. 193.

Finally, two other Catholic authors write most significantly as follows:

“*The Cross and the Switchblade* is the account of the life and spiritual adventures of David Wilkerson. . . . The book spoke of the indwelling and powerful Spirit as the motive and moving power of our Christian lives. It was very old doctrine, it was a very traditional doctrine, it was a very Catholic doctrine. . . .” — Kevin & Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals*, pp. 9, 10.

Reprints of *Is the Charismatic Movement Catholic or Protestant?* are available on request. Write to either of the following *Present Truth* addresses. U.S.A.: P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, California 92028. Australia: P.O. Box 333, Tweed Heads, N.S.W. 2485.



The Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The Editors

What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? What are the conditions for receiving it? How is it communicated? What is the evidence for its reception? These are urgent questions. They demand a clear answer, especially since the "charismatic" movement is growing rapidly within the Christian churches.

The apostle Paul challenged believers by asking them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Acts 19:2. Paul considered the Spirit's baptism to be imperative. To the Ephesians he wrote: "Stop getting drunk on wine, for that means profligacy, but ever be filled with the Spirit." Eph. 5:18.*

1. The Condition Upon Which the Holy Spirit Is Given

The gospel of the New Testament takes the law of God seriously. No man can be accepted (or justified) in the sight of God, nor share in the life of His Spirit, apart from perfect and absolute obedience to the law of God. Notice:

"The doers of the law shall be justified." Rom. 2:13.

"The Holy Ghost . . . [is] given to them that obey Him." Acts 5:32.

If God bestowed His Spirit on any other condition but perfect obedience to His law, this would condone sin and compromise His justice. Above every-

*The Emphasized New Testament (J. B. Rotherham).

thing else, God's law must be honored, maintained and revered.

There are two ways in which a man may go about meeting this condition of perfect obedience. There is the way of legalism, and there is the way of the gospel. Between these two methods there is no compromise. A man may take one road or the other. He cannot take both.

If a man could obey God's law at all times without any falling short of the divine ideal in any instance, he would be entitled to claim God's promise of life. "Of legal righteousness Moses writes, 'The man who does this shall gain life by it.'" Rom. 10:5, N.E.B. Whether the man aspires to this attainment with or without God's help makes no difference to the principle.

Yet the reception of God's Spirit is in no sense a human attainment. It is not a reward for a sanctified life. The Bible is clear: "For all **have** sinned [past tense], and all continue to come short of the divine ideal [present continuous tense]." Rom. 3:23. The human predicament is precisely that no son of Adam has rendered an obedience that would merit the Spirit of God. And because of man's fallen, sinful nature, no one will ever be acceptable to God on the basis of his performance. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh **be justified** in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:20.

How then shall a sinful man fulfill the conditions upon which the Spirit of life shall be given? This brings us to consider the way of the gospel. In the person of Jesus Christ, God paid a visit to this planet. He took His place as the new Head of humanity. He became the Representative Man, the Substitute for every man. He undertook to obey the law perfectly for us. He covenanted Himself to die in our stead and thereby release us from the penalty of disobedience. Thus it is written:

"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law [i.e., under obligation to satisfy the claims of the law for us]." Gal. 4:4.

"Jesus replied, 'It is right for us to meet all the law's demands.'" Matt. 3:15, Phillips.

"I am not come to destroy [the law], but to fulfill [all of its requirements]." Matt. 5:17.

When Christ, as the Representative Man, fulfilled the law, it was just as if every man had fulfilled the law. When He died to make full satisfaction for the law's penalty against sin, it was the same as if every sinner had died and paid for his sins. So Paul declares: "We look at it like this: if One died for all men, then, in a sense, they all died." 2 Cor. 5:14, Phillips.

The atonement of Christ was the fulfilling of **every condition** upon which God is able to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. When the Son of God cried, "It is finished!" every barrier was then broken down which intercepted the freest fulness of the gift of the Spirit to the most guilty of Adam's race. The Spirit is given on the basis of perfect obedience to the law—not our obedience, but Christ's. The Spirit is given, not because of our **attainment**, but because of His **atonement**. His work, and His alone, brings the Spirit to us. This is Paul's message to the Galatians:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. . . . Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3:10, 13, 14.

Summary: The one indispensable condition of receiving the Spirit is perfect obedience to God's law. Christ has fulfilled that condition for all. Therefore Christ has entitled all to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Channel of the Spirit's Communication

In the Roman Catholic tradition, divine life and power is regarded as being communicated to humanity through the sacraments of the church. In the tradition of the Pentecostal bodies, the Spirit is regarded as being communicated by some high-powered ecstatic experience. But in the Apostolic and Reformation view, the Holy Spirit is communicated through the Word of God.

The Word of God is the instrument of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul said: "The sword of the Spirit . . . is the Word of God." Eph. 6:17. "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Heb. 4:12, R.S.V. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

The Word and the Spirit agree. They cannot be separated. That which the Spirit does it does through the instrument of God's Word:

"Being born again . . . by the Word of God. . . ." 1 Peter 1:23.

"Now ye are clean through the Word." John 15:3.

". . . that He might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the Word." Eph. 5:26.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." Ps. 119:9.

"By the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Ps. 17:4.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." John 17:17.

The life of God is in His Word. It is through the Word that God created this earth and gave life to men. It was through His Word that Jesus healed the sick, cast out devils and raised the dead. "His Word was with power." He said, "Be clean," and lepers were cleansed; "Rise and walk," and the lame rose.

We must guard against the idea that the Spirit of God works independently of the Word, or that He comes in some experience which is outside of the Word. Those who insist on signs and miracles outside of the Word are "an evil and adulterous generation." In fact, they are wide open for Satanic deception, for the Bible warns us that especially in the last days will Satan work "with power and signs and lying wonders . . . in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:9, 10. In the day of judgment many will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not . . . done many wonderful works?" But Christ will say, "I never knew you." Matt. 7:22,23.

There is always a danger that people will want

something outside of the Word to create feeling. Through this avenue Satan leads many away from the Word of God into the vagaries of human impressions, impulses, fanatical exercises, and finally into practices contrary to the plain Word of God. There is safety for our feet only in keeping close to God's Word. Here is the source of all truth and power.

Summary: The life of God is in His Word. Through His Word God communicates His Spirit to men.

3. The Method of Receiving the Holy Spirit

The part that man is called to play in receiving the Spirit is so exceedingly plain and simple that it is an offense to human nature. As we have already seen, Christ has fulfilled the conditions for the Spirit's bestowal. The Word of God in the gospel of Christ is the channel through which the Spirit is communicated. Men receive the Spirit simply by the hearing of faith:

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. 3:1,2.

The Spirit comes to men in the Word of the gospel. Paul declared: "The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the Word of faith, which we preach." Rom. 10:8.

The Spirit, therefore, is received by no other way but by hearing the Word. The ear is the most passive organ of the personality. It creates nothing, emotes nothing and sees nothing. It is completely receptive. So man cannot obtain the Spirit; he must be endowed with the Spirit. The sinner cannot get to the Spirit; the Spirit gets to the sinner. It is received by hearing—the hearing of faith. It is received **by faith alone**.

The book of Acts furnishes us with a practical illustration of how the Spirit is received solely by the hearing of faith. Peter was commanded to go to the home of a Roman centurion and preach the gospel to a group of Gentiles. The apostle uplifted Christ and declared, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. And the record immediately adds, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which **heard** the Word." Verse 44. There were no exceptions. All who heard the Word received the Spirit.

This is just as true today. The Word comes to us, saying: "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Mark 2:5. "He has taken us into His favour in the person of His

beloved Son." Eph. 1:6, Knox. "In Christ our release is secured and our sins are forgiven." Eph. 1:7, N.E.B. The Spirit of the Almighty is present in this Word to create faith. If we receive that Word, we receive the Spirit, for it is still true that the Spirit falls on everyone who hears the Word, not as the word of a mere man (as in Acts 8:12-16), "but as it is in truth, the Word of God." 1 Thess. 2:13.

Wherever the Word of the gospel is preached, it may be said, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." 1 Thess. 1:5.

Not only is the Spirit initially imparted through faith, but it is continuously imparted by faith—"from faith to faith." Rom. 1:17. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Col. 2:6. Any subsequent operations of the Spirit in life come in the same way as the initial reception.

Summary: The Holy Ghost comes to men in the Word of God. Whoever hears (receives and believes) the gospel, receives the Holy Ghost.

4. The Evidence of the Spirit's Reception

God's Word plainly tells us how we know if we have received the Spirit of God. It does not tell us to look to some audio-visual sign. Remember the words of Jesus: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." Matt. 12:39. The primary evidence of the Spirit is faith—simple, fussless, unspectacular, gospel faith.

When the Corinthian believers were caught up with the idea of the superior value of demonstrative, spiritual ecstasies, Paul directed them to the primacy of faith: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. 12:3. As if to say, Demonstrative spiritual exercises are not necessarily evidence of the Spirit's working ["Brethren, be not children in understanding" —1 Cor. 14:20], but the supreme evidence of the Spirit's power is that a sinful, fallen man comes to confess his faith in Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of his life.

That one who was in rebellion against God can now cry, "Abba [dear] Father," is the primary evidence of the Spirit's presence and power.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:15, 16.

Along with faith, hope is also the evidence of the gift of the Spirit. Says the apostle, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

Gal. 5:5. "Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. 8:23-25.

Faith looks to a victorious past (to Christ's work for us on the cross) and to the present (to Christ's intercession for us at the right hand of God). Hope looks to the glorious future of Christ's second coming—"Being justified by faith, we . . . rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. 5:1, 2.

Hope in the coming of Jesus in glory is evidence of the Spirit's presence. Just as the Spirit gives faith to accept Christ as our righteousness, the Spirit inspires hope in the consummation of life at the glorious return of Jesus Christ:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

The gift of God's Spirit in this life is called "the firstfruits of the Spirit." Rom. 8:23. In Ephesians 1:14 it is called "the earnest [or the down payment] of our inheritance." This is a most important point. Our experience in this life is always incomplete. Life is not fulfilled within the historical process. We can never find satisfaction in our own spiritual experience, for at best it is only a down payment of what God has in store for us. The Spirit inspires us to groan, wait, long for and press toward the hope of receiving an infilling of the Spirit not possible in this mortal life. Beyond this present feeble existence there awaits us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:17. Meanwhile we walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), knowing that although we are imperfect and incomplete, Christ Himself is our completeness (Col. 2:10). Thus our consolation is always in Him and never in our own experience.

The third evidence of the Spirit is love. Love (the Greek word is *agap *) is not an emotional or ecstatic experience. It is not "a funny feeling in the tummy." It is a holy principle of life wherein God and our fellow men, rather than ourselves, become the object of our concern.

An absorbing preoccupation about one's own spiritual enjoyment and experience is not love, for love "seeketh not her own." 1 Cor. 13:5. Finding satisfaction in feelings of spiritual ecstasy, so far from being evidence of the Holy Spirit's working, is evidence that the Spirit is not working.

Love is more likely to be manifested in patience and self-control, in doing good to others. But most of all, it is not absorbed in experientialism—the lusting

after an exhilarating and satisfying experience. Experientialism is a form of legalism—the most subtle form of legalism. But the gospel received and believed lets God be God and man be man. It lets God be God in that it rests salvation solely on Christ's experience (Isa. 53:12), and thereby ascribes salvation to God's work alone. When a man is released from doing some work or having some experience upon which to ground his salvation, he is released from egocentric concern and begins to think of his fellow men. In short, the gospel lets men be human. Those who accept the gospel of their deliverance in Christ, make their fellow men the object of their works. They work to make all men see something of "the fellowship of the mystery."

Of course, the Christian will experience the selfishness of his sinful nature always trying to get in the way. He will be tempted to live for himself and to make himself the terminating point of God's mercy and love. That he feels this sin within him is no evidence that he is without the Spirit. But that he fights against the flesh and walks not after it is the most sure evidence that he is fighting the good fight of faith in the might of the Spirit's power. Love is not measured by flights of happy feeling, but by willing conformity to the commandments of God—feeling or no feeling.

Summary: The evidence of the possession of the Holy Spirit is faith, hope and love. From human sight they are not the most spectacular graces; but from heaven's view they are the supreme miracles of divine grace.

5. The Sign of the Spirit's Baptism

Baptism is the sign of the Spirit's baptism. In the book of Acts we see that the gift of the Spirit was associated with baptism:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost 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 Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." Acts 10:44-48.

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ

Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Acts 19:4-6.

The baptism of water and into Christ is not some deficient initiation that needs to be supplemented by some further baptism. Jesus spoke of a man's entrance into the kingdom of grace as a baptism "of water and of the Spirit." John 3:5. He commanded His disciples to baptize men "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28:19. Therefore, this initiating baptism is the baptism of the Holy Ghost as much as it is the baptism of Christ. Neither is the Spirit bestowed stingingly at the Christian initiation. Says the apostle:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus 3: 5, 6.

The church of God is not like the great passenger ships which have first- and second-class passengers. The church is the only true classless society in the world. To a community of believers who were in danger of making distinctions such as "ordinary Christians" and "Spirit-filled Christians," Paul declared, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13. Again he said, "There is one body, and one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Eph. 4:4, 5.

There is no such thing as ordinary Christians and Spirit-filled Christians. Either a man is a Spirit-filled Christian or he is not a Christian (Rom. 8:9). God does not give to a few individuals an experience differing from the body. There is one Christian baptism—it is the baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost. There is only one gospel; and it is the full gospel. The Trinity is indivisibly One. The baptism of the Spirit is not a higher experience than the baptism of Christ.

Although the ordinance of baptism itself is the sign of the Spirit's reception, it is no guarantee of the Spirit. The sign must not be confused with the evidence. Plenty of "gate crashers" get into the church on earth by taking the sign; but the church roll in heaven does not always correspond with the roll on earth. To take the sign apart from the evidence is hypocrisy and blasphemy.

When we say that true Christian initiation is the baptism of water and of the Spirit, we do not deny that the Spirit may not come at some subsequent times to renew faith, to give power for special occasions, or to impart special gifts for the prosecution of the gospel commission. God is not bound, and the Spirit may reveal Himself as He chooses. Just as the

Christian age opened with a mighty outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost which mightily equipped the believers for service, so the Bible teaches us that the gospel age will close with no less power before the coming of the Lord. This is what the ancient prophets called "the latter rain," and the time of its bestowal is at hand.

The prophet exhorts us, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." Zech. 10:1. We shall be safe in doing this if we realize that the Spirit's work is to make us Christ-conscious rather than Spirit-conscious, Christ-centered rather than experience-centered. The Spirit does not speak of Himself (John 16:13). We do not know His name. His sole mission is to glorify Jesus and to make us more and more sensible of our own sinfulness and dependence on a righteousness outside of and above ourselves.

The Spirit's work in us is not the end and Christ only the means to that end. Rather, Christ is the end, and the Spirit is the means of laying hold on Him. Christian experience, however Spirit-filled, does not recommend us to God's favor. The sanctification of the Spirit does not lead a believer to attain higher than, or to surpass the primacy of, justification. Indeed, as one has well said, "Sanctification is our taking justification seriously," and the Spirit is given to us for that end.

Summary: Baptism is the sign of the Spirit's baptism. The Trinity is indivisible in His work. The members of the church all enjoy one baptism and one Spirit. The ongoing work of the Spirit will not lead us to another experience, but will re-enforce us and settle us more firmly in the truth of justification by grace through faith.

6. The Fulness of the Gift of the Spirit

While in this life we only possess the first fruits of the Spirit, yet in the gospel sense we possess a fulness of the Spirit that can never be transcended or superseded. This is the message of the book of Colossians. The Christians at Colosse were troubled by a "higher life" group who were not content to live the normal Christian life of faith and hope. (The problem is still with the church. Human nature does not want to endure its sense of weakness, sinfulness and finiteness. It does not want to endure the day-to-day reality of dirty dishes, frayed nerves and a persistent fight against the flesh.) Thus some of the Colossians advocated seeking a **fulness** of the Spirit that would lift them into such spiritual ecstasy that they would soar above their poor, struggling, earthly Christian brethren.

(How nice! And what Christian has not thought that such a charge of spiritual power might lift him above the tedious conflict of life.)

So this holiness group sought for a fulness of the Spirit that transcended a "mere" enjoyment of Christ and a "mere" justification by faith. Of course, since their aspirations went beyond the simple "by faith alone" formula, they began to practice and impose rules and formulae of their own devisings. (These are still seen in modern books that specialize in subjectivity — i.e., *Secrets of a Victorious Christian Experience — 10 Steps which Show You How, or Preparation for the Spirit's Baptism — 7 Conditions for You to Receive It.*)

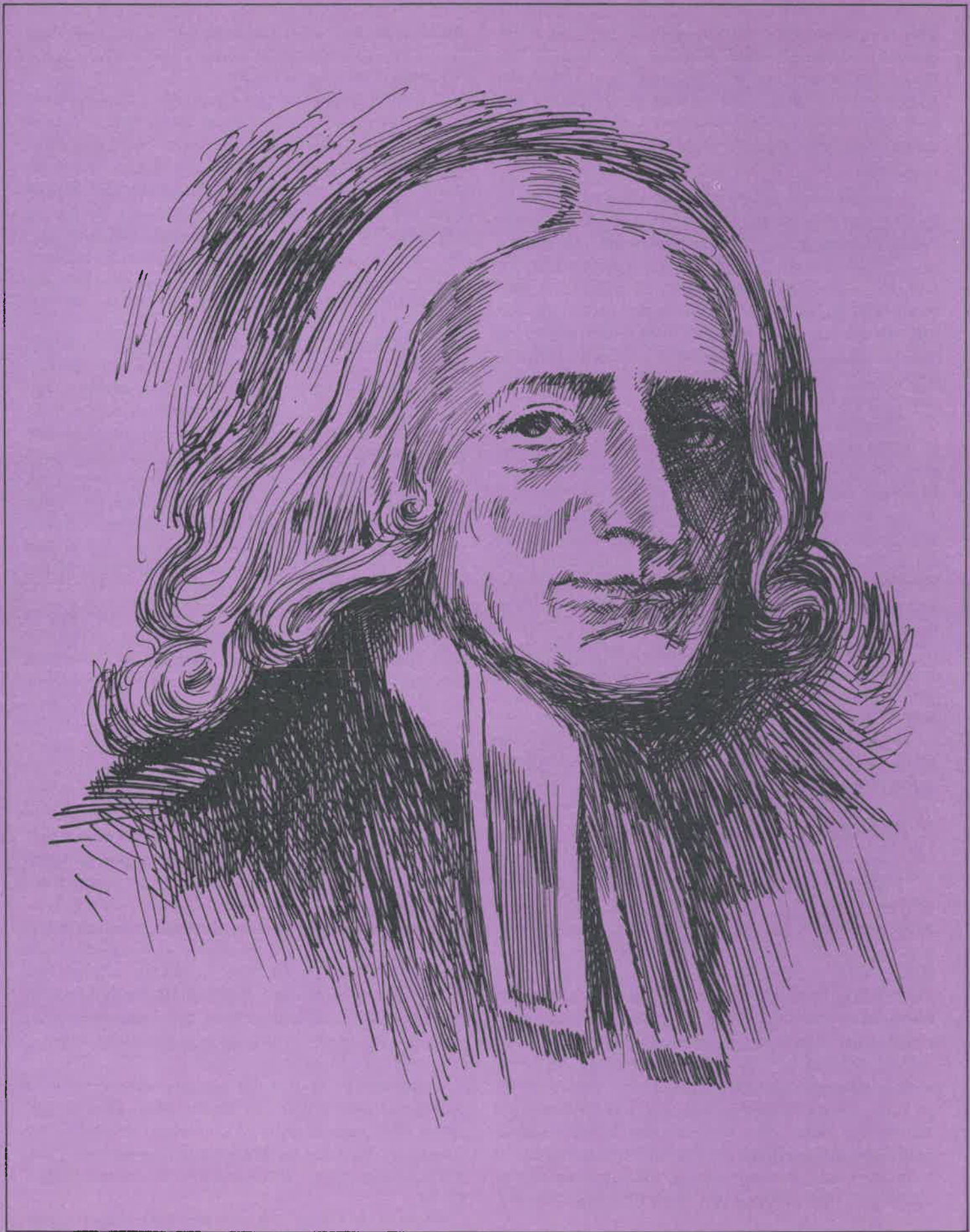
The apostle Paul showed the Colossians that this program of making the attainment of a high spiritual experience the center of concern was legalism. His answer to this "holiness" group was a magnificent exaltation of the person of Christ and the absolute centrality of Him in the church's faith. Paul's key word was fulness. Meeting the heretics on their own ground, he showed the church where that fulness can alone exist—in Jesus Christ and never in another. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 1:19; 2:9.

As our Substitute, Christ not only rendered to God everything that we owed in perfect obedience; as a Man in our place, He also received from God everything that God had to give and longed to give us—even all the fulness of His own life. In Christ, humanity has received the totality of God's life. In Him we have been filled with all the fulness of God. It could never be any other way but in Him, for no one other than this God-Man could contain all the accumulated fulness of eternity. Faith staggers not at the gift God has given us in Christ, but confesses that in Christ God has given all; and in simple faith the Christian possesses all. Thus Paul says: "And ye are complete [have been made full] in Him." Col. 2:10.

In this sense a believer can never have anything more than when He accepts Christ as the Saviour and the Lord of his life. He lives "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. 6:10. Faith embraces Christ and that fulness in Him; hope patiently waits for the inheritance, knowing that life is not fulfilled here and now.

Summary: In this life we can never experience enough of God's Spirit to satisfy either God or ourselves. Yet the humanity of Christ has received all the fulness of God for us. We have it now by faith, and shall possess it by visible reality at the coming of Christ.

Reprints of *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit?* are available on request.



The Ordinary Grace of God

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by John Wesley to a certain Miss Bolton:

“George Bell, William Green and others, then full of love, were favoured with extraordinary revelations and manifestations from God. But by this very thing, Satan beguiled them from the simplicity of life in Christ. By insensible degrees they were led to value these extraordinary gifts more than the ordinary grace of God; this, my dear friend, makes me fear for you. . . .”

Since many of our friends in the modern charismatic movement are trying to use John Wesley as a sort of spiritual father, we think they, as well as us, may profit by this sound piece of spiritual counsel.

The Importance of Justification by Faith

“This doctrine [justification by faith] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour. . . . For no one who does not hold this article — or, to use Paul’s expression, this ‘sound doctrine’ (Titus 2:1) — is able to teach aright in the church or successfully to resist any adversary This is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head. That is why Satan, in turn, cannot but persecute it.”

“Whoever departs from the article of justification does not know God and is an idolater For when this article has been taken away, nothing remains but error, hypocrisy, godlessness, and idolatry, although it may seem to be the height of truth, worship of God, holiness, etc.”

“If the article of justification is lost, all Christian doctrine is lost at the same time. And all the people in the world who do not hold to this justification are either Jews or Turks or papists or heretics; for there is no middle ground between these two righteousnesses: the active one of the Law and the passive one which comes from Christ. Therefore the man who strays from Christian righteousness must relapse into the active one, that is, since he has lost Christ, he must put his confidence in his own works.”

“When the article of justification has fallen, everything has fallen. Therefore it is necessary constantly to inculcate and impress it, as Moses says of his Law (Deut. 6:7); for it cannot be inculcated and urged enough or too much. Indeed, even though we learn it well and hold to it, yet there is no one who apprehends it perfectly or believes it with a full affection and heart. So very trickish is our flesh, fighting as it does against the obedience of the spirit.”

Selected from the Writings of Martin Luther*

“The article of justification and of grace is the most delightful, and it alone makes a person a theologian and makes of a theologian a judge of the earth and of all affairs. Few there are, however, who have thought it through well and who teach it aright.”

“Of this article [justification] nothing may be yielded or conceded, though heaven and earth and whatever will not abide, fall to ruin; for ‘there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,’ says St. Peter (Acts 4:12); ‘and with His stripes we are healed’ (Is. 53:5). And on this article all that we teach and practice is based, against the pope, the devil, and the world. That is why we must be very certain of this doctrine and not doubt; otherwise all is lost, and the pope and the devil and all things gain the victory over us and are adjudged right.”

* Selected from *What Luther Says*, an anthology compiled by Edwald M. Plass, Vol. 2, pp. 702-704, 715-718.



“The article of justification must be learned diligently. It alone can support us in the face of these countless offenses and can console us in all temptations and persecutions. For we see that it cannot be otherwise: the world is bound to be offended at the doctrine of godliness and to cry out constantly that nothing good comes of it, since ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.’ ”

“In short, if this article concerning Christ — the doctrine that we are justified and saved through Him alone and consider all apart from Him damned — is not professed, all resistance and restraint are at an end. Then there is, in fact, neither measure nor limit to any heresy and error.”

“There is this about the article of grace that if one diligently and sincerely remains loyal to it, it keeps one from falling into heresy and from undertaking anything against Christ or His Christendom. For with it comes the Holy Spirit, who enlightens the heart by it and keeps it in the true, certain understanding, so that it is able precisely and plainly to distinguish and judge all the other articles of faith and forcefully to sustain and defend them.”

“The papacy is shaken and shattered nowadays, not through these tumults of the sectaries but through the preaching of the article of justification, which has not only weakened the kingdom of Antichrist but has also till now sustained and defended us against its power.”



On the Religious Front

New Catholic Impetus to Ecumenism

Religious observers are noticing with surprise the increased Roman Catholic initiatives in the ecumenical field. In harmony with recent Vatican policies to foster ecumenical accord, a growing number of statements and actions are being made these days. This plan stems from the Vatican II Council decisions to eliminate "the scandal of Christian disunity" and foster and finally achieve the unity among His people for which Christ prayed.

Notable among the evidences of Catholic activity in this direction are the following pronouncements and actions:

Pope Paul: Recently the pope proclaimed that the world-wide cause of Christian unity is being menaced by divisions within the Roman Catholic Church. He told a delegation of the Russian Orthodox patriarchate of Moscow, that Catholic and Orthodox Christians share a common faith which they are obliged to preserve, understand and transmit to future generations.

Cardinal Jan Willebrands: President of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, Cardinal Willebrands pronounced that he saw a number of significant developments in progress toward Christian unity during 1971. He cited the following areas of contact and exchange which gave reason for his optimistic comment:

- Exchange of correspondence between Pope Paul and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, which stressed the need for the growth of a truly brotherly attitude in both communities so that one day they might "communicate together with the same chalice of the Lord."

- Official visits to the Orthodox churches of Greece and Crete, as well as attendance at the synod of the Russian Orthodox church in Moscow.

- Completion of the Catholic-Lutheran joint commission report on the theme of "The Gospel and the Church."

- First series of Catholic-Methodist conversations held on the problems of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist, matrimony and the Christian family.

- Conversations with the World Reform Alliance on the subject of "The Presence of Christ in the Church and in the World."

- The substantial agreement regarding the doctrine of the Eucharist, reached by the International Joint Commission of Catholics and Anglicans.

Archbishop Michael Ramsay: The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement presented the Christian Unity Award to Archbishop Ramsay, primate of all England, titular head of the Anglican Communion at Graymoor. Archbishop Ramsay had just returned from his United States visit last month, during which he preached in St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral in New York.

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake: A historic ecumenical service was held February 20 in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Sydney, Australia, when world church leaders gathered to inaugurate the Year of Renewal. Dr. Carson Blake, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, was the preacher. Among heads of churches present at the service were Bishop Karekin Sarkissian of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, Lebanon; Dr. Frank Woods, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne; and Right Rev. William Morgan, the Moderator of the Presbyterian church in Victoria. At the Service of Renewal a new Eucharistic prayer was used for the first time.

Melbourne Parish Action Commences: The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia, has launched its parish action weeks for each of its churches. Ecumenical services are included in the program. The first parish to begin the "Action Week" was the Holy Name Parish, East Preston, whose ecumenical service was held before a combined congregation of Catholic, Anglican, Church of Christ, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army personnel. The *Catholic Advocate* of February 17 reports the meeting thus: "Accompanied by music from the Salvation Army Band, all the churches represented joined in a dramatised farce on ecumenism — showing how they could (after a long history of ecumenical co-operation in the East Preston area) laugh at the many small things that were once a great stumbling block to unity."

Pentecostal Thrust in Asia

Pentecostalism has commenced large-scale evangelistic thrusts throughout Southeast Asia and is preparing for "gospel" penetration into Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and mainland China.

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