A very marked peculiarity of the dispensation of the Spirit is that, as a rule, the surface of life is so undisturbed . . . The man talks and laughs and plans a shrewd trade and takes his evening in pleasure and seems to be careless of all spiritual demand; but there is another chapter you cannot read. Motives are being used, great self-decisions are now and again being made, silently there is deposit after deposit in moral character; and all this is watched and treated and lifted into full redemptional bearing by the swift and profound agency of the Holy Spirit. And there is philosophy in this quiet, undramatic method, too; for were there constant noise and upheaval and terror there could be no genuine self-decision (Olin Curtis, The Christian Faith, p. 340).

Personal experience is the self, conscious of itself, in relation to someone else. The ultimate in conscious awareness is the self in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit awakens any dormant or hidden element essential to true personality and imperiously drives the person to genuine self-decision. It is highly significant that Jesus was said to have been lead (Matthew and Luke) or driven (Mark) into the wilderness to be tempted or tested. Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit (Luke), entered into that ultimate experience in which the deepest purposes of his being were exposed and explored. He could never meet any event in life which had not been prefigured in that testing. It was moral preparation not only for the terrors of the crucifixion from which, humanly, he drew back in fear for a moment, but also for the more dangerous and subtle inducement to short circuit his ultimate goal in the interest of a pre-mature and spectacular and superficial victory. That he was tempted in all points like as we are, relates this kind of testing to ourselves. And it is under the ministry of the Spirit that this occurs. We have said that faith is an intensely moral act and important to us as men in appropriating the benefits of the
atonement, but it is by the ministry of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to exercise faith in this saving way.

"When He is come . . ." Jesus' own work was to have been personalized in individuals and enlarged - universalized - by the coming of the Holy Spirit. Nothing of the philosophical problems implicit in the doctrine of the Trinity or the person of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Godhead is to be attempted here. To the early church the Holy Spirit was a matter of practical experience, not theoretical speculation, and it is this practical aspect which is important here. In the course of progressive revelation, any possible speculative idea about God became "existential" in the Incarnation. God now was seen to be real, an empirical fact as well as an intellectual concept; "That which was from the beginning . . . which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. (I Jn. 1:1-3)." In the Holy Spirit the personality of God is revealed - in the ultimate sense of that word person. Rather than the personality of the Holy Spirit becoming an intellectual problem, to the early church He was the final solution to such a problem in relation to God, in this, that the presence of God was actualized deep within the personality of man by the Holy Spirit. He is himself pure person. The person and work of the Holy Spirit was religion before it was theology or philosophy.

The religious dimension of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit must be kept alive by the church and holiness theology in particular rises or falls in respect of that imperative. The entire work of redemption hangs on the ministry of the Holy Spirit but the view one holds of Him determines one's view of redemption. If the absolute sovereignty of God prevails over the existential relevance of the Holy Spirit, salvation
is by decree and not by grace. Redemption is a philosophical concept, then, with no relevance for moral experience. If the physical and historical fact of Christ and the cross alone is central and the Holy Spirit is God's agent in applying the benefits, then salvation is wholly objective and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross an exact equivalent of objective sins and redemption is a monetary matter reserved for certain specified individuals covered by the transaction. The relation between God and man is legal and not moral. It is economic and juridical, not of grace. If the Holy Spirit, alone, is central — as is true in many charismatic groups — there is no objective guard to the emotional subjectivism which results and salvation is determined by psychological phenomena not objective facts. It is sentimental only. The only safe means of preserving redemption from rationalism, antinomianism and psychologism is to maintain a balanced view of the Trinity which includes both the objective and subjective and personal aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit. It will be seen how this relates to redemption teaching.

Who and what is the Holy Spirit? No convenient analogy helps to answer this question as the Father and Son analogy aids our minds in this case. A brief Biblical study may contribute some light.

Old Testament Concept

In the Old Testament the spirit represented the life and activity of a person and never an independent entity. The Spirit of God was the strength, vitality, guidance, life, of God. In Mosaic times the Spirit was the energy of God, not a separate person. There was no distinction between God and "His Spirit" as there is in the New Testament. Men,
possessed of "the Spirit of God" were men made capable by God of unusual strength, wisdom, leadership and sanctity. The prophets were "men of the Spirit", and were the mouth pieces of God, forth tellers and fore tellers.

The Messianic Kingdom was to be a nation in which everyone would be filled with the Spirit. The Kingdom was to be a Spirit possessed nation. Everyone would be possessed and everyone would be unusual in strength, wisdom and sanctity as a result. This common Possessor would give cohesion to the nation and make it capable of unusual and peculiar accomplishment. The Messiah - the Anointed One - would be permanently possessed of the Spirit of God giving him spectacular and tremendous physical and moral powers which would set him apart as a Leader before the world and he would be able to endue others by His own power. There were to be signs of this possession in both Leader and people; exstacy, visions, prophecy, healings, powers. It is no small wonder that the Jews sought after signs and found some hope in Jesus' acts of miracles but only disappointment and disillusionment in his death. The signs they looked for were materialistic not spiritual and it was because of this fact that Jesus rebuked them so roundly.

Old Testament teaching pointed to the true meaning of the coming of the Spirit but since spiritual truth is necessarily couched in analogy the truth was often misunderstood. Zechariah saw the seven lamps burning in the tabernacle and was told they were the eyes of the Lord which range through the earth and that it was "not by might nor by power but by my Spirit" that God was to conquer. These eyes gave the idea of God's immanence. The figure of an ever-widening river was common. "I will pour water on the thirsty and floods on the dry ground" (Isa. 61:3),
is an analogy of "pouring my Spirit on thy seed." Joel records God's promise, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh," under the analogy of the river or an abundant source of life-giving water. Hence, the woman of Samaria would understand something of the "living water springing up to everlasting life," and Jesus could preach convincingly to the crowd by saying, "If any man thirst let him come to me and drink," and "He that believeth on me out of him shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7). The people then would have known that which John supplies to those who would read his story outside the Jewish fold, "This spake he of the Spirit." They looked for just such a Messiah. John the Baptist's message was relevant, too, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It was announcement to the Jews and spoken in a language they understood.

Peter simply said in explanation of the events of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit had come. "This is what you have looked for. This is the Kingdom and these are the promised signs of it." The Hebrew people had been thoroughly prepared for this. Pentecost conformed to the pre-arranged pattern. Its' truth could not be denied by the alert Hebrew who looked for the redemption of Israel. The Holy Spirit was the life of God in men.

It is significant, perhaps, that the "signs" accompanying the coming of the Holy Spirit were to Gentiles different than to Jews. The signs meaningful to the Jew would not be so to the Gentile. Appropriate external signs remained in the church only so long as they validated the new order to those who needed the confirmation. To insist on their perpetuity beyond this point of need is absurd. Those who seek for these signs today simply fail to understand the function they served.
In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is introduced for the first time as a separate entity, an agent of God, with an independent will—a person with specific functions. He was involved in Mary's pregnancy. He assumed leadership in Jesus' life and ministry.

Jesus' baptism with the Spirit was highly symbolic for this was the external sign of Messiahhood calculated to introduce the people to the fact of the Kingdom which was at hand. Jesus' "signs and wonders" validated Him as the Spirit anointed Messiah and showed "his glory". In answer to John's question, "Are you He?" the answer that the sick are healed, the demons are cast out and the poor have the gospel preached to them was to say, "Yes, John, the signs are right. I am He." The signs were those expected by one filled with the promised Spirit.

So important and convincing were these signs that Jesus could cry out his most solemn and terrible warning to those who, seeing the signs, could dare to say, "this is the work of a demon and not the Holy Spirit." The nature of that rejection was blasphemy. It had no forgiveness, not because sin as such could not be forgiven but because the last trace of moral integrity was forfeited by this deliberate violation of revealed truth. The life and cohesion of the New Kingdom was the Holy Spirit and to attribute the Messianic signs to the demons, rendered a person incapable of further moral discrimination. "When He is come, he will testify of me." Christ cannot be known savingly, apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He provides sufficient "signs" to convince. That is His ministry. Apart from Christ there is no salvation. To interpret the Holy Spirit as a demon is simply to cut one's self off from
the atonement. It is "the lie".

Paul was concerned about this matter. The Corinthians had an abnormal desire for the powers, gifts, signs, and psychological exstacy which the Holy Spirit's indwelling was supposed to provide. To them, however, it was the showiness and emotion that intrigued them and they gloried in the spurious effects. Exstacy itself has no moral guards and the Corinthians had no spiritual discrimination. When, said Paul, in exstacy, one says, "Jesus is accursed" (precisely what they said of him in Mark's gospel), it has a demonic source. Only by the Holy Spirit can a man say, "Jesus is Lord." The test of the Holy Spirit's presence is not exstacy, but the sharpened awareness of Christ and his demands of Lordship on us.

The Holy Spirit is important to the inner life of men, to his moral life. Only in His illumination is it possible, in the midst of conflicting pseud-truths, to know The Truth. It is not that one Person or another of the God-head is more or less important ontologically than the others but that in distorting truth by personal rebellion the channel of spiritual life is destroyed and the Holy Spirit cannot guide into saving truth.

The Promise of the Father

Jesus fortold the coming of the Holy Spirit's coming to all men. He said that the Father had promised to give men the Holy Spirit. It was the "promise of the Father," that was important to Him. Strangely, Jesus did not seem to consider himself the ultimate gift to men, though salvation was through him alone, but he pointed to the spiritual immanency and dynamic of the promised Spirit who would bring the Christ-event
to completion. The Holy Spirit was the ultimate revelation of God because by Him Christ would be available spiritually to all men.

In Luke 11, Jesus answers a searching question about prayer, "teach us to pray." As is so commonly the case in the New Testament answers to simple questions became the occasion for profound analyses and teaching. The answer is bigger than the question. So here, Jesus was talking about real prayer, the ultimate concerns of prayer, and not, as is so often supposed, a discussion of how to obtain material things by prayer. Scholars believe that this whole 1-13 section is a unit of thought in contrast to Matthew's record. If this is true, the answer to the question. "Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," sets the purpose before us. Prayer, to Jesus, was union with God by the Holy Spirit and this is what he wanted the disciples to know. Remember, it was a characteristic of the Kingdom that the Holy Spirit would be available to everyone not just a select few. If we follow Matthews chronology it seems apparent that the subject of conversation just previous to this story had to do with Jesus casting demons out in the synagogue and the bitter criticism of the Jews. Significantly, the Lukan passage is followed by another like event. The subject under discussion was the kind of signs which would indicate the kingdom had come and one of them was the presence of the Holy Spirit. All the rich exegesis of this whole section must be reluctantly by-passed, except the point at issue. Prayer, in this kingdom, was a vital communication between God and men. The term "Father" indicates the approval with which God meets us. This is a fellowship and the greatest gain from prayer was not food but mutual love — the Holy Spirit -- God, Himself.
The great truth Jesus was teaching is that God wants to give Himself to us. Assurance of this is the deepest concern of this bit of teaching. Contrary to common interpretation, it seems more in keeping with the whole spirit of the passage to see in the analogy of the reluctant friend a contrast to God's ways. A friend may be slow in awakening and recognizing the urgency of our need, but even he will finally stir himself and give us what we ask for. Then Jesus clinches that point with the assurance of God's willingness in v. v. 9 and 10. It is not good exegesis to press the application farther than Jesus did. We are not taught to beg, but that God is more available than our friends.

But there is more to say. God is not just a friend, he is Father and as a father he is not only anxious to be loved and addressed and trusted but wants to give us better things than we ask for. The application of this analogy goes beyond the first one. God is not only instantly available to our cry but he answers our real need -- a need for himself. The whole point of prayer is fellowship with God, for our needs and responsibilities. The promise of the Holy Spirit is the answer to the question posed. The Holy Spirit is God in us. Prayer is not forcing a reluctant friend to give us what we need, but it is entering the presence of our Father who eagerly gives us what we most need - Himself. The highest reach of prayer is for God's Holy Spirit. That is the essence of Christian communion.

This Holy Spirit was promised by the Father. Jesus was to send Him forth. "I will send forth the promise of my Father," he said (Luke 2:26). "Wait for the promise of the Father," he continued (Acts 1:8), "for you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Apparently it is this event Jesus had in mind in Luke 11:13. The ful-
fillment was on the day of Pentecost when he (the ascended Christ) shed forth this, which ye both see and hear" (Acts 2:33) according to Peter.

God's promise of the Holy Spirit was not simply to the early Jewish disciples. Peter assured those whose hearts were quickened on the day of Pentecost, that "the promise of the Holy Spirit is to you and your children and to all that are afar off" (Acts 2:38), on the condition of repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. Paul said the Gentiles, through Christ, could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, as well as the Jews (Gal. 3:14). In this remarkable passage, "the blessing of Abraham," which is righteousness by faith, is equated with "the promise of the Spirit," made available by Jesus Christ. "By faith" is righteousness, and sonship, and "because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts . . ." (Gal. 4:6). We have here the identification of the promise to be both the Spirit and all that is available by the Spirit. The promise of the Father is not simply an "experience", but the soteriological content of all God's provision of grace. That is, when the Holy Spirit is come, He brings with Him all that God has provided for us. This is borne out by the passages having to do with the promises of God and those referring to the "Holy Spirit of promise."

The Function of the Holy Spirit

The function of the Holy Spirit is well defined. He was to abide with men in contrast to the temporary presence of the physical Jesus. But in no way was He to supplant the presence of Christ. Through the
Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "I will come to you" (John 14:18), obviously in a more effectual and universal sense than physical.

The Holy Spirit was to be a "Comforter" (King James translation) or Paraclete (Helper, Advocate) or Counselor (RSV) (Jn. 14:16). No English word quite conveys the meaning of the Greek term. There is nothing of the sentimental or emotional in the word. It, rather, suggests a change of a basic situation for the better. The presence of the Holy Spirit would create a new atmosphere in which to live out the implications of the gospel -- not easier external circumstances but a heart strengthened from within to meet any outside emergency. The disciples would not be tragically orphaned by Jesus' departure because, though absent physically, the Lord would be permanently present in the individual through the Spirit. All temporal and spacial limitations are transcended in this new order.

The Holy Spirit was the Spirit of Truth and the divine Teacher and prod to the memory (Jn. 14:26 and 16:13). He would glorify Christ, never speaking of Himself but witnessing to Christ always (John 15). He is always self-effacing, throwing light on the Saviour instead of Himself. When we become aware of Jesus and sense His tremendous claims upon us, we know (if we remember it), that the Holy Spirit is operating. He does not make men conscious of himself but of our Lord.

The Holy Spirit not only gives dynamic effectiveness to the Christian's witness (Acts 1:8) but, Himself assumes the responsibility of convicting and convincing the world. Jesus said, "If I had not come, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sins" (John 15:22), but when He left the Holy Spirit would universalize this knowledge, "He will convict of sin, and righteousness and judgment."
The Holy Spirit's coming hung on the finished work of Christ on the Cross. He could not come until Christ's atoning work was done. "If I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come to you" (John 16:7). John, in explaining Jesus' promise of the "rivers of living water" (John 7:39), said, "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Spirit came to a reconciled world and could not otherwise come.

Post Pentecost Teaching about the Holy Spirit

On the day of Pentecost, and following, the promised signs attested the phenomenon of the coming of the Spirit. Jesus became the central message of the Church. The power of articulation - utterance - was of the Spirit. That which was articulated was Jesus Christ the Lord.

In Jerusalem - (land of orthodox Jews) "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Jews - by blood and by proselyting - saw the signs and heard the message. They were amazed and "pricked in the heart," and asked what to do. Peter interpreted the events as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The Spirit was to be "poured out" on all flesh. The qualification for receiving the gift of the Spirit was repentance and baptism in Jesus' name.

Philip went to Samaria - (land of renegade Jews) and preached Christ to them with Kingdom signs validating his own ministry and the people believed. Peter and John were sent to them and under their ministry the Holy Spirit was given them with no recorded demonstration.

In Caesarea the Roman army officer, Cornelius, a Gentile who was a religious man (at least), was, with his household the recipient of the
Holy Spirit under Peter's preaching. The "tongues" mentioned seemed to be a convincing evidence to Peter and the Jews that this was indeed the gift of the Holy Spirit. Cornelius seemed to need no such confirmation. Subsequently to this experience they were given Christian baptism indicating that previous to this event they were not Christians, but simply religiously devout persons.

In Ephesus, Paul found disciples of John the Baptist, possibly made so through the ministry of Apollos, loyal to John but ignorant of Christian teaching. Paul saw something was not quite right with them. His question is more interesting than the English translation is quite capable of revealing. It served to "locate" them. The action of the aorist participle, (in this case, "believing"), is customarily understood to have preceded the main verb. Therefore, it can read, "When you became believers - or began believing, did you receive the Holy Spirit?" or (less literal but more true to the meaning), "What did baptism mean to you? By it, did you receive the Spirit?" The answer is illuminating, "We never heard about there being any Holy Spirit," or possibly, "We did not know the Holy Spirit had come." This immediately called for the question, "Then, to what were you baptized?" The reply, "John's baptism," revealed that these persons, had missed the point of John's teaching altogether, if, indeed, they had ever heard it.

Perhaps, they were among those who hearing John and being baptized by him continued their travels to other countries. No better way could be devised to appeal to these loyal supporters of John, of whom there were many (John 3:22-25; Luke 7:19; Matt. 11:12), than to ask about the results of their faith. Paul could then say, "John taught that his disciples should transfer their faith to Jesus Christ who was coming who
would in turn give them the Holy Spirit." The Ephesian disciples were then baptized in Jesus' name and under Paul's hand received the Holy Spirit with the most full validating demonstration of any other than the original event at Pentecost. The testimony of God to the Christian believers was the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's question to them was sharply diagnostic. It asks the most revelatory thing about faith. It distinguishes clearly between Christian and all other kinds of religious faith. Did your faith give you the Holy Spirit? It does not ask whether their faith in the Holy Spirit resulted in His coming. It points to the fact that only faith in Christ can result in the coming of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Holy Spirit validates Christian faith. If one believes in Jesus the Holy Spirit confirms that faith. Faith in Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit are truths that validate each other. That is, the fact that one does not have the Holy Spirit points without question to the fact that alleged faith is either not really faith or that the object of faith is other than Christ.

There is one other record of an initial filling with the Holy Spirit and it is the only record we have of an individual, alone, being filled. Ananias (Acts 9:17-18) came to blinded Saul with the express ministry of opening his eyes and that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit. Only his physical healing is then mentioned except that after he arose he was baptized. We may judge that he was filled with the Spirit but nothing is told us about the details of it, either as to what was required on his part or the results. It is interesting to note that baptism followed as it did with Cornelius' household.
Results of the Holy Spirit's Coming

The New Testament gives a few hints as to the results in the church and in individuals of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

There seems to be no semantic significance in distinguishing between the terms "filling", "baptized", "endued", "fell upon", "gave", "received", or "poured out." At least, in all cases, the terms are used interchangeably with no apparent difference in meaning. For instance, Jesus said that the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). He also said, according to Luke (2:49), that they would be endued (literally, clothed), with power and also that the Holy Spirit would come upon them (Acts 1:8). All of these terms (different Greek words) were used by Jesus as reported by Luke. Luke's term referring to the actual event was another word altogether, namely, filled (Acts 2:4), and Peter reported it as a falling upon. Incidentally, baptism in reference to the Holy Spirit's coming is only used in prospect never in retrospect or to describe the event of the Spirit's actual coming.

John the Baptist foretold the event by the use of the term, saying that Christ would be the one who baptized with the Holy Spirit and possibly his water baptism was an analogy for the spiritual event. Jesus is said to have used the word in referring to John's teaching, but he said, "you will be baptized" (Acts 1:5). Peter recalls this whole complex of usage in Acts 11:16 where the only other occasion of the use is recorded.

On the day of Pentecost the disciples were "filled". Peter's sermon quoted Joel's word, "poured out." The Samaritans "received". On Cornelius' household the Spirit "fell". Ananias prayed that Saul might be filled." Peter said God "gave" the Holy Spirit, uniting the "fell"
of the account of Cornelius experience and the "filling" of the Pente­
costal event to add up to three separate words for the same event. And
the Spirit "came on" the 12 men in Ephesus. A different word is used
in every case, yet the essential fact is the same, so it would be quite
impossible to press dogmatic distinctions between the words. It proves
to be equally difficult in all cases to show any difference on the
basis of grammar.

This points up a needed observation, namely, that these figures
of speech must not be unduely literalized. To do so caricatures into
absurdity the sublime truth which is being taught. Where spiritual
matters are taught no single figure of speech is used in Scripture, un­
doubtedly to prevent just such heavy-handed literalism into which we
are so apt to fall. For instance there are well over a quarter of a
hundred symbols of Christ's redemptive relationship to us, from one who
pays a ransom, through the birth analogy and marital relationship to a
ritual sacrificial offering and vital vine and branch figure. So here,
there are possibly a dozen different words to describe the same event,
each contributing something to the total concept.

However, the results of a vital union with the Holy Spirit are
not so difficult to understand. The references in which verbs are im­
portant follow. Peter, "having been filled (aorist, pass, participle),
with the Holy Spirit," spoke to those who had imprisoned him, with cour­
age and power (Acts 4:8). The disciples prayed for boldness to speak
while God was "stretching forth his hand to heal," and for"signs and
wonders" to be done through Jesus' name. And having prayed "the place
was shaken . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" and
spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:30-31). Paul, having been
filled (aorist, pass. part.) with the Holy Spirit fastened his eyes on the sorcerer (Acts 13:9) and rebuked him sorely and pronounced a curse on him. Paul and Barnabas, after being expelled from Antioch met with the disciples in Iconium where all were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." In this case, the passive imperfect indicative of the verb "filled" suggests a state of having begun and continuing from the past into the present. The following passages use an adjective or substantive so that the time element is not a matter of concern. In Acts 6:3 we are told the church sought a man "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom", and in v. 5, it is Stephen who is chosen as one "full of faith and the Holy Spirit." Later (7:55), it is Stephen "full of the Holy Spirit" who while being stoned to death, saw Jesus standing at God's right hand. Barnabas, also, was said to be a good man, "full of the Holy Spirit and faith" (11:24).

More specific statements are made in the Epistles regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" which had been given (aorist part.) to us (Rom. 5:5), said Paul, as a result of justification. To Titus he writes contrasting "the works of righteousness which we have done" with the true righteousness stemming from God's mercy, namely, "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit which he had poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour (3:5-6). To the Galatians, Paul writes that Christ came in the fulness of time (4:4-7), to redeem them under the law, in order that they might (contingent) receive the adoption of Sons. Because they became sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into "our hearts".
It is the Holy Spirit, as we have already noted, who assures us of our salvation, and whose presence is the test of salvation. In Romans Paul says that "the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God" (8:16). In the same chapter he says it is the presence of the indwelling Spirit that signifies that we are spiritual and not carnal (v. 9), and that the test of being Sons of God is being led of the Spirit. These are dynamic rather than formal tests of salvation. John, in his first letter strongly applies the tests of salvation identifying the presence of the Spirit with the love which we have. It is a solemn test by which to judge ourselves.

John, moreover, makes the attitude men take to Christ a test of the Spirit's indwelling (1:1-3), as does Paul in I Cor. 12.

The Holy Spirit is, also, a pledge, a seal, an option, an assurance of ownership. "Having believed in Christ," Paul writes (in Eph. 1:13-14), "ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Again, the aorist tenses in both main verb and participle indicate simultaneous action initiated in the past. This same sense of a pledge is found, also, in II Cor. 1:22 and 5:5, and the warning against grieving that Holy Person by whom we are sealed (Gal. 4:30).

Personal matters are the Spirit's concern. He convicts for sin (Jn. 16:8) and leads to truth (Jn. 16). By Him we are to put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13). He manifests Himself through those who are in the body of Christ (I Cor. 12). He leads the Christian (Philip, Paul). He leads the Church ("It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," and, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul"). The fellowship of Christians, to God and to each other is by the Holy Spirit. He is the
spiritual and vital and organismic unity and cohesion in the body of Christ. To violate this is to "destroy the temple of God which is holy" (I Cor. 5) for which individuals are themselves destroyed.

Receiving the Holy Spirit

How is the Holy Spirit received? What conditions must be met? John tells us in 7:39 that the Holy Spirit was to be given to those who believed on Jesus. To those who were quickened by conviction on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, "repent and be baptized . . . and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Peter, again, in another early sermon (5:32), disturbs the complacency of the orthodox Jews by saying that it is to those who obey that the Holy Spirit has been given. Peter later reasons, "If God gave them [the Holy Spirit] like he did unto us when we believed . . . (Acts 11:17). The promise of the Spirit is through faith, Paul says (Gal. 3:14), and believing is the condition in Eph. 1:13. In a word, faith in Christ is the condition of receiving the Holy Spirit with the added commentary that faith includes obedience. There is no grammatical evidence to indicate that there is a time lapse between the inception of faith and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The intervening time element is a theological problem. This much must, however, be noted that no other condition than faith and obedience is mentioned anywhere as being the necessary prerequisite to the coming of the Spirit. Certainly faith is logically prior but not necessarily chronologically separated from the coming of the Holy Spirit according to the N.T.

Ought believers to seek to be filled with the Spirit? Of this much we can be exegetically sure. The disciples were commanded to "tarry
until", wait for (not ask for, or seek), the Holy Spirit, according to the text. He was promised and He was a gift, and faith in the One who promised assured them. Peter and his company were surprised when the Holy Spirit came on the house of Cornelius. Ananias came to Saul to be instrumental in giving him the Holy Spirit. Saul did not seek it. In fact, we have no command anywhere to seek or ask for the Holy Spirit, nor are there any occasions related in the New Testament where by the direct prayer for the Holy Spirit he came on those praying. The only evidence that it is in order to ask for the Holy Spirit is in Luke 11:13 and this passage must not be neglected, though it must not be interpreted too far afield of its own particular teaching or in such a way to do violence to the more specific teaching abundant everywhere. Probably, it would be safe to say that under the conditions given above, and with a deep understanding of what is involved, the highest reach of prayer is to ask for the Spirit. Certainly, no more holy matter could be transacted in the inner heart of man than to prepare for and receive the Holy Spirit. If this is the ultimate in personal prayer life it is in perfect keeping with all subsequent teaching about the abiding Holy Spirit. However, to substitute a prayer asking for the Holy Spirit, for the more difficult prayer for forgiveness and cleansing is nowhere in Scripture given a warrant.

One more segment of truth remains to be noted in relation to the Holy Spirit. Aside from the single Lukan reference to a praying for Him, the exhortations regarding the life of the Holy Spirit within us, are relative to maintaining His presence. In no case, is it ever suggested, let alone taught, that the Holy Spirit's presence or sealing is in any sense automatic or on non-moral conditions. We have already noted that
blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is impossible of forgiveness. This blasphemy is not verbal or against the person of the Holy Spirit as one would swear in Christ's name. It is turning the truth He teaches into a lie. It is deliberately interpreting light as darkness, Christ as a demon. It is never a sin of ignorance or doubt or despair but always a sin of studied rejection and deliberate distortion of moral truth. A study of the few passages that deal with it indicates that mainly believers commit it since it is against the light He brings that this particular sin is committed. It is peculiarly and solemnly the possible sin of a once enlightened Christian.

Paul's Ephesian appeal, "be filled with the Spirit," must be taken in context, not separate from it. It lies in the midst of an exhortation to Christians, practical and earnest. Do not be foolish in these evil days, Paul says, but understand what God's will is. The contrast is the foolish rioting of the drunken and the glorious spiritual strength of the Spirit filled man. This exhortation is not that a believer without the Spirit should become filled with Him, but that the Christian should maintain the Spirit filled life once begun in the past. This is indicated by the tense of the verb "filled", it being an imperative in the imperfect indicative, indicating an action begun in the past and continuing to the present. This tense would not be proper were this a command to now begin an action.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul's urgent appeal is to "walk in the Spirit" which distinguishes the believer from those who "walk in the flesh". These two walks cannot be maintained in the same person at the same time. The Spirit-filled life is not a static thing but exists in continuing and pursuing the life of the Spirit. Only in this
active life can the lust of the flesh be avoided. There are two ways and only two, "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the spirit reap eternal life." (6:8). This absolute contrast is also described in Romans 8. "Quench not the Spirit," Paul told the Thessalonians and apparently meant that the energy of the Spirit as He worked through human personality was to be honored and cherished. This exhortation is to believers and cannot well be interpreted as a rejecting of the Holy Spirit's conviction for sin which a sinner feels as is so often the use made of it in the evangelistic pulpit.

The most explicit counsel is given in Eph. 4 regarding the believers attitude toward the Spirit. To "grieve" Him according to the context would be to fail to "put away ... the old man," and to "put on the new man." It would be to fail to put away "the lie" and to speak truth and to "put away bitterness ... and malice" and "to be kind one to another." It is these things that the Spirit is prompting us to do. To refuse to do them is to forfeit His presence.

In a word, it seems to best express Biblical teaching to say that, rather than praying for the Holy Spirit, it is the believers moral obligation to studiously seek to create a place in his heart and life suitable for the dwelling of the Spirit. Whatever hinders His abiding must be put off. This care and sensitivity must be developed and maintained and exercised throughout life.

This leads to the further observation that the coming of the Holy Spirit marked the end of the alienation existing between man and God. The Holy Spirit is the bond of fellowship in the God-head. Now fellowship can be a proper word to describe the divine-human relationship.
When the estrangement ended in the body and spirit of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:15-22), God was again approachable — immanent in the world, morally. God's love (abstract) becomes grace in Christ (concrete) and fellowship through the Holy Spirit (spiritual). The intention is made possible of a restored moral union with God from whom sin had isolated us. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Cor. 5), and this reconciliation is applied — made available — by the Holy Spirit. In Him, all the benefits of grace are available. Everything the atonement is objectively and provisionally is made personal and possible by the restoration of the Holy Spirit's activity in men.

The Spirit's field of operation is in the inner hearts of men. He strives, leads, convicts, enlightens, testifies of Christ, always forcing moral tensions and demanding moral decisions in the center of responsible consciousness. He forces personal matters. The Spirit's activity is the most deeply personal relationship possible to men. He preserves the objective atonement from abstraction and artificiality and antinomianism. In the ministry of the Holy Spirit all intermediaries, ritualistic, legal, sacerdotal, organizational or creedal, are pushed aside. In His presence men's souls are immediately confronted by God. This is not metaphysical — or mystical, but moral in the ultimate sense. The Spirit applies truth morally, not simply intellectually as thought or empirically as experience, or moralistically, as law. It is a Whole Person to whole person confrontation.

This immediate personal confrontation — (not identity, or loss of personal awareness) — was impaired by the fall. Divine alienation was not withdrawal of God's creative or preserving power but withdrawal of fellowship — a fellowship which could not exist in the fact of moral
rebellion. The law was the form of fellowship, but not its essence, and hence only a "stop-gap". In Christ the moral gap was closed because in Himself both the parties concerned were vitally united. In the Spirit this moral union is potentially universalized and the door opened to personal moral union with God. All impersonal and temporary aids and forms ended in Christ's involvement with the race and death on the cross. In the Spirit, the immediate personal confrontation is again established and the responsibility now lies in the hearts of men. The Biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit emphasizes a personal responsibility that robs the doctrine of the imputed merit of Christ of all its false hope. No moral being can borrow the personal righteousness of another to substitute for his own personal responsibility. "Moral" has no meaning in this sort of intellectual game. But Christ's obedience has opened the door for our own obedience to mean what it should - not as "works of righteousness" but as the minimal moral responsibility of rational man. Our obedience simply is a sign of moral integrity. We would dishonor Christ's work by our acts and attitudes were we to meet it with less than our moral minimal. And that Minimal is made possible by the Holy Spirit. In fact, every step in grace is made possible by the intimate personal ministry of the Holy Spirit. The atonement provided by Christ may be free but it is not cheap.

The progressive revelation of God and His redemptive will, to which the ministry of the Holy Spirit is the climax, is not primarily an intellectual education. It is rather a moral revival which leaves no part of life untouched. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the more objective aspects of revelation relevant to the continuing moral life of the race. Revelation, as the written word or the living Lord, can
never become static, dated, irrelevant, so long as the Holy Spirit personalizes it. The New Testament makes us aware of the importance of this truth and warns us, as Jesus did, of the danger of sinning against the Holy Spirit. The lie of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5) was to the Holy Spirit and the consequent punishment was a sign to the new church of the seriousness of such a sin. Stephan accused the Jews of resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers had done (Acts 7:51). Paul's only touch of severe warning in the otherwise genial first letter to the Thessalonians is that those who reject the call to holiness actually reject God who has given us His Holy Spirit. There is an echo of this same warning in the second letter. Since it is God's original plan to save us by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, to not love truth is to be "damned". Only through the Spirit of Truth is salvation possible - to reject truth is to quench the Spirit and close the door to hope. The letter to the Hebrews is full of solemn warnings against apostacy. Heb. 6:1-8 is one passage and 10:29 another of shocking import. Both teach that to reject the ministry of the Spirit is to forfeit the protection of the blood of Christ because it is precisely for the sanctification of the people through the Holy Spirit that Jesus died.

The Test of His Presence

A practical question remains, how is one to know when the Holy Spirit has come? and how may one know it is the Holy Spirit who has come? The answers have been suggested already but must be made explicit.

The answers to these two questions are closely related but will be distinguished for the sake of clarity. Fully aware of the theological expressions which we may seem to be challenging, it must be said that
at this point the importance of how we pray for the Spirit becomes a vital matter. If it is the Holy Spirit that we pray for directly, we must also be able to judge whether it is the Holy Spirit who has come or another spirit as "an angel of light". By thus praying, we are supposing that when He comes we will know it. How can we know it? Only by way of the ordinary physical and psychical channels over which every other knowledge comes. We are not equipped to distinguish the source and character of the matters that come to us via our senses, apart from some objective reference. A good many pleasant emotions are able to possess us and history is full of those who have interpreted these as God's will only to be lead blindly into tragedy and disgrace.

We feel that the failure of the Scriptures to give us a clear command to pray for the Spirit is a protection against our own incapacity to make the necessary discrimination at the point of sense experience. The Scriptural failure, moreover, to tell us how we could know when we were filled, by some emotional demonstration or spectacular manifestation is in the interest of our protection from the spurious. Since the Spirit is intangible we need tangible assurance. Otherwise, we have no test at all, therefore some have imagined that speaking in tongues or shouting or some other "evidence" would give the assurance necessary. But it is obvious that any manifestation of the emotions or subjective conviction of the mind can be duplicated in any one of a number of ways and is duplicated constantly in ways far outside the religious life. The Holy Spirit's presence cannot be compared with the erratic emotions of the sub-conscious though the effects of both may "feel" the same.
The direct question regarding the assurance of the identity of the Holy Spirit is akin to another question which will be answered in the proper place. "How does one know when the 2nd blessing has been experienced?" Both questions require an answer, and a good one but if the answer is given on the level of the question, the same pit-falls will be encountered — a dangerous and irrational subjectivism without any rational or moral guards.

There are two tests of the presence of the Holy Spirit and neither of them can be counterfeited. The first is a pre-occupation with and a love for Christ. When we are filled with a sense of the nearness of Christ, the Holy Spirit has come. When we love God, the Holy Spirit is by that identified. We know He has come and we know it is He. But how do we know Christ? Not by mystical contemplation, all the testimony of the aesthetic saints to the contrary notwithstanding. We have an objective source of knowledge - the Scriptures, and this must absolutely determine any content of what we profess to know. True, the objective record is not, itself, Christ and He comes alive only as the Holy Spirit illuminates Him. But this serves only to emphasize a most important point. One does not know the living Christ by absorption only in the historical and physical facts of his existence. As important as this is it is not any more than what one could learn without the Holy Spirit. Mysticism is irrational. Biblical literalism and historicism is sterile rationalism. "When He is come," the moral imperative of the Lord Jesus Christ is pressed home to the "quick". Jesus was much more than history. He was - and is - the ultimate in moral demand. The Scriptures objectify all of this and the Holy Spirit personalizes it. There can be no counterfeiting this.
The second test follows naturally from the first and elaborates it. When the Holy Spirit comes, moral readjustments invariably accompany His coming. There is a current emphasis on the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in evangelical circles. This is as it must be. But one often misses the moral dimension of the presence of the Spirit. It is well to pray for the Holy Spirit and acknowledge our helplessness without Him but He is not a Power we may coerce to our will, however spiritual and fine our plans. When we ask the Holy Spirit to convict sinners it is not to be imagined that we may escape the same searching exploration into our own motives and procedures. We do not bid the Holy Spirit, however humbly we may phrase our request. He bids us, for He cannot leap over our willfulness to do our will for us. If He comes, our whole inner life of personal responsibility will square away to His approval. We do not need the Holy Spirit for the execution of highly organized machinery, advertising, psychological effects, turning big wheels. We can do that and our hidden, wrong motives may never show in all the fanfare. But, when we ask the Holy Spirit to come, He wants to see the private records, He insists that we be good. And, this, only the Holy Spirit can do and the goodness He helps us to maintain cannot be counterfeited.

How can we know when the Holy Spirit comes? We are assured by the Word of God that when we repent and believe and obey, God will give Him to us. There is no burden of proof on us any more as to the identity of Him who comes. What is the proof of His presence? When we love God and do His will and increase in moral sensitivity and genuine humility, then we know He is near. When we hate sin and love righteousness it is the Holy Spirit who is abiding. When Christ is Lord — actually control-
ling us, -- it is by the Holy Spirit. He never calls attention to Himself. He spotlights Christ. He will not remain in a heart which is satisfied to dull the edge of the distinctions between right and wrong. He quickens the moral conscience. He forces moral tensions. He demands moral decision. It is He who confronts us with the disquieting presence of Christ. He heals, not by sentimental comfort but by purging. He it is who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. In His fellowship we are cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Faith is the transfer of the moral center of life from self to God. It is the Holy Spirit who lights the dark corners of motive and forces us to the clean commitment which is faith. Neither faith nor the ministry of the Holy Spirit is less than wholly personal and absolutely moral.