

A Quarterly Religious Journal
(Presented by email)

“LIGHT FOR OUR AGE”

Bob Oliver, editor

(Please use the following email to contact me.)

*Due to the fact that I retired this spring, I am going to have you
contact me at my personal e-mail site:*

boboliver32446@gmail.com

July, 2011

**Volume 3
Issue #3**

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119:105*

Feature One: Editorial

Part 4: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today

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

Sometimes we let our minds get bogged down with unimportant matters and miss out on the great truths. I have read with interest some of the controversies as to whether the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) is something He gives, or is Himself. Although this is an interesting subject, I believe we sometimes get bogged down on topics such as this, and lose the great lessons on the Holy Spirit.

We know we receive something from the Holy Spirit. That promise is joined to our remission of sins in the text. What does the Holy Spirit give? I believe the Bible does tell us in Romans 8:10 “And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.” Notice the phrase “but the Spirit is life”. Without the Spirit within us there could be no life. That harmonizes with Romans 6:3-5. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:”

In this text we see the death of our “old man of sin”. What do you do with a dead body? You bury it. When we die to sin we bury the body in water (which imitates the burial of Christ in his death.) In this burial we come in contact with the blood of Christ (...baptized into his death) Then as Jesus was raised from literal death to an eternal life, so the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life, for “the Spirit is life...”. Without the Spirit there can be no life. When we can answer how our own spirit resides in our body we can then answer how the Holy Spirit resides in our body. We do know that he resides within the body of a Christian. 1 Corinthians 3:16 states, “Know ye

know that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

We know from this text that the Holy Spirit was dwelling within the Christians of Corinth. We know that they apparently did not know that He was dwelling within them. We also know that these brethren were not perfect in their following of the teachings of Christ. They were divided, they were willing to bring brethren to law before the unjust, they misused the Lord's Supper, and they had many other problems. Still, the Holy Spirit was within them. Paul writes to the Ephesian brethren in Ephesians 4:30 to "...grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...?"

The Holy Spirit is not going to give us any new information according to Galatians 1:8 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Therefore, there is nothing new that the Holy Spirit will give us. But we do see some of his work in Romans 8:26. Here Paul writes, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*."

There are times we are at prayer and our hearts are troubled by deep emotion. We know we need God, but we really don't know what to say. Part of the work of the Spirit today is to pray to the Father on our behalf.

We also know that the Holy Spirit gave us God's message that we have contained in the Bible. In Mark 13:11 Jesus tells the men that will be his apostles to "take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak

ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.” It was the work of the Holy Spirit that gave us God’s word. Jesus also promised us in Matthew 24:35 that “my words shall not pass away”. The Holy Spirit saw to it that the words of the Lord were recorded for us, and He sees to it that they will always be on the earth.

Remember what Jesus said to the apostles in John 14:16-17
“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The Greek word “lambano” is here translated “receive”. The meaning is actually, the world cannot take the Holy Spirit by force as it took Jesus by force. The enemies of Christ cannot see the Holy Spirit, and they do not know the Holy Spirit. He is not here in the flesh as was Jesus.

Notice, however, that the Holy Spirit is to remain here forever. That is his work..

Feature 2: an article by R. C. Oliver

July, 1955 edition of *Light*

I am sure that most of my readers are aware of the fact that I do firmly believe that except a man is baptized (buried) in water, for the remission of his sins, he cannot be saved.

Therefore in continuing my series on *Why I Believe*, I shall, in this issue of *Light* set forth some of my more salient reasons for believing that baptism is essential to your spiritual life, both now and forever, But before I point out why I believe baptism to be essential, I wish first to consider what

I recognize to be two notions of error which have associated themselves with out subject.

The Merit Is In The Water

First, I should like to point out that I do not believe that there is any particular merit in the water itself; it is not the water *per se* that saves one; rather, it is God who saves him upon his obedience to this commandment of initiation which God has given.

In order to illustrate, I suggest that you turn and read the entire fifth chapter of 2 Kings. In this chapter we are told that the leper, Naaman, was instructed to dip himself seven times in the Jordan, in order to be cleansed of his leprosy. At first, Naaman was very angry, just like many people are today when they are first told that they too must be dipped in water in order to be saved, but later he regained his better judgment and went and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, and when he did that, “his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” –2 Kings 5:14. Though he could not have been healed apart from the water, yet who now is so foolish as to think there was, or is, such medical value in the waters of the Jordan as will heal a man of leprosy? I am sure that none does, for if he did, he would begin immediately to bottle the waters of the Jordan, and send it all over the world as a “sure cure” for leprosy. It was God who healed him upon his obedience. You ask, “Why then did he have to dip in the Jordan if the water didn’t heal him? He had to dip in the water for the same reason we must be baptized. God commanded it! This is one way God has through which he tests men’s faith. In rejecting the water test, Naaman proved to himself and to everyone else that he did not believe what God had said. And just as long as Naaman didn’t believe, just that long he refused to dip in the Jordan; but when he believed God’s promise, he went and dipped himself

and was healed, Please notice, however, that he was not healed the very moment he believed; rather, through his faith in God's promise he was brought to obedience, and, upon his obedience, God healed him,. In like manner, when one rejects baptism today, such action is proof that that one does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16), and just as long as one does not believe on Christ, just that long will he refuse to recognize baptism as essential to his salvation; but just as soon as he believes on Jesus Christ, he will then be baptized as Jesus commands him to be, and thus he will be saved. However, just as Naaman was not healed the very moment that he believed God's promise, neither are we saved the very moment that we believe; rather, as it was with Naaman, even so it is with us. Through our faith in Jesus Christ we are brought to obedience in baptism, and, upon this obedience, God saves us from all our sins that are past. Though we cannot be saved without water, yet it is not the merit of the water that saves us, rather it is God who saves us upon our obedience to his command.

“Baptismal Regeneration”

Another common error entertained by some upon the general subject of baptism is that called “Baptismal Regeneration”. As it is generally used, this phrase is understood to mean that one can be saved by baptism alone. This the Bible does not teach! We are not saved by baptism alone; however everyone, including both Catholics and Protestants, who teaches the essentiality of infant baptism is guilty of this error.

It is true that the Bible speaks of the “washing of regeneration”, or a “bath of regeneration”, and baptism in water is here meant, but it is neither taught nor implied in this text, (Titus 3:5), nor in any other text, that baptism alone will save a man. If the Bible taught “baptismal regeneration” then I would encouraging the baptism of grown men whether they wanted to be

baptized or not.

In Titus 3:5 it is affirmed that through God's mercy and grace he has saved us by the use of, not one, but two instruments namely: *baptism* and the *Holy Spirit*. This is in perfect agreement with Jesus in John 3:5, and with Peter in Acts 2:38. God does not promise to save man by water alone. Neither does he promise to save him by His Spirit alone. When a man is born of both "water" and the "Spirit", the Lord affirms that this man is saved.

Therefore though I do not believe in either the meritorious value of the water, or salvation by baptism alone, yet I do believe that baptism is essential to your salvation in Christ.

(Next quarter the article will continue as the author states: "I shall endeavor to introduce such texts and arguments as will show to all honest hearts why I believe what I do about baptism.")

Feature 3: Our Communication: The Art of Being a Good Listener ---

Ordinarily when you think of teaching public speaking, the focus is on the art of speaking. There is another aspect that demands serious study as well. That is the art of listening. Speaking is of no effect without someone to listen. Being a good listener is more valuable than gold. If you listen to others you gain the benefit of their experiences and knowledge. But it is not always easy. It is an art that must be cultivated. Consider some of the problems that keep people from being good listeners.

When we are in a conversation with one or more people our focus is often on what we want to say next rather than keeping our focus on what others are saying. If the group is large, and we are just listening to a speaker, there is a tendency to "chase rabbits". By that I mean letting a word or

thought spoken by the speaker get our mind off the track of his thought, and we begin thinking about something entirely different.

In either case, we lose. We lose understanding what the speaker is trying to say in both situations. Learn to focus on what others are saying. Often they will greatly expand our understanding.

Feature 4: Bible Questions

Last quarter I answered a question concerning Paul's vow. I received an excellent response that I will include it in this issue.

Bob,

Thanks for your journal! I enjoy reading it each time.

Here's another thought regarding Paul taking a "vow." While this was obviously some level of a vow or commitment, I doubt that it was the Nazerite vow. People often conclude that this was the Nazerite vow because the shaving of his hair is mentioned, and because the Nazerite vow is very well-known. But that vow also required the complete abstention from the fruit of the vine, which would have made it impossible for Paul to partake of the Lord's supper--a restriction to which he would not have submitted.

I appreciate your writing efforts, and I appreciate your father's work as well!

--Bob Veil

From Tennessee comes the following: "Must one attend services of the church in order to be saved? J.W.

The Hebrew writer is, in Hebrews 10.23, exhorting the church to "hold fast the profession of our faith," and then he proceeds to show us what to do,

and what not to do, in order to this steadfastness. One of the negative requirements is: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Now, in that all who are spiritually minded will acknowledge that the inspired writers wrote the Lord's commandments (I Cor. 14:37), and in that keeping the commands of the Lord is a prerequisite to our "entering in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14), we must conclude that attending the assemblies of the saints is essential to our salvation.

Humor: (Contributed by brother Larry Foy)

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means? The son replied, "I do know!" "Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?" "That's easy, Daddy..." the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'

In Closing:

In the Master's service,

Bob Oliver