

## 1. The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit

**Biblical material:** Gen. 1:26; 3:22; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; 2 Cor. 13:14.

### Quotes:

- Every time we say, “I believe in the Holy Spirit,” we mean that we believe that there is a living God able and willing to enter human personality and change it. *J B Phillips*
- Spell this out in capital letters: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON. He is not enthusiasm. He is not courage. He is not energy. He is not the personification of all good qualities, like Jack Frost is the personification of cold weather. Actually, the Holy Spirit is not the personification of anything..... He has individuality. He is one being and not another. He has will and intelligence. He has hearing. He has knowledge and sympathy and ability to love and see and think. He can hear, speak, desire, grieve and rejoice. He is a Person. *A W Tozer*

### Questions

Why is it important to think that the Holy Spirit has personality? How does this affect the way we relate to Him? What of the concept of divinity? When thinking of God, is the Spirit often left out? How do we see the divinity of the Spirit in practice? Frequently the Spirit is seen only as an adjunct to the Father and Son. How can this be corrected? What of the picture of God?

### Discussion

A 1997 Barna survey revealed that 61% of US residents agreed with the statement that the Holy Spirit is “a symbol of God’s presence or power, but is not a living entity.” Bearing in mind the high level of Christian belief in the US, such a conclusion is startling. However it does reflect the widespread confusion about the Holy Spirit and his role in Christian life. Misunderstandings over the nature and character of the Spirit are extensive, and these lessons provide an opportunity for a very necessary corrective.

When God determined to “make man in our image,” already the “plurality” of God is established. The Holy Spirit is identified right there in the beginning of the Genesis account, and has been intimately involved with us and this world’s history, whether he has always been recognized or not.

Jesus’ command to his disciples to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit is also illustrative of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. But what does it mean? Is it simply a formula to be observed? What happens if this command is not always followed to the letter? How exactly is the Spirit involved in all of this, and if he does not get the credit, what then?

1 Cor. 12:1-11 speaks of the work and influence of the Holy Spirit. How would you interpret this—what does it mean, and how do we apply this? As so often is the case when it comes to matters concerning the Spirit, it seems there are more questions than answers!

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14 NIV. Does this verse set out the different spheres of operation of the members of the Godhead, or is this just a comment from Paul? Was he setting out specific theology here, or what? Most of all, how does the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit impact the issues in the great controversy?

## Comment

“While most Christians think of the person of the Holy Spirit as being a He or It, Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists, and others, believe that the Holy Spirit is a feminine Motherly Being, deriving this from the Hebrew language, rather than Greek or Latin. They also believe that ancient (and modern) Goddesses, and the veneration of Mary by Catholics, are derived from this truth. They sometimes ascribe the name ‘Sophia’ to the Holy Spirit.”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy\\_Spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit)

“Wherefore, if Holy Scripture proclaims that God is love, and that love is of God, and works this in us that we abide in God and He in us, and that hereby we know this, because He has given us of His Spirit, then the Spirit Himself is God, who is love. Next, if there be among the gifts of God none greater than love, and there is no greater gift of God than the Holy Spirit, what follows more naturally than that He is Himself love, who is called both God and of God? And if the love by which the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father, ineffably demonstrates the communion of both, what is more suitable than that He should be specially called love, who is the Spirit common to both? For this is the sounder thing both to believe and to understand, that the Holy Spirit is not alone love in that Trinity, yet is not specially called love to no purpose.” *Augustine, On the Trinity XV. 18.32, 19.37.*

“In his intimate life, God ‘is love,’ the essential love shared by the three divine Persons: personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Therefore he, “searches even the depths of God,” as uncreated Love-Gift. It can be said that in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons, and that through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of this self-giving, of this being-love. He is Person-Love. He is Person-Gift. Here we have an inexhaustible treasure of the reality and an inexpressible deepening of the concept of person in God, which only divine Revelation makes known to us.

“At the same time, the Holy Spirit, being consubstantial with the Father and the Son in divinity, is love and uncreated gift from which derives as from its source (Fons vivus) all giving of gifts vis-a-vis creatures (created gift): the gift of existence to all things through creation; the gift of grace to human beings through the whole economy of salvation. As the Apostle Paul writes: ‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.’” *The salvific self-giving of God in the Holy Spirit. Excerpted from Pope John Paul II’s encyclical letter “Lord and Giver of Life,” Dominum et Vivificantem, 18 May 1986.*

## Ellen White Comments

Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, a new principle of mental and spiritual power was to be brought to man, who, through association with divinity, was to become one with God. {UL 191.3}

But through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, humanity may be a co-worker with divinity. {YRP 137.1}

Christ came to this world and stood before men with the hoarded love of eternity. The whole ocean of divine love was flowing forth from its great center. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were working in behalf of man. Every power in the heavenly universe was put into activity to carry forward the plan of redemption. {RH, January 7, 1902 par. 7}

...we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person... {2SAT 136.6}

## 2. The Holy Spirit Symbolized in Scripture

**Biblical material:** Matt. 3:11; 10:16; John 1:9, 32; 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 1:20-22; 1 Pet. 1:22.

### Quotes:

- The Spirit has his own existence and personal function in the inner life of God and the economy of salvation: his task is to bring about the unity of the human race in the Body of Christ, but he also imparts to this unity a personal, and hence diversified, character.  
*John Meyendorff*
- If the Holy Spirit guides us at all, he will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them. *George Muller*

### Questions

How much do we understand from Scripture of the Holy Spirit? Why is he so invisible? What is the problem with the use of symbols? Which aspects of the symbols are we supposed to take as explaining the Spirit? If the Scripture explains the Spirit and the Spirit explains the Scripture, is this not circular reasoning? And in the end, what difference does this make?

### Discussion

Some of the texts adduced regarding the symbols used for the Holy Spirit stretch the text, to say the least. Matt 3:11 refers to the Holy Spirit and fire, but does not link or equate them. Matt 10:16 simply refers to serpents and doves, and the Holy Spirit is not even mentioned. John 1:32 references John saying the Holy Spirit came down “like a dove,” without explaining what this means. John 1:9 refers to light, without mentioning the Spirit. And so it goes. It is a surprise to some that so much of what we assume about the Spirit is not actually there in Scripture.

Jesus links the Spirit to streams of living water, without any further explanation. 2 Cor 1 states that the Spirit is a deposit, a guarantee. And 1 Peter 1:22 says nothing about the Spirit at all.

On the surface, then, there are precious few explanations of the Spirit and his actions. He is like the wind, may be manifested in some way as tongues of fire, descends as a dove, breathes into (inspires), and so on. But like the wind, he is hard to see, define, or pin down. No wonder there is much confusion as to his work, nature, and even existence.

If, as the lesson suggests, the Holy Spirit is illustrated by symbols such as fire, wind, water, oil, candlesticks etc., what is the likely result in our minds of identifying with such non-personal images?

One of the main problems is that we can conceive of Father and of Son, but an invisible Spirit is just that—ethereal, numinous, and insubstantial. Hard to have much of a concrete idea of such a personality. So while there may be a few symbols, such symbols are not explained, and we are left to try to understand what aspects they are supposed to convey.

This leads to the wider concepts of how we are to read and understand Scripture generally. Frequently made assertions are made: “I take the Bible just as it reads,” “I believe in verbal inspiration,” “I know the interpretation is right when I get a warm feeling in my heart,” etc. Here we are trying to understand what the Bible is saying about the Holy Spirit and asking the Holy Spirit to help us understand! It would be easy to conclude that we should “just believe” without asking questions as to what we should believe...

Some rest content in that they have extensive acquaintance with the words of the Bible. But as Ellen White points out, that is not enough. Always the search for meaning and

understanding is paramount. Without a desire to understand and apply, the Bible remains just words, which though fascinating, are not effective. As Jesus told his hearers—you search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life, but they are they that testify of me. All too often we also can search the Scriptures because we think by doing so we gain, but without meeting the Christ of the Scriptures are search is in vain. Mere words cannot save—it is only as we find the God who is revealed there that we can come to know and trust him as he truly is.

**Comment:**

The following is the Adventist church’s current description regarding the Holy Spirit. Since we do not believe in creedal formulas, and that truth continues to be revealed, and that human words can always be improved upon, are there areas here you think could be better said?

**Fundamental Belief #5. The Holy Spirit:** God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)

**Ellen White Comments**

It is not enough for us to know and respect the words of the Scriptures. We must enter into the understanding of them, studying them earnestly, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Christians will reveal the degree to which they do this by the healthiness of their spiritual character. We must know the practical application of the Word to our own individual character-building. We are to be holy temples, in which God can live and walk and work. Never must we strive to lift ourselves above the servants whom God has chosen to do His work and to honor His holy name. “All ye are brethren.” Let us apply this Word to our individual selves, comparing scripture with scripture. {5BC 1135.5}

The student of the Sabbath-school should feel as thoroughly in earnest to become intelligent in the knowledge of the Scriptures as to excel in the study of the sciences. If either is neglected, it should be the lessons of the six days. The injunction of our Saviour should be religiously regarded by every man, woman, and child who professes his name. Teachers in the Sabbath-school have a missionary field given them to teach the Scriptures, not, parrot like, to repeat over that which they have taken no pains to understand. “They are they which testify of me”—the Redeemer, him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. If teachers are not imbued with the spirit of truth, and care not for the knowledge of what is revealed in the word of God, how can they present the truth in an attractive light to those under their charge? The prayer of Christ for his disciples was, Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. If we are to be sanctified through a knowledge of the truth found in the word of God, we must have an intelligent knowledge of his will therein revealed. We must search the Scriptures, not merely rush through a chapter and repeat it, taking no pains to understand it, but we must dig for the jewel of truth which will enrich the mind, and fortify the soul against the wiles and temptations of the arch-deceiver. {RH, November 28, 1878 par. 7}

### 3. Jesus and the Holy Spirit

**Biblical material:** Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Matt. 1:18-20; 3:16,17; Luke 1:35; John 3:3-8, 34; Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14.

#### Quotes:

- The Holy Spirit does his work by making Christ present among us, and Christ can do his work on earth only by being present in his Holy Spirit. *Regin Prenter*
- We may take it as a rule of the Christian life that the more we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the more we shall glorify the Lord Jesus. *Frank Gabelein*
- God hath made you men; do not renounce your reason where you should chiefly use it. *Richard Baxter*

#### Questions

When did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit? Why would Jesus as God need the Holy Spirit? How does Jesus' interaction with the Holy Spirit reveal God? What aspects of God does Jesus show through the ministry of the Holy Spirit? How does Jesus explain the work of the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit also reveal the truth about God?

#### Discussion

As the lesson explains (Sab. pm), Jesus' earthly life was intimately connected with the Holy Spirit. He was there at Jesus' conception, at his baptism, at his temptations, and so on. The first question is obvious—why would Jesus need the Holy Spirit if Jesus is also God?

In connection with the virgin birth, the lesson (Monday) makes the observation “what is faith other than belief in what we can't fully understand.” How would you agree or disagree with this statement? While it is clear that no one can explain the processes involved in God taking human form, does that then mean we have to give up the search for understanding and simply call this “faith”? If we accept that faith really means trust, then we surely can trust without abandoning the search for understanding. All too often faith is equated with “believing what you know ain't so,” to use the words of Mark Twain, with terrible results for all concerned.

As so many have understood, the “dichotomy” between faith and reason is an illusion. Faith needs reason, reasons needs faith, as both terms are properly defined. One primary theme in Jesus' revelation of the divine is a God who makes sense. If we deny this then we turn the gospel on its head and make Jesus' coming futile. Yet in the vast majority of religions, including Christianity, reason is downplayed, even derided. That is not to say that “by searching we can find out God.” Jesus came to reveal the Father because we could not work out what God is like by ourselves! Yet the God Jesus reveals is not illogical or unreasonable—he is the God who makes such good sense, in all the meanings of such words!

When at Jesus' baptism the Holy Spirit “descended as a dove,” what was that for? Jesus knew what was happening, so we can only surmise that this visible confirmation was for the onlookers. This is so like God—to make sure we see and understand what is taking place, so that we will not be confused but clearly appreciate the significance of the event.

Romans 8:11 indicates that it was the Spirit who raised Jesus. However Jesus said he had the ability to lay down his life and to take it up again. Yet in other places we're told it was God who raised Jesus. What does this tell us about the nature and character of God?

How does Hebrews 9:14 fit in here? What was the Holy Spirit doing as the Son presented himself as sacrifice to the Father? It may seem rather “mechanistic” to some. Perhaps we would better see this verse as yet another demonstration of all members of the Godhead working together for our salvation, intimately concerned for the best of all created beings, and in the process refuting the charges of the Devil in the great controversy.

**Comment:**

“Faith is the gift of God: but it does not in the least follow that the faith God gives is an irrational faith, that is, a faith without grounds in right reason....The Holy Spirit does not work a blind, an ungrounded faith in the heart....nor yet new grounds of belief in the object presented; but just a new ability of the heart to respond to the grounds of faith, sufficient in themselves, already present to the understanding. We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in Him, not though it be irrational....We are arguing that faith is, in all its exercises alike [religious or secular], a form of conviction, and is, therefore, necessarily grounded in evidence. And we are arguing that evidence accordingly has its part to play in the conversion of the soul.” *B.B. Warfield*

“Nothing, therefore, can be more derogatory to the Bible than the assertion that its doctrines are contrary to reason. The assumption that reason and faith are incompatible; that we must become irrational in order to become believers is, however it may be intended, the language of infidelity; for faith in the irrational is of necessity itself irrational....We can believe only what we know, i.e., what we intelligently apprehend. *Charles Hodge*

**Ellen White Comments**

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {5T 331.2}

The worker for God must be imbued with the spirit of Christ. His love for souls must be fervent, and his faith strong and unwavering. His faith must be that which works by love. He must continually cultivate the graces of the Spirit of God, repressing all unbelief. Under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit, the powers of the missionary of the Lord are to be put to their very highest use. It is thus that man may become a laborer together with God. All whom God has endowed with reasoning powers may become intellectual Christians. God has given abundant evidence of the truth of his word, and he requires that those who would be counted as the followers of Christ should study the Scriptures, that they may be able to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. He has not required any one to believe without evidence. Let the inquirer after truth put to the stretch his mental powers in diligent study of the word of God... We must know what saith the Lord, that we may be able to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.” We cannot afford to have another settle questions of such momentous import as those concerning our soul’s salvation. We must open the Scriptures for ourselves, searching the word of God prayerfully, that we may know the truth as it is in Jesus. We cannot afford to trust to the ministers, to follow idle traditions, to subject our souls to human authority, but we must know for ourselves what God has said. {MM, May 1, 1892 par. 6}

## 4. The Promise of the Holy Spirit

**Biblical material:** Exod. 31:3; Num. 11:25; Isa. 6:1-7; 48:10; Ezek. 36:25-27; Mal. 3:2, 3; Matt. 3:11; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:3; 5:17; 7:1.

### Quotes:

- Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God “Father” and to share in Christ’s grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory. *Basil*
- The work of the Spirit is the bringing to be of the vision of God...the capacitating of persons to ‘see visions’ and ‘dream dreams’. .... The birth of the Church is the beginning of the End. .... The Kingdom of God as the miracle of ocular newness when ‘the blind see’ makes its impact on history in the creation of a *visionary community*. *Gabriel Fackre*
- The Holy Spirit is the heavenly Lover’s engagement ring given to us. *Michael Green*

### Questions

What role did the Holy Spirit play in the Old Testament? Though the Spirit is introduced right at the beginning, how do you think those early believers conceived of the Spirit? What does the unfolding role of the Holy Spirit tell us about the way God gradually reveals truth? What is the most important aspect of this promise? How could it have been different?

### Discussion

Most of the Old Testament references to “Spirit” are in the context of “the spirit of the Lord” or the “spirit of God.” It is doubtful that any idea of a different member of the Godhead with the role we ascribe the Holy Spirit was ever entertained. We have to be careful not to read back into the words of the OT our current understanding. As far as the believers of that time were concerned, God was one. Unsurprisingly in the context of polytheism with their multitude of gods (usually pretty horrible ones at that), the true God was primarily trying establish that there was only One God. The concept of the trinity would not have played out well in such a situation.

Such a situation well illustrates the concept of “present truth”—that is truth that is specific and relevant to the particular time. That is not to say that truth is variable, but that God in his wisdom chooses to emphasize different aspects of truth at different times. Similarly Jesus who told his disciples that he had many things to say to them, but that “you cannot bear them now.” Once again the lovingkindness of God comes through in a magnificent way.

So while the Spirit is there, he is not explained or his work identified in any great way. Exodus 31:3 correlates the Spirit with creative skills, Numbers 11:25 with prophesying, Ezekiel 26:36 with a new heart etc. But this is in a very quiet and unobtrusive way. The Spirit is there in promise, but not yet in fulfillment.

John the Baptist, the forerunner, explains that the one who is coming will baptize with Holy Spirit and with fire. One wonders what his hearers understood by such a statement! Yet after Pentecost, the work of the Spirit becomes abundantly clear, and Paul can state in Romans 8:9 that Christians are controlled by the Spirit. The Spirit-filled life becomes a determining image within Christianity.

But we are still entitled to ask what all this means.

Jesus promise of the Spirit after he left the earth has made people wonder if the Spirit had not been present before. Surely the answer is one of extent and magnitude. Without the physical presence of Jesus, the Spirit takes a far more “visible” position. He is to impress the need to a change of heart, to bring to mind what is needed, to lead into all truth. Knowing this it is the more surprising that the Spirit has all too often been associated with things that are not entirely “sensible”—reflective of the God who makes sense!

### **Comment**

- “The Spirit is not elusive, it is ours today.”
  - “God has the power to change our lives here and now. He longs to do it, the power is available now.”
  - “You can’t bring the gospel of salvation to an individual without the Holy Spirit.”
  - “We have true freedom through the liberating power of the Holy Spirit.”
  - “God gives us the power to live the life of the Spirit.”
  - “The Spirit makes evangelism possible.”
- Dr. Jan Paulsen, sermon, Guatemala City, August 1999.

“Consider, also, the examples of faith we are given in Hebrews 11. If God intends our faith to be subjective, or “blind,” Abraham and many other key figures who encountered God (or His “Angel”) tangibly would have been omitted from the roster. And what could we say of the “faith” of those who saw and heard and touched and walked side by side with our Lord Jesus Christ during his years here on earth? We are not denying, however, that even with all their firsthand experience, it was by the work of the Holy Spirit that these men and women received their salvation. Obviously, a paradox concerning our part in believing and God’s part lies at the very core of this issue...

“We can begin to empathize, however, with some people’s (including some pastors’) difficulty in appreciating an evidence-based approach when we take into account 1) the many abuses of “scientific evidence” in promotional campaigns of all sorts, 2) the lack of scientific training to understand, analyze, and evaluate the various evidences and arguments presented, and 3) the teaching of some Bible colleges and seminaries that to test the reliability of God’s Word is somehow to set ourselves above God and thus to express rebellion against Him.” *Hugh and Kathy Ross*

### **Ellen White Comments**

Just prior to His leaving His disciples for the heavenly courts, Jesus encouraged them with the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs as much to us as it did to them, and yet how rarely it is presented before the people, and its reception spoken of in the church. {YRP 308.1}

The Lord will enrich the minds of those who are searching for the hidden treasures of truth. What promise did our Lord Jesus Christ make to his disciples to furnish them with consolation in view of his departure from them? It was the promise of the Holy Spirit of God. The divine influence of the Holy Spirit was to co-operate with the human mind and bring to their remembrance whatsoever Christ had spoken unto them. The great need of this time of peril is the Holy Spirit; for it will bring to the receiver all other blessings in its train. {1888 1249-50}

## 5. The Promise Fulfilled

**Biblical material:** Exod. 23:16; Mark 16:17; John 4:35; **14:16-26, 16:7-13; Acts 1:4, 5, 14; 2:1, 2, 5-7, 22-35.**

### Quotes:

- We do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit to come: he came on the day of Pentecost. He has never left the church. *John Stott*
- We do not speak of faith that two and two are four or that the earth is round. We only speak of faith when we wish to substitute emotion for evidence. *Bertrand Russell*
- Even while we wait for the full enjoyment of the good things in store for us, by the Holy Spirit we are able to rejoice through faith in the promise of the graces to come. If the promise itself is so glorious, what must its fulfillment be like? *Basil*
- When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, it wasn't dynamite, it was a dynamo! Dynamite makes a loud noise, kicks up a lot of dust, and it's over. A dynamo is a continual source of power. It builds and builds and builds, and the power never stops flowing. *Ken Hutcherson*

### Questions

Why is it important that the Spirit came after the departure of Jesus? How is he truly manifested? What are the dangers of "enthusiasm" as regards the Spirit? What proof do we have that the Holy Spirit always acts in ways to uplift the truth of the God who makes sense? How do we react to those who have different ideas as what Pentecost means? How are we Spirit-filled?

### Discussion

Adventists have always been nervous about Pentecost. On the one hand, and the major concern, is that of over-enthusiasm that leads to "Pentecostalism," defined as experience with "speaking in tongues" and other physical manifestations—hand-wavings, trance-like states, apparent "fits," "slain by the Lord" etc. On the other hand the true impact of the real Pentecost would have us out of the pews and speaking to all those who need to hear the truth—a disturbing concept for many. So where's the balance, if that's the word?

While we might not want the denial of reason embraced by some pentecostalists, how can we still retain the enthusiasm undeniably shown by the disciples at Pentecost?

We should look again at the words of Jesus in John 14 and 16 to see what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do, and then look at the results in the book of Acts. By doing so we can avoid the misunderstandings and misapplications that characterize all-too-many ideas of what the Spirit does today.

The most important concept is that the Holy Spirit does not act unreasonably. He always acts for good reason, and with respect for all people. Sometimes people want to exploit the power of the Spirit (remember the Simon in Acts 8 who wanted to buy the gift!), but the Holy Spirit is not for sale or misuse. The Spirit is entirely sensible and reasonable, not fulfilling our whims or desires, but the work of God. He is not our validation—for example to prove we are spiritual since we speak in tongues—but rather we validate God and his truth by the Spirit working through us.

Why did Paul write that he would rather speak five words with understanding than ten thousand in an unknown tongue (see 1 Cor. 14:19)? It seems that already there were issues

regarding tongues as a manifestation of the Spirit. How different is the modern “speaking in tongues” to the experience on the day of Pentecost? How can we speak to such issues without seeming cold and unmoved by our Christian experience? What is the basis for true joy?

### **Comment**

“Reason is a principal tool God has given us to apprehend, understand, and transmit our faith. ‘Come let us reason together,’ he says. Jesus tells us in the greatest commandment to love the Lord with all our minds (Matthew 22:37); Peter tells us to prepare our minds for action (1 Peter 1:13); and Paul says, ‘I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.’ (1 Corinthians 14:15). Therefore we should not say that we don’t need reason or knowledge or intellect because we have faith. Rather we should say that we *need* reason and knowledge and intellect *because* we have faith.

“Those who desire to argue God out of the universe are succeeding, but only because we have not concerned ourselves with refuting them. God wants your brains; I would urge you to think and pray about serving him with all your mind.” *Robert Harris, Chapel Talk, Vanguard University of Southern California*

“A man cannot acquiesce to the truth of the Gospel apart from the enabling of the Holy Spirit. But, a man cannot acquiesce to that which he either does not know or believe to be true. It is thus an illegitimate separation of faith into either a ‘mind or heart,’ ‘faith or reason’ dichotomy. Biblically understood, faith and reason are intimately, completely and inseparably involved in one another. Thus, true biblical saving faith is not synonymous with credulity or having ‘blind faith.’” *Kim Riddlebarger*

### **Ellen White Comments**

Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. If we keep these things before the people, they will produce an evil effect, an unhealthful emotion. The genuine working of the Holy Spirit on human hearts is promised, to give efficiency through the Word. Christ has declared the Word to be spirit and life... Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel garments. But the light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it.

We shall encounter false claims; false prophets will arise; there will be false dreams and false visions; but preach the Word, be not drawn away from the voice of God in His Word. Let nothing divert the mind. The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented and presented. Through satanic delusions, wonderful miracles, the claims of human agents will be urged. Beware of all this. Christ has given warning, so that none need accept falsehood for truth. The only channel through which the Spirit operates is that of the truth. . . . Our faith and hope are founded, not in feeling, but in God.--Letter 12, 1894. {2SM 48-9}

In the future we shall have special tokens of the influence of the Spirit of God--especially at times when our enemies are the strongest against us. The time will come when we shall see some strange things; but just in what way--whether similar to some of the experiences of the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit following the ascension of Christ--I cannot say. {3SM 369-70}

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