

## IN RESPONSE - THE FACT IS . . .

by Dennis Prutow  
Volume II, Number 6

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When you sit down to watch a political debate there is a protagonist and an antagonist. A position is set forth by the protagonist and rebutted by the antagonist. Very often the antagonist will counter by saying, "The fact is...." He will then iterate the "facts" as he sees them. The underlying thought is that facts exist in and of themselves. They are just there. Cornelius Van Til speaks of so called 'brute facts.' And without doubt, the notion of brute facts is false. How so? It is contrary to the very definition of the term *fact*.

What is a fact? *Webster's New World Dictionary* tells us the word *fact* comes from the Latin word *factum*. It has the primary meaning of 'that which is done.' A *fact* is 'originally, a deed; act.' The point is, a fact is something which is made; it is something which has been accomplished; it is an act.

We might get a better understanding of this by looking at the suffix which comes from the same Latin word. The suffix is *-fy*. It signifies 'to make.' The following are examples: clarify means to make clear, magnify means to make great or large, sanctify means to make holy, justify means to make just, rectify means to make right. The list could be easily lengthened. And you can no doubt think of other words which might be added to it. But the point is made. By definition, a *fact* is something which is done, something which is made, something which is accomplished.

We may look at Genesis 1:1-5 in this light.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. What are the facts here? The *fact* of light *means* light was made. And God named what He made. God called the light day.

The *fact* we enjoy days, *means* these days *were made*.

What about Genesis 1:6-8?

Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

When we look into the sky on a crisp cool night and see the vault of heaven, the *fact* of its existence is undeniable. Or is it? The expanse of heaven is real. Is it a fact? We readily admit it is. But this means the expanse of heaven was made. I belabor this point because we do not seem to have another word to describe the reality of heaven above. We readily acknowledge the reality of heaven as a fact. *By definition this indicates it was made*. Do we realize what we are saying?

Again, what are the facts given to us in Genesis 2:18-19?

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.' And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

Adam names the animals. What does naming the animals really amount to? If Adam is identifying facts, is he not identifying what God has done? The *fact* of the animals indicates a maker of the animals. And Adam goes through the process of identifying the manifold activity of God. The process of identifying the works of creation is continuous and ongoing. It is taking place today as new species of birds, fish, and beetles are being identified. It is a task which is essential to our well-being.

Making clear identification is *always* helpful. A physician can be helpful to a patient only after a proper diagnosis has been made. The problem must be identified and named. Only then can adequate

treatment proceed. The same is true in the area of counseling. When a counselee seeks help, part of the process involves properly identifying and naming the source of the problem being faced.

Interestingly enough, the same is true in television advertising. For example, a certain car manufacturer tells us we have a heart and mind and conscience. Did you notice the word manufacturer. This word takes the word *fact* and adds the prefix *manu-* meaning *hand*. The amateur etymologist will see that to manufacture means to hand make.

The car manufacturer maintains that our minds can identify and understand the engineering excellence of this machine. With our hearts we can identify or grasp the esthetic qualities of this automobile. And with our consciences we identify and realize how correct it is for this car to be equipped with superb safety devices.

Interestingly enough, the car manufacturer identifies the mind, heart, and conscience as basic *facts* of the human constitution. But if the mind, heart, and conscience are basic *facts*, things which are made, by whom are they made? Let's look at the answer to this question in terms of the car manufacturer and its television advertisement.

The mind discerns order in the engineering of the car. The fact of the car points back to the manufacturer. There is a manufacturer. The *fact* of the car is undeniable as is its manufacturer. Not only so, the superb engineering indicates something about the maker of the car. This maker is capable of astounding and exacting design.

In exactly the same way, the mind discerns the order present in the universe. The mind grasps the magnificent order in the planets spinning through space around a star we call the sun. The mind grasps the wonder of the rings of Saturn and the rings indicating the orderly growth of a tree. Grasping these facts, the mind is pointed back to the Maker of the universe.

I maintain that the *fact* of the mind draws us inescapably to this conclusion. The mind has no alternative but to be drawn to this conclusion. This is the case

because this is how the mind has been made. We again speak of the *fact* of the mind. Paul substantiates this conclusion, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made" (Romans 1:20). As a *fact*, the human mind inescapably draws the conclusion from creation that its Maker is there.

The heart discerns the beauty of the car. Its lines, contours, and colors, the esthetic quality of the engineering, the beauty of the synchronization of thirty-two valves operating with eight pistons, and an electronic ignition to generate power to spare. Once again, the *fact* of the car inevitably points back to the manufacturer. In addition, the nature of the manufacturer is revealed through the esthetic qualities perceived by the heart. This manufacturer is genuinely creative with an eye to real beauty.

In exactly the same way, the heart discerns the beauty of flowers, trees, oceans, and stars. The universe is packed with symmetry, color, and loveliness we are still discovering and identifying. The fact of this universe points back to the Author of its elegance.

And I again maintain the *fact* of our hearts draws us inescapably to this conclusion. The author of elegance has given the human heart a unique capability to probe beauty itself. And the *fact* of beauty draws the heart inescapably to its Maker. In point of *fact*, this is how we think. This is who we are.

The conscience discerns the morality of sophisticated safety devices installed on our car. The *fact* of conscience is used to the advantage of the manufacturer to draw assent from a buyer regarding the ethics standing behind the car. The *fact* of the safety devices points back to the morality of the manufacturer.

In the same way, the fact of conscience points to the moral nature of the universe and hence to the moral nature of the Maker of the universe. That we are moral beings is a *fact*. Romans 2:14-15 is clear,

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

The mind contemplating the conscience discerns its moral nature. It asks the question, "From where did I come?" The *facts* of mind and conscience then point to the Maker. In addition, these *facts* reveal the nature of the Maker. As Paul says, they reveal "the eternal power and divine nature" of the Maker (Romans 1:20). The *fact* of conscience draws us inescapably to this conclusion. This is the plain *fact* because this is who we are.

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# IN RESPONSE - HERMENEUTICS AND INFANT BAPTISM

by Dennis Prutow

One of the criticisms of infant baptism is that it is based upon a false method of interpretation, a false hermeneutic. It is said that infant baptism is based upon the same hermeneutical principle, the same method of interpreting Scripture, as theonomy and paedocommunion. To be sure, those favoring infant baptism maintain that since God commanded the sign of the gospel covenant to be placed upon infants in the Old Testament, and since this command has not been set aside in the New Testament, it is still valid. Those opposing infant baptism maintain this view conflicts with our understanding of progressive revelation in the Bible and places us in the position of interpreting the New Testament by the Old Testament rather than the other way around.

It is my objective to show that carrying the Old Testament commands, specifically the command to apply the sign of the gospel covenant upon infants, into the New Testament is not an aberration. It is actually standard procedure. This being the case, those holding to infant baptism are not engaging in the use of poor methods of interpretation for the purpose of justifying their practice. To make my case, I'll briefly review three subjects: the family, the law of God, and the Lord's Supper.

It is well known, although disputed by feminists, that God ordained a specific order within the family. I intentionally use the word order instead of the term hierarchy because the latter expression carries a pejorative sense for many. At any rate, Genesis 2:18-20 says,

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.' And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

The fact that God created Eve to be a helper for Adam is often called a creation ordinance.

The apostle Paul refers to this creation ordinance to substantiate his understanding of the family. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 he lays out the natural order relating to God and the family, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ." This authority structure is corroborated by reference to creation. "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake" (1 Corinthians 11:8-9). In other words, this ordinance of the Old Testament is clearly carried over into the New Testament. And it is not considered to be an interpretation of the New Testament by the Old Testament.

We find the same thing to be true concerning the Law of God. There are three subdivisions of the Law: the civil law, the ceremonial law, and the moral law.<sup>1</sup> Regarding Israel and the civil law, the Westminster confession of Faith says, "To them also, as a body politic, He [God] gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of the people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the civil law was set aside when the ancient nation of Israel expired. As a result, we no longer enforce the civil law in our present culture according to its ancient specificity. For example, we do not punish infidelity or prostitution by stoning. A. A. Hodge explains, "That the judicial laws of the Jews have ceased to have a binding obligation upon us follows plainly, from the fact that the peculiar relations of the people to God as a theocratical King, and to one another as fellow-members of an Old Testament Church State, to which these laws were adapted, now no longer exists."<sup>3</sup> And so we have an example of an Old Testament commandment set aside in the New Testament.

We find the same thing to be true regarding the ceremonial law. The burden of the Old Testament ceremony was to typify Christ and the manifold grace of God through Christ. When Christ came,

fulfilling the typological significance of these Old Testament ceremonies, their obligatory nature ceased. Scripture is quite clear on this. The writer to the Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8 and then interprets the Psalm for us.

After saying above, 'Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Thy will.' He takes away the first in order to establish the second (Hebrews 10:8-9).

That is, the ceremonial law is taken away in order to establish the work of Christ by which it is superseded. Here is another very clear example of Old Testament ordinances abrogated by New Testament teaching.

But now, what about the moral law summarize in the Ten Commandments?

[T]he moral law continues of unabated authority, not only because its elements are intrinsically binding, but because, also, of the authority of God, who still continues to enforce it. And Christ, instead of lessening, has greatly increased the obligation to fulfill it.<sup>4</sup>

Yes, Christ explains the pervasive extent of the requirements of the moral law. See Matthew 5:17-48. Christ does not set aside the moral law. He affirms it.

A. A. Hodge gives us the principle of interpretation involved.

When the continued obligation of any commandment is asserted or practically recognized in the New Testament, it is plain that the change of dispensations has made no change in the law. Thus the provisions of the moral law are constantly recognized in the New Testament. On the other hand, when the enactment is specifically repealed, or its abrogation implied by what is taught in the New Testament, the case is also made plain.<sup>5</sup>

*This is exactly the same principle upon which the advocates of infant baptism rest their case.*

In view of the fact that the new covenant is based upon and is an unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant,<sup>6</sup>

in view of the basic identity of meaning attaching to circumcision and baptism,<sup>7</sup> in view of the unity and continuity of the covenant grace administered in both dispensations, we can affirm with confidence that evidence of revocation or repeal is mandatory if the practice or principle has been discontinued under the New Testament.<sup>8</sup>

The hermeneutical principle is identical to that applied to the moral law. There is no aberration here.

We find the same principle in use when we look at the Lord's Supper. The contention of those favoring paedocommunion is that since children partook of the Passover, there is no reason for them being denied the Lord's Supper. The specific command regarding the Passover is given in Exodus 12:24, "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever." Moses then tells the people that their children will ask, "What does this rite mean to you?" or as the Authorized Version, "What mean ye by this service?" (Exodus 12:26). Matthew Henry interprets this question,

What is the meaning of all this care and exactness about eating this lamb, and this unleavened bread, more than about common food? Why such a difference between this meal and other meals?<sup>9</sup>

Children sitting at the Passover table would naturally ask these questions. Does this mean children are also to be brought to the communion table?

The answer is no. Enlisting the same principle just quoted from two different sources, we find explicit New Testament instructions concerning the Lord's Supper. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly" (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). Clear teaching in the New Testament alters the command given in the Old Testament. The point we have been laboring is again substantiated. The hermeneutical principle rejected by those opposing infant baptism is not an aberration but consistently used in our understanding of and interpretation of Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Confession of Faith, XIX:I-IV.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Confession of Faith, XIX:IV.

<sup>3</sup> A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), p. 256.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>6</sup> "In Response - The Covenant and Baptism," March, 1993

<sup>7</sup> "In Response - Circumcision and Baptism," April, 1993

<sup>8</sup> John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972), p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 320.

# IN RESPONSE - 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3, PART I

by Dennis Prutow

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We continue to look at the two primary Bible texts which nag many evangelical Christians on both sides of the issue of so called biblical feminism. The first is 1 Timothy 2:12, "I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." The other is 1 Corinthians 14:34 "Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says." It is the argument of many that since *Paul* allows women to pray and prophesy (1 Corinthians 11:5), then *we* must not disallow the preaching and teaching of women within the church.<sup>1</sup> We have already discussed the matter of preaching and teaching.<sup>2</sup> In this lesson we begin an excursus in which it is my aim to show that prophecy is a supernatural gift of the Spirit which is no longer extant. As such, applying it to our contemporary situation as a ground for women in the office of pastor-teacher is inappropriate. It is a representation fallacious reasoning.

To achieve my goal, I point to 1 Corinthians 13:8, "But if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away." The question to be answered here involves when prophecy does cease. And in order to get to the answer to this question, we'll go through several steps. First we'll look at the overall context of 1 Corinthians 13. Second, we'll briefly outline the chapter. Third, we'll take an excursion through 1 Corinthians 13 with emphasis on the latter portion of the chapter.

To do justice to the argument and give an even passing exposition of 1 Corinthians 13, it will be necessary to continue the present lesson beyond these pages. But it will remain my objective to show that knowledge, prophecy, and tongues ceased upon the completion of the canon of Scripture. And as just said, it is inappropriate to lean upon prophecy as a support for women in the role of the pastor-teacher.

## **I. The Context of 1 Corinthian 13.**

The section of Paul's letter within which Chapter 13 falls, begins with 1 Corinthians 12:1. "Now concerning spiri-

tual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware." You will note the word *gifts* is italics. This indicates it is not present in the original language but has been inserted. The text might actually be read, "Now concerning spiritual things or spiritual matters, I do not want you to be ignorant." Paul is beginning an extended discussion of several different spiritual matters which concern the Corinthians.

Interestingly enough, the very first deeply spiritual subject which Paul mentions has to do with the basic Christian confession.

You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental stance of the Christian involves the absolute Lordship of Christ. And heartfelt confession of Christ as Lord is deeply spiritual. It is the result of the work of the Spirit.

Then Paul turns attention to the spiritual gifts.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

This discussion continues through verse 11. And we note that "the word of knowledge" (verse 8), "prophecy" and "*various* kinds of tongues" (verse 10) are special gifts of the Spirit.

Then in verse 12 Paul moves to the topic of the body of Christ. "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ." Using this metaphor of the body, Paul continues his discussion of the church and its inherent unity through verse 30. In the latter part of this section Paul points out the interrelationship of gifts within the body.

Chapter 12 ends with these wonderful words which introduce the deeply spiri-

tual subject of love, "But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way." Chapter 13 then expounds the virtues of love in contrast to the special gifts of knowledge, prophecy, and tongues already mentioned.

Then in chapter 14, Paul outlines the use of tongues and prophecy within the local church assembled for worship. This too is a deeply spiritual matter of special relevance to the Corinthians.

That we find the excursus on love imbedded in this section expounding spiritual things is of no small consequence. Prophecy is set in its proper context as a special supernatural gift. In the setting of the New Testament church, this gift was regulated. And because it was a special gift sovereignly dispensed by the Spirit, it was Paul's stated position to allow women to prophesy.

## **II. An Outline of 1 Corinthians 13**

A. Verses 1-3. Here the apostle lays out the superiority of love. A comparison is made with tongues, knowledge, prophecy, faith, and philanthropy.

Given this comparison, we ask the reason for it. In addition, we ask in what way is love superior to these special gifts. The answers are found in the reasons for these gifts in the first century. These supernatural gifts were evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul is saying love is the superior evidence.

Not only so, Paul is affirming it is possible to have these special gifts and be without love. If this is the case, a person may actually be the recipient of supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit but not be born again. That is, a person may possess superior gifts but be without the superior manifestation of the Spirit, namely love. A specially gifted person may not possess the essence of Christianity.

And if people do not really have the root of the matter in them, they are not Christians. Love is therefore the superior evidence of the saving presence of the Spirit.

B. Verses 4-8. Paul now describes love. As I will show, he does not define love. We must therefore look elsewhere for a concrete definition. When we do so, we discover love to be the primary fruit of

the Spirit by which Christians are identified. This confirms Paul. It also shows us that Paul is anxious that love, as defined by Scripture, be exercised in a particular manner. Hence the description of verses 4-8.

C. Verses 8-13. In this section Paul tells us that the supernatural gifts including tongues, prophecy, and special knowledge will cease. He also tells us when the cessation takes place. And it is my contention that properly interpreted, Paul is telling us tongues, prophecy, and special knowledge cease when we receive the perfection of Scripture.

This is significant because Scripture now gives us the full orbed understanding of love which is necessary for it to be the special identifying mark of the Christian. Love, as defined in Scripture, gives us the adequate evidence of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. It is for this reason love is superior to all the special gifts.

### **III. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

A. First, what are the tongues to which Paul refers? These tongues are languages. They are the tongues, languages, of men and angels.

In Acts 2, and on the Day of Pentecost, the apostles spoke in other tongues. Those who heard the apostles

...were amazed and marveled, saying, 'Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God' (Acts 2:7-11).

Biblical tongues were known, understandable languages.

These tongues were also evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4 makes this quite clear. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit was giving them utterance." It is for this reason that so called charismatic churches insist upon the necessity of speaking in tongues. I have been bluntly told that if I did not speak in tongues, I did not have the Holy Spirit. Tongues becomes the chief evidence of the presence of the Spirit in a human life.

That tongues *were* an evidence of the presence of the Spirit is confirmed in Acts 10 where Peter is found preaching the gospel for the first time to Gentiles.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?' And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

The way the apostles and others knew the Gentiles were recipients of the Holy Spirit was that they received the Spirit in exactly the same way the apostles did. That is, they received the Spirit with the manifestation of tongues. And so tongues *were* an evidence of the presence of the Spirit in a human life.

In like manner, special knowledge, prophecy, and faith, because they were special supernatural gifts of the Spirit, were viewed as evidences of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

B. But was it possible to be overconfident in depending upon special gifts as the evidences of the presence of the Spirit? Paul's answer is, 'Yes.' Tongues, prophecy, knowledge, and even faith used by themselves as evidences of the presence of the Spirit can be and are deceptive. We look at tongues first of all. And we ask, is it possible for angels to speak wonderful things about Christ and to even know Christ and yet be damned? Mark 1:23-24 gives us an answer.

And just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit;

and he cried out, saying, 'What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!'

Here we find a fallen angel who knows and identifies Jesus. The disciples are having a hard time identifying Him as the Holy One of God. But the demons have no such problem. If a person can properly identify Jesus, does this mean He is a recipient of the Holy Spirit?

Compare Acts 16:16-18.

And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.

Here is another case of a fallen angel, an unclean spirit, telling the truth. But this young lady, speaking with the tongue of this fallen angel, is in no way a recipient of the Holy Spirit. It is quite the opposite. Without love, there is no guarantee of conversion.

C. What about prophecy? Is it possible for a person to have the gift of prophecy, to prophesy, and yet not be born again of the Spirit? Our first impulse is to say, 'No.' But before we jump to this conclusion, we had better examine the Scriptures. Take for example 1 Samuel 10:9-10 and the experience of King Saul,

Then it happened when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day. When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them. And it came about, when all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, that the people said to one another, 'What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?'

Was Saul a converted man? And what about the fact that "God changed his heart"? Note this text carefully. The

promise of the New Covenant is the promise of a "new heart" (Ezekiel 36:26).

Saul's heart was changed. He was transformed from a man behind a plow into a man who would stand before armies. But Saul was not a converted person. In 1 Samuel 18:10-12 we read,

Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing *the harp* with his hand, as usual; and a spear *was* in Saul's hand. And Saul hurled the spear for he thought, 'I will pin David to the wall.' But David escaped from his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David, for the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul.

There was murder in Saul's heart. This was no momentary thing. His hatred for David grew. "The one who says he is in the light and *yet* hates his brother is in darkness until now" (1 John 2:9). Saul was in darkness. Even though he experienced the extraordinary gift of prophecy, he was unconverted. The fact that God departed from Saul is confirmation of this fact. We therefore once more affirm that prophecy is no sure evidence of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit.

D. We turn to special gifts of knowledge as evidence of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit. To set the stage for this portion of our exposition, we look at 2 Peter 2:15-16 where the unrighteous are described in terms of the sins of Balaam.

Forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; *for* a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

The testimony of the New Testament is that Balaam was an unbeliever. He was a prophet for hire to the highest bidder.

But what of the wonderful special knowledge of Balaam concerning Christ? Look at Numbers 24:15-17.

The oracle of him who hears the words of God, And knows the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered. 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the

forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.'

Christ is the star predicted to arise in Jacob. Through special revelation from God Balaam knew about the coming of Christ. Yet as already observed, Balaam was an unconverted man. He was without the saving work of the Spirit within him. The undisputed fact of special knowledge coming from God was and is not proof of the saving presence of the Spirit in the life of a person.

E. Next we examine faith as an evidence of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit. There is such a thing as miracle working faith which is devoid of a saving union with Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> Judas Iscariot is a prime example. This man was reprobate. Yet it is clear from Scripture that Christ sent him to perform miracles.

And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing (Luke 9:1-2)

In the parallel passage in Matthew, Judas is specifically named as one of those who was given these extraordinary powers.

And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent out... (Matthew 10:1-5).

Here is the evidence for miracle working power without what some would insist must be concomitant experience of the saving power of the Spirit. Judas proclaimed the gospel and worked miracles. Yet he was unconverted. Faith to work miracles is no sure sign of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit within the life of a person.

F. Finally we look at the philanthropic spirit and the spirit of self sacrifice. Are these, in and of themselves, evidence of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit? Not according to the apostle.

There are several ungodly reasons people give to feed the poor. A person

might give to the poor to please himself rather than to please God. *We will resume our excursus in the next issue of In Response.*

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<sup>1</sup> See for example 'The Ministry of Women' by Adoniram Judson Gordon reprinted from the World Missionary Review of 1894 by Christians for Biblical Equality.

<sup>2</sup> See Part II of this series.

<sup>3</sup> For further discussions on faith see In 'Response-What is Faith?', Volume I, Numbers 1-4, January-April, 1992.