

WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST



“every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION

The question is not, “Does the Holy Spirit operate in converting the sinner,” but, “How does He operate?” No one who professes to believe the Bible denies that the Holy Spirit exerts His power in the conviction and conversion of sinners. We have often been accused of making such a denial. Those who make this charge misrepresent us. Jesus said, “He [the Spirit]...will convict the world in respect of sin...” (Jn. 16:8 ASV). We believe what He said. He also said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall *believe on me through their word*” (Jn. 17:20). John says, “...but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31). We affirm and teach that the Holy Spirit works through and by means of the word of God, and nobody denies what we affirm; what we teach is not called in question.

Others teach that the Holy Spirit operates immediately — without means or instrument — upon the heart of the sinner. Or, as some say, He performs an operation in addition to the influence exerted through the word of God. This we deny. It is their position that is questioned, not ours.

The Spirit convicts men of sin. Now faith is conviction (Heb. 11:1 ASV). The same word is used here as a noun, the verb form of which is translated “convict” in **John 16:8**. But faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The Holy Spirit convicts or produces faith through the word. He cannot convict a man without the word unless He convicts him twice. The same man cannot be convicted through the word and without the word at the same time. Both cannot be true. We affirm that what the Bible says on the very point at issue is true.

In **John 14** through **16**, Jesus said many things about the Spirit. He would “send” the Spirit to the apostles. They would receive Him. He would “come” to them, “testify,” remind them of all Jesus had said, teach them all things, and guide them into all truth. In these chapters, there is just one thing that the Spirit would do to sinners — He would convict them.

Jesus later commissioned the apostles to “preach the gospel” (Mk. 16:15), to “teach” (Matt. 28:19); but not to begin until they received power from on high (Lk. 24:49) and this power was received by them in Jerusalem on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to them (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. Their words were the words of the Holy Spirit. The ideas conveyed to enlighten the hearers were the ideas of the Holy Spirit. The motives which moved the hearers to act were brought to their hearts in the words of the Holy Spirit.

Peter preached on that occasion. He quoted scripture, stated facts, made arguments and drew a logical conclusion. His hearers were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, and that they had murdered the Son of God. Do you not think that they were convicted of sin? “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:36-37). - **(Cont. on page 3)**

KEEP YOUR HEART CLEAN IN 2013

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SERMONS THIS SUNDAY:

AM: ED KELLEHER

Christians and Firearms
PM: ED KELLEHER

Egyptian Unity

“Say not thou, I will recompense evil;
but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.” - Proverbs 20:22

KEEP YOUR HEART CLEAN IN 2013

JOIN US IN
NEW TESTAMENT
CHRISTIANITY
TODAY!

A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
www.WestColumbiaChurchOfChrist.org

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SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided
Bible Classes for all ages

LADIES CLASS

To be announced

EVANGELIST

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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER: Judy Walker, Miles Johnson, Richard Ramkinson, Margaret Herring, Wilson Burton, Betty Mathis, Lamar Reeves, Elma Berrier.**
- **Dorothy Gray** requests prayers for a friend who had a death in the family, the **McFadden** family. Keep **Dorothy, Roderick** and the children in your prayers also.
- **Stephanie Rigney** was in the hospital briefly. Keep her and Steve in your prayers.
- **Michael** and **Marshall Mancuso** have been down with a bug.
- **Connie Richbourg** was able to make it out to the assembly last Sunday after knee replacement surgery, and seemed to be doing pretty well.
- **Judy Walker** has had a bad cough and not been able to make it out.
- Remember **Jason Parks** who has been working in Vermont several weeks.
- Good to have **Anna Porter, Gwen Pittman** and **KC Dunbaker** back with us also.
- Keep all these, and **the church here**, in your prayers. Our thanks and gratitude to those who watch, and work and pray for the church here. To those faithful in visiting and attendance, encouraging others by talking with them. To those quietly doing the many jobs necessary to keep the congregation functioning.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" - Psalms 56:3

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- **Singing at Twin City Church of Christ** in Batesburg-Leesville. Sunday, 2-4 PM.
- **BULLETINS BY EMAIL** sent each Friday. To subscribe, send email address to Ed.
- **Tommy White** needs a ride to the assembly Wed. nights. Give him a call at 794-6249 and help this brother who looks forward to our meetings.
- Remember to **send cards to our visitors.** **Marshall Mancuso** had had a bunch of nice cards printed, and **Jones Gamble** faithfully gets visitor cards posted with addresses. So help out yourself! Send a card, invite people to visit, then send more cards! Postage for a post card is \$.32, Send 3 for a dollar and keep the change!

**"For God has not given us the spirit of fear;
but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." - 2 Timothy 1:7**

KEEP YOUR HEART CLEAN IN 2013

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,
shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;
but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” - Matthew 7:21**

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION—(Continued from page 1)

Peter preached. They heard, and were convicted *when* they heard by *what* they heard. But what did the Spirit have to do with it? Everything. Peter had preached the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:12). Men believed through his words, as Jesus had said they would (Jn. 17:20). Faith had come by hearing. But faith is conviction. They were convicted. But the Spirit was to convict. When the word of God produces faith, the Holy Spirit convicts a sinner, and He works now in exactly the same way, and by the same means that He did on Pentecost.

Jesus promised to send the Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all truth and to convict and convert sinners. He commissioned the apostles to teach and to baptize, and to teach the baptized to observe all things which He required of them (Matt. 28:19-20). How did the Spirit do the work? What did He do? You can see the answer in concrete form. Look at your New Testament. That is what the Spirit did. It is the truth into which He guided the apostles. It is "their words" through which men believe and are led to repent of their sins, to confess their faith in Him and to be baptized into Him. It also contains what they taught the baptized to observe. It is the commission carried out. But they carried out the commission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did what Jesus said He would do through — by means of — the words of inspired men. Those words were first spoken. When sinners heard the word, they believed. That word was put in writing that we may believe (Jn. 20:31). The gospel was preached. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17). Paul, in writing, says, "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you..." (1 Cor. 15:1).

Let us suppose now that the Holy Spirit decides to convert a sinner and make a Christian of him without using "the written word of God," and that He does so convert a man. Will that newly-made Christian believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Certainly. How did he become a believer? Was the thought put into his mind without words? How? Suppose the man had been in a heathen land, and that he had not been under the influence of the "written word." He was converted without it. After conversion, how could he say, "I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," if he had never heard those words? No one since Pentecost has ever said those words who had not heard or been taught them. We all know such a convert cannot be found. If you say, "The Holy Spirit *spoke the words* to the man, I reply, "That would not be a direct operation of the Spirit. That would be using *words* as means of conversion." That is the way the Holy Spirit always converts men, and was the way men were converted on Pentecost *before* the New Testament was written down.—(Finished on page 2)

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day." (Jn. 6:44). This is a favorite proof text of the doctrine of direct spiritual influence upon the sinner. But look at the next verse: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." No man can come except God draw him. But all shall be taught. Everyone who *hears* and *learns* comes. God draws men by teaching them. He does not draw them without teaching. This passage says so. Not one single person is drawn by the Father or comes to Christ who has not been taught, who has not heard and learned. This is Christ's denial of direct operation. That ought to settle the matter.

- John Early Arceneaux, 1883-1970 Gospel preacher