

An Evil and Adulterous Generation

Seeking After a Sign

By George Davis and Michael Clark

The Holy Spirit was not sent to entertain us, or give us ecstatic spiritual experiences. He was not sent to give us goose bumps, or simply put us into an euphoric state of mind, although where the Spirit of God is there is peace and liberty. The Holy Spirit has but one passion, to glorify the Son.

An understanding of the work and passion of the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest needs of the individual Christian and the collective church today. All believers are called to walk in lockstep with Him. Believers who fail to understand the specific purpose and passion of the Holy Spirit are open for deception. The defining purpose of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, to make Him known, visible and believed on. All who walk in sync with Him have the same passion, because they are of One Spirit. Pressing for spiritual manifestations beyond this is dangerous, and can result in questionable spirit activity that is not necessarily the Holy Spirit! This is what Paul was addressing when he wrote to the Corinthian church, "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully." (2 Corinthians 11:2-4, NASB).

The Holy Spirit was not sent to entertain us, or give us ecstatic spiritual experiences. He was not sent to give us goose bumps, or simply put us into an euphoric state of mind, although where the Spirit of God is there is peace and liberty. The Holy Spirit has but one passion. Jesus said, "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." Speaking to His disciples of the coming Holy Spirit, Jesus said, (John 14:16-18 WEB)

Jesus comes to us through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings the living Lord to the believer. The continuous work of the Holy Spirit is to lift Jesus up and bring the reality and essence of Christ to us. He was sent for nothing else. The Holy Spirit is "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." (Ephesians 1:17) Although God may

be pleased to work miracles as He sees fit, for man to press for spirit manifestations is dangerous. We must approach God with a "give us this day our daily bread" trust and dependence, being confident that He will bring to us each day all that we need as a good Father who loves His children. That daily Bread is Jesus! He is the bread of life and He comes on the wind of the Spirit.

Seeking After a Sign

Certain of the scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "[An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.](#)" (Matthew 12:38-39 WEB)

What did Jesus mean by referring to seekers of signs as an "adulterous generation"? Jesus was being quite graphic here, painting a picture of those asking for a sign as possessing the fickleness of heart and the immoral behavior of a wife having intercourse with someone other than her husband. Considering that Israel was God's betrothed, He was referring to that apostate generation as an unfaithful wife; in this instance an unfaithful wife who still wanted the benefits of her husband.

Among the synonyms of adultery is the word prostitution. In our day a prostitute is referred to by many titles, such as whore, call girl, hustler, harlot, streetwalker, vice girl, tramp, tart, hooker, lady of the evening, and bimbo. Certainly none of these titles are becoming to womanhood. They indicate perversion, a fallen condition in which the mysterious beauty and nobility of woman is marred beyond recognition as her heart is turned from her betrothed to herself. This is the beginning of the perversion that ultimately leads her to seek gratification in other lovers, using both them and her husband for her own ends. Neither possesses her heart.

What husband would not be heartbroken to find out that his wife loved him only for what he could do for her or the thrills he could give her and that he was merely a convenience, an addition to her world. The wife who seeks thrills is adulterous in heart, if not yet in behavior. She is unfaithful first in her heart and then in her actions. She seeks the gold of her husband, not her husband. She knows nothing of what it means to be enraptured by him. She is nothing like the Shulimite maiden, whose heart was so transfixed by her Beloved that she would not rest until she found Him. "[I adjure you, O](#)

daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am sick with love."
(Song of Solomon 5:8 RSV)

Like an adulterous wife, the western church preaches the gospel of hedonism, the doctrine that pleasure and happiness are the highest good. This is a gospel that says in effect, "Get saved and God will bless you, then He will give everything you have always wanted." Converts to this gospel make God a fine add-on to their hedonistic lifestyle; He becomes nothing more than an errand-boy they have added to their entourage of servants, feeding the desires of their flesh. This evil is manifest in a materialistic religion where God is like the great cornucopia in the sky. God also becomes the heavenly entertainer, called upon when His children are bored and in need of excitement.

Like a wife who married a man for His money, many Christians in the church today seek God's benefits, not His person. They want phenomenal spiritual amusements, not His face. It is adulterous to make God only a part of our lives. Rather than entering God's Kingdom, people make Him a wonderful addition to their own kingdoms. It is an adulterous generation that attempts to add the Author of Life to its hedonistic pantheon.

In Matthew 12:38-39 we see that God does not give special-order signs for the amusement of men, but specific signs but that were preordained and unfold in God's timing for His purposes. Jesus had just bound a deaf and dumb spirit and cast it out of a man. As the result, the multitude of witnesses were proclaiming that He was the promised Son of David. The common people saw God in action. They saw the Sign standing in front of them. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)." (Isaiah 7:14, ASV)

The religious leaders only saw that their kingdom and popularity were being threatened and so they credited this great act of mercy to the devil. They were blind to the purposes of God to glorify His son. For them there was only one sign in God's immediate timetable, the sign of Jonah. This was the sign of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, but also of sudden destruction that was to come upon them if they did not repent. Thirty-five years later Rome finally had all the rebellious Judean state it could stand and leveled Jerusalem, temple and all. We wonder if the Savior's words echoed

in their ears when He said, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13:2, NKJV)

Religious man is driven by an inordinate desire for Spiritual manifestations. In fact, many people travel long distances just on the rumor that there are miracles and signs occurring. Clearly the end in view is an experience, a revival, a move of God. They come by the thousands to experience the blessing. Many odd spiritual manifestations have occurred in these meetings. The reason is simple. In their insistence on receiving spirit manifestations, people press beyond the perimeters of the passion and work of the Holy Spirit. It is all a matter of what you are seeking. If one is seeking IT, the experience, the phenomena, the blessing, in time they may discover that the IT they got was not HIM. The real question is this: Are we contented with HIM? Is HE our passion? Is Jesus really enough? Is HE our quest, the one thing desired? This is what the Holy Spirit seeks to accomplish in our lives. Do we desire it as earnestly as He does?

Through failing to feed on the inner Christ and neglecting to drink from that well of Living Water springing up from within, many people are hooked on the rush of external revival sensations. Like junkies hunting for another fix, they search and search and are never truly satisfied.

We are not saying that God does not send times of refreshing, causing the rain of His Spirit to fall. What we are saying is this: He is the rain! He is not an experience, an IT. He is The Blessing! He is coming to His people by the Spirit! Just as the prophet foretold, "He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain to the earth." (Hosea 6:3) Jesus told His disciples regarding the coming Holy Spirit, "I will come to you." When the Spirit comes, He brings Christ. "He shall come to us as the rain."

Some authorities think that the restlessness and misbehavior of many children today is due to a general state of malnutrition. Some believe the ground in which our vegetables and fruits are grown has been stripped of 80 to 90 percent of the nutrients necessary to produce food with the vitamins and minerals required for natural health and development. This leaves consumers hungry, searching for food that satisfies. They are eating, but what they eat is devoid of the nutritional value their bodies require. They constantly hunger for nourishment. They are unsatisfied as they consume empty calories.

A similar condition exists in Christendom today. There is restlessness throughout, a frantic search for food. What is served up leaves the believers unsatisfied and searching for more. They cannot rest because their hunger and thirst are driving them on. The danger here is becoming hooked on spiritual junk food, the sensations, the rush, the signs and the fever pitch of so-called revivals, rather than feasting on and being nurtured by the Bread of Life. Shifting from a deep and abiding relationship with Christ to a devotion to sensationalism is the most immediate and imminent peril to the church today. This is nothing less than adulterous.

I, Michael, have been to many a conference and meeting, driven on by this same hunger. What was going on in my local church was dead and empty form, so I found that its denominational conferences were just the ticket for filling the void. After a while I started noticing that I was meeting many of the same people at these conferences. We had become conference junkies because the fix we experienced there did not last. My wife finally had enough and said, "If Jesus wants to do something special in my life, He knows where I live. I am through with all this running around. Didn't He say, 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and, he time has drawn near. Therefore do not go after them?'" After carefully considering her words, we quit chasing around the country seeking after a sign, but started seeking Him within. A dear old Canadian saint who has walked for years with the Lord once told me, "Seek God's face, not his hands." I have found this to be the best advice I have ever received as I have grown in Christ.

We leave you with the words of a man who, through years of trials, found the true blessing.

I often hear people say, "I wish I could get hold of Divine Healing, but I cannot." Sometimes they say, "I have got it." If I ask them, "What have you got?" the answer is sometimes, "I have got the blessing," sometimes it is, "I have got the theory"; sometimes it is, "I have got the healing"; sometimes, "I have got the sanctification." But I thank God we have been taught that it is not the blessing, it is not the healing, it is not the sanctification, it is not the thing, it is not the it that you want, but it is something better. It is the Christ; it is Himself. How often that comes out in His Word-- Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses, Himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree! It is the person of Jesus Christ we want. Plenty of people get the idea and do not get anything out of it. They get IT into their head, and IT into their conscience, and

IT into their will; but somehow they do not get Him into their life and spirit, because they have only that which is the outward expression and symbol of the spiritual reality. I once saw a picture of the Constitution of the United States, very skillfully engraved in copper plate, so that when you looked at it closely it was nothing more than a piece of writing, but when you looked at it at a distance, it was the face of George Washington. The face shone out in the shading of the letters at a little distance, and I saw the person, not the words, nor the ideas; and I thought, That is the way to look at the Scriptures and understand the thoughts of God, to see in them the face of love, shining through and through; not ideas, nor doctrines, but Jesus Himself as the Life and Source and sustaining Presence of all our life.

I prayed a long time to get sanctified, and sometimes I thought I had it. On one occasion I felt something, and I held on with a desperate grip for fear I should lose it, and kept awake the whole night fearing it would go, and, of course, it went with the next sensation and the next mood. Of course, I lost IT because I did not hold on to HIM. I had been taking a little water from the reservoir, when I might have all the time received from Him fullness through the open channels. I went to meetings and heard people speak of joy. I even thought I had the joy, but I did not keep it because I had not Himself as my joy. At last He said to me -- Oh so tenderly -- My child, just take Me, and let Me be in you the constant supply of all this, Myself. And when at last I got my eyes off my sanctification, and my experience of IT, and just placed them on the Christ in me, I found, instead of an experience, the Christ larger than the moment's need, the Christ that had all that I should ever need who was given to me at once, and for ever! And when I thus saw Him, it was such rest; it was all right, and right for ever. For I had not only what I could hold that little hour, but also in Him, all that I should need the next and the next and so on, until sometimes I get a glimpse of what it will be a million years afterwards, when we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father (Matt. 13: 43), and have all the fullness of God.

"Now the question for each of us is not "What think you of Bethshan, and what think you of divine healing?" but "What think you of Christ?" There came a time when there was a little thing between me and Christ. I express it by a little conversation with a friend who said, "You were healed by faith." "Oh, no," I said, "I was healed by Christ." What is the difference? There is a great difference. There came a time when even faith seemed to come between me and Jesus. I thought I should have to work up the faith, so I labored to get the faith. At last I thought I had it; that if I put my whole weight upon it, it would hold. I said, when I thought I had got the faith, "Heal me." I was trusting in myself, in my own heart, in my own faith. I was asking the Lord to do something for me

because of something in me, not because of something in Him. So the Lord allowed the devil to try my faith, and the devil devoured it like a roaring lion, and I found myself so broken down that I did not think I had any faith. God allowed it to be taken away until I felt I had none. And then God seemed to speak to me so sweetly, saying, "Never mind, my child, you have nothing. But I am perfect Power, I am perfect Love, I am Faith, I am your Life, I am the preparation for the blessing, and then I am the Blessing, too. I am all within and all without, and all for ever." (A. B. Simpson- "Himself")

A Point of Clarification

(Addendum to "An Evil and Adulterous Generation")

When we sent this article out on our mailing list, it received mixed reviews. Many readers found it a blessing and very timely, but a few thought it was an attack or judgment against believers who move in the gifts of the Spirit. The article was in no way meant to discourage anyone from genuinely moving in obedience to the Spirit of God, building up the body of Christ in love. Our purpose was to see Christ lifted up in everything and to expose a spiritual counterfeit that is taking attention and power away from Him. The objective of the article was to bring to light the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit--the exhalation of Jesus Christ alone.

Some people come like the Greeks did to Philip, "We would see Jesus," and there are others who want to see the Jesus stuff. There are people who want to be thought well of for being a Jesus follower and there are those who no longer give a hoot what people think. Like Him, they have made themselves of no reputation, counting it all dung, except for the excellent (intimate) knowledge of Jesus Christ. *Is Jesus enough?* Or is He just something we have added to our bag of charms and made a part of our support system that keeps that old man in us in power? Is He just another person we use to strengthen that old nature that must die? It is not a new thing for an aspiring king to appeal to popes, cardinals and bishops to lend the weight of heaven to gain his own aspirations. This is the very thing that must be exposed in everyone that comes to Christ. Like the rich young ruler who wanted both his wealth and Jesus, you must choose one or the other. You can't have both. Will we follow Him no matter what it costs as the early believers did, or will we seek His gifts like Simon the sorcerer so we can have a name and power over men?

A few years back the Spirit showed me, Michael, that I had taken the same drives and ambitions I had in the world into the church and was now using the church to achieve fame, reputation, gain, and position. The Bride of Christ was just an object to be used for my pleasure and goals. When I saw this, it sickened me and I cried out to Jesus to kill that thing in me that used His Bride for my fleshly purposes.

John the Baptist saw the difference. Please read this passage carefully and put yourself in the place of John. This is where the true believer must find himself or find himself lost.

Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification [baptism]. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:25-36, NKJV).

This is deeply rooted in man. He insists on defining himself and gaining recognition by his actions and is threatened when another shines more brightly. This is even more the case in the spiritual realm. When the ambition of man meets the Spirit of God, religion is born out of this collision and another cult following or denomination is the result unless there is a death in our old life driving force. Instead of Christ becoming our sole identity, "He must increase, but I must decrease," we take up the powers of this new identification to strengthen our own kingdoms and oppose His. Without death to that old nature even the gifts of the Spirit are used to define one's self, rather than to

glorify Jesus and build up the body of Christ. Often we hear from the mouths of believers, "I have the gift of. . . .I am call to be a. . . ." Their place is defined by the personal pronoun I and not "[no longer I, but Christ.](#)" (Galatians 2:20).

Part of the reason why so few desire the position John describes is that "...what he has seen and heard, that he testifies; and no one receives his testimony." This position will not bring glory, but only more rejection from men. Are we willing to lift up Christ at the cost of our own decline in the eyes of carnal men?

God has no desire to elevate the messenger or the one the gifts are manifest through; rather the Spirit desires to elevate the Son, Jesus. These gifts are nothing more than a manifestation of the Son that HE might receive all praise and glory. They are NOT something the bearer is to use to start a traveling salvation show as we see so often in the western church of today. This is spiritual prostitution.

Blessing on all who seek His face alone.