

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

Although I stand by all I have written in the preceding pages, I have the feeling that if Paul had been sitting alongside me, by now he would be slowly shaking his head in disappointed disapproval, murmuring something about my 'missing the main point'. I hope he would be agreeing with what I have written, but he would know that I have been majoring on lesser issues – real issues, important issues, it's true – but all the while failing to hit the bull's eye. And late in the day, it is true – very late in the day – I have come to see how right he would have been.

Here is where I record my gratitude (for the third time in this present work) to my friend Rick Peterson. As I was putting the finishing touches to the manuscript, he advised me to read Gordon Fee's book *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*.¹ How right he was! And that volume has opened my eyes. Though I don't agree with Fee in every point, and though most of what I say in this chapter can be found throughout the earlier part of my book, nevertheless Fee's book brought all I had said sharply into focus for me, and I hope, as a result, that this chapter will increase any overall value there may be in my work.

Let me illustrate what I am saying by taking you back to the antediluvian days when 35mm slides were the latest thing. It is a winter's evening. We would set up our slide projector, blasting out hot air from a 500W lamp, erect the wobbly screen, turn out the lights, and settle down to be bored – or bore everybody else – by a seemingly endless stream of holiday slides or pictures of family events. We kept our slides in an upstairs cupboard. Central heating in those days in the UK was a fairly primitive affair, so the slides that we fetched

¹ Gordon Fee: *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1997.

out of storage to be slipped into the projector were pretty cold. For a moment or two, everything was fuzzy. Then, with a little click, the slide warmed up, and the image became as sharp as its photographer and our equipment could make it.

So, for this chapter – where I hope the whole thing clicks and becomes crystal clear. Well, as clear as I can make it.

I should have seen it long ago. You remember that I talked about ‘the key passage in Galatians’? Let me remind you of what I said at the time. Quoting the verses in question:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you...?... Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now² being made perfect by the flesh? (Gal. 3:1-5)...

I went on:

This is the key passage. The Galatians had begun in the Spirit – that is, they had begun their spiritual experience by the Spirit. They had been regenerated by the sovereign Spirit and justified by faith in Christ alone without the law. Now what about their perfection – that is, their progressive sanctification? While they were not under the law for justification, was the law the essential perfect rule for their progressive sanctification? Clearly, Paul’s rhetorical questions can have only one answer – a resounding ‘No!’

I stand by that. But I now see that Paul’s main point – his main point, I stress – was not, as I argued, justification and progressive sanctification, but both by the Spirit, by the Spirit as opposed to the flesh. Obvious isn’t it? I had concentrated on justification, progressive sanctification and the law, and that was right. Except, as I now realise, I was just exposing how much I have been affected by Christendom, and allowed Christendom-speak to take over the debate. Paul would not have been slogging away like I have been – although I stand by all I have said – but he would have delivered the knock-out

² Note the ‘now’. Having been justified, ‘now’...

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

punch right from the start. Which, of course, he did! Listen to him expostulating with the Galatians:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you...?... Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now...

Isn't it obvious that the howitzer in Paul's locker was... what? No! Not what – who? The Spirit, of course, the Spirit! The Spirit, not the flesh! It is the Spirit who makes the fundamental discontinuity between the old and new covenants. And it is Christ's bestowal of the Spirit, and the Spirit's presence and power that should be prominent in this debate. And that was the key point the *pseudadelphoi* were missing. They were going back to the old covenant and touting the law with all its emphasis on 'flesh', when all the time the new covenant is the age of the Spirit!

This is where Christ's parable of the wineskins comes into its own:

No one puts a piece of un-shrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved (Matt. 9:16-17).

The old covenant was completely incapable of coping with the sheer effervescence, life, vigour of the new age. If the combination of these two passages of Scripture (from Galatians and Matthew) does not refer to the bestowal of the Spirit, leaving the flesh as useless as old, withered leather of the dried-up wineskins, words have lost all meaning. It is the bestowal of the Spirit that is key.

Now, at this point, we must be careful, very careful. Paul made his position clear for all to see: 'Christ is all', he thundered (Col. 3:11). Nothing would ever shake him from that position. And we must be careful never to give the Spirit

the place that belongs to Christ. Christ is all, end of debate. And, as he himself said:

The Spirit of truth [the Holy Spirit]... will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you (John 16:13-15).

There it is, in black and white. We dare not exalt the Spirit over Christ. The Spirit himself always exalts Christ. So must we. So must our theology, our preaching, our books – in everything, Christ must be all. But Christ is now in heaven, and he has sent his Spirit to dwell and work in and among his people until he comes again. And herein lies the crux of the discontinuity between the two covenants:

‘Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said: “Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”. Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified’ (John 7:38-39).

When I quoted that promise earlier, I commented:

The new covenant might well be described as the age of the Spirit (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4; 4:31; Gal. 5:16-25, and so on).

How right I was! More right than I realised!

But it is at this point that Christendom enters the fray, Christendom with all its confusing and dampening power. Christendom has fractured the *ekklēsia*. Who can deny it?³

³ C.H.Spurgeon: ‘Whenever the church has been thoroughly distinct from the world, she has always prospered. During the first three centuries the world hated the church. The prison, the stake, the heels of the wild horse, these were thought too good for the followers of Christ... And all this, I believe, was partly the result of that striking, that marked difference between the church and the world. Certainly, during the period after Constantine professed to be a Christian... from the time when the church began to be linked with the State...

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

Take believers *en masse*. Some of us are dry-as-dust doctrinal nerds. Others of us are frenzied Spirit-geeks. The two camps are at loggerheads, leaving most believers nervously shuffling their feet in between, too embarrassed or too ignorant to have, and certainly to voice, any decided opinion. My background, as I have explained, is the dry-as-dust contingent, and what I have written in the previous pages has all-too clearly confirmed how deeply ingrained this background within me still is. The way I dealt with Paul's answer to the *pseudadelphoi* shows that clearly enough. And, of course, there is need for that approach. But... Well, perhaps this chapter will make some of my dry-as-dust critics think that I have gone over to the Spirit-geeks. True I had spoken of the Spirit in the earlier pages, but I had failed to see the key role his presence plays in all this. No! Let's say it as it is: I had absolutely missed it!

But the question is, what does Scripture tell us about this? We need to get back, if we can, 2000 years, and read Paul's lament to the Galatians, and read it uncoloured by Christendom:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you...?... Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now...

It stands as plain as a pikestaff. If it possible to use such a word in this context, the great factor – the deciding factor – in Paul's battle with the *pseudadelphoi* was the Spirit, the bestowal of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit, the power of the

the Lord left her, and gave her up to barrenness, and Ichabod was written on her walls. It was a black day for Christendom when Constantine said: "I am a Christian". "By this sign I conquer", said he. Yes, it was the true reason of his pretended conversion... From that time the church began to degenerate. And coming down to the Middle Ages, when you could not tell a Christian from a worldling, where were you to find piety at all, or life or grace left in the lands... Never were there good times when the church and the world were joined in marriage with one another' (Spurgeon sermon 305).

Spirit. And all in opposition to the flesh. The simple task of merely totting up references will make the point. 2 Corinthians has twelve references to 'Spirit', and Galatians has eighteen, give-or-take on the issue of spirit/Spirit. As for 'flesh', Galatians 5 has six references in twelve verses.

Romans is a most interesting letter in this regard. In the first seven chapters, we have references to the Spirit, of course, yes – but six, at most. But when we come to Romans 8, what a change! That chapter records an explosion on the Spirit as opposed to flesh – in a few verses, over twenty references to the Spirit and twelve to flesh! What is more, I think it is possible to see in those first seven chapters Paul setting out the negative side of all this: salvation – in all its aspects – is not by reason of birth, not by law – in part or in whole – but entirely by Christ. He summed up those seven chapters in the opening paragraph of Romans 8, before immediately unleashing a torrent of teaching on the Spirit, especially in contrast to the flesh. I now see this as Paul giving us his real answer to the *pseudadelphoi*: Christ's bestowal of the Spirit in the new covenant. This is the knock-out blow. The law and the flesh belong to the old covenant, but believers are living in the days of the new covenant, the age of the Spirit; the new wine is just too effervescent for the old wineskins. It is useless – and worse – to mix the covenants.

Of course, God used the old-covenant prophets to speak of these things, even though the prophets themselves realised they were speaking of things beyond their understanding, things they would not experience (1 Pet. 1:10-12). Moreover, when they set out the promise of God about the new-covenant bestowal of the Spirit, they had to use old-covenant language; they could do nothing else. But it is clear what we should understand by their words:

I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. This one will say: 'I am the LORD's', another will call on the name of Jacob,

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

and another will write on his hand: 'The LORD's', and name himself by the name of Israel (Isa. 44:3-5).

'And as for me, this is my covenant with them', says the LORD: 'My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring', says the LORD, 'from this time forth and forevermore' (Isa. 59:21).

I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God (Ezek. 11:19-20).

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules [or, just decrees] (Ezek. 36:25-27).

I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD (Ezek. 39:29).

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

Coming much closer to the actual event, we have John the Baptist's declaration:

I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:11-12; see also Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

And then we have Christ's great announcements:

'Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said: "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water". Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified' (John 7:38-39).

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you... The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you... When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me...

I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you' (John 14:16-18,26; 15:26; 16:7-15).

Then we have Christ's prayer as Mediator, when he prayed for those he was leaving behind:

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word... I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known (John 17:6-20,26).

How would this prayer be answered? By the bestowal of the Spirit!

We know that Christ's closing words to his disciples just before his ascension centred on the gift of the Spirit:

Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

And:

He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me; for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'... He said to them: '... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you' (Acts 1:4-8).

So, in accordance with Christ's promise:

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

As Peter confidently asserted on that very day:

This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:16-21).

And, as he later said, in justification of his epoch-making break with old-covenant culture when he entered Cornelius' house, preached, and witnessed the breaking out of the gospel among the Gentiles:

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said: 'John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit'. If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? (Acts 11:15-17).

And Paul could set his seal on the way God revealed the gospel to the apostles, and hence to believers throughout this age:

When you read [what I have written], you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:4-5).

This is it! The new age – the new age of the Spirit had come. Things would never be the same again.

In particular – the theme of this present work – take Paul's response the *pseudadelphoi* over the question of salvation. Do not miss the apostle's stress on the Spirit against the flesh (or letter). You recall how Paul virtually opened his case against them in his Corinthian letter:

God... has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Now if the ministry of death... will not the ministry of the Spirit... Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:5-18).

It stands out a mile does it not? Paul was saying that he and his apostolic colleagues were ministers,⁴ servants, of that new covenant, the ones to whom God has revealed the gospel in all its fullness, and yet you Corinthians are listening to law-men, workers who deal in the old covenant. This is the age of the Spirit, the day of the new covenant! As believers, you have come into the new age. Well stay in it! Stick with the Spirit. Why leave the new covenant and go back to flesh, letter, death, condemnation and slavery? Whatever are you thinking of?

And it is on this very point that the apostle challenges the Galatians:

Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh... Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works

⁴ All believers are ministers, but in this passage I think Paul had himself and his fellow-apostles in mind.

miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? (Gal. 3:2-5).

How is a sinner justified? From birth he is dead in sins, under the wrath of God (Eph. 2:1-3). He must believe (Rom. 10:14-15). He must, therefore, be regenerated. Unless he is born again, he cannot believe. And regeneration is only possible by the Spirit (John 3:3-8). The bringing of the sinner to justification is all by the Spirit: he is poured out upon the sinner, regenerating him, separating him, washing him, uniting him to Christ, thus bringing him to justification (Rom. 2:29; 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11,17; 2 Thess. 2:13; Tit. 3:5-7). Without the Spirit, no sinner has a glimmer of the truth; the gospel is nonsense to him (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 12:3). Unless a sinner is indwelt by the Spirit, he has no part in Christ (Rom. 8:9). The Spirit plays the key role in conversion (Gal. 3:2-3), and ever after (Gal. 3:5). How are sinners brought into Christ? By the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Who anoints and seals the believer in Christ? The Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14). The Spirit pours God's love into the heart (Rom. 5:5). And so on.⁵

As Fee put it:

For Paul, therefore, whatever else happens at conversion to Christ,⁶ it is the experience of the Spirit alone that is crucial; and therefore it is the Spirit alone who identifies God's people in this present eschatological age... Whatever else, the newly-formed people of God are Spirit people.⁷

I would add, that whatever else believers are, they are children of the new covenant. For Paul, any linking of conversion, justification, and so on, with the old covenant, the law, the letter, the flesh – the stock in trade of the *pseudadelphoi* – was absolutely ruled out by the role played by the Spirit in the new covenant, and the believer's experience of the Spirit.

⁵ See my 'Natural & Spiritual' and 'Flesh or Spirit' on my sermonaudio.com page.

⁶ Original 'Christian conversion'.

⁷ Fee pp88-89.

Fee:

The failure of the former covenant, the covenant of law, was that even though the law⁸ was 'spiritual'... (Rom. 7:14), and even though it came with glory (2 Cor. 3:7), it was not accompanied by the empowering Spirit.⁹

Therefore it could not do the job. Hence, as Paul so clearly stated in Romans 8:1-4, and as the writer to the Hebrews made plain, the old covenant with its law was too weak; it needed a better covenant – which God brought in through Christ – thereby superseding the old covenant which would be rendered obsolete:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free [has freed you] from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of [for] sin: he condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath... This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant... Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second... In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away... Therefore he is the Mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 7:18-22; 8:6-7,13; 9:15).

⁸ Original 'Torah'.

⁹ Fee p100.

So much for the original experience, conversion and justification. What about progressive sanctification in the believer's spiritual life? Fee spoke of the absolute, unbreakable tie between justification and progressive sanctification, and rightly did so in terms of the Spirit:

...the Spirit's role in salvation in Christ... Paul would not understand conversion that did not include growing up into Christ. For him, the Spirit was the essential ingredient to [in?] the whole life in Christ.¹⁰

Again, but now taking the debate further, Fee dealt with lawmen who, majoring on the law for progressive sanctification, inevitably find that it doesn't work, because of the inherent weakness of the law, the old covenant, to bring about, not only justification, but also progressive sanctification. Such teachers unavoidably end up driving believers into a life of perpetual struggle and inevitable failure, often – anticipating later developments – stressing what they claim to be the vital role of 'the wretched man of Romans 7'.¹¹ Fee:

Two things are clear from this passage [Galatians 5:13 – 6:10]: that the Spirit is the key to ethical life [that is, progressive sanctification], and that Paul expects Spirit people to exhibit changed behaviour...¹² Paul would have as little patience with [better, no patience with – DG] a view that for people to be 'justified sinners' without appropriate changes in attitude and conduct... as he would with an appeal to helplessness on the part of those who live in and walk by the Spirit. Paul simply knows nothing about an internal struggle within the human breast, in which the flesh continually proves to be the greater power.¹³

¹⁰ Fee p95.

¹¹ I will return to this.

¹² Indeed, a changed life is inevitable for those who are in Christ, indwelt by the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17).

¹³ Fee pp106-107.

Just so. Leaping ahead once more, Galatians 5 destroys any law-man's claim that 'the wretched man of Romans 7:14-25' is the normal – indeed, the highest – Christian life.¹⁴

But what about the flesh? I have used the word repeatedly, but what does *sarx* mean? Many believers are all at sea over the word. Many talk in terms of schizophrenia for the believer – of his having a perpetual internal conflict between flesh and spirit. Or even as the believer being tripartite. As one website has it:

There are three entities living within each believer: the Spirit of the living God, the sinful flesh (in which nothing good dwells) and us (which at least includes our ability to choose between the two).

Which is nonsense. It is heavily based on a complete misunderstanding of Romans 7:14-25, and 'the wretched man'.¹⁵

The meaning of 'flesh'

There are several ways in which the Bible uses *sarx*, but when Paul spoke of 'flesh' he overwhelmingly meant the natural man, the unregenerate, unbelieving man, the man in Adam, fallen man, the man outside of Christ, the man who is lost in sin, and hostile to God. In other words, the believer, having been born 'flesh', has been regenerated and brought by faith into Christ: he now is spiritual; he is no longer 'flesh'. He still has a physical body, of course, and he lives among those in the 'flesh' and in a 'fleshly' world, but in the vital sense of the term, the spiritual man is no longer 'flesh'. He was in Adam, but now he is in Christ; he has the Spirit.

Christ laid down the marker:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless

¹⁴ As before, I will return to this.

¹⁵ See my *Christ* pp171-172. See also Romans 7 items on my sermonaudio.com page.

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you: 'You must be born again'. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8).

And Paul expanded the point:

While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code (Rom. 7:5-6).

Note the change between 'flesh' and 'law', and 'Spirit', the old and the new: 'living in the flesh... but now we are released from the law... we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code'. The apostle came to this:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry: 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (Rom. 8:1-17).

Again:

The natural person [that is, the man who is 'flesh'] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly [foolishness] to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person [that is, the man who is no longer 'flesh'] judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 'For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

But doesn't Paul tell us about the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit?

He does indeed. But in one place only; namely, in Galatians 5:17. Strange as it may sound to some, that is the only place where Paul talks of this conflict: 'The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do'.

But what about the end of Romans 7? That speaks of the believer's inward conflict, doesn't it?

Well, no it doesn't!

Here is the first mistake which so many make: they lump Romans 7:14-25 and Galatians 5:16 – 6:5 in the same

bracket.¹⁶ But the two passages could not be more different. Their similarity is merely superficial. In the first, there is no mention of the Spirit, and all is defeat; the Galatian passage is about victory, victory by the Spirit. I have already spoken of the anxiety many believers endure as a direct result of a misunderstanding and misapplication of ‘the wretched man of Romans 7’ teaching. In the Galatian passage, the apostle urges

¹⁶ And with what confusion! Walter Marshall: ‘Holy Paul says truly of himself: “I live, yet not I” (Gal. 2:20); because he did live to God by Christ living in him, and yet in another respect, according to his natural state, he did not live to God. Again, he professes that he was “carnal, sold under sin”, and yet, on the contrary, that he “allowed not sin”, but “hated” it. He shows how both these were true concerning himself in various respects. He says: “In me (that is in my flesh) dwells no good thing”, and “I delight to do the will of God according to the inward man”, “With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but, with the flesh, the law of sin” (Rom. 7:14,15,18,22,25). John says: “He that says he has no sin, deceives himself, and is a liar” (1 John 1:8); and also that it is true that “Whatever is born of God, does not commit sin; for his seed, [that is Christ, the new spiritual nature] remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9). It is true that we are weak and can do nothing, and yet strong and able to do all things (2 Cor. 12:10,11; Phil. 4:13). It is true that believers are dead, because of sin, but alive, because of righteousness (Rom. 8:10); and that, when they die a natural death, they shall never die (John 11:25, 26). They are sons, that have the inheritance by their birthright, and yet in some respects may differ nothing from servants; and so they may be under the law in a sense, and yet under grace and heirs, according to the free promise at the same time (Gal. 4:1,2). They are redeemed from the curse of the law, and have forgiveness of sins, and a promise, that God will never be wrath with them, nor rebuke them any more (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Isa. 54:9); and yet, on the contrary, the curse written in the law is sometimes poured out upon them (Dan. 9:11); and they have need still to pray that God would deliver them from their guiltiness, and forgive their debts (Ps. 51:14; Matt. 6:12); and they may expect that God will punish them for all their iniquities (Amos 3:2). These contrary things asserted concerning believers in Scriptures do sufficiently manifest that they partake of two contrary states in this life’ (Walter Marshall: *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*).

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

believers to resist the hostile culture of flesh all about them, and assures them that they will be successful in this if they 'walk in or by the Spirit' and 'keep in step with the Spirit':

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbour. For each will have to bear his own load (Gal. 5:16 – 6:5).

As Paul made crystal clear, the conflict is severe, and the consequences of a believer acting as though he were still in the flesh are very, very heavy indeed – 'I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God' – echoes of Hebrews, no less, if not the other way round. But as the apostle immediately pressed on to say: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is...'

In saying this, I would not be misunderstood. Progressive sanctification, living in the Spirit, walking in step with the Spirit is not a piece of cake for the believer – in Fee's words,

it is 'not just a stroll in the park', 'passive' or 'automatic'.¹⁷ The believer must not abuse the apostle's teaching on the gift of the Spirit, making it into an excuse for a lack of self-control and positive obedience to Scripture. False confidence will prove – as the governing-adjective declares – false.¹⁸ As I have shown in this present work, and elsewhere,¹⁹ believers have the most serious responsibility laid upon them to be progressively sanctified, and this has both a negative and positive aspect. Paul does not mince his words about it. See, as the merest sample, Romans 8, Galatians 5, Ephesians 4 and 5, and Colossians 3. These extracts make the point:

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk [that is, live] as the Gentiles [that is, pagans] do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ! assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness...

At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them (Eph. 4:17-24; 5:8-11).

If [that is, since] then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is

¹⁷ Fee pp131-132.

¹⁸ As the unregenerate man I met on Lewis who drew comfort from the fact that he felt he could repeat the mantra 'my father was in the covenant' – whatever that may have meant!

¹⁹ See my *Christ; Liberty*.

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all (Col. 3:1-11).

Here we have it: the believer was unregenerate, and as an unregenerate man he lived in unregeneracy; he was in Adam; that was his 'self', his pre-conversion 'self'. But he has been regenerated, and as a regenerate man he now lives in regeneracy; by faith he is now in Christ; that is his 'self', his post-conversion 'self'. He was an 'old man', he had an 'old man'; he is now a 'new man', he has a 'new man'. So far so good. The apostle's concern, however, was not simply to state the fact of his glorious transformation: he urges, he commands, he exhorts believers not to live according to what they were – unregenerate, in Adam, as *per* their 'old man' – but according to what they really now are – regenerate, in Christ, as *per* their 'new man'. This is precisely where the believer's conflict lies. It is a battle over choice: will he live according to his old self or according to his new? He does not have two men fighting within him, he is not (spiritually speaking) both in the flesh and in the Spirit; he is spiritual, he has the Spirit. The fleshly world is all around him, cajoling him to follow its ways, but he is responsible – he has to resist; he has to choose. And, according to the apostle, there is only one choice for the regenerate man:

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17).

That is both a fact and a duty!

But, it goes without saying, it is invidious to cite passages to make the point: the entire New Testament overflows with the teaching.

As Fee explained:

The Spirit-flesh conflict in Paul has not to do with an internal conflict in one's soul, but with the people of God living the life of the future in a world where the flesh is still very active... Nowhere does Paul describe the Christian life, life in the Spirit, as one of constant struggle with the flesh. He simply does not address that question.²⁰ His point, rather, is the sufficiency of the Spirit for God's new end-time people. Basic to Paul's view is that, as with law-observance,²¹ the time of the flesh is over for the followers of Christ. According to Romans 7:4-6, Christ and the Spirit have, with the new covenant, brought an end to the time of the law and the flesh, which belong to our existence *before* and *outside* Christ... That Paul viewed the flesh as belonging to the past for believers, in the same way as he viewed law-observance,²² is specifically stated in Romans 7:4-6: 'When we *were* living in the flesh, the passions of sin, aroused by the law, *were* [also] at work in us;... but now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been set free... to walk in the new way of the Spirit'.²³

When Paul talks of the spirit-flesh conflict for the believer – as, I remind you, he does just once (in Galatians 5:17) – he is referring to the way the believer confronts the culture of the world, and wards off its attacks. A believer who fails in this warfare lives below his standing in Christ, lives as though he were still in Adam. Indeed, Paul had to rebuke the Corinthians on that very point:

I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh [that is, unregenerate], as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are

²⁰ Original 'speak to that question'.

²¹ Original 'Torah observance'.

²² Original 'Torah observance'.

²³ Fee pp125,127,129, emphasis his.

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

still of the flesh [that is, living as though you were unregenerate]. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human [that is, carnal, natural, unregenerate] way? For when one says: 'I follow Paul,' and another: 'I follow Apollos', are you not being merely human [that is, fleshly, carnal]? (1 Cor. 3:1-4).

He made his own position clear:

I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh [that is, carnally, as natural men]. For though we walk in the flesh [that is, as men], we are not waging war according to the flesh [that is, carnally, as natural men]. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh [that is, carnal, human] but have divine power to destroy strongholds (2 Cor. 10:2-4).

Addressing the Philippians, the apostle urged them:

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh [that is, the physical body]. For we are the circumcision [that is, the spiritual Israel, the regenerate], who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh [that is, anything human] – though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh [that is, the physical body] also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh [that is, the physical body, human connections], I have more (Phil. 3:2-4).

Following which, as we have seen, he punched home his qualifications as an Israelite (Phil. 3:4-11).

And addressing the Romans, Paul was blunt:

God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh [that is, fallen-ness], could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [that is, fallen man] and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh [that is, the physical body], in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh [that is, fallen humanity] but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh [that is, fallen humanity] set their

minds on the things of the flesh [that is, fallen-ness in any shape or form], but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh [that is, fallen-ness in any shape or form] is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh [that is, fallen-ness in any shape or form] is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh [that is, in Adam, unregenerate] cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh [that is, in Adam, unregenerate] but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Rom. 8:3-9).

As Fee put it:

Any conflict in this matter has to do with believers in Christ, [and thus are people who are in Christ – DG], people of the Spirit, continuing to behave according to their pre-Christ perspective and values. Paul's point always is: 'Stop it'. [Don't be fools – DG]. 'Put off your old self, he says, and 'put on your new self' (Eph. 4:22,24).²⁴

As Paul, immediately after the above extract from Romans, went on to say:

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh [that is, fallen-ness in any shape or form], to live according to the flesh [that is, fallen-ness in any shape or form]. For if you live according to the flesh [that is, fallen-ness in any shape or form] you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Rom. 8:12-14).

The *pseudadelphoi* demanded obedience to the law. Without circumcision, the Gentiles would not be saved, would not be the children of God. So they claimed, so they taught. In other words, they were demanding a course of action that would, among other things, inevitably lead believers into a sense of defeat. And Paul would have none of it. Paul, in flatly contradicting the *pseudadelphoi*, was prepared to polarise the

²⁴ Fee p129.

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

issue, concentrating his reply on the Spirit as opposed to the flesh and the law. As Fee expressed it:

On the contrary, Paul argues, the Spirit, and the Spirit alone, identifies the people of God under the new covenant... The Spirit, promised as part of the new covenant [weak; the bestowal of the Spirit is the great marker of the discontinuity of the two covenants – DG], would produce the righteousness the former covenant called for but failed to produce. The Spirit has now been experienced by Jew and Gentile alike, and that quite apart from the law.²⁵ Thus the Spirit, as the eschatological fulfilment of the promised new covenant, plays a pivotal role in Paul's argumentation whenever Gentile inclusion, law-free,²⁶ is the issue.²⁷

What about progressive sanctification? Fee:

The goal of individual conversion is for us to bear the fruit of the Spirit; that is, to be transformed into God's own likeness, the likeness of Christ.²⁸

And how is this produced? By the law, that is, in the flesh? Certainly not! Fee:

The Spirit... is the key to our being transformed into God's own image.²⁹

Believers live in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), and have to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), rejecting all the allurements of the flesh, but producing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26).

Fee caught the essence of this:

The Spirit is central in Paul's ethics [that is, teaching on progressive sanctification]... because there is no such thing as salvation in Christ that does not also include righteousness on the part of God's people [that is, progressive sanctification]. They are not saved by doing righteousness –

²⁵ Original 'Torah'.

²⁶ Original 'Torah-free'.

²⁷ Fee pp100-101.

²⁸ Fee p111.

²⁹ Fee pp109.

that is unthinkable, since righteousness as behaviour is the *product* [effect – DG] of the Spirit's empowering, not a requirement of obedience to get in [that is, justification]. But for that very reason, ethical life [that is, progressive sanctification] is required, because both getting in and staying in are the work of the Spirit, and Paul sees [and will allow – DG] no division between the two...

The Spirit is essential to Paul's ethics [that is, teaching on progressive sanctification] because truly Christian ethics [that is, progressive sanctification] can only be by the Spirit's empowering. That is why law-observance³⁰ does not work; it may make people 'religious', but it fails to make them truly 'righteous', in the sense of reproducing the righteousness of God in their lives. Spirit people not only *want* to please God but are *empowered* to do so.³¹

The law plays no part in justification or progressive sanctification, but it has its use as a shadow and illustration of the new covenant, particularly of Christ himself.³² Fee:

In the age of the Spirit, discontinuity lies in the area of law-observance³³ – keeping the law as a way either to identify the people of God or to establish one's relationship with God. Paul's break with his Jewish tradition [background, upbringing, education, culture] at this point is absolute – and resolute: 'Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; what counts is keeping the commandments of God' (1 Cor. 7:19)...

The fruit of the Spirit is none other than the Spirit's producing in our lives the righteousness of God (the righteousness that characterises God). When this is happening, law³⁴ is fulfilled in such a way that for all practical purposes it has become obsolete; however, law³⁵ as part of the Old Testament story... is never obsolete. In this sense it will endure as long as this between-the-times endures – not as a means of righteousness or as a means of identity,

³⁰ Original 'Torah observance'.

³¹ Fee p104, emphasis his.

³² See my 'No Mixture' on my sermonaudio.com page.

³³ Original 'Torah observance'.

³⁴ Original 'Torah'.

³⁵ Original 'Torah'.

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

but as a means of pointing us to the righteousness of God, which the Spirit brings to pass in our lives in the present expression of the eschatological future.³⁶

To sum up this excurses on 'flesh', consider this from an earlier and larger work of Fee:

Paul herewith [Galatians 5:13-26] places the flesh and the law on the same side of things over against the Spirit... Everything before Christ, which was fundamentally eliminated by his death and resurrection and the gift of the eschatological Spirit, belongs to the same 'old age' sphere of existence. In that sense the Spirit stands over against both the flesh and the law, in that he replaces the latter and stands in opposition to the former. Although Paul does not say so here, the argument of Romans 6 – 8 demonstrates that [law]³⁷ was helpless in the face of the flesh, while the Spirit is not, and for that reason [the Spirit] replaces [law].³⁸

Fee quoted F.F.Bruce:

For Paul... the law and the flesh belong to the same pre-Christian order.³⁹

* * *

And there is another vital matter that must be dealt with, one of immense practical or pastoral importance: the believer's assurance. A lack of assurance – and, as a result, life-long slavery to anxiety – is one of the consequences of law-teaching. As I have shown elsewhere, the new-covenant way of assurance is by the witness of the Spirit, not by obedience to the law.⁴⁰ Listen to Paul:

³⁶ Fee pp102-103.

³⁷ Original 'torah'.

³⁸ Original 'torah'.

³⁹ Gordon D.Fee: *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1994, p438.

⁴⁰ See my *Assurance*. As I have noted, progressive sanctification is a witness to others.

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ... Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry: 'Abba, Father'. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory... We... have the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9,14-17,23).

Now it is God who... anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Cor. 1:21-22).

God... has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Cor. 5:5).

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our [your] hearts, the Spirit who calls out: 'Abba, Father'. So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir (Gal. 4:6-7).

You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory... Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30).

And then John:

You have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth... As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in him (1 John 2:20-27).

This is how we know that he lives in us: we know it by the Spirit he gave us (1 John 3:24).

Paul's Answer: The Spirit

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (1 John 4:13).

It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth... We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (1 John 5:6,9-11).⁴¹

* * *

Fee's conclusion, albeit somewhat restrained, hits the nail on the head:

To be sure, the Spirit is not the centre for Paul – Christ is, ever and always – but the Spirit stands close to the centre, making Christ known and empowering all genuinely Christian life and experience. For this reason, the Spirit must play a much more vital role in our thinking... than tends now to be the case.⁴²

I echo that sentiment with respect to all that I have written so far in this book. The Spirit's person, presence and power is absolutely key to all I have insisted on. No wonder, then, that the Spirit's bestowal was Christ's parting gift to his people. Without the bestowal of the Spirit, there would have been no new covenant. And the root error of the *pseudadelphoi* was that by their law-teaching they were undermining and undoing Christ's provision. The consequences, if they had succeeded, don't bear thinking about.

⁴¹ In addition, we have the repeated experience of 'being filled with the Spirit' (Luke 1:15,41,67; 4:1; Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 6:3,5; 9:17; 11:24; 13:52; Eph. 5:18).

⁴² Fee p179.