

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

David Lipscomb

The 30th verse of the 4th chapter of Ephesians, is, **“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of our God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.”** In properly understanding this passage, we must note the meaning and use of several terms. The term *seal* is a sign guaranteeing and confirming a promise, or obligation. Persons in the apostolic age of the church, believed in Christ, confessed Him and put Him on in baptism. The New Testament Scriptures were not then given. To instruct the new converts, to strengthen and encourage them in the divine life—to prevent them losing faith and heart and courage, and to enable them to persevere faithfully to the end, the Holy Spirit was given to them or at least a sufficient number to supply all needful instructions and guidance to the infant congregations.

The disciples on the day of Pentecost, the Samaritans, to whom Peter and John went down after Philip had preached and baptized many, and laid hands, that they receive the Holy Ghost, those same Ephesians who first knowing only John’s baptism were baptized in the name of Christ, when Paul laid his hands upon them they received the Holy Ghost. By the Holy Ghost, they are here said to be sealed unto the day of redemption. That is the Holy Ghost was given to confirm to them the promise of God as well as to instruct and guide in the way of truth and so to encourage them to persevere unto the end. It sealed and guaranteed to them the truth of what was

taught, and confirmed to them the promise of God, gave assurance to them that the promises and work were from God in such a way as to prevent their growing faint and weary in their minds, and turning back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world.

This gift of the Spirit was direct and what is called miraculous in its character. It was the transfer of God’s Spirit of knowledge and power to the individual and so transferred God’s knowledge and power to the individual, as to manifest that God was with and in the individual. The promises of redemption were made to these persons in the gospel and were confirmed by this gift of spiritual knowledge and power. God in this way sealed or confirmed the certainty of His promises unto the day of redemption. This Spirit, in its miraculous manifestation of gifts of divine knowledge and power, has not been possessed by any individual since the revelation was completed, collected and confirmed to man. Hence the Spirit in closing the revelation through John in the Isle of Patmos, says,

**I am Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Whosoever shall add to the things written in this book, to him shall be added the plagues written in this book, whosoever shall take from the things written in this book, from him shall be taken the promises contained in it.**

That is, the spirit of revelation that he possessed was the first and last of revealing spirits, or it revealed the first and last of divine truth to the world, and had completed its revelations, so that when that book was closed no further revelation would be made.

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# Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher  
dpbcftf@gmail.com

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25403 Lancewood Dr., Spring, Texas 77373  
Telephone: (281) 350-5516**

**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder  
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The truths confirmed, the promises made sure and the directions needful to the guidance of man are all fully set forth in the book of the revelation of the Spirit. Through that book it now teaches, guides, directs and comforts.

It did not direct, comfort, strengthen when given in its miraculous form to man, otherwise than through revealing and confirming the instructions to man. The apostles themselves had the truth revealed to them, and were left like other men, to contend with their passions and infirmities, strengthened and encouraged by the knowledge revealed to them. For the Spirit to influence them otherwise than through revealing truth to their mind, and leaving them to act under the direction of that truth would be to destroy their individuality and responsibility. Hence apostles, prophets and men of less degrees of inspiration sinned. Peter was [not] inspired before he denied the Saviour, [but] sinned after the full apostolic measure of inspiration was received. Balaam was inspired. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Saviour, was one of the twelve to whom was given power “**to cast out devils, Heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease**” (Mat. 10:2).

No spiritual power to resist evil and temptation was conferred by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit save by giving to the mind a clear perception of truth with its blessing and of the evil tendencies and fatal results of error that leads to sin. The clear perception of truth with the good that flows through its practice, together with the loveliness of God, kindness to man, touches the heart, purifies the affections, restrains the evil tendencies of the flesh, and so strengthens the soul for good. The same influences are exerted now by the Spirit through the truth, revealed in the Scriptures and confirmed to our faith. All the instructions given by the Spirit to the apostles, for the enlightenment, guidance, comfort and help of the world are recorded in the Scriptures for the benefit of the world. Hence:

**All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

It is through that Spirit then, in its teachings and guiding power that in this day Christians are sealed unto the day of redemption. That is, the promises of God through Christ are sealed or confirmed to all Christians until the day of redemption, complete and thorough from the thralldom of sin.

The Spirit is the medium of divine communication with man. It is God's representative here on earth. We reach God through the Spirit. God is spirit and they who worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Then what pleases the Spirit pleases God, what pleases God pleases the Spirit, what vexes God or grieves God grieves the Spirit.

There is a declaration in Isaiah 53:10 that is of the same purport. **“But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit, therefore he [God] was turned to be their enemy and fought against them.”** When these Jews vexed the Holy Spirit they certainly grieved it. The Holy Spirit was in the prophets, through them taught the Jews the law of God. Those Jews refused to hearken to His law, rebelled

against the law and so rebelled and sinned against the Holy Spirit that gave the law so that God turned and fought against them.

Again in Psalm 78:40 he, referring to their frequent rebellings against Moses, against the Holy Spirit speaking through Moses, said, **“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness and grieve him in the desert.”** They provoked and grieved God and His Holy Spirit, by the frequent murmurings and rebellions against Moses and his law in the journey through the wilderness from Egyptian bondage up to the land of Canaan. Distrusting His promises and disobeying His commands grieved Him in the wilderness and provoked the Lord to destroy them.

—Deceased

## THE CAUSE AND ORIGIN OF DENOMINATIONALISM

Rex A. Turner, Sr.

Denominationalism had its origin in the reformation of the sixteenth century. There were several causes which contributed to the rise and prevailing course of denominationalism. An overview of four of the chief causes will suffice for this article.

One contributing cause of the rise of denominationalism was that Martin Luther, the chief leader of the reformation movement, proceeded on two erroneous concepts. Luther, a priest of the Roman Catholic Church who had become very distracted by the intricate rituals, forms, and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, by chance read from Paul's Epistle to the Romans the statement: **“The just shall live by faith.”** He seized upon the statement as being the answer to his unrest and confusion; and he construed the meaning to be that the just shall live by faith only—thus the reformation was grounded in the “faith only” doctrine from the very outset. Luther labeled the book of James—which teaches that one is justified by works and not by faith only—as being “a right strawy epistle.” This was one of Luther's chief erroneous concepts, and his other chief erroneous concept was that he should expend his efforts in an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church. He did not entertain the concept that he should resort to the New Testament as his standard of authority and thus proceed therefrom to restore the New Testament Church.

A second contributing cause of the rise of denominationalism was the injection of the doctrine of Calvinism

into the reformation movement. In 1533, John Calvin experienced “a sudden conversion,” and he joined in the cause of the reformation. Though he rejected the papal—authority of the Roman Catholic Church, together with the numerous rituals and regularities, yet he held many of the Catholic doctrines—particularly the doctrine of original sin and predestination. Calvin proceeded to systematize protestant thought through his “Institutes of the Christian Religion.” Calvin's system consisted of five very erroneous doctrines—namely, total depravity, unconditional predestination, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. James Arminius, a Dutch theologian of the reformation movement, came forward to oppose there tenets. His was a move, a step, closer to the truth, but he embraced a modified approach to certain tenets of Calvinism. To illustrate, he granted the doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit—but he denied that the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is irresistible.

A third contributing cause of the rise of denominationalism was the crystallizing of the doctrine of divine grace—or the direct operation of the Holy Spirit—among all the denominations. The case is that this doctrine is held in common by all the denominational churches—some churches hold that this direct operation is irresistible; whereas others hold that the Holy Spirit, with effort, can be resisted. Now, this doctrine made every man who “received” the Holy Spirit a standard of authority within himself. The Word very naturally took second place with

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every person who imagined that he had received an experience of grace as a result of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

A fourth contributing cause of the rise of denominationalism was the efforts of certain movements, from time to time, to move closer to truth. To illustrate, the sect of the Anabaptists arose to oppose infant baptism. Those of that sect rightfully declared that baptism should be administered to believers only, but they granted that sprinkling is baptism. Calvin gave violent opposition to the movement, and he also reacted violently in his disagreement with the Lutherans over the Lord's Supper, which in turn resulted in the separation of the Evangelical Church into the Lutheran and the Reformed. In about 1608, John Smyth baptized himself and began to advocate that only immersion would suffice for baptism—a step closer to the truth—but he did not regard baptism as being a condition of pardon for the alien sinner. This gave rise to the General Baptists. In 1644, there arose the Particular Baptists—which was a sect devoted to the Calvinist doctrine that

came to embrace immersion only as baptism. In America, the Particular Baptists divided into two fellowships—the Hard Shell Baptists and the American Baptists, which include the now Missionary Baptists. The Hard Shell Baptists hold that the direction operation of the Holy Spirit is irresistible, whereas the Missionary Baptists hold that, with effort, the direction operation of the Holy Spirit can be resisted.

The crux of all this is that every erroneous doctrine embraced made for division; and further, every step toward truth provoked violent reactions. Extremes begot extremes—the Lutherans against the Calvinists, the Calvinists against the Arminians, the bishops against the presbyters, and the Presbyterians among themselves. There was a pressing need for the restoration based solely on the New Testament. This is the Biblical plea (Luke 8:11), and it is the plea of every faithful congregation of God's people.

—Deceased