

three disasters by Christ's fellowship with us by the Holy Spirit and in the gospel—a fellowship which frees us from the witness cabined within to be the body of Christ in the world.

Second, fellowship is continuously initiated, refurbished and nourished where God meets us in the gospel, that is, in the preaching of Christ; where God meets us in his self-giving—in the sacraments of grace; and where we, in worship, are commissioned to make Christ's fellowship with us the meaning of our relationship with all whom we meet everywhere. The church is divinely appointed: it is the heartthrob of the Christian life. But it is *ecclesia via*—the church on the way. It is always on the way from the world in order to go back to the world. It cannot stay with itself: it gathers to scatter, but it cannot scatter unless it gathers, and it cannot gather honestly unless it is the gathering of the scattered who are anxious to be scattered again.

Third, anything within the church that prevents fellowship in the world is a denial of fellowship. If our method of getting people into the church, and keeping them there, teaches them that their involvement with ecclesiasti-

cal affairs is the major expression of their loyalty to Christ, the total purpose of fellowship is aborted. But, whatever in the church impels us to fellowship in the world—to Christlike living in the daily life and to living from the Christ within to the neighbor without—is God impacting fellowship upon us as the way of life in Christ.

Fourth, Christ's love for others, not our status-conditioned affability with others or our pride over this church, this minister, this people and this tradition, determines where our fellowship is to be exercised, and that "where" is simply where others are. Christ uses his church to reach and help those outside the church—in the nonchalant or deadly serious contacts of life. It is only there that fellowship in Christ, begun in church, comes to fruition.

Fifth, fellowship creates our "manner of life . . . worthy of the gospel of Christ . . ." (Phil. 1:27). This "manner of life" sits loose to life. It cannot be planned, organized, or made a matter of technique. It is purely a situational outcropping of a gospel-dominated being, a being driven by a prior fellowship of Christ with it. Like the Holy Spirit who authors the fellowship of Christ with us, the fellowship life is

free, free to meet every circumstance on the sole basis of the person's primary relation to Christ.

To ask What is fellowship? is to build a containing wall around the church for the protection—and frustration—of those inside who prefer not to be disturbed in their pleasant "we" game. But, to ask Where is fellowship? is to have the walls of the insulated church torn down by the entering Christ, it is to be caught up in Christ's redemptive action, and it is to be given a part and share in Christ's mission of salvation for persons and circumstances wherever we encounter them. And, when we succeed in bringing others into fellowship with Christ, it is to bring them into the worship of the Christ that he may send them out into his work in the world in and through their ordinary work in the world.

Since our fellowship is in Christ and with others wherever we are, each worship service could profitably conclude with these words adapted from the punchline of a Broadway play: "Get out of here . . . and love." Or, we may put it in the quieter words of Calvin: "God . . . bids us extend to all men the love we bear to him. . . ."

PULPIT PATTERNS

By David A. MacLennan

I That's the Spirit!

Scripture: John 14:15; 14:26; 15:26, 27.

A Cornell University president remarked to a visiting preacher: "I have heard almost every sermon by distinguished visiting preachers, including eminent theologians, here in Sage Chapel. Not once in all these years have I heard a sermon on the Holy Spirit." Wistfully, he added, "I would like to hear one interpretation of the church's teaching on the Spirit."

Pentecost Sunday (June 6 this year) is an appropriate time to think of this doctrine. Many modern citizens resemble the Ephesians to whom Paul spoke. If you were to repeat the Apostle's question, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" they could honestly answer, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:1-2. N.E.B.). Others are confused as a result of the apparently inconsistent references to "the Holy Spirit," "the Spirit," "the Spirit of Jesus." These terms are interchangeable. Moreover, the New Testament writers are unanimous in affirming that the Holy Spirit is God at work in the world, in the lives of men, in the community of faith and redemptive love which is the church. Jesus himself prepared the first Christians for an experience of the Holy Spirit when, in one of his last conversations with them in the Upper Room, he forecast the Spirit's coming (John 14, 15, 16). The greatest missionary teacher of them all,

the Apostle Paul, experienced this "One who stands beside" (the meaning of the word translated in some versions of the scriptures: "paraclete"). Early Christians soon realized that the Holy Spirit was one who had the character of Jesus. The guiding and supportive power, the tender healing action, the transforming and keeping love of Christ are available now as they were in Palestine of old. Study of the relevant chapters of John's Gospel suggests a threefold answer to the question, "Who or what is the Holy Spirit?"

1) The Spirit is the *champion* (advocate, helper; literally, someone called in to help John 14:15). The old translation "Comforter" will do if you give the word the old meaning: one who enabled a discouraged, beaten soul to be brave. The Holy Spirit brings God into the situation as Christ did.

2) The Spirit is the *instructor*. ("the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have told you" John 14:26. N.E.B.) The Spirit is the interpreter. An interpreter's commission is to translate ideas from one language to another, to explain hidden meanings and to introduce. A once-popular fiction character was David Grayson. In a talk with a friend, Grayson said, "Do you know what I'd like to be called? I'd like to be called an introducer. I'd like to say to my friend Mr. Blacksmith, 'Let me introduce you to my friend Mr. Plutocrat. I could almost swear

you were brothers, so near alike are you. You'll find each other wonderfully interesting once you've got over the awkwardness of the introduction.' . . . 'And Mr. White Man, let me present you particularly to my good friend Mr. Negro. You will see, if you sit down to it, that the curious color of the skin is only skin-deep.'" (In 1965 something should be added to such an introduction if conversation is to be meaningful and justice realized.)

3) The Spirit is the witness. ("he will bear witness to me. And you also are my witnesses, because you have been with me from the first" John 15:26, 27. N.E.B.) A witness is one who says, "This is true and I know it."

Among many helpful books to consult when preaching on the Holy Spirit, one of the most lucid, readable ones is William Barclay's *The Promise of the Spirit* (London: The Epworth Press, 1960. Paperback.)

II Is Your God Too Small?

Text: 2 Corinthians 13:14. N.E.B.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with you all"

Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost or Whitsunday, celebrates of the most mysterious doctrines of Christian faith. To many it is telligible, unnecessary and at best of theological jigsaw puzzle. Not less it was not remote when it formulated; it came straight experience of ordinary C!