**Please use the information in this manuscript anyway you see fit.** Brother Perry Cotham had me write this book for the benefit of others. He served as more than just a brother in Christ. He was my second earthly father. After my father died, he became my sounding board. He begged me to take over his work in India. I did so for a decade, and then the money ran out. Very few men have had the impact on so many people like brother Perry. I miss him and look forward to the day when we can sit together in paradise.

 ***Bill Myers*** *is a faithful gospel preacher. He has given to the brotherhood a valuable book which deserves a wide distribution in all parts of the world. Those who will read this book with an honest and sincere heart will receive much benefit from it. We predict for it a great influence for good for the Lord’s church.*

* *Perry B. Cotham*

**PREFACE**

I can remember when my daughter was born. The first thing I thought was, “Boy, am I blessed!” God had given me a precious little girl to light her path to heaven. I never thought that I would end up with six wonderful children who would be more faithful to the church in their early years than I was.

 I wasn’t that I was an ignorant child, nor was I brought up to hate the church. Truthfully, my parents, though not as active as they should have been, were not the reason for my swaying from the kingdom. The various reasons you will find recorded in this manuscript.

 This book is a firsthand look at the world of the charismatic, a guide into a movement that swept this country in the 60’s and 70’s. It was an experience that I shall never forget. For though I am so glad to be in God’s Kingdom, there is a part of me that misses the many friends I left behind.

 It is not that I desire to be involved in the movement again. I is simply the conviction of teaching and converting a multitude wrongly, friends who trusted me. Nevertheless, I led them into darkness never revealing to them the true light.

 I continue to pray for them. For, just maybe, somewhere there is a gospel preacher who will knock their door. But, if not, then I know the chances of them ever finding the truth is slim.

 We, who are ministers of the gospel, must see the need to echo the truth to the four corners of the world. Most of this world is blind. False teachers have perverted their minds. Thus, we must do our part to lead them out of darkness into the light. This, and this alone, is the only purpose why my past is unveiled.

**INTRODUCTION**

Imagine standing on the bank of the Jordan River. It is the first year of the Lord’s ministry. On a small hillside, not far from shore, you see a great gathering of people. Inquisitively, you make your way up the hillside only to view a young man preaching. After he sermon is over, you follow along with the rest of the crowd. Suddenly an elderly lady who had a terrible blood disease touches the hem of His garment. Amazingly she is healed whole. More astonishingly, others beckon the young man to heal their diseases. And before your very eyes the blind receives their sight, the lame begins to walk and the dumb begin to speak. Within your heart you know this is more than just a man; this indeed is the Son of God.

 “If it happened long ago why not now?” This is the logical conclusion that leads people to believe the charismatic philosophy. Many people believe they need to see a miracle. In their minds, it is proof that their faith is not in vain. Sadly, once convinced that they have seen a miracle these people are almost impossible to convert to the truth. Thus, it takes knowledge and skill to teach those who are willing to listen.

 Be that as it may, every soul is special. Just because a great number refuses to hear the gospel, never give up! You must believe that there is someone somewhere who is beginning to question certain things. This is the person who is looking for a way out. Believe me, I know this, for I was one of those individuals. I thank God that light beamed in my direction! So, I begin this book by showing the reader what it was like to be a charismatic. Further, I want to give you insight on their theology, and how, with kindness and love, you can bring some out of the darkness into the light.

**CHAPTER ONE**

1. **RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

It was my first year in college. I had just entered my freshman year at Vincennes University in Vincennes, Indiana. Like most young freshmen attending their first semester, I was looking for a way to meet new friends. Being a member of the church of Christ, I started attending the congregation in Vincennes. The brethren were friendly, and in the beginning, I attended several of their youth gatherings.

 I was proud of myself. I, for the first time in my life, had a zeal to do that which was right. I tried never to miss services or any special events that were associated with the church. However, my faith was soon to detour from the proper path.

 Strolling back to my dormitory after lunch one day, I heard a conversation going on between several young students. The subject they were discussing was the Holy Spirit. Once I entered the open door to the room where the discussion was being held, I offered an apology for my intrusion. “No sweat!” Bob replied, “come on in and join in our discussion.”

 I never thought that the moment I entered that open door, the door of truth would be shut for ten years. I loved the brethren at Vincennes, but I was a teenager who desperately needed friends my own age. Hence, I felt that Bob and his colleagues were the answer to all my problems. Face it! Most of the creatures on this planet thirst for attention and friendship, especially a young college student like me who had been feeling the plague of loneliness. Looking back, I wish I could have remained introverted.

 “Why leave the church?” I have had people ask me on several occasions. The first time I entered the door to Bob’s room, I heard things I was not capable of refuting. The subject of the Holy Spirit was something I knew nothing about, yet Bob made it seem so easy. Not only that but also, I felt comfortable around people my own age. I finally had friends. We would all go to breakfast together and stay up many nights talking about the Bible. Truthfully, I wanted to be entertained, pampered. When I was introduced to the Charismatic movement in the fall of 1973 that need was fulfilled. By comparison, the church of Christ could not compete with my new-found friends, and new-found religion. I didn’t want to participate. The preaching was boring. There seemed to be very few activities for young people, and I just didn’t see the need to be faithful. In that small dormitory room at Vincennes University, I would begin a journey which would lead me further and further from the truth- so far, indeed, that the way back home seemed almost impossible.

1. **“Rose Up to Play”**

 There is a verse in the book of Exodus which reads, “And the people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play” (Exodus 32:6). This passage concerns itself with the wrongful attitude of the Israelites and personifies the charismatic religion. Most of those whom I knew within the movement were emotional fanatics. The guitars, drums, and having fun became the enticing attributes that convinced many of us that we had found the true way to heaven. After all, why shouldn’t services be entertaining?

 Sitting and listening to someone open a Bible and preach for thirty minutes is sadly a boring thing for most people. My misunderstanding of the meaning of worship, and my childlike demeanor caused me to despise attending services.

1. **A Grand Entertainer**

 Probably one of the finest speakers I have ever heard was a young college student from Bowling Green University. He had been raised in the Pentecostal religion. His charisma was astonishing plus, with his strong voice and good looks, he had charmed most of the ladies on campus during his short visit. His reason for being on campus was to see his girlfriend who happened to be a part of our small group. She was a dedicated follower of the philosophies of the movement. She was also very much in love with Peter.

 Peter was one of those individuals who had stood in a pulpit from the time he was in junior high. He was dynamic. His smooth speeches and funny stories captivated all of us. Thus, his mesmeric abilities led me one step further from God.

**3. Time to Receive the Spirit**

It was a beautiful evening outside the classroom where Peter was conducting one of his last sessions before heading back to Bowling Green University. He was speaking again about the Holy Spirit. This time he placed more emphasis on the identifiable marks of a true believer in Christ. He explained that unless one received the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues salvation could not be obtained. He used various passages quoted by most Pentecostals (Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; Acts 2; Acts 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:10), verses that convinced my soul that I needed to receive what Peter said God was so willing to give.

 After the lesson was taught, Peter led his faithful followers to the basement of one of the dormitories. The laundry room became the place where we eventually ended up. Within the confines of that small room in the basement, and amazing event took place. Peter, standing in the middle of the gathering, asked if anyone would like to receive the Holy Spirit. I, and two others, came forward. To the charismatic this was the seal of his or her salvation. I wanted this more than anything. I can remember Peter laying his hands on the first candidate. He began to utter words, if you could call them words! Then, stepping over to the second candidate, Peter once again laid his hands on the young student, who, after a little hesitation, began to speak in tongues. Then it was my turn. My stomach churned. I was nervous and at the same time excited. “What if he lays his hands on me, and I don’t speak in tongues? What will my new friends think?” I thought. So many questions were running through my mind, questions that would soon be answered.

 When Peter laid his hands on me the fist time, nothing happened. I felt strange. There was no power surge or some other type of miraculous proof that the Holy Spirit was present. Without any reaction from me, the crowd started to whisper. I could hear some proclaim that Satan was stopping me from accepting the Spirit. Others were speaking in tongues as if offering prayers on my request. Then Peter touched me a second time. Still nothing happened. Looking up at Peter, I could tell he was frustrated. The voices of friends cheering me on could still be heard emanating from the crowd.

 Peter laid his hands on me a third and final time. I said to myself, “Make it happen!” So, I began to make things up. I uttered stupid sounds and words that made no sense. I knew without a doubt I was faking the whole event, but in the background, I could hear only laughter and praise. “Hallelujah!” one man proclaimed. “Praise God!” I heard another say.

 That night when I proceeded back to the dorm. I stopped in at the room of one of my new brothers. I explained to him that I had faked the whole thing. He gazed back into my eyes and stated that what happened to me was real. He explained that Satan was the one who was causing me to think this way. Then he raised his voice and exclaimed, “The Spirit within me has informed me that you are engulfed with His presence.” He further stated, “I have the Spirit of interpretation, and I was able to understand all that you said.” What could I say? I was shocked. “Could it be true?” I thought to myself. “Was it Satan’s deception that caused me to think these things?” I further resolved. In the end, I walked out of that room a charismatic.

 After several more Bible studies my new brothers and sisters were helping me practice my tongue speaking. As time progressed, I learned to turn the utterances on and off whenever and wherever I liked. At this point, all my doubts about the movement were behind me. Nothing was more important than attending the meetings and keeping the faith. This, as far as I was concerned was true religion. Where else cold one attend services filled with fun and games, pleasure, and uplifting entertainment? Looking back at the days when I attended the church of Christ, I realized how boring and shallow their services were. There were no bands paling to excite the spirit. There were no choirs or entertainers to keep the people’s attention. All they had was truth!

 The beautiful thing about truth is, “The truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). I was not free under this new religion. Sure! There was something new going on all the time, but after a while even those things got old. I was being led with a chain around my neck. However, when I began to question some of the actions taken by certain leaders, that chain was pulled even tighter.

 The charismatic world is a controlled environment. The leaders have a firm hand on everything that happens within the group. Thus, it is difficult for one to grasp the truth. Occasionally the truth lands on the heart of a charismatic, but it is quickly plucked out by one of the stronger members of the community.

 You hear people call charismatics ignorant people, but this not necessarily true. Many individuals within the group are highly educated. They are diligent in their studies. Even though they seemingly draw wrong conclusions about many things, this does not negate the fact that they have a zeal to learn the Bible. At first the closeness of the group is usually what attracts most people to the movement, though when all is said and done, the closeness at times becomes a hindrance rather than an asset. Face it! People do not want to be totally controlled by another. They want at least a certain amount of freedom. Therefore, when they are instructed on what they can or cannot do, it rubs many people the wrong way.

 True Christianity is based upon the concept of free moral choice. We become slaves to Christ, not because we are forced to be, but because we choose to be. Therefore, the charismatic philosophy of controlling the group is what makes the religion more or less a cult.

1. **BORN OF THE SPIRIT**

“*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*” (Jn. 3:5). These words from the immortal Savior to a “ruler of the Jews,” Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1), were meant to give him a great lesson concerning the kingdom. In my early years in the charismatic movement, I felt as though this verse taught that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to all believers. However, I learned that this philosophy was incorrect.
 Baptism is an interesting study. There are several types mentioned in the Bible: the baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11), the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11), the baptism of the dead (1 Cor. 15:29), and water baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38).

1. **Baptism of Fire**

 Baptism of fire was mentioned by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:11), but the phrase was used against the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to watch John baptize believers in the Jordan River (Matt. 3:5-7). After commenting in verse ten that “every tree” that did not bring forth “good fruit” would be cut down and cast into the fire, he proceeds to make an astonishing statement. John exclaimed, “*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”* (Matt. 3:11).

 The Holy Ghost is no doubt about salvation. Nevertheless, what does it mean to be baptized with fire? The answer is found in the next verse. Notice what John proclaims, “*Whose fan is in his (Christ) hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*” (Matt. 3:12).

 Now to those in the charismatic movement, this verse represented tongue speaking. In other words, once one is baptized with the Holy Ghost, the immediate result was the speaking in tongues. Hence, to the charismatic, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of fire are the same. But according to John, this is not even remotely close to what is being taught. John’s train of thought was not broken from verse ten through verse twelve. He began speaking of the hypocrisy and condemnation of the Pharisees and Sadducees, eventually ending with this same thought in mind. In conclusion, the baptism of fire is representative of “*everlasting punishment*,” the condemnation and wrath that the Lord will pronounce upon the wicked (Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 20:10, 14-15).

1. **Born Again and Holy Spirit Baptism**

Let’s go back to the original question, “What does it mean to be ‘born of the Spirit’?” Peter gives some guiding insight on being born again:

 “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which*

 *liveth and abideth for ever*” (1` Pet. 1:23).

 Just by breaking down this verse one finds the truth so readily available. By asking brother Peter how one is born again, the great apostle responds, “By the word of God” (cf. Eph. 6:17; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Thus, “being born again” is when one applies the word of God and does what God says the way He says it is to be done.

 The problem so often with those in the charismatic movement is that they cannot separate Holy Spirit baptism from being born again. Holy Spirit baptism, as in the case of the apostles (Acts 2), and Cornelius (Acts 10; 11:1-18), imparted several miraculous gifts upon the recipients. Whereas being born again is a necessity to salvation having nothing to do with the miraculous.

 There is recorded in the gospel an example of a man who had the ability to perform miracles, yet he was lost. Look at Matthew chapter ten. Jesus said to His apostles:

 “*Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go*

 *Rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of*

 *Heaven is at hand.* ***Heal*** *the sick,* ***cleanse*** *the lepers,* ***raise*** *the dead,* ***cast******out*** *devils: freely ye*

 *have received, freely give”* (Matt. 10:5-7, emp., BM. Cf. vs 1).

 These verses are generally given the title of *The* *Limited Commission* (cf. Matt. 28:18-20, given the title *The Great Commission*).

 Jesus is sending His apostles out to preach about the coming kingdom. On this journey, **all** of them would have the ability to perform these various miracles.

 Keeping this story in mind, let us turn our Bibles to the tenth chapter of the Book of Acts. Here we find a man who is termed, “*A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and he prayed to God always*” (Acts 10:2). Though he had all these good qualities, he was lost. It was about 3:00 P.M. when a Roman centurion by the name of Cornelius received a vision. In this vision, and angel informed Cornelius to send for Simon, whose surname was Peter. This servant of Christ (Peter) would tell Cornelius what he had to do to attain salvation (Acts 10:6; 11:14).

 Now, when I was charismatic, this chapter became a proof-text to show that everyone was to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. When one reads the story, Peter never laid his hands on these people. Further, when they received this miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in tongues (Acts 10:46). Finally, I falsely perceived that all these things happened through the power of the centurion’s prayer (Acts 10:4). “What a story! What a testimony!” I thought. Yet, I failed to understand the small details that would destroy the charismatic doctrine of Holy Spirit Baptism.

 For example, the Bible states that Peter was going to speak “words” to Cornelius, and these “words” would reveal God’s plan of salvation (Acts 11:14). However, when Cornelius received the Holy Spirit baptism, Peter “began to speak” (Acts 11:15). Now! Something didn’t make sense. How is it that God stated, through His servant, that it would be this centurion’s response to the word that would save him? Then before the word could be presented, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household. Did God lie? Did God’s anointed minister, Peter, add something to God’s command? Was the angel misinformed? (Compare Luke’s statement in Acts 10:44-46).

 God does not leave us stranded concerning the answers to these questions. Peter unveils that the Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius and his household to save them. In fact, Peter relays to his fellow Jews that this event took place to show all mankind that the Gentiles were to be accepted into the kingdom of God (Acts 11:17-18; 10:45). After this sign was given to Peter, he no doubt taught them the plan of salvation. Once they heard it, they were all baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 10:47-48). By their response to God’s word, this group of Gentiles were born again.

 Therefore, taking the story of Cornelius, there is a decisive difference between Holy Spirit baptism and being born again. Being born again is brought about by one’s response to God’s word. On the other hand, Holy Spirit baptism was a direct gift given by God that was separate and apart from His word. Also, receiving the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with salvation. It is merely a means of proving to the Jews that the Gentiles were to have access to the kingdom. Whereas being born again was, and still is, synonymous with salvation.

1. **Baptism for the Dead**

 The third type of baptism to be discussed is the baptism for the dead (1 Cor. 15:29). Some feel that this verse points out that one who is alive can be baptized for a loved one who is deceased. Even though this might have been happening during Paul’s day, he is not endorsing this at all. In the second century, Cerinthus (and his followers) and Marcion (and some of his followers), two heretical sects, engaged in this practice, yet it was universally denounced by the church.

 Also, note that in this verse Paul used the third person pronoun. This proves that he was not speaking of himself nor the brethren at Corinth. It only indicates that this was a practice that he was aware of but did not condone. He simply intended to warn the Christians at Corinth to be cautious concerning the prevalent false practices that were going on around them.

1. **Water Baptism**

The next type of baptism presented in the Bible is water baptism. There are two types discussed in the holy pages of God’s Word: the baptism of John and the Lord’s baptism.

 John’s baptism was with water. This is firmly shown in the books of Matthew and John (Matt. 3:1-12; John 3:23). One must remember that John was preaching that the kingdom “is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). This emphasizes that John was baptizing during the preparatory stage of the kingdom. Jesus Himself remarked,

 *“For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than*

 *John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he”* (Luke 7:28).

 Next, John’s baptism was for the “remission of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Knowing the reason for baptism, John would state to Christ, *“I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me*?” (Matt. 3:14). Jesus was perfect, and John knew that. Water baptism would not remit any sins of a man who was perfect. Christ had no sins to confess. Burt Jesus state that His reason for baptism was to “*fulfill all righteousness*” (Matt. 3:15). Jesus was to be the example in all things. Therefore, by Him being baptized, He pointed out to others the necessity of baptism.

 Shortly after the resurrection of Jesus, a new baptism begins. No longer was John’s baptism valid. This can be proven by looking at the preaching of Apollos shortly after the kingdom was established. He was a man who was “*mighty in scripture*” (Acts 18:24). Yet, he knew only the baptism of John (Acts 18:25). Aquilla and Priscilla, two Christian companions of Paul, expounded unto Apollos the way of God “*more perfectly*” (Acts 18:26). In other words, they taught him that John’s baptism had been changed to something better. That something better was the baptism of Jesus. It was still to be administered with water (Acts 2:38), but it was to be performed “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*” (Matt. 28:19). It became figurative of the Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6), the means of washing away one’s sins (Acts 22:16), and the way in which one would be able to put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

 To the charismatic, this doctrine is nonsense. They, like many other denominational followers, believe baptism to be simply symbolic. The act of baptism, in other words, has nothing to do with salvation whatsoever. They have turned the Holy Bible into a scrapbook. They overlook those passages that may confuse their basic tenants. However, as I have stated, many within the group had Pentecostal backgrounds. Others, like myself, had strayed from the true church. Therefore, a small minority of charismatic disciples believed in the necessity of baptism.

 The leader of the group, especially, were the ones who rejected water baptism. They always had a way of looking at some easy-to-read passages and making them difficult. They elaborated on various mystical interpretations of the Scriptures that only they possessed. Words had to be added that only the Spirit could supply. These spiritual leaders were treated more like angels than like men. They truly believed that the Spirit dwelled within them. Howbeit, we who were ignorant at the time ignored our feelings on certain subjects and submitted our allegiances to these infallible interpreters of God’s Word. Little did we know; these men were more blind than we.

1. **SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

Speaking in tongues is at the focal point of the charismatic movement. They so earnestly believe that it is the only way to tell if one is truly saved or not. For this reason, and this reason alone, they stand firm on the gift of tongues. During the first century there was a diversity of gifts. To the charismatic, the one gift that all believers were to receive was the ability to speak in tongues. In their perception, tongue speaking is the language of angels (1 Cor. 13:1). A means of addressing God in His own tongue or delivering God’s message to others. Further, it was the Spirit making intercessions for the true believers. Therefore, it is so often used in their prayers. They draw their philosophy from such passages as Rom. 8:26 and Hebrews 5:11. They perceive that men do not know how to pray to God properly, hence, the Spirit inserts spiritual words that only God can understand.

 Sometimes the new believer in the movement would have problems speaking in tongues. I, for example, needed help in the beginning. Therefore, I was given written words that I was to practice. These grammatical phrases were to assist the new convert in allowing him or her the ability to speak more fluently—“help aids,” in other words, for the Holy Spirit.

 Asserting their own philosophies, as pertaining to this gift of the first century, charismatics fail in understanding the true meaning of tongues. A simple study of the New Testament unveils that tongues speaking was in known languages of that day and age (Acts 2:9-9). Further, the ability to speak in tongues was just one of the many gifts given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-10). Paul mentions in the next chapter (1 Cor. 13:8-10) that the gifts of the Spirit would vanish. When? “*When that which is perfect is come*.” (The perfect thing, however, will be proven to be the word of God later in this study.)

1. **DEMON POSSESSION**

 One evening while Peter was still on campus at Vincennes, a young man entered the classroom in which we were all gathered together for Bible study. I remember his distasteful-looking appearance. He had dark hair that was greasy and long. Also, he was very thin with an extremely light complexion. He walked slowly and calmly into the room. Without a word, he found a seat in the corner and sat down. Once the young man was seated, Peter continued to his speech. During the class the young man became very agitated. After class was over, Peter confronted this seemingly pathetic human being. It was at that moment a strange event took place.

 Peter began to speak in tongues and so did the stranger. Suddenly Peter started to force his hands upon the forehead of the young man, commanding that the demon leave his body. Before our eyes a battle took place between the forces of good and the forces of evil. At least, this is what we all thought.

 Finally, after a long struggle, the young man fell to the floor. Wiping the sweat from his brow, Peter turned and looked at his loyal fans. “What you have witnessed is the power of God over the power of Satan,” Peter exclaimed. After the event was over, the young man seemed to calm down, and Peter informed us that he had cast out the demon. It was at this point that the cheers began to spring forth. After all, it wasn’t everyday we were able to see such a drama unfold.

 As time continued, and I attended more Bible studies, there would be a multitude of events that would be startling. Yet, after a few of these so-termed miraculous events, something bothered me. It seemed as if every vice a person had was caused by a demon. One of my friends was literally dragged to the communion table in one of the local denominations. They proclaimed that he had a demon of smoke due to his addiction to cigarettes. Another was informed that he was possessed because he was overweight. Still another was exorcised because he had the demon of profanity. The list could go on and on.

 The New Testament revealed something different than what I was being taught. Every example in the New Testament shows that in each case the person or persons were acting like they were insane. “Lunatic” is a better word for such behavior. Yet my friends were not insane. They were bright people, seeking an education from a reputable college. Their vices were brought about because of human weakness. It wasn’t a demon that provoked them to do wrong. No! Indeed! It was their own lusts that led them to do evil. The book of James informs the reader of this fact. He states:

 *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil,*

 *neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of* ***his own lust****,*

 *and enticed* (Jas, 1:13, 14).

 One may ask, “What about the man in Peter’s class?” Till this day, I have no answer to the identify of this college student. Several fellow students identified the man as being a Satan worshipper. Others engaged in the rumor that he practiced witchcraft. The truth of the matter is, **lies** are all a part of the charismatic movement. Thus, more than likely, it was all staged by Peter to build upon his ego.

1. **THE SECOND COMING**

 While I participated in the charismatic movement, literature was constantly being passed out informing the true believer of the many recognizable signs pointing to the second coming o Christ. They are always predicting that the end is near. One tract advocated that the vultures in certain parts of the world were laying more eggs, getting ready for Armageddon. Other tracts testified that ministers were raising the dead in far away places like Africa and India.

 One day I remember studying in my room when one of my friends rushed through the door, “Bill, you have to hear this tape!” He blurted. “What tape?” I questioned. “This one from David Wilkerson!” He answered.

 David Wilkerson was a well-known Pentecostal minister who had supposedly received a vision from God. In fact, the title of the tape was, “The Vision.” It was indeed a tape that had greatly affected every charismatic disciple throughout America. I remember sitting on my bedside listening to every word. The powerful voice brought several people out of the hallway into my room. By the time the tape was finished nine or ten people had entered to hear the horrific message that heralded from my tape machine.

 The end of the world was near. David’s vision revealed the coming of the Antichrist, the arrival of God’s kingdom, and the second coming of Christ. His portrayal of such events brought chills up my spine. I had never heard anyone speak with such simplicity and honesty. Every word seemed to come from the heart. I truly felt like I had heard a prophet.

 If one were to calculate how many times these so-called prophets have been wrong, it would hinder anyone from following these charismatic individuals. There is always someone coming along proclaiming this and that about the events of the second coming. Furthermore, you will consistently find that they have misinterpreted one section or another from the last book of the Bible.

 The bulk of the doctrine of the charismatics comes from the book of Revelation. They dwell on the descriptive features of the book. They see the interpretation as literal. Hence, this becomes the premise on which they stand or fall.

 Jesus, speaking on the topic of His return, stated, “*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but* ***my Father only***” (Matt. 24:36). Then note what Mark writes, “*But of that day and that* ***hour*** *knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven,* ***neither the Son,*** *but the Father”* (Mark 13:32). If the Lord proclaims that He has no knowledge concerning His return, then how is it possible that the charismatic does? The only way such testimonies can be believed or taught is by perverting God’s sacred message, in which the charismatic disciple is an expert.

1. **A DEMON STORY**

 It was a cold winter that year in 1974. We traveled a short distance from campus to a small trailer where a Bible study was to be conducted. A young couple lived in that trailer. Both were very much involved in the movement. That night they wanted to share a terrible story that they proclaimed to be true.

 The man began his story by telling us that he and his wife were at home several nights ago alone. They heard, as they called it, a faint voice coming from the bathroom. They at first thought it was only the wind. Nevertheless, when the wind died down, the voice could still be heard. Next the man exclaimed that he stood up and slowly proceeded to the bathroom. When he opened the door, there was nothing there, but when he stepped inside, he quickly gazed into the mirror. It was at this point that he let out a scream. Immediately his wife ran in to see what was wrong. What she found was her husband in a cradle position in the middle of the floor. Whimpering in the arms of his wife, the man proclaimed that there was a demon in the mirror that spoke to him.

 “What did the demon say?” the wife asked. “He wanted me!” the husband replied.

 After the husband calmed down, they, the husband and wife, kneeled in prayer. They said they prayed for hours. Shortly, after their prayers were ended, they stood up and knew within their hearts that the demon had left. Then they cried, “Praise God,” hence claiming the victory in Jesus.

 There is no doubt that both believed the apparition to be genuine. What this man perceived he saw was as real to him, at least, as the wife who came to his rescue.

 After the man and is wife told the story, everyone who heard their testimony was horrified. If I had any doubts concerning my charismatic faith, this story was the convincing factor that I was on the right course. It confirmed within my heart that miracles still existed, concluding that Satan and his demons still had the ability to possess the souls of men. But note the language of Paul:

 “…*even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying*

 *wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they*

 *received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send*

 *them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed*

 *not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

 Years later I came to realize that what this couple experienced was a “*strong delusion*.” They rejected the true way of God. Further, because of their firm commitment to the philosophies of the movement, they received what they envisioned to be true. Nevertheless, God does not lie. The Bible unveils that these things no longer happen (1 Cor. 13:10; Jas. 1:25; Acts 8:18), whereas it should be obvious how deceiving our minds can be. Thus, many people today are possessed not with demons but by monsters that dwell within the confines of their minds.

1. **THE GIFT OF PROPHECY**

 I remember at one Bible study I attended, a woman who supposedly had the gift of prophecy was present. Now, to the Pentecostal there seems to be two types of prophets: the one who interprets the future and the one who sees the inner spirit of man. In other words, they predict certain sins that will enter one’s life and lead him astray.

 On this occasion, the Bible study seemed to be going as usual. Verses were being addressed, and people apparently were enjoying one another’s company. Suddenly our quiet Bible study was interrupted by one lady within the group. Without warning she stood up and said that God had sent her a vision, a revelation that He was unhappy with a certain individual who sat among us. I could feel the mood of everyone change. Suspicion could be seen in the eyes of all those who were present. “Who is she speaking about?” I questioned. Every person was feeling much like Judas when the Lord spoke of a traitor among them.

 She continued with her vision to unmask that the someone was a male. Well, that eliminated about half the crowd gathered. Eventually, out of the blue a young student confessed. He exclaimed that he was lusting in his heart for women, which in turn, spawned a multitude of expressions.

 “Praise God!” one of my charismatic brethren replied. “God has revealed this to you!” one of my charismatic sisters cried out. Consequently, the expressions led the zealous prophetess to lay hands upon the young man and cast out the devil that was causing him to lust.

 After this event, several Bible studies were conducted at this lady’s house. Each session from that date forward was seemingly neurotic. I quivered on numerous occasions thinking that she was going to point out one of my secret sins, yet after a while her ridiculous habit caused the entire group to meet somewhere else. We all understood our weaknesses. Also, I believe that the clear majority within the group tried to live good, moralistic, and dedicated lives. At this point in my life, however, I did not have knowledge of 1 Cor. 13:10 and James 1:25. I truly felt that miracles were still going on, that people still had the gift of tongues, prophecy, and the ability to perform miracles. These people, in my eyes, were inspired. To question them was to question God, and, I knew one should never question God.

 Oh! How I wish I would have given time to proper Bible study. I wish now that I would have taken time in those classes at the Lord’ church to pay attention. I was not a great student in my younger years when it came to secular education, but I was even worse when it came to reading the Bible.

1. **A WOMAN’S PLACE**

 It didn’t take me long in the charismatic movement to understand that women played an important role. They did everything. One would find them preaching, serving tables, and giving long testimonials. They totally reject the teachings of Paul in First Timothy chapter two, verses eleven through fourteen. Here it informs the reader that women are not to usurp authority over the men. In fact, the Bible states that “women are to be silent.”

 I one addressed this issue with a firm believer in the Pentecostal belief. His response was totally ridiculous. He said, “It is not the women who is in control, but the Holy Spirit is the one doing the speaking.”

 This reply led me to the next question that demanded an answer. “What does it mean to remain silent?” The young man must have remained stunned for three or four minutes. After receiving no response at all, I gazed at him and said, “That’s the best definition of silence I’ve ever heard!” I also had this same discussion with a woman preacher rendering the same result.

 The biggest problem with the charismatics is that they dictate what verses are to be taken literally and which ones are figurative. Their ignorance is astounding. Though they may spend hours reading the Bible, they end up with little comprehension. This is why they are so dependent upon the minister. He or she becomes the root of their religious conviction.

 Now, concerning the women in the charismatic movement, they are different than the women who claim to be Pentecostals. Though they seemingly have the urge to lead, preach, and serve in various manly roles, they are liberals among the Pentecostals. They wear perfume, jewelry, and casual dress. At first glance, they look like the basic college student of the 70’s. The Pentecostal women wore their hair long. They do not believe in wearing fancy jewelry, and their dresses are below their knees. The wearing of no make-up is always the standard identification mark.

 Personally, I have always liked a woman to wear a little make-up. My little boy used to say, “Daddy, you would not have married mommy if you had seen her without her make-up.” However, to the Pentecostals the wearing of make-up, rings, necklaces, and various other items are not allowed. Over the years, it is reasonable to assume that several of these restrictions have changed. The changing times have no doubt modernized some of the various Pentecostal groups. Howbeit, this is true of many denominations.

 Once again, a charismatic is not a Pentecostal. Their only link is centered on their conviction about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Hence, with the indwelling comes the ability to speak in tongues, dream dreams, and see visions.

1. **SPIRITUAL HEALINGS**

 It would not take one long in the movement to meet someone who proclaimed divine healing. I remember one young man who talked of having a brain tumor that miraculously vanished. He had been seeing doctors who were giving him treatments, yet the tumor was still present. After continual prayer for this young man, supposedly the tumor disappeared.

 On many other occasions healing was accomplished by one of the leaders of the group laying his or her hands on the sick individual. If the healing did not take place, the person was informed that it was their lack of faith that was hindering them from being healed. One event that took place in my younger years as a charismatic was when my friend was hurt seriously, I had come to know two Chinese Buddhist monks. While one was riding a bicycle, he was in a serious accident that broke both of his legs. Clots formed in one of the legs which became life threatening. That night my loyal friends and I gathered together to request God to heal my friend. There was not one person there that night who did not firmly believe that God was going to answer our prayer and save the life of this young man, yet the next day he died.

 During the days of Christ’s personal ministry some of those He healed had faith while others did not. How much faith did Lazarus have? He was dead! Even the blind man who was healed by Christ replied concerning Jesus, “*Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see*” (Jn. 9:25).

 There was another occasion where a young college student was walking across the school’s practice field. A charismatic brother was practicing throwing the discus. What happened next was terrifying. This heavy circular object flew a good distance and hit the young man on the side of the head. He was rushed to the hospital where little hope was offered. Once again, the group gathered, praying fervently for the recovery of this unknown college student. Several days later the young man was on a steady course of recovery. Alas! Our prayers were heard. A miracle was granted. We counted this a great victory. It was not the doctor’s aid that rescued this young boy from death. Not at all! We knew within our hearts that the Holy Spirit brought the boy back from the clutches of death and healed his wounds.

 In all reality, we were ignorant of the true definition of a miracle. There is a time element involved when speaking about miracles. Miracles happened instantaneously. It did not take several hours, days, or weeks for a healing to take place. When Jesus said, “Arise and walk!” that person would immediately get up and walk, yet among the charismatics, so-called miracles could take months to happen.

 The second part of defining a miracle is concerned with the healing itself. When Jesus healed people, they were healed wholly. The blind man was able to see, and the lame man was given the ability to walk. There was no progression of healing that took place over a stretch of time. Jesus spoke, and instantly the one with the infirmity was healed complete.

 There is also another important factor concerning the difference between what was going on in these healing sessions and the healings during the personal ministry of Jesus. When Christ performed miracles, He would often tell the one healed to “*Go and tell no man.”* Then in the next scene one would find this person informing the world of his healing. In other words, the miracles of Jesus were highly publicized, not because He wanted them to be but because people were astonished at His abilities.

 Now, don’t you think if someone were able to perform miracles today, that every major radio and TV newscaster would be informing the populous of these abnormal events? How could you stop them? Imagine if just one person today was raised from the dead? Do you think you would be able to hide a miracle such as this? Common sense should dictate to our small minds that if miracles were happening today, there would be no way of hiding them, yet repeatedly these so-termed faith healers have been proven to be fakes. What is undeniably profound is the fact that even when these men are unveiled as false teachers, people still support them. Oral Roberts can announce on television that if he does not receive a certain amount of money by such and such a date, God will take his life. Was he able to collect the full amount needed? Sure, he was!

 Likewise, Jimmy Swaggert can release to the public that he fornicated with a prostitute, then turn around and beg the forgiveness of all his viewers. I’m a firm believer in a God that forgives, so I won’t belittle that ability of my Father in heaven, but within a few months that same preacher is having to beg forgiveness once again for committing the same act. Any logical human would conclude that this man has a problem, a spiritual weakness that needs immediate attention. Furthermore, during this same period when he was engaged in his sinful practices, he was still claiming the ability to heal.

 I appeal to all who send money to these glorified celebrities, you need to open your hearts to the pure waters that flow from God’s Word. They profess to be chosen vessels and friends of Christ, yet they live in luxurious homes, supplied with the best money can buy. They are not the true representation of evangelists. They are rejectors of the truth and not men of God.

 Though the miracles have ceased today, charity still prevails. Hence, the churches of Christ are the beacons of that charity that stretches across the globe. We should all consider ourselves blessed knowing that though there are no miracles today; our faith is based solely on God’s word (Rom. 10:17). Isn’t it great to know that we do not have to see to believe?

1. **THE SPIRIT REVEALS**

 On occasion I would visit the Lord’s church in Vincennes, Indiana. I loved the people, and they always tried to encourage me to return. I came to admire Dr. Nelson, who was a faculty member at Vincennes University. Because of my memory of his kindness and strong spirit, the path back to God was graciously lit. I remember on one occasion a fellow charismatic and I were attending services at the Vincennes congregation. The minister approached my friend and started having studies with him. When he reached the subject of baptism, a controversy occurred. Angry about this study, my friend came to my room and told me that the minister informed him that he needed to be baptized. He, with all sincerity, exclaimed that he had the Spirit. Thus, it was not necessary for him to be baptized in water.

 The truth, when finally revealed, often hurts. I compromised the doctrine of Christ that day. I knew in my heart that baptism was a part of the plan of salvation, but, nevertheless, this was my charismatic brother, and I chose to stand with him. So often the receivers of the truth know what is right. Howbeit, because they are afraid of offending their charismatic brethren, or some other group they believe in, they reject the truth.

 My support for my friend bothered me for years. It was knowing what was right yet choosing wrong. At that time, the group was the most important thing in my life, whereas my personal beliefs were insignificant. How often do we find people so committed that they will even damn their own souls? I guess you call it sacrificing your own soul for the security of the group. If it be family tradition, group commitment, or denominational loyalty, nothing is worth losing your soul over.

 My friend was confused about baptism. How could he not be? The Bible is explicit concerning this part of the plan of salvation, but once again the human heart interfered with the commands of God, and, being loyal to the group, I could only go along with what my friend felt in his heart.

1. **THE MUSIC MINISTRY**

 I can remember the jam sessions we used to have in our Bible studies. I and several others would bring our guitars. People would be jumping up and down, speaking in tongues, and screaming at the top of their lungs. To the charismatic this is “church.” We always knew what songs to play to get the blood pumping. By the time we were done, people would be crying, and the feeling of joy seemingly fell on every heart. We were happy, and that’s all that mattered at the time.

 Confusion is the best description of a charismatic session. We didn’t know any more when we were done than when we began. That’s a sad note for people who claim to be “God’s chosen.” The guitars, drums, and other instruments became a total necessity for a successful worship session. That’s because the sessions were focused more on the group than on the Creator.

 In the Lord’s church today with all these acapella groups, I am wary. They make records, sell albums, and receive glamour and praise from others. We put them out front, and all eyes are upon them. What if I wanted to sing with them? Could I? No! Why? Because they are there to entertain us. That’s sad, brethren. For so long in the charismatic movement, I was around talented people making a buck and a name for the sake of entertaining. Even now there are those groups in the brotherhood that have even performed within the walls of denominational churches. “What fellowship hath light with darkness?” (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18). That’s the question we should be asking. I remember that it took a song or a band to get me in the mood to worship God when I should have been in the mood all the time, not from some song, mind you, but from His Holy Word.

 Take a lesson from someone who at one time could carry a note and play and instrument. God is the focus of our worship and not ourselves. We are teaching one another in songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and not entertaining one another.

 I remember during these days of illusion and misunderstanding the grand event that every charismatic enjoyed. Each year in Wilmore, Kentucky (the Ichthus Music Festival) brought in famous religious singers to perform. It lasted for about three days, and thousands would gather. It was basically a religious Woodstock.

The philosophy of that event was good. It was trying to teach people to be “high on Jesus” and not “high on drugs.” The problem was that these people had no perception of the true Jesus. They had molded Jesus into the type of being they wanted Him to be. They made the rules. They set the standard.

 The stirring up of the emotions is another fundamental doctrine of the charismatic. If they can touch the heart of someone with a story or a song, it’s amazing how far they can take a person. On that sunny day in Kentucky, sitting there listening to the stories, pondering the words to the songs, I became further embedded in a religion that was condoned by men but condemned by God. In other words, I was a music junkie! I needed the guitars, the drums, and the noise to pump me up. Without the concerts, jam sessions, and sing along, I was useless. I had become an addict.

 The charismatic religion centers itself around the music. Sure! There was always a minister to give a lesson or a member to give his or her testimony, but it was music that kept the audience coming back for more. In every session we injected a little more into our veins, and when the music stopped, the withdrawals would follow.

 Going back home when college was out for the summer was difficult. I would literally become depressed. After all, the music stopped. It was my life source. Without the group, I was like a small minnow in a big ocean. Often my parents would try to speak to me about the church, but like every loyal charismatic, I would only mock their beliefs. I perceived that they were only undiscerning of true worship. “The churches of Christ must be truly ignorant!” I thought. There were no instruments played in the assembly. “Without a band,” I further questioned, “how could they worship God properly?”

 Yet, as always, truth, though often overlooked, has a way of revealing itself. The truth torments you in the cold of night. Your mind remembers, though you pretended like you were not listening. The proverbial writer proclaimed, “Buy the truth and, sell it not” (Prov. 23:23). But in my case, I didn’t even want it given to me. Nevertheless, it was in my mind. Wherefore I thank God for the echoes of His word that haunted my soul.

1. **TESTIMONIES**

I could not tell you the multitude of times I’ve heard people give me their testimonies in the charismatic movement. You find people who were at one time drug addicts or prostitutes on the streets telling their stories how Jesus changed their lives. It is an apparent fact that Jesus can change the life of a person. Look at the example of Paul. However, their lives (the charismatics) were not changed by truth.

 Sadly, their testimonies were laced with sincerity. They extolled Jesus for helping them through their trials. They praised His name before a massive audience. Nevertheless, they truthfully in all reality did not know Him.

 I remember one summer in the 70’s, my brother, a friend, and I traveled to Warsaw, Indiana, to hear Nicky Cruz. He was the gangster who was converted by David Wilkerson. In fact, there was a book and a movie about the conversion of Nicky Cruz. It was entitled *The Cross and the Switchblade*. Thousands had gathered to hear this man speak of the terrible life he once led, a life of drugs and crime. His voice bellowed through the microphone like a giant 747 taking off. Occasionally when he would stop to take a drink of water the massive crowed remained motionless and silent. Every eye was upon him, and every ear eagerly awaited the next few sentences that hit the heart of every true believer.

 This once evil creature had now become a preacher. The whole sermon was his testimony. He personified hope for every lost soul. “*If Nicky could do it, so could I*,” was the feeling expressed by every soul present that night.

 Face it! Most of the religious world believes they need at least one hero figure to encourage the weak. The characters of the Bible are dead and gone. Jesus Christ, though alive and well, is invisible. So, paragons are created, people who delineate the true attributes of a hero. Thus, Nicky represented their lives, the lives of the masses present that evening. He was living proof how God changed the lives of men.

 “Testimony for a buck!” That’s what I call these events. These revivals cost, and believe me, you will face the firing squad if you do not give. Your charismatic friends will taunt you. If you are at one of these events and the plate is passed, certain people will stare you down, trying to convict you to give. Conviction is the name of the game. The bigger the name, the bigger the con. And, in all honesty, these professionals with their heartrending stories have “come along way, baby!” from the streets of the inner city to a stage in Warsaw, Indiana. A man who was once clothed in rags was now clothed in the finest apparel money could buy. There was no true doctrine presented. It was simply the gospel according to Nicky Cruz.

 Now don’t get me wrong about emotions. I love to see a sincere believer show emotions in worship. I’ve seen men cry when offering thanks for the Lord’s Supper. I’ve seen men cry when a certain song was sung in the assembly. Yet, so many of these “testimonial ministers” in the charismatic movement are like faucets. They can turn their emotions on and off.

 That night in Warsaw, Indiana, was a time I would not forget. My brother, who was also raised in the Lord’s church, came along for the ride. The words he heard that night caused him to start believing the same way I believed. He questioned the true teachings. He began believing that what he heard were words from a true minister of Christ. I thought I had accomplished a great feat; I led my brother into the charismatic philosophy. Even today, my brother follows the liberal path. No doubt the beginning of that path started in Warsaw, Indiana. Though I try to speak to him concerning the truth today, his heart is far from God. The concept that there is more than one church is a deadly compromise. It focuses on human reasoning and not on the Divine. The heart of man is deceptive. It offers the illusion of security. Notwithstanding, security rests only in Christ.

 Sometimes we hear our own brethren belittle the church with their impure reasoning. They seek to compare the church to the denominational world. They wonder why denominations grow so quickly and why so often the church seems stagnant. Jesus never promised that the multitude would be saved. In fact, He stated just the opposite. We who are the Lord’s servants cannot compete with the denominational ministers. These advocates of Satan preach to “itching ears.” They compromise even the doctrine of salvation so that numbers can grow. Sermons are preached that are meant to soothe the listener. Further, every word is based upon stimulating the hearer in doing what the puppeteer demands, albeit when all is said and done, when the strings are cut, all that remains is a well-cut block of wood.

 Yes, my brethren! I have had my fill of denominational dogma, so called servants of God white-washing the gospel. I ran from denominationalism, and I found myself entering again the sacred confines of God’s Holy Elect. I would have never dreamed that I would find brethren in the Lord’s church running toward the unholy teachings of those who live by the flesh, and not by the Spirit.

1. **A TIME TO FAST**

 Learning to fast was a difficult task for me in my early years as a charismatic. Every time I turned around one of my brethren was initiating another day of fasting. Jesus exclaimed:

 “*But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto*

 *men to fast, but unto thy Father which is seen in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret,*

 *shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6:17, 18).*

Jesus made it plain about fasting. The charismatics make it difficult. You were told usually when to begin your fast and when to stop. If you broke the fast, you would receive condemnation from the entire group. I hated to fast. It was not that I couldn’t but because I disliked being totally dominated. For years I was forced to diet because of the sport of wrestling. Every year during that season I would have to abstain from much of the foods that I fondly loved. Now, once again, I was being commanded to fast. It wasn’t something I wanted to do, but still I did it.

 There is no doubt that their philosophy was different from our Lord’s. Though our Lord believed in fasting, He did not set a time to do so. It is true that Jesus told His apostles that casting out of certain demons could only be done by “prayer and fasting” (Matt. 17:20, 21), but the focus in these passages centered on the concept of faith.

 Let me assure you that fasting is good. It is something that the brotherhood speaks little about. Yet a faithful Christian should not have any problem with submitting to a fast. However, fasting should be something that an individual must determine to do or not do. Secondly, it is not something that is revealed to everyone else. Fasting is private and personal. It is associated with prayer and humility.

 It wasn’t uncommon during these periods of fasting for me to travel to a distant store to buy candy. It was something I could devour quickly and suffice my hunger temporarily. At the same time, a chocolate bar was not able to satisfy my appetite for long. So then by the time I returned to campus, my stomach would once again resume its growling. Deceptive, no doubt, but I’ll guarantee you, that snicker bar never tasted so good.

1. **SERVING BROTHER BILLY**

 During my two years at Vincennes University an opportunity was offered to my group. Billy Graham was endorsing a movie that he had just put out. It was called, *A Time to Run*. He was asking the various denominational churches to supply counselors. Though we were charismatics and Billy Graham was Baptist, it did not matter to him. This small group of charismatics volunteered without delay. This was our opportunity to preach our views and philosophy.

 At a meeting concerning this future event, those who volunteered were given name tags and booklets that would be handed out to anyone who responded to the invitation at the end of the movie. Once the invitation was given, one would rise and go forward. The name tag would identify him or her as a counselor, and the booklet would be used to teach the plan of salvation to anyone willing to listen.

 The first showing of the movie was well attended. At the end over thirty people responded. Once down front, I took four or five emotionally-touched individuals to the side. There I formulated a little group and followed the instructions given in the booklet on how to present the message. During that week there was no telling how many souls I taught. Some of my comrades instilled their own philosophy to the groups that came forward. After all, Brother Billy forgot to speak about baptism of the Holy Spirit. So, it doesn’t take a bright person to realize that all kinds of different doctrines were being presented to these sincere people seeking forgiveness.

 Denominational groups may claim that we are all going to the same place, but their different doctrines show otherwise. We tolerated denominationalism. We felt that they knew the way, but we felt we were the elite among God’s chosen. None of my comrades understood the true way to heaven but one, and I compromised all that was holy for the security of friendship.

**CHAPTER II**

1. **A FEW THINGS LEARNED**

 So many false doctrines are taught by the charismatic community. At the same time there are also some things we can learn from them. For example, in my ten years of being charismatic, I learned that giving was not difficult at all. Though I complained about all the special offerings, I never had a problem giving. If it was my time, money, or whatever, it became enjoyable to give. The more I gave, the better I felt.

 Among many of my brethren in the Lord’s church, giving is something they just don’t speak about. Giving, to them, is a burden. This ought not so to be! We, who belong to God, should make the denominational world look bad. We are the examples and not them. Sure, in many situations pressure is used to get people to give, or as in other examples, gimmicks are used to entice the funds from the so-called faithful. These gimmicks range from selling holy water to advertising books and tapes. Whatever the case may be, the charismatic learns early to give generously.

 There was also a focus in their giving. It was what you call survival of the group! Without funds the message would not reach across the block. Tracts, Bibles, and other necessities were not bought with good looks. The excuse, “I’m sending my money to some charity group,” was not tolerated. If one wanted to send a little, that was fine, but he had better make sure the bulk of his giving was centered in the movement.

 We, who claim to be the true people of God, need to conquer these negative attitudes on giving. Are you the kind of person that gives five dollars to the local congregation of the Lord’s church and then the rest is sent elsewhere? Are you the kind of person who gives and then takes back what is God’s? I have seen many Christians get mad at certain decisions made by elders, turn around, and lower their contributions. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

 The local congregation is the most important feature of any town or city. We are the messengers of God. We are charged to preach the gospel to the world. Without funds, buildings will be devoured, and congregations will fold. It is sad to say, but multitudes will not attend services if the church gathers in someone’s home. Most of the religious world has come to believe that the church is the building. Though this is the wrong philosophy, it is nice to have a local gathering place where the saints can meet.

 Another thing that becomes the heart and soul of the charismatic philosophy is prayer. I found myself praying all the time when I was active in the charismatic movement. I would pray during class and after class. I thanked God for the grades I received, my teachers, and the dormitory room I slept in. There wasn’t anything I was not thankful for, and all the praise and glory I gave to God.

 Every true charismatic believes in the power of prayer. If he prayed over someone who was sick, and they were not healed, it was because that person did not have enough faith. He knew this because one firmly came to believe that God was listening. Little did I realize that my prayers were not going any further than the top of my dormitory ceiling. Just a brief study of the story of the raising of Lazarus proved that it didn’t take faith for someone to be healed. After all, how much faith did Lazarus have, being dead? (John 11).

 We who are in the kingdom, need to comprehend the power of prayer. These people who believed things contrary to the word of God prayed without ceasing. Every chance they got, they bowed before God, believing that God was attentive to every word spoken, but we, the true disciples of Christ, know the truth. Yet, many of us find ourselves too busy to kneel in prayer, and when we do, the prayer is short and sweet. We need to understand the true meaning of being dependent on God. The privilege of communicating with Him should motivate us to speak to Him as often as we can. After all, prayer is a privilege.

 Prayer for the sick should be offered before the throne of God. Though we may not believe in miracles today, the providence of God is still a reality. “What is the providence of God?” one may ask. It is simply God’s active participation in one’s life. You may not be able to prove it one way or the other, but it still does not negate the hand of God in the affairs of men.

 A miracle, if you remember from our previous discussion, was undeniable. A blind man healed instantly is beyond the realm of human comprehension. A dead man being raised was an act that proved the power of Christ, and once again the evidence was too clear to deny.

 Yet, when someone is dying, and prayers are offered on his behalf, and then after a while when they begin to recover, some proclaim this to be a miracle. The problem is a recovery such as this does not fit the Biblical definition of a miracle. Jesus would speak, and the healing would take place instantly. Not only that but also the healed masses of the first century were healed completely. The blind men were able to see; the dead were able to walk; and the lepers were cleansed of their leprosy.

 Today, we have on many occasions prayed for our sick. Sometimes, a person who was diagnosed with some terminal disease turns for the better and gets well. The doctors usually have their prognosis, whereas many of us believe it was the power of God’s hands that caused them to get better. For me to prove this would be impossible. Therefore, I simply term this “the providence of God!” Later in this book, and entire section is dedicated to this topic. Thus, this is something to ponder on.

 Another positive that was obvious in the charismatic movement was their energy to evangelize. They found themselves sharing the charismatic message with every person they met. It became a way of life. At first, the young charismatic is nervous when sharing his or her testimony with someone, but after a short period, the tension leaves, and one begins to feel convicted when not sharing.

 The devil wants us to sit back and do nothing. He realizes that there is a multitude of cults and movements out there that are preaching doctrines contrary to the Word. Procrastination is the Devil’s trademark in the heart of the believers, but for every second we sit idle, there is someone with a false conviction teaching our neighbors and friends.

 The charismatic movement was also a very close group. I like the concept of every person being important. This is, no doubt, the true concept of the Lord’s church. However, when we find this more so in the denominational world, there must be a problem. Preachers scream out for members to draw closer to one another. We find clicks formulating and congregations growing apart. Once again, this should not be happening in the Lord’s church. I encourage every reader of this book to try and draw close to every member of the church. Get to know your brothers and sisters. Find out their needs. Usually the people we so easily dislike are those individuals we never took time to know. I’ve heard people remark, “*I have nothing in common with that person*,” but usually these individuals do not know the person they are wary of. The Bible says, concerning the converts on Pentecost, “*And all that believed were together, and had all things common*” (Acts 2:44). I don’t believe this verse teaches that all these people liked the same foods, enjoyed the same entertainment, and dressed the same way. No, these people had “*all things common*” spiritually speaking. Their link was Christ. They enjoyed discussing and studying about Jesus. They shared in the same joy knowing they were saved by His blood. So, then they had much to talk about, and most of all, they felt the power of unity. They were united in Christ, and thus “*they had all things common*.”

**CHAPTER III**

1. **HOW TO CONVERT THE CHARISMATIC**

 There is not a doubt in my mind that if we were to get fifty Christians in a room and ask them how to evangelize the world, we would probably get fifty different responses. Therefore, my insight on how to convert the charismatic is through my eyes only. Having been a charismatic for ten years should offer some warrant to my reasoning.

 The first step in converting the charismatic is by LOVE! Though this should be a term that every member of the church is familiar with, it is not. The individual who believes in the miraculous power of God being manifested today is surrounded by people who protectively love him. It is the characteristic of the movement that makes it so popular with young people.

 When a firm believer in the movement is approached, they must see this same kind of love for them, or they will simply refuse to listen. If we come on too strong with our views, or seemingly become confused, they will only use this against us. Therefore, in the end the bridge we may have tried to build will be burned.

 Secondly, one must have PATIENCE with the false believer. Solomon stated, “*Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit*” (Eccl. 7:8).

 It is difficult to have patience. We as humans want results immediately. These individuals in the movement have been programmed to believe certain things. Many of them have accumulated their philosophies over several years. They have felt with their hearts. Thus, to bring them out of this world of false teaching may take a long time.

 Besides patience and love being used to convert the charismatic, one must CONTROL his or her TEMPER. I can remember on several occasions being evangelized by my brothers and sisters in the church of Christ. My response to their comments would often bring about anger. Once this happened, all that they tried to do and say would be instantly destroyed. It would be like my wrestling days when I would do my best to make my opponent angry. If I could make him angry, it was a sure thing that he would lose. Why? This meant that I was in control! Brethren, to convert someone, one must remain in control. He will do his best to bring out some negative emotions. When this happens, all the good we tried to do will be abolished.

 Another important point to be brought up when discussing the evangelistic efforts used to convert the charismatic is the concept of the DRIVER’S SEAT. I remember when I first moved to Virginia, I lived in a house that was surrounded by an iron fence. The only way to enter the property was to open the gate and drive the car through. One day I hopped in my pickup, which had a clutch, and decided to go to the store with my two children at the time. Christie, my elder child, was about six years old, whereas, Billy was nearly one and a half. Anyway, when I jumped into my pickup, I noticed that I had left the keys in the house. I informed Christie to watch the baby while I ran in to get the keys. I had not been in the house more than twenty seconds before I heard a loud bang outside. When I ran out, I saw my pickup truck at the entrance of the property with the door of my vehicle lodged tightly against the gate. I immediately ran to the truck to make sure the children were all right. Billy was in the driver’s seat jumping up and down. He had a giant smile on his face. Christie was on the passenger’s side crying. Once I realized they were both fine, I asked Christie, “What happened?” She simply replied, “Don’t ask me, he was driving!”

 There were two evaluations that evolved that day. One, I underestimated the abilities of that small child. Secondly, children don’t need to be behind the driver’s seat. We may view the charismatic as ignorant, yet you will be surprised how many can quote the Scriptures. They take pride in their abilities to be considered serious students. Though we think these people to be ignorant, many can indeed carry on a logical conversation about various parts of the Bible. Hence, DON’T UNDERESTIMATE THE CHARISMATIC!

 Concerning children not being placed in the driver’s seat. You better know the word of God before you attempt to refute a well versed charismatic. Only chaos will prevail if you are not prepared.

 I’m a firm believer in knowing one’s opponent. Learn about the opposition. Find out his or her feelings on the various subjects to be discussed, and then study diligently! Don’t presume anything. For once you do, you will fail to accomplish the task of converting the soul.

 Next, start with those points of doctrine that you have in COMMON with your opponent. Don’t shoot out of the gate tearing apart the false doctrines believed so firmly by the movement. This will only create a wall that will not be easily broken. The heart of the charismatic can be opened. After several discussions along the line of commonality, the bridge of communication will take on a different perspective, thus allowing you to engage in conversation aimed at converting them to the truth.

 There are many things that we do hold in common with the charismatic. They, for example, believe that Jesus is Lord, also emphasizing that Jesus is God. They do not deny the Trinity (the Godhead). Concerning the plan of salvation, they believe that one must believe, repent, and confess. However, there are certain groups who hold to what is termed the Jesus only doctrine! This doctrine teaches that there is but one in the Godhead, Jesus. Though this is easy to refute, there are many who hold to this belief. Hence, it will become necessary to prepare yourself to debate this issue.

 Another important belief that is held among most charismatics is how they look at the Bible. They truly feel that the Bible is inspired. Their position arises in the way they translate it. They perceive, which is correct, that the Holy Spirit gave us the word, and since the Bible is inspired by the Holy Ghost, one needs the Holy Ghost to interpret it.

 Next, it is important that you teach the charismatic a LITTLE bit at a time. In other words, don’t try to engulf them with so many passages which will only confuse them. Give them one or two passages at a time. Ask them to study these passages for themselves. Then discuss the passages in detail. After all, you don’t feed infants with massive amounts of nourishment. You start with small dosages. The more mature they become, the more food they will devour.

 Further, ONE ON ONE evangelism is an important part of the converting process. The group is where his or her strength exists. If you find yourself surrounded by group members, you will fail in accomplishing the task of converting the soul. They will mock every word you say, and confusion will be the outcome. When you walk away angry or disheartened, they will claim the victory.

 If you evangelize one on one with the charismatic, eventually, you will find yourself facing his or her SPIRITUAL LEADER. If you ae well prepared, you can turn the heart of the charismatic. If you remain clam during your discussion and give him questions he cannot answer, much can be accomplished. Once again, you must remain in control. I have not met a charismatic leader yet who did not enjoy having the lead in every discussion. They are masters at taking control. Therefore, it is vital to keep control of the conversation. Not only is it essential to keep control but also teach with the philosophy that you want to EVANGELIZE the soul and not win the argument.

 I can remember when my children were small, I bought a rabbit. It was a beautiful white rabbit that my daughter just adored. One day that rabbit became ill. I had no alternative but to go outside and shoot the rabbit with my rifle. What I did not know was that my little girl was at the window watching me shoot the rabbit. When I entered the house, after I buried the rabbit, my little girl cried, “*The bunny is going to bunny heaven, but daddy’s going to bunny hell*!”

 I realized that day that I should had made sure that Christie was not watching. Though what I did was justifiable, it caused damage that could had been avoided. My actions were not thought out.

 The spiritual leader of any charismatic group is well respected. He is no doubt a false teacher, and unless he changes, he will be lost. For some reason he has acquired the admiration of the group. Therefore, the attitude to murder and bury him in front of his followers will accomplish nothing.

 Last, but not least, ALWAYS KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN! If you find yourself beginning a heated discussion, then stop. Try to remain on a friendship basis with the one you are trying to teach. If you can communicate, there is always the chance that you may one day reach him.

 In Luke 19:2-8, we find Jesus dining with the publicans and sinners. In other words, the Lord presented Himself as one who cared for their souls. If we, who have the truth, graciously offer the truth to others in a caring manner, the truth will prevail. It may take time, and in all reality, you may preach to your heart’s content but may never convert one single charismatic. Howbeit, I believe that there are many Pentecostals and charismatics who, like myself at one time, are questioning some of the teachings. Eventually, these are the souls that are reachable.

**CHAPTER IV**

1. **THE CHARISMATIC DOCTRINE REFUTED**

This section of the book focuses on the multitude of passages used by the charismatic. These are primarily the major ones that I had heard during my ten years as one of their disciples. Thus, there are many more that may not be discussed in this booklet, whereas you may be able to find another publication by one of our brethren who will give you more insight in this area.

 Probably one of the first proposed doctrines presented to me in the movement was this philosophy called “Jesus only” doctrine. Many of my friends were members of the United Pentecostal Church. They taught that there are not three persons in the Godhead, but one God. They quoted passages such as Isaiah 44:24, “*I am the Lord that maketh all things¨that stretcheth forth the heavens* ***alone****: that spreadeth abroad the earth by* ***myself*,**” and 1 Tim. 2:5, “*For there is* ***one God****, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*.” Any passage that emphasized the number “one” was readily available to them to prove that there was only one in the Godhead, and that was Christ.

 They greatly emphasized the omnipresent of God. Hence, when Jesus in Matthew 3:17 hears a voice from heaven, it is His voice speaking, not from heaven but internally. For they stress that God can be in every believer’s heart, in heaven, and on the cross at the same time. Like I said earlier, this is something that I was taught and many of friends believed, but I did not. Utilizing the same passages from Matthew chapter three, this doctrine can be refuted. In this scene we ae seeing a visual presentation manifested. Jesus, coming out of the water, SAW the Spirit of God descending like a dove (Matt. 3:16), and the Lord had another one of his senses activated when He HEARD the voice from heaven. One would have to reason falsely to assume that all this was happening within the mind of Jesus.

 Another passage which proves the existence of the Godhead is found in the letter written by Paul to the brethren at Corinth. Paul proclaims, “*But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God*” (1 Cor. 11:3). Two members of the Godhead are separated in this passage. In fact, God the Father is said to be the “head of Christ.” Therefore, how could one deny the existence of the Godhead?

 Next, one doctrine that I did accept from the movement was the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To the charismatic there are two baptisms being spoken of in the book of Acts. First, in Acts chapter two, there is the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3, 4).

 In this scene we find the apostles being baptized in the Holy Ghost. The proof of that baptism was the “speaking in tongues.” Later in that same chapter, the people asked, “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). The Peter responded, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*Acts 2:38). Many of the charismatics believe in water baptism. There were a few, like my friend mentioned earlier, who did not believe in the necessity of water baptism. Though I believed firmly in water baptism, I felt it was not enough. To the charismatic there was a second baptism that was necessary, Holy Ghost baptism. This was the gift which was promised in Acts 2:38.

 It is typical for the charismatic to quote passages such as Joel 2:28-31, which is also stated in Acts 2:17-21. Howbeit, verse thirty-nine of Acts two is the heart and soul of the charismatic philosophy. It reads, “*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*.” They insist that the promise being spoken about is Holy Ghost baptism. Just from first glance one can see that this type of baptism is not even part of the discussion in this passage. The people asked one question on that notable day. They asked, “*What must we do to be saved*?” They did not ask how they might receive the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit.

 Further, the promise of being baptized with the Holy Ghost was promised to the apostles only. Notice Acts chapter one, verses four through eight. Verse two of chapter one mentions the apostles, and if one follows the course of the pronouns, it is obvious that the apostles are the ones who were to receive this gift. Even in verse eleven after Jesus was taken up into the clouds, and angel stated to the apostles gazing up, “*Ye men of* ***GALILEE****, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:11).

Then when we venture into chapter two, we notice that verse fourteen states, “*But Peter, standing up with the* ***ELEVEN****, lifted up his voice, and said unto them*.” Therefore, the full measure of the Spirit was given to the apostles on that day, and not to every believer.

 It is true that Cornelius and his household, eight chapters later, would receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Yet, if you read about the story earlier in this book, you would note the true reason why this event took place. The Spirit fell on Cornelius, not to save him, but to reveal to the Jews that the Gentiles were also heirs of the kingdom.

 Holy Spirit baptism was just the stepping stone for the charismatic’s perspective on miracles. His ignorance on this subject is based primarily on misguided thinking. The Scriptures reveal that the miracles of the first century were performed by Christ as a signature of Who He was (Jn 20:30, 31).

 A most powerful chapter against miracles happening today is found in Acts chapter eight. Here one reads about a minister of the gospel. He preached in Samaria, and many people came to believe in Jesus and were baptized (Acts 8:12). Yet not one of these new coverts had been given the miraculous measure of the Holy Ghost (vs. 16). Any charismatic would be stunned at this story. After all, these people had everything necessary, under the philosophies of the charismatics, to receive the baptism of the Spirit.

 In the next few verses of this chapter the truth is illuminated in one of the greatest events during the life of the apostles. In verses fourteen through eighteen the Bible informs the readers that Peter and John, two apostles, came to the region to impart the Holy Spirit unto the new converts. Notice what verse eighteen reveals, “*And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.”* These apostles (Peter and John) imparted the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which Philip could not do (compare Acts 10:6; 2 Tim. 1:6; Rom. 1:11); but this was not the baptism of the Spirit.

 It doesn’t take a bright person to understand that an apostle is different than a disciple. The first chapter of the Book of Acts reveals the story of the death of Judas. After his demise, there was a position that needed to be filled. Two men were proposed before the Lord. One was Joseph, and the other Matthias (Acts 1:21). Before these men could even be nominated, they had to meet two qualifications. First, these men must have been with the other apostles during the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus (Acts 1:21). This would make these men disciples of John and Christ. It would also make these men extremely old if they were still living today.

 Secondly, these men had to be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:22-26). As witnesses of this great event, they would have the ability to state firsthand what they knew to be true. That fact alone would stimulate their conviction to preach the resurrected Christ. For based upon the resurrection the gospel stands or falls.

**FOOT WASHING**

 Another doctrine firmly believed by those who proclaim themselves to be charismatic is foot washing. The example is found in John 13:1-17. They focus on the verse that reads, “*For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you*” (Jn. 13:15).

 The first time this happened to me was in my beginning days as a charismatic. Several of us had gathered. In the middle of the floor there was a large container filled with water. We were asked to take off our shoes and socks. At this point, one by one we stepped into the water-filled container, and the person in front of us, after he had his feet washed, would begin washing ours. At first, I was uneasy about the whole situation, but after a period, it became easier to accept.

 To the true charismatic this example was binding. The Lord said to do it, therefore, one had to obey. The amount of times this was to be done was not specified by the Lord. Hence, it was up to the spiritual leader to decide how often this would be performed. The problem with this doctrine is that it was not meant to be doctrine at all. In other words, charismatics focus on the act and not on the lesson to be learned. During the days of our Lord’s personal ministry men and women wore sandals. It was typical that when one entered the home of another, he or she would wash his feet before entering. This way one could wash off the dust that he accumulated from the natural surroundings.

 What Jesus was trying to teach was servitude. “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him*” (Jn. 13:16). They were being taught to serve one another. It was a lesson that they greatly needed. For the Lord knew that if the group could draw close together and serve one another, they would have the ability to spread the word to every corner of the globe.

 The Lord wanted His apostles to learn the meaning of servitude and not to go out and teach foot washing as a part of Christian worship. A close look at the New Testament unveils that this was the only time the act of foot washing was administered. There are no other examples.

**TONGUE SPEAKING**

Another important doctrine believed by the charismatic community was tongue speaking. Tongue speaking was that outward sign to prove that one had received the Holy Spirit. Without it one had no proof that he was saved. Their entire philosophy about tongue speaking rests in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12-14. Paul proclaimed, “*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*” (1 Cor. 12:7). Thus, they believe that this verse implies that the gifts were meant for every generation.

 They also enforce the concept that tongue speaking is not any known language today. They quote Romans 8:26, “*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*.”

 They will sum up their perspective on the subject by quoting First Corinthians chapter thirteen and verse one. Here Paul speaks of the “*tongues of men and angels*.”

 In chapter fourteen, Paul declares that the tongue speaking is an “*unknown tongue*” (1 Cor. 14:2). Therefore, they conclude that this is a divine language that needs a Holy Spirit-filled interpreter, and without this person the usage of tongue speaking is but a prayer that the Holy Spirit is uttering through you.

 There are several problems that the charismatic faces by his or her belief about tongue speaking. First, the gift of tongues was a gift of known languages. When the people who gathered on the day of Pentecost were hearing the apostles speak in tongues, the masses concluded, “*And how hear we every man in our* ***OWN TONGUE, WHEREIN WE WERE BORN****?*” (Acts 2:8). Then in verse nine through eleven the different dialects are stated. The Bible, from the very beginning when tongue speaking was introduced, identifies the gift of tongues to be the known languages of that day.

 Also, if you have ever been to a charismatic worship service, one thing is notable- CONFUSION! You may have one person beside you speaking in tongues, another yelling at the top of his lungs, and the preacher with his microphone in hand, screaming for the responses from the crowd. If you are not participating in some way, you will surely be intimidated to get involved.

 This is not what you read about in the first century church. Paul, to the Corinthian brethren wrote, “*Let all things be done decently and in order*” (1 Cor. 14:40). This is far from the typical worship service held in most charismatic settings in which I was involved. Paul would have surely felt out of place and ashamed of the events that happened at one of these meetings.

 Secondly, in the first century church if one did speak in an unknown tongue there was also to be an interpreter present (1 Cor. 14:27). Notice what the next verse says, “*But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak of himself, and to God*” (1 Cor. 14:28). Occasionally you would find a person interpreting what one of the members was supposedly saying, but not often. In a worship setting there could be twenty or thirty people speaking in tongues at the same time. Common sense alone tells us that this was not acceptable in the sight of God.

 Within the writings of Paul in First Corinthians chapter twelve through fourteen, an amazing prophesy unfolds. Paul declares, “*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.  For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.  But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”* (1 Cor. 13:8-10*).*

Paul proclaims that when “*that which is perfect*” would come, the miracles would cease. The question is, “What is the THAT?” To many charismatics the “that” represents the second coming of Christ. When Jesus comes again there will be no need for miracles; therefore, they will cease. The problem with this view is the gender of the pronoun so used by Paul. “That” is neuter gender. Would you dare pray to Jesus and call Him an “it” or a “that?” Surely not! Whenever I pray, I use the masculine gender for Christ.

 So, then, what is this “perfect” thing that would come and eliminate the need for miracles? The answer is given in the Bible. It has already been proven that the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit could only be transmitted by the laying on of the apostles’ hands, and when the last apostle died, the gift could no longer be transferred to others. Thus, when the last person who received the laying on of the apostles’ hands passed away, the miracles vanished.

 The book of James further states, “*But whoso looketh into the* ***PERFECT*** *law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed*” (Jas. 1:25).

 James is talking about the word of God. His writing on the subject further supports what has previously been stated. Once the last inspired person died, there could no longer be anything added to the New Testament. Therefore, the New Testament would be complete, and once it was completed, there would be no need for miracles to still exists (cf. Jude 3 and Eph. 4:11-13).

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

 Beside the tongue speaking, healings, and the various other points of doctrine that have been discussed, it is necessary to focus some attention on the usage of the instruments of music in worship. As has already been discussed, music is at the heart of the charismatic movement. Nothing can bring out the “Dr. Feelgood” philosophy more than a group of entertainers. The pounding of the drums, the strumming of the guitars, and the loud voices echoing through the microphones excite the crowd. In the end a so-termed worship service turns into a rock concert.

 The Lord is specific concerning how He wants to be worshipped. Paul proclaimed that the instruments we are to use in worship to God is the heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). There is no biblical justification for the usage of the instruments of music in worship. One may want to turn to the pages of the Old Testament, but the Old Law has been done away (Gal. 3:19-27; Col. 2:14).

 A typical place that people love to run to when trying to justify their belief in the instrument is the Book of Revelation. They usually quote from Revelation 14:2, which reads, “*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”* Ask yourself this question, “What did John hear?” He didn’t hear a harp at all. He heard a VOICE. It was a voice that sounded like water running, thunder thundering, and harpers harping. Thus, it is unreasonable to offer this verse as a proof-text for the use of mechanical instruments in worship.

 When it comes down to it, those who support instruments have but one reason why, and that is, THEY LIKE THEM! It has nothing to do with what God says. It has everything to do with feeling good. If one feels good, it must be right. What a sad philosophy! So many will never open their hearts to the truth because of this reason.

**SPIRITUAL HEALINGS**

 It would not take one long in discussing religion with a charismatic before he or she tries to set him straight on spiritual healing. They will profess of the multitude of times they have seen the power of God heal the sick. It is always some friend, family member, or neighbor who was ill and miraculously recovered. This is no doubt the largest boulder one will have to crack before one can covert a charismatic. The proclamation, “I know within my heart!” will be echoed in one’s ear a thousand times before the discussion is ended. “I know what I saw!” will be another phrase often used. One story after another will be thrown in your face. They will in the end question your faith for not believing what they had witnessed.

 It is important that in this type of discussion one focus on the obvious. “If Oral Roberts had the ability to heal all these sick people, then why did he build a hospital?” “Have you ever seen a dead person brought back to life?” “Have you ever seen a blind man healed wholly?” “Have you ever seen someone healed without the aid of a doctor?” These are questions that infuriate the charismatic. Just like the example of doctors being involved in the healing is usually an undeniable part of the spiritual healing process. Yet there was no process during the New Testament times. Jesus would say some words or touch a certain part of the diseased person. Within seconds that person, or persons, would be completely healed. There were no doctors in sight, no medicine taken, and no surgery required; Jesus spoke, and they were healed!

**PREMILLENIALISM**

A term that is often referred to as a charismatic term is premillennialism. It is the belief that Jesus will come again and set up His kingdom upon this earth. It will remain here for one thousand years, and then the final judgment will take place.

 This doctrine also proclaims that a “rapture” will occur. This means that the righteous ones will be taken to heaven, and the wicked will remain on earth. During that thousand years, though it will be difficult, the wicked will have a chance to enter the kingdom of God. In other words, this has been termed the “second-chance doctrine.” The philosophy is drawn from the Book of Revelation. That is why many people are confounded by the doctrine. The Revelation letter was written in figurative language. It was written metaphorically to conceal the contents of the book from the Roman Empire, and the radical Hebrews.

 Looking at the doctrine of premillennialism, there is no need for Jesus to come and build a kingdom. Why? The Kingdom is already present. In the book of Matthew, Jesus told Peter:

 “*Upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

 *and I will give unto thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt*

 *bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be*

 *loosed in heaven*” (Matt. 16:17, 18).

Therefore, in these verses Jesus proclaims that the kingdom is future tense. Yet, Peter would be alive when it came.

 Secondly, John, the powerful writer of the Book of Revelation, proclaimed, “*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9).* Note that John states he was IN the kingdom. It can be concluded that between the time Jesus made His statement to Peter in Matthew sixteen and John made his proclamation in Revelation one, the kingdom had been established (cf. Col. 1:13; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; Heb. 12:28).

 If you turn your Bible to Acts chapter two, and verse forty-seven, it reads, “*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*.”

 Looking at Jesus statement in Matthew sixteen, we find Jesus using the terms church and kingdom interchangeably. This would cause one to conclude that the kingdom and the church are one and the same.

**CHAPTER V**

1. **BEWARE LEST YE FALL**

Accumulating knowledge is a part of our human existence. When we fail to do what is right before God we get our just reward. This part of the narrative concentrates on why many of our brethren turn away from the truth, and why it is necessary to feed our young people with the nourishment that comes from the Holy Bible.

 First, let me point out that we sometimes fail in the very beginning. We feel that if we teach them the basics, just enough to get them in the water, that’s as far as we need to go. How many new converts are stranded on the wayside of life? How many are taught after their conversion? New converts are babies. They need to be taken by the hand, and they need to be spoon-fed.

 Not only do we leave these young converts vulnerable to the vultures but allow the wrong people to instruct them. Teachers who believe and practice things contrary to the word will teach things contrary to the word. One minister told me that we need to tolerate these liberal brethren. In other words, if we have someone teaching liberal doctrine, one should not cause dissention by confronting them. We should let them teach. I truly do not see a difference in the philosophy than when I was in the charismatic movement. In that sect we had different beliefs yet tolerated one another for the good of the group.

 False teachers are being praised as heroes today—men like Max Lucado, who has joined hands with denominationalism. He has become an ecumenical partner with Billy Graham. These false teachers have taken that which is holy and have thrown it to the dogs. They have compromised truth for a buck, and they have led a massive amount of people astray. It’s time to wake up and smell the roses!

 I am also concerned for the negativism many times expressed among some of our members. When I first inducted into the movement, I came home one summer from college. My dad took me on a fishing trip. It was a beautiful day. In the middle of the lake with my father in my younger years would have been enjoyable, but those days were gone. I started speaking to my dad of my charismatic experience. He became angry with me and asked, “What happened to cause you to leave the truth?”

 I never told my father that day why I left, and long after my father passed, I can’t remember giving him the answer to his question. I believe my reason is parallel to many others who leave the faith.

 In my younger years as a member of the Lord’s church, I was privileged to be with a group of people who really enjoyed each other’s company. As years passed, I began to hear people speak ill of the church. It usually began with some preacher they didn’t like or some member who did them wrong. Even ministers were involved in this backbiting epidemic. It made me wonder, “How could these people be the true representation of Christ on this earth when they speak so badly about one another?” Preachers gossiping and members telling lies created a cancer within me that needed to be healed. My brethren, these things ought not to be!

 It’s hard to tell the world about the church when the church is hidden. The Bible informs us that we are to “let our light shine,” not flicker on and off. When you find religious groups shining their lights brightly, it is amazing that we have as many members as we do. These denominational groups are not sources of the true light. That is the reason why it is imperative that we, who are ministers of truth, reflect the true character of Christ. If we will do this, others will follow.

 If we are going to try and prevent the falling away of God’s elect, we need to stop feeling sorry for ourselves. So often we feel that what we do is useless. We see denominational churches growing by leaps and bounds around us, and we ponder what’s the point of trying. Gospel preachers are charged to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:1-4). We can plant the seed and water it, but it is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Every seed we plant has the possibility of blossoming. Therefore, we must not become weary in well-doing (Gal. 6:9).

 Another problem so typical among our brethren is the formulation of clicks. I don’t feel it is wrong to enjoy the company of close friends. Howbeit, it is wrong to find groups established that are more involved in politics than religion.

 Power struggles within the Lord’s church are typical. It is sad, but true. To win souls these oppositional groups need to be abolished. How? One may ask. The answer is found in the pages of the most sacred book, the Bible. Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 1:12-18 that it was wrong to formulate groups in support of one minister over another. This philosophy was dividing the church. Paul wants them to center their minds on Christ.

 Ministers of the Gospel need to bring people back to reality. This demands that there must be unity in doctrine and commitment. God’s people must remember that we can’t drag people into a ship that is sinking. We must wave our flags high. We must prove to the world that we are who we say we are. This implies that when it comes to evangelism, we must exceed the charismatic. When it comes to our living, we are to imitate Christ!

**INTRODUCE OUR FRIENDS**

 Next, this is something that I feel is extremely important. We must introduce our families to the brotherhood. Sometimes we have become so narrow-minded that we feel the only righteous ones are those who meet with us in our local congregations. Elijah, at one time in his life, felt that he was the only righteous man left on the planet, but note what God said to the prophet. He exclaimed, “*Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal”* (1 Kings 19:18).

 If members would visit other congregations, attend area gospel meetings, and invest in more literature put out by the brethren, we would see a drastic change in the attitudes of many of our brethren. We need to get to know one another. Introduce your children to the visiting minister. Involve them in the activities that are happening in the local congregation. If you attend a church where the young people are being ignored, then take the proper steps in making sure that activities are formulated every month for the kids.

 If we do not take the initiative to get everyone involved at the local autonomy level, then, believe me, there will be some fanatical group willing to devour our families and friends. Never forget that Satan is a roaring lion seeking the souls of men (1 Pet. 5:8).

 The local autonomy is important, yet we all need to recognize that the church is also universal. Thus, I pray for the growth of the church the world over. We are one brotherhood. Committed to Christ. We have the power to conquer the world, but to do so, we must prepare ourselves and our children for the evils of this world.

**CHAPTER VI**

1. **TEN STEPS TO FOLLOW**

 For ten years I was separated from the light of the gospel, and I count myself as one of the lucky ones who found the way back. This section of the book is intended to help the struggling Christian to remain faithful, yet, there are no guarantees. As humans we become discouraged, and Satan loves to make God’s people question their faith. Standing firm is not always easy. Likewise, walking in the light is even harder. It seems as if for every valley there is a mountain to climb. Hence, sometimes that mountain seems too high for us to conquer. Therefore, I want to share with the reader ten steps to help climb those mountains and to forge through those valleys.

 First, never allow another brother or sister to influence your direction. It’s easy for problems to arise and crusaders to appear. However, when you submitted your life to Christ, your direction was very clear. Your eyes were focused on the cross. He became your Savior, and you became His servant.

 Secondly, never forget the basics. Remember those diagrams you were shown about the church when it was first presented to you, the emphasis on the one body and the one head (Eph. 1:22, 23); that wonderful revelation of God’s plan of salvation; last, but not least, the five parts of worship on the Lord’s Day. Everything you were taught had a book, chapter, and verse. It was clear. Howbeit, you were able for the first time to see the wonders of the kingdom and the evils of the world.

 Thirdly, never walk away from a situation in anger. The human side of the church is not perfect. Our perfection solely rests in the blood of Christ. We, as humans, make mistakes. People get hurt, and sometimes they leave, but when these times do come, don’t walk away. Resolve your differences. If you can’t, then walk away on friendly terms hoping to soon speak once again on the matter at hand.

 Fourth, never underestimate the power of Satan. Pride is something we all face at one time or another. At times we feel as if we are too strong to fall. Satan loves a challenge. He was responsible for some of the finest men in history falling. David and Solomon are two examples that yielded to his tactics.

 Fifth, never stop growing. It is a natural process of life to grow. Babies grow up to be teenagers, and teenagers grow up to be adults. It is a process that has continued for five thousand years. This growth is a necessity in the church. From our new converts, whom are merely babies, to our senior members, the church blossoms because of this growth cycle. This blossoming will only continue if we digest the proper diet of God’s word.

 Sixth, be active in all the affairs of the church. Activity is a necessity for every member of the Lord’s kingdom. We so often use the excuse that nobody wants to get involved, or the congregation has little to offer our teenagers. The problem, though it may partly rest on the congregation, also resides upon you. Begin a Bible study in your home. Invite the teenagers, friends, and family members to attend. Don’t wait for someone else to make the first move; do it yourself.

 Seventh, become diligent in your studies. I have known people so addicted to television that they spend endless hours surfing the channels. These souls can explain in detail what they have watched on television but have no clue what is written in the Bible. It is imperative to take time every day to study God’s word. After a while, studying the Bible will become an addicted behavior. Can you think of anything better to be addicted to?

 Eight, be informed. You need to know what is happening in the brotherhood. You also need to know how to refute the false doctrine that runs rampant among some of our brethren. Being informed means being prepared. It is usually our ignorance that causes us to stray from the truth. Knowledge prepares us for proper living.

 Ninth, be positive concerning the church. Phillis Diller once stated that she put away all negative influences in her life and surrounded herself with the positives. As members of the body of Christ, there are so many positives concerning the kingdom. Don’t spend your times around people who constantly complain. For centuries people have professed that the church is dying. My brethren, the church is alive and well on planet earth. Jesus proclaimed that nothing would be able to destroy it (Mat. 16:18).

 Last, but not least, pray. Make it a point to pray as often as you can. Pray for your children that they will not be led astray. The power of prayer is real. It is our direct phone service to the throne of God. Use it, but don’t abuse it! (Jas. 5:16; 1 Thess. 5:17).

**THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**

 It was stated at the beginning of the book that I wanted to define the difference between a miracle and the providence of God. Too often people utilize the two terms interchangeably. This, however, is against the character of the Biblical definition of both.

 The providence of God is often defined as God’s ability to govern and preserve all His creatures and all their actions. It can be stated that God’s providence is involved in every star that falls, every bird that flies, and every tree that blooms. However, when comparing God’s providence with miracles, Divine providence will be defined as those events that are directly touched by the hand of God.

 The easiest way to understand the difference between providence and miracles is by remembering three terms: power, performance, person.

 First, let’s see how the first term relates to God’s providence. When a miracle occurred during the first century, the event was defined as being (1) instantaneous, and (2 immediate. The power of God could clearly be seen. This is not so with providence. When a congregation comes together to pray for someone who is ill, and later they recover, one can assume that God heard and answered. Though, what proof do you have? You may believe this with all your heart, but the proof is not so obvious as in the case of the miracles that Christ and His apostles performed.

 Secondly, let’s notice the second distinction between a miracle and the providence of God. In this case, the word “performance” comes to mind. During the early years of the church, the miraculous events were clearly visible. The world was a stage, and Christ and His disciples performed before the masses. This is not to say that Christ was pretentious, a simple performer deceiving the masses. The Lord lived His life in open view before the world. This impacted the people in understanding that Jesus was more than a mere human. He was God in the flesh.

 God’s performance, through His providence, is not so revealing today. As humans we guess at where the hand of God has touched. For example, when AIDS was first discovered, a great number of people believed that it was God’s wrath being sent to slap the face of the homosexual community. Also, many perceive that many disasters, especially when nature is involved, are providentially sent. Nevertheless, God’s performance in such cases cannot be proven one way or the other.

 At the same time, God is not sitting in a big rocker in heaven doing nothing. God has been active since the day He created the heavens and the earth. One can conclude that God is still an active participant in the affairs of men. I can recall lying in a hospital bed in Virginia. My body temperature was nearly 105 degrees. Delirious after suffering for five days from the fever, the doctors were worried. They were concerned about brain damage and death. The saints from various congregations prayed for me. Then after five days of misery, the fever broke. In my heart, I believed that God’s providence was involved in my recovery, but I would never be able to proof this to the unbeliever. I believed that God’s intervening was obvious and so did my fellow Christians. Nevertheless, if I had to stand up in court and prove this to a judge, I could not!

 Thirdly, when one speaks about the difference between a miracle and providence, the word “person” arises. Before and after a miracle, God would always receive the glory. Jesus and His apostles aimed the event at the rightful source. In other words, the instrument performing the miracle gave glory to the person responsible for it. In every case, that person was God! Whereas, when one speaks of providence, this is not true. God, for example, allows certain things to happen naturally. An earthquake, a massive flood, or a hurricane can happen by God providentially ordaining such to happen or simply allowing events such as the ones stated to occur.

 In the story of Job terrible things happened to Job and his family. His children were killed (Job 1:19); the oxen, asses, and camels were taken (Job 1:14, 17); and even his servants were murdered (Job 1:15, 17). Job, weeping over these calamities, did not charge God. Yet, his friends did! Eliphaz, Job’s friend who spoke first, said, “*Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God, they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed*” (Job 4:8-9).

 Why did these things happen to Job? Eliphaz and his comrades concluded that Job had sinned, and by God’s hand was all this misery brought about. Looking at Job 1:6-12, the Bible informs the reader that it was Satan who caused such pain to fall upon Job. Likewise, today when terrible things happen, many people want to blame God. It never occurs to them that Satan is often in the background. Though God is aware of every leaf that falls from the tree, it does not mean that God’s hand is involved in everything that happens under the sun. Good and bad things happen to all who live on this planet, no matter how wicked or how righteous they may be.

**CHAPTER VII**

1. **CONCLUSION**

 I’ve come a long way from a small dormitory room at Vincennes University to a nice office I Elkhart, Indiana. For fifteen years I have served as a gospel preacher. My journey from the past to where I am now has been difficult. Nevertheless, like the prodigal son, I found my way home.

 It was a tiring journey. I had to be once again reeducated all over again, and I had to find a way to reach my beloved friends whom I left behind.

 If you’re a parent who attends one service of the Lord’s church, rarely makes it to Bible study, and believes there are better things to do than worship God, this book should serve as a warning to you. Your children will be easy prey. Believe me, once they have been indoctrinated with the doctrines of devils, you will carry the burden of their lost souls.

 It’s time to carry our banners into battle. It’s time to wake up! There was a song we used to sing often when I belonged to the movement. One line read, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going.” The philosophy of that song is true. It’s time for the brotherhood to set the woods on fire. “*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few*” (Matt. 9:37).