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WILL THE SPIRIT BE WITHDRAWN?

At what point will the Spirit's work for Christians be complete? We answer, not until we are *born* of the Spirit. Our Head—the Lord Jesus Christ—was born of the Spirit more than 1800 years ago, and we as members of His body must and will follow Him into the same life, and by the same power of the Holy Spirit. The birth of the Head secures the birth of the body in due time.

If as some claim Christ the Head is to return to His church under the veil of the flesh to complete the education of His church, and that then because He returns, the Spirit is to be withdrawn, would it not prove the Spirit incompetent to do the work to which He was appointed by the Lord Himself, viz: to lead us into all truth and bring us to the birth.

The Spirit is Christ representative in us, and Paul uses the terms "Spirit of God," "Spirit of Christ" and "Christ in you" interchangeably. Rom. 8:9-10. Now if an external, visible Christ is superior teacher to Christ in us, it would not have been expedient for us for Christ to go away and send the Comforter.

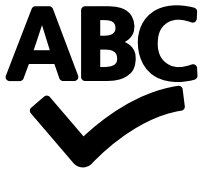
It is Christ in us, or the indwelling of the spirit, that makes us Christians or sons of God. Rom. 8:8-17. This is the real and only difference between us and the world. He *strives with* the man of the world to lead him to God; but he *dwells* in the Christian. We can conceive the idea of the Spirit's (for some special reason) ceasing to strive with man, as when the Lord spoke to Noah: "My spirit shall not always strive with man;" but we cannot conceive the idea of the spirit being withdrawn from the Christian, without his *ceasing to be a Christian*. Take the spirit from the church, and they would be nothing but a company of mere *natural* men—men in the flesh. "So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is *none of His*." Rom. 8:8,9. The only way that the work of the spirit can cease is by being perfected. In this sense, Paul speaks of several things ceasing—prophecies, tongues and knowledge (1 Cor. 13:8); but he explains it: "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." Verses 9,10. So also, he says, a child ceases to be a child by becoming a man. Ver. 11. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but *then* face to face." We can only cease to be *begotten* children of God by being *born*. God's plan moves on to perfection.

That it is possible that we might be born of the Spirit, and for a time remain in *appearance* as natural men, as did Christ, after He was raised from the dead, we do not deny. *Such may be the case.* But the Spirit cannot resign his work until it is complete.

J. H. P.

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