

## **A SUMMARY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**By Tom Werner**

The Holy Spirit is a person, not an abstraction or an impersonal force. The Holy Spirit is called by a number of names in the Scriptures, including some that relate the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and of the same essence as the Father and the Son.

The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to produce holiness in men and women. However, the Holy Spirit also participated in the creation of the world, and works now in sustaining the world. The Holy Spirit works to produce common grace, restraining evil, creating order and producing civil righteousness in unbelievers as well as believers. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and the writers of Scripture.

The Holy Spirit is vital in regeneration. Our natures have been corrupted by the fall so that we are not inclined to seek God. However, the Holy Spirit implants within us, by a prevenient grace, a principle of life which changes our disposition, and allows us to respond to the call of the gospel.

As we hear the gospel, we turn in conversion, repentance and faith. We are in union with Christ by the work of the Spirit, and the Spirit testifies that we are God's children. We are justified by the Father. We are sanctified through the work of the Spirit and our work in seeking God through prayer, Bible study, fellowship, hearing the preached Word and partaking of the sacraments. The Holy Spirit helps to assure us, and causes us to persevere and equips us for ministry. Finally, the Spirit, which raised Christ from the dead will, with the other members of the Trinity, cause us to rise on the last day.

God intends us to be filled with the Holy Spirit as part of the normal Christian life. The filling of the Holy Spirit equips us for service, either long-term or for a particular task. The filling puts us in right relationship with each other and God. All Christians are exhorted and commanded to be filled by the Holy Spirit by being yielded to him on an ongoing basis.

The fruit of the Spirit reproduces the character of Christ in us. The fruit is supernatural in origin, coming from the Holy Spirit. The fruit is natural in development and gradual in growth.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an area of great controversy within the church. The baptism can be characterized as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a direct way on believers, which grants reassurance of the presence of God and great joy, and also power of witness. It is not necessarily the same thing as regeneration. There is nothing in Scripture which indicates it is not available today. It is also not necessarily the same thing as the filling of the Holy Spirit. Not all Christians do receive the baptism – it is within God's sovereignty to grant. We should not expect that a formula will grant the baptism. However, we should seek the baptism and not quench the Spirit.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to edify the church. There are about twenty or so gifts discussed in Scripture, and these are not necessarily exhaustive. All believers have some gift to aid the body.

In some cases the place of the gifts is controversial today. Christians can strongly disagree as to the merit, and even the continuance of the gifts. Our conclusions on some of the individual gifts follow.

1. We are persuaded that the ministry of apostles was “foundational” to the church, and that the ministry of apostles is ended.

2. Prophecy, including prophecy in tongues, continues today, but as illumination, not revelation. While Scripture is inerrant and infallible, prophecy today is fallible, and its truth and application must be discerned. The church needs to be careful in allowing the freedom of the Spirit to move through prophecy. Believers are encouraged to discern the truth and application of prophecy under the authority of the pastor and the Session.

3. Tongues continue today, but tongues is more prevalent today as a private prayer language, which serves to edify and spiritually strengthen the believer. Not all Christians will speak in tongues; however it is a frequent manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

4. Healing and miracles continue today. We do not understand all that pertains to divine healing. We do not understand why some are healed and others are not. Our part is to preach the gospel, and petition God in humility for healing and miracles. Healing depends upon God’s grace. Healing may require some faith, but God is gracious to give us the faith required. All healing, whether instantaneous or gradual, whether through the body’s natural systems, or medical treatment or through the direct power of God, is God’s healing.

The Holy Spirit, then, is vital for our salvation and works through the Christian to produce a life which is transformed and pleasing to God.

## **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

This paper is intended to summarize the person and work of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit is described in Scripture. It should serve as a starting point for discussions in our church on the person of the Holy Spirit, and the work of the Spirit in our church and in the individuals who comprise our congregation.

Few topics in the modern church could engender greater controversy. Therefore we must undertake this task with great care and wisdom and love for brothers and sisters. John Stott, in the introduction to his book Baptism and Fullness, makes several points which we think are appropriate, and which we will paraphrase here, with some comments of our own.

First, our common desire and duty as Christians must be to enter into the full purpose of God for us. Nothing less than this will please him; so nothing less than this should please us. All of us who claim to follow Christ should seek a clearer understanding of God's purpose for his people, should be moved to penitence by our failures to attain it, and should keep pressing on eagerly, longing to lay hold firmly and fully of everything for which Christ has laid hold of us. (Philippians 3:12-14) This task should keep us humble as we realize how poorly we fare, how far we fall short of God's intention for us.

Secondly, we are to discover this purpose of God primarily in Scripture. The will of God for his people is in the Word of God. It is here that we are to learn it, and not primarily from the experience of particular individuals or groups. We should neither covet for ourselves what God may have given others, nor prohibit others from what God has given them, nor urge upon others what God may have given to us, unless it is plainly revealed in his Word that this is his will. The Scripture must govern what we seek for ourselves and what we teach to others. We should consider common experience. But experience must never be the criterion of truth; truth must always be the criterion of experience.

Third, our motive in thus seeking to learn God's purpose from the teaching of Scripture is practical and personal, not academic or controversial. We are brothers and sisters in the family of God. We love one another. We are concerned to know God's will in order to embrace it ourselves and commend it to others. We have no desire to score cheap points off one another in theological debate.<sup>1</sup>

After these introductory points regarding our approach, we are ready to consider the person and the work of the Holy Spirit.

## **II. THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The term, "Spirit" does not suggest personality with the same force as does "Father" and "Son," and the Holy Spirit has not appeared in human form as the Son did. As a result, we may tend not to think of the Holy Spirit as a person, but as a force or

abstraction, and there have been some groups who have contended that the Holy Spirit is not a person. However, the Holy Spirit is a **person**, not an abstraction or an impersonal force.

This is apparent from Scripture for several reasons. First, Scripture uses the personal pronoun “he” of the Holy Spirit. For instance, in John 16:7-8 and 13-15, “he,” “him” or “his” are used eleven times with reference to the Holy Spirit.

Second, the Holy Spirit is identified with the Father and the Son to indicate personality, as in the phrase “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19) Notice that there is one “name,” not “names,” implying unity. If there is personality in the Father and the Son, we can infer there is also in the Holy Spirit.

Third, personal activities and qualities, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as in I Corinthians 2:10-11, where the Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God, and knows the thoughts of God, or in Romans 8:26, where the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, and at Ephesians 4:30, where the Holy Spirit can be grieved. The Holy Spirit is said to speak, guide, teach, command, forbid, desire, give speech and give help. (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 2:4; 8:29; 13:2; 16:6,7; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27; Galatians 4:6; 5:17, 18) These are actions and qualities we associate with a person, not a force.

### III. THE NAMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are a number of names and descriptive titles that are given to the Holy Spirit.

First of all, there are the direct or personal titles. Foremost here, of course, is the name *Holy Spirit* or *Holy Ghost*. These mean exactly the same thing. The English language is hybrid and has borrowed from other languages, and ‘Ghost’ is an old Anglo Saxon word while ‘Spirit’ is derived from the Latin *spiritus*. These are the words used to translate the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek *pneuma*, which literally mean “breath” or “wind.”

Also in this group is the *Spirit of holiness*. (Romans 1:4) In Hebrews 9:14 the Holy Spirit is referred to as the *eternal Spirit*, and Paul says in Romans 8:2, ‘Through Christ Jesus the law of the *Spirit of life* set me free from the law of sin and death.’ In John 14:17, he is called the *Spirit of truth*, and in chapters 14, 15 and 16 of the gospel of John, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the *Comforter*.

Second, there are the names that relate Him to the Father, including the *Spirit of God* (Genesis 1:2); the *Spirit of the Lord* (Luke 4:18); the *Spirit of our God* (I Corinthians 6:11); and the *Spirit of the Lord God*, which is in Isaiah 61:1. Jesus speaks, in Matthew 10:20, of the *Spirit of your Father*, while Paul refers to the *Spirit of the living God* (II Corinthians 3:3); *My Spirit*, while God is speaking in Genesis 6:3, and the psalmist asks, “Where shall I go from *your Spirit*?” (Psalm 139:7). He is referring to as *his Spirit*; the

phrase *the Spirit of him* (God the Father) *that raised up Jesus from the dead*. All these are descriptive titles referring to the Holy Spirit in terms of His relationship to the Father.

In a third group are the titles that relate the Holy Spirit to the Son. First, “If anyone does not have the *Spirit of Christ* he does not belong to Christ.” (Romans 8:9) In Philippians 1:19, Paul speaks about the *Spirit of Jesus Christ*, and in Galatians 4:6 he says, “God sent forth the *Spirit of his Son* into our hearts.” Finally he is referred to as the *Spirit of the Lord*. (Acts 5:9).

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that these last two categories, although related to the other persons of the Trinity, refer to the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV. THE PLACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN THE TRINITY, AND THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. There is some controversy within the church as to what is called “spiration.” Jesus is said to have been eternally begotten, or generated, of the Father. (John 1:14,18; John 3:16,18; I John 4:9) Similarly, the Holy Spirit is said to have eternally proceeded from the Father and the Son in spiration. Jesus says, “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me...Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 15:26; John 16:7) Also the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of Christ and of the Son. (Romans 8:9 and Galatians 4:6) However, the Eastern (“Orthodox”) churches do not believe the Son is involved in the act of spiration.<sup>3</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that beginning in 589 A.D., this question was one important reason for the split between Eastern and Roman Catholic churches in the eleventh century.<sup>4</sup>

The deity of the Holy Spirit is rarely questioned, as is the deity of Christ, probably because the Holy Spirit has never taken on human form.

In the Old Testament the expressions “God said” and “the Spirit said” are used interchangeably. This pattern continues in the New Testament, as in Acts 5:4-4 where Peter says, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit**, and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?...You have not **lied** to men but **to God**” (emphasis added). Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God.

The Bible also attributes divine qualities to the Holy Spirit. Paul ascribes omniscience to the Holy Spirit, saying “The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” (I Corinthians 2:10-11). The Spirit is described as omnipresent in Psalm 139, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?” The Holy Spirit also works in creation, hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:1-2) and has the power to raise Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11), consistent with omnipotence.

#### V. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## **A. The Work of the Holy Spirit Generally**

The traditional formulation of the Trinity is that God is one in essence and substance, and three in person. Within the Trinity, there are certain works in which all three persons participate, but also some works which are reserved to one of the persons of the Godhead. What is the particular work of the Holy Spirit?

Louis Berkhof says “it is the special task of the Holy Spirit to bring things to completion by acting immediately upon and in the creature.”<sup>5</sup>

J.I. Packer says that the essence of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to mediate the presence of Christ. He looks to the statements of Jesus made at the Last Supper contained in John 13-16, where Jesus explained the coming of the Spirit. In particular, John 16:14 says that the Spirit will bring glory to Jesus. Packer calls this a “floodlight ministry,” by which he means that the Spirit does not draw attention to itself, but puts light on the person of Christ, so that Christ is the center of men’s attentions.<sup>6</sup>

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that the name of the Holy Spirit suggests the primary work of the Spirit. Why is the Spirit referred to as “Holy?” After all, the Spirit is no more holy than the Father or the Son. He replies that the Spirit is called “Holy” because the primary work of the Holy Spirit is to create holiness in men.<sup>7</sup>

However, the Holy Spirit also works in other ways. We will look at the work of the Holy Spirit in creation, common grace and the inspiration of the prophets and Scripture before we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in drawing men to Christ and producing holiness.

## **B. The Work of the Holy Spirit in Creation and Common Grace**

The Holy Spirit is present in the very creation of the world, as Genesis 1:2 says, “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” The Holy Spirit was at work in the creation of the world. The Holy Spirit is also involved in sustaining and maintaining the creation. In Psalm 104 God is described as the sustainer of the earth, and in verse 30 we see that it is by the Spirit that all is kept, and at Isaiah 40:7 we see that the Spirit can cause the grass to wither and the flower to fade. We also see in Scripture the work of the Father and the Son in these activities. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that the Son operates to sustain the creation through the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

The Holy Spirit also is responsible for much of common grace. By common grace, we mean the general blessings God imparts to all people, not just Christians. Common grace includes the moral influence by which evil and sin are restrained, order is maintained and civil righteousness is promoted. John 1:9 says that there is a “true light which lights every man,” This light is conscience, which is given by Christ but implanted in men by the Holy Spirit. Stephen in his sermon at Acts 7:51 says that the unconverted are resisting the Holy Spirit. Paul in Romans 1:28 says that the people have been given over to their sin, but until given over they have been restrained by God.

In addition to the internal check of conscience, there are also external structures, such as culture which restrains evil, and charitable organizations to promote medicine and science, and government. All these are the products of the gifts given by the Holy Spirit

### **C. The Holy Spirit and Inspiration**

The prophets and the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Numbers, two men, Eldad and Medad were prophesying and Moses was asked by youthful Joshua to make them stop. Moses replied, "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" Peter says that "prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." II Peter 1:21.

Paul says that all Scripture is "God-breathed." It was the Holy Spirit that inspired the writers of the Scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament.

## **VI. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REDEMPTIVE HISTORY**

As we read about the work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and certain statements made in the Scriptures about the Holy Spirit before Pentecost, we need to clarify the work of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. For instance, we read at John 7:39, "Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." Jesus told his disciples, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." (John 16: 7) He also told them to stay in the city of Jerusalem "until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49).

How should we interpret these statements? Do these statements mean that the Holy Spirit did not come until Pentecost?

We can see from the references above that the Holy Spirit was operative before Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was at work in creation, in sustaining the creation, in the prophets and in the writers of the Scriptures. It is said repeatedly of the judges that, "the Spirit came mightily upon them." (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14) The Holy Spirit also was at work in believers, such as David, who prayed in Psalm 51:11, "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me." Paul says at II Corinthians 4:13 that it is the same spirit of faith who moved the Psalmist to believe and speak which moved Paul and other Christians to believe and speak. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was told that John the Baptist would be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15) and his mother Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. As the disciples were sent out to preach and cast out devils, they must have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. And at John 20:22, the disciples were gathered in the upper room when Jesus appeared, and "he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

All these Scriptures show that the Holy Spirit was at work before Pentecost.

However, though the Spirit was at work before Pentecost, the period after Pentecost has been different. Paul contrasts the period after Pentecost with God's work in Israel, and calls this age the "ministry (or 'dispensation') of the Spirit." Isaiah wrote of the day when the Spirit would be "poured upon us from on high." (Isaiah 32:15) God promised, "I will pour water on the thirsty lands, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring." (Isaiah 44:3) "Then they will know that I am the Lord their God...for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel." (Ezekiel 39:28-29) Again in Joel 2, which we will discuss later, God promises that he will "pour out" the Holy Spirit.

B.B. Warfield seeks to explain how the periods before and after Pentecost are similar and yet different.<sup>9</sup> He says, "The Spirit was active under the Old Dispensation in all the modes of His activity under the New Dispensation." He says that the Holy Spirit operated in essentially the same way both before and after Pentecost, that there is no great change in the way the Spirit operated. However, he also says that the primary difference between the Old and the New Dispensations was the giving of the Holy Spirit, and says that this age, the Dispensation of the Spirit, is different, for four reasons, as follows:

First, the extent of the operation of the Spirit is greater in the New Dispensation than in the Old Dispensation. The scope of the New Dispensation is worldwide, not just limited to one people. Of course, in the Old Testament period, the Spirit was not strictly limited to the Jews, but there is greater geographic scope to the work of the Holy Spirit and the gospel after Pentecost.

Second, in the New Dispensation the object of the Spirit's work is to recover the world from sin. During the Old Dispensation, the primary object of the Holy Spirit was to prepare; in the New Dispensation the primary objective is performance. In the Old Dispensation seeds were planted, in the New Dispensation there is a great harvest.

Third, in the New Dispensation the mode of administration of God's Kingdom has become spiritual. In the Old Dispensation, God's Kingdom was viewed as earthly, related to land, an earthly king, temple worship and the observation of ceremonial law. In the New Dispensation, God's kingdom is no longer of this world, related to the earthly government or state of Israel, or external ordinances such as the law. Where the Spirit is, there is the church.

Finally, in the New Dispensation the Holy Spirit is "poured out" upon all flesh, as prophesied by Joel 2:28-32, quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). The words "poured out" indicate a great work. In the New Dispensation the Spirit works in the hearts of men with a more prevailing and pervading force.

Although the Holy Spirit worked in the Old Testament period in the same ways as the New, the New Testament is the dispensation of the Spirit for all these reasons.

## **VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SALVATION**

## A. The Order of Salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of the application of salvation. Christ's work and death on the cross is sufficient to atone for the sins of the world, but some response is required in order to make his death effective for us. Christ's sacrifice may be said to be objective, as it historical, but that death must be applied to us individually, or subjectively. The Holy Spirit is the agent by which salvation is applied to us.

In order to examine the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation and its outworkings, we should review the work of a saving faith, salvation and its logical outworking. The list which follows is referred to by theologians as the *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation. The order is not always agreed to, and the order may not in all cases be important. This order is usually based on what we think to be the logical order and not the order in time. The list will be helpful in analyzing who does what in salvation.

Salvation involves **regeneration**. Regeneration is spiritual rebirth. Regeneration can be defined as the principle by which new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of man is made holy.<sup>10</sup> The word "regeneration" is used only at Titus 3:5, "the washing of regeneration." However, other similar terms are used. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, saying, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). Paul echoes this thought. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come." (II Corinthians 5:17). Other synonyms used in the Bible include, "beget," (James 1:18) or "born of God" (as often in I John) and "made alive" or "quickened" (Ephesians 2:5).

A part of salvation is **calling**. By this we mean two calls. First, there must be an **external** call, the proclamation of the word so that there can be a response. However, there must also be the work of God, the **internal call**, in the person so that he or she responds. The work of God in the person hearing the message is also sometimes referred to as **effectual calling**. Some do not separate regeneration from calling, and according to the Westminster Confession, regeneration is part of effectual calling (Chapter X, paragraph 2). However, others treat regeneration and effectual calling separately. For instance, according to Berkhof, the effectual call differs from regeneration in that regeneration is subconscious and works inside man, as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "The wind blows wherever it please. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:8) This is regeneration, which is unseen and unfelt. But effectual calling is conscious to man, and works externally as one hears the gospel proclaimed.<sup>11</sup>

With salvation comes **conversion**. In Scripture, the word most often translated as conversion (*metanoia*) means "to undergo a change of one's mind." Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, unless you change ('are converted') and become like little children, you will never see the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) This change of mind does not mean a mere changing of a few opinions, or changing some bad habits, but changing the entire direction of one's life. It implies going down a highway in one direction and doing a U-turn.

Conversion has two opposite sides to its coin, a negative aspect and a positive aspect. Paul told the Ephesian elders that he had “declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.” (Acts 20:21) There are the two sides to conversion. In **repentance**, there is a change in the consciousness of a sinner by which the sinner turns away from sin. Instead the sinner embraces **faith**, which may be said to be a conviction as to the truth of the gospel, and a heart-felt reliance on the promises of God in Christ. These steps together mean a radical turning from sin, self, the world and Satan and a turning to Christ.

With conversion comes **union with Christ**, by which the believer is mystically united to Christ as the branches are united to the vine, or a wife is united to husband, and by which the believer receives the merits of Christ. Then there is **adoption**, by which a believer is made a child of God.

With salvation there is also **justification**, the legal act of God the Father by which He declares unjust sinners to be just. There is a declaration of “not guilty.” Justification means that, by God’s imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us, we are saved from the guilt and eternal punishment that should be the consequence of our sin.

As the believer grows in the knowledge of Christ, the believer is **sanctified**, conformed to the image of Christ and growing in holiness. The believer receives **assurance of salvation** and **perseveres** in the faith, even when tried, and finally enters into **glorification** when life is over.

Each of these is a part of salvation. As we will see, from the very beginning of our Christian lives to the very end, we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

## **B. The Holy Spirit in Salvation and its Outworking.**

### **1. Regeneration and Effectual Calling**

The Holy Spirit is vital in regeneration. Christ’s death on the cross was sufficient to pay for the sins of all men. However, in order to be effective, to bring us to salvation and a new way of life, Christ’s work must actually be applied to our lives. What makes Christ’s sacrifice effective for us? What action or response is needed and how do we come to that response? The work of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in regeneration.

There are three basic views on the condition of the unregenerate man or woman who does not know Christ. First, the “Pelagian” view is that man is essentially good and perfectly free to choose to follow God without external influence. This view was espoused by Pelagius (for whom the view is named) in opposition to Augustine, and is maintained today by liberal theology. The Pelagian view does not accept the Fall of man in Adam, and the corruption of man by original sin. However, we will study Scriptures below which show that the Pelagian view must be regarded as unbiblical. The Pelagian view was declared heretical by the Council of Ephesus in 431.

The second view, held by Arminians (sometimes called “semi-Pelagians”) is that man was adversely affected by the Fall, and that his will has been corrupted, but that man can co-operate with the Holy Spirit and contributes to his regeneration. Again the view is named for a man who held it, Grotius Arminius. This is a synergistic theory and is commonly held today.

The third view, held by the Reformed tradition, is that man is radically corrupted, and so does not either initiate regeneration or co-operate in regeneration, but can respond only after being regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit. This view is monergistic. The work of regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit.

We must determine which of these views is Biblical.

The Reformed view is the only one which takes seriously the fallen condition of man. Man is described in the Bible as unwilling to seek God, dead in his trespasses and sins, and incapable of turning by his own power. For instance, “There is no one who understands, no one seeks God.” (Romans 3:11) “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace, because the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.” (Romans 8:6-8) “As for you, you were dead in your sins and trespasses...but God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.” (Ephesians 2:1,5) Or Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born of God...No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.” (John 3:3,5) Paul says that, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he does not understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Corinthians 2:14)

Regeneration, the principle by which the new life is implanted in man, is initiated by the act of God in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore the initiating agent in regeneration, and man does not respond until later in the salvation order. The Reformed position is that man does not even co-operate in the initial work of God through the Holy Spirit in regeneration, that man is dead in sin and rebellion until the Spirit works to regenerate him.

The decision to receive the gospel is not like other human decisions - which car to buy, which career to pursue, which person to marry. When we consider Christ, our disposition is hostile to God. Therefore a “prevenient” grace, a grace that goes before and prepares the heart for the message of the gospel, is needed.

This position has pastoral as well as doctrinal consequences. First, it is the source of true grace. Our salvation proceeds from the work of the Father in election, the work of the Son on the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Our salvation is not the result of our work, either in obedience that gives us righteousness, or in the decision that enables us to have saving faith. We cannot take credit for our decision of faith, and

therefore cannot boast in it, nor feel superior to those who have not made a commitment to faith. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:10)

This position will also be important later when we discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in believers. If the Reformed position is correct, the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing an unbeliever to Christ is not thwarted by initial lack of faith, or even hostility to God. If this is so, can the work of the Holy Spirit through believers be blocked by their lack of faith? The work of the Holy Spirit is a grace which overcomes obstacles, including unbelief, a prevenient grace that goes before and prepares our hearts.

**Effectual calling** is the next step in the *ordo salutis*. Jesus said that “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). The external call goes out to many, but is effective only in those who are chosen. The great promise of Romans 8:28-30 is that all things work together for good is reserved for those who love God, who are “those who are called according to his purpose.” These verses indicate that man is passive in the effectual call, and that calling effectively is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The necessity of effectual calling also has pastoral consequences. We should preach the gospel “in season and out,” and blessed are the feet of those who preach the good news, but ultimately the effectiveness of the gospel does not depend on the skill of those who bring the good news, but on the effective call of the Holy Spirit. This should free us to preach, and to share the news of Christ with the confidence that God can use our halting efforts despite our inadequacies.

We have been discussing the Reformed view, and we are persuaded of its truth. However, even if we accept the Arminian view, the work of the Holy Spirit is still necessary to our salvation. Only the Pelagian view, which disregards original sin, regards the Holy Spirit as unnecessary to conversion.

Because the Holy Spirit works to regenerate us, we are assured that we receive the Holy Spirit when we are converted. “Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” (I Corinthians 12:3) At Pentecost, Peter told those interested in conversion that they would receive the Holy Spirit, telling them they should, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38) Paul asks the Galatians a rhetorical question, “Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?” (Galatians 3:2) He thinks the answer to be self-evident – that they received the Holy Spirit when they believed – and that another answer is “foolish” (Galatians 3:1). Paul also says that anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit of Christ – the Holy Spirit. “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” (Romans 8:9)

## **2. Conversion, Repentance and Faith.**

In **conversion**, man responds to the work of the Holy Spirit. Now that the person has been regenerated, now that the call has been effective, that person will want to do something, and will respond. The person's disposition and nature has been changed. Where the person was once hostile to God, now God appears in his irresistible sweetness, and the person changes, is converted. Here it is the believer who acts. We should not get the idea that we take no part in the process of salvation, that we are automatons or robots. However, our conversion is in response to the prior work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and the effectual call. Our conversion will then lead to **repentance** and **faith**.

## **3. Union With Christ and Adoption.**

The Scriptures discuss **union with Christ** as a state enjoyed by all Christians. We are described as "in Christ," and no longer in Adam in Romans 5. It is by our union with Christ that we have merit and a right standing before God. Chronologically, union with Christ takes place at the same time as the effective call, and union with Christ may logically be placed either before or after regeneration. Union with Christ is a part of salvation, and does not depend on our actual holiness. There is here an important departure from other religions, and from some mystics who claim to be Christians. The Bible claims that union with the divine is instantaneous with regeneration, at least in part by the work of God, and not a change over time dependent on our efforts in attaining actual holiness, as the mystics would argue.

Lloyd-Jones and Berkhof both say that this union is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Scriptures they have cited are not necessarily convincing. I Corinthians 6:17 says, "He who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit," which would indicate the believer has at least some role in the decision to unite, although the actual uniting must be the work of God.

With salvation we also receive **adoption**, because "those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." (Romans 8:14-15) It is again the Spirit who initiates and we respond.

## **4. Justification**

As discussed above, **justification** is the judicial act of God the Father, by which he declares unjust sinners to be just, based on the merits of Christ attributed to us. The imputation of Christ's merit to us comes as a result of our union with Christ, received by faith. The act of justification is by God the Father.

## **5. Sanctification**

**Sanctification** will receive more attention below, in a discussion of particular issues related to the work of the Holy Spirit and the life of the believer. Here we can say that sanctification is the work of both God and the believer. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and act according to his

good purpose.” (Philippians 2:12-13) In the context of the verse, it is clear that Paul is talking about sanctification, not working to salvation. Notice in this verse that both God works and the believer works toward sanctification. The work of sanctification is the work of a triune God, but particularly the work of Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16 and I Peter 1:2).

## **6. Assurance and Perseverance**

**Assurance** of salvation comes from three sources. First, there are the assurances of Scripture. Second, we can see the “tests of life” set out which John wrote that “you may know that you have eternal life.” (I John 5:13) These tests of life are: believing that Jesus is the Christ, loving the brethren, keeping the commandments and having the Spirit. John provides these tests for the reassurance of the believer. Third, there is assurance of faith given by the Holy Spirit, in that “the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” (Romans 8:16)

**Perseverance** is the work of God. After all, our initial coming to salvation does not depend on our merit or our decision without the prevenient grace of God in regeneration, so our perseverance also does not depend on human will and determination. Maintaining our faith seems to be the work of all three persons of the Trinity. (John 10:27-29; Romans 11:29; Philippians 1:6; II Thessalonians 3:3; II Timothy 1:12)

## **7. Glorification**

The resurrection of the dead is also the work of the triune God in which the Holy Spirit participates. “And if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” (Romans 8:11) But at John 5:21 and 25, we are told that the work of raising the dead is also the work of the Father and the Son. “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it...I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear it will live.” Jesus may have been speaking of the physical resurrection, or the spiritual rebirth he provides.

## **C. Conclusions on the Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation**

Based on the above, the work of the Holy Spirit is vital in salvation and the outworkings of salvation. The Holy Spirit regenerates us, and gives us a new disposition which is no longer hostile to God, but which allows us to see God in his beauty and majesty, and to turn to him. This secret work of God allows to be called effectually, to hear the gospel and respond. This is God’s grace to us, that he not only provided for reconciliation by the cross of Christ, but that he applies it in our lives.

Once regenerated and effectually called, we turn in conversion, repentance and faith when we hear the gospel.

Union with Christ and adoption also are the result of the Spirit’s work in us. Justification is then God’s declaration that, based on the work of Christ on the cross, we are not guilty. Sanctification, the joint work of the believer and the Holy Spirit, makes us

Christlike. We receive assurance of our salvation from the Holy Spirit, and persevere in the faith by the work of the Trinity. Finally we are glorified by the Trinity.

### VIII. THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We should begin a discussion of the filling of the Holy Spirit with a review of the Scriptures on the subject. John Stott does a good job of discussing the Scriptures on the filling. First, he categorizes the Scriptures on the fullness as follows:

“A comparison of the various New Testament texts which speak of people being ‘filled with’ or ‘full of’ the Holy Spirit suggests that they fall into three major categories. First it is implied that to be ‘full’ or ‘filled’ was a normal characteristic of every dedicated Christian. Thus the seven who were set apart for the care of the Jerusalem widows were to be ‘full of the Holy Spirit,’ as they were also to be ‘of good repute,’ ‘full of wisdom’ and ‘full of faith.’ (Acts 6:3,5) Now I suppose their ‘wisdom’ and ‘faith’ might be regarded as special spiritual gifts. But a good reputation can hardly have been unusual for Christians. Nor, I think, was their being full of the Spirit. Similarly, Barnabas is described as ‘a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.’ (Acts 11:24), and the newly converted disciples of Pisidian Antioch were ‘filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.’ (Acts 13:52). These verses appear to denote Christian normality, or at any rate what God intends Christian normality to be.

“Second, the expression indicates an endowment for a particular ministry or office. Thus John the Baptist would be ‘filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb’ in preparation, it seems, for his prophetic ministry. (Luke 1:15-17) So, too, Ananias’ words to Saul of Tarsus that he would be ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ seem to allude to his appointment as an apostle. (Acts 9:17; cf. 22:12-15 and 26:16-23)

“Thirdly, there are occasions when the fullness of the Spirit was given to equip people not so much for lifelong office (*e.g.* as apostle or prophet) as for an immediate task, especially in an emergency. Zechariah was filled before he broke into prophecy (though his office was that of a priest, not a prophet. *Cf.* Also his wife Elizabeth, Luke 1:5-8,41,67). In the same way Peter before he addressed the Sanhedrin; the Christian group in Jerusalem before they continued their ministry of the word in spite of the onset of persecution; Stephen before he was martyred and Paul before he rebuked Elymas the magician – all these, we read, ‘were filled with the Holy Spirit,’ presumably to empower them for the responsible task with which they were just then faced. (Acts 4:8, 31; 7:55; 13:9)”<sup>12</sup>

The didactic (teaching) passage which best discusses the filling of the Spirit is Ephesians 5:17-21, as follows:

“Do not get drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the father for everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

John Stott says that in the Greek, all this is connected. There are two verbs in the imperative (“Do not get drunk with wine...instead be filled with the Spirit”), on which depend four verbs which are present participles (literally “speaking,” “singing and making music,” “giving thanks” and “submitting”). That is, the single command to be filled with the Spirit is followed by four descriptive consequences of the Holy Spirit’s fullness.

The first and fourth consequences of this command to be filled are that we are in right relationship with each other, because our speech is right and we submit to one another. The second and third consequences are that we are in right relationship to God because we are worshipful and thankful.<sup>13</sup>

Stott also says that we are to take note of the statement to “be filled with the Spirit.” Four points are to be made.

“First, the statement is in the **imperative mood**. ‘Be filled’ is not a tentative suggestion, a mild recommendation, a polite piece of advice. It is a command...

“Second, the verb is in the **plural form**... [It is written] to the whole Christian community. [It is] universal in application.

“Third, the verb is in **passive voice**: be filled. That is, ‘let the Holy Spirit fill you.’ (NEB) An important condition of enjoying his fullness is to yield to him without reserve. Nevertheless it must not be imagined that we are purely passive agents in receiving the Spirit’s fullness, any more than in getting drunk. A man gets drunk by drinking; we become filled with the Spirit by drinking too, as we ...[see] from our Lord’s teaching in John 7:37.

“Fourthly, the verb is in the **present tense**. It is well known that, in the Greek language, if the imperative is aorist [this is the Greek verb form] it refers to a single action, while if it is present the action is continuous. Thus when at the wedding in Cana Jesus said, ‘fill the jars with water.’ (John 2:7), the aorist imperative shows that he meant to do it only once. The present imperative, ‘be filled with the Holy Spirit,’ on the other hand, indicates not some dramatic or decisive experience which will settle the issue for good, but a continuous appropriation.”<sup>14</sup>

In summary, God intends us to be filled with the Holy Spirit as part of the normal state of the Christian life. The filling equips us for service, either long-term or for a particular task. The filling puts us in right relationship with each other and God. All Christians are exhorted and commanded to be filled by the Holy Spirit by being yielded to him on an ongoing basis.

## IX. THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The fruit of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22-23a:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

In the fruit of the Spirit we see the character of Christ represented and the fruit of the Spirit is intended by God to develop the character of Christ in us. There are several truths revealed here which we should examine more closely.

First, the fruit is supernatural in origin. After all, this is fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is credited with production of this fruit. This fruit is different than normal character development. This fruit is in contrast with the acts of the sinful nature which Paul has just previously catalogued for us. Paul has told us that the acts of the sinful nature are sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. (Galatians 5:19-21) If left to ourselves, the sinful nature will take over, and all kinds of terrible acts follow.

This fruit is more, however, than just avoidance of these acts of the sinful nature. The Holy Spirit does work even in unbelievers to restrain evil through common grace which we discussed early in this paper. Because of this work of common grace, unbelievers may display behavior which is more moral than the behavior of Christians. In verse 24, Paul says that, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.” Christians have not just changed behavior, but changed natures. No unbeliever can make this claim. It is the Holy Spirit who begins to change us from the inside out. It is this work of the Holy Spirit that makes our behavior begin to conform to the character of Christ.

Second, the fruit is supernatural in origin, but natural in development, for that is how fruit grows. There are certain conditions on which the development of fruit depends. Fruit requires soil, nurture, light and water. Development of spiritual fruit in us depends on certain elements as well. We are not passive in development of fruit. Paul says so at Galatians 6:7-8:

“Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”

Paul has changed the illustration slightly, from fruit perhaps to grain, or perhaps sowing and reaping may still refer to fruit; but he is still citing a basic principle of agricultural production. A man reaps what he sows. The Spirit is at work, but we are also at work in the life-style we choose – who our friends are, who we date or marry, the materials we read, the movies we watch, the pursuits of our leisure, our desire to study the Bible and pray, and everything which occupies our interest and absorbs our energies. We are not just passive in growth of the fruit. As we discussed above, we have a part in our growth in sanctification. We can nurture or we can hinder the fruit of the Spirit by the conditions we provide, or fail to provide, for growth.

Third, the growth of fruit is gradual, and so will our growth in the fruits of the Spirit be gradual. Sometimes the growth is almost imperceptible to us, discouragingly slow. If this is the case, we may need to check the environment for growth, and make changes, and perhaps even ask whether we belong to Christ. But if we belong to him and provide conditions for growth, we will see an increase in fruit.

In summary, the fruit of the Spirit reproduces the character of Christ in us. The fruit is supernatural in origin, coming from the Holy Spirit. The fruit is natural in development and gradual in growth.

## **X. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **A. Scriptures on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

As we address the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we go to an area in which there is much controversy. We will need to remember our introductory admonitions that we remain humble, discover God's will primarily in Scripture and that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Before we go on to discuss baptism, we should again survey the applicable Scriptures which refer to the baptism. Of course, the Scriptures also discuss water baptism, and there are some cases where either water baptism or baptism with the Holy Spirit could be intended.

The term "baptize with the Holy Spirit" was used by John the Baptist. At Luke 3:16-17, the people were watching John and wondering if he was the Christ, but he told them, "I baptize with water, but one more powerful than I...will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (See also Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; John 1:32) Note that Jesus is said to be the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:5, Jesus used the same expression. "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

According to Martyn Lloyd-Jones, these are the only references to the Holy Spirit using the actual word "baptize." However, there are other references which do not use the word "baptize," but are nevertheless relevant to our study. Joel 2:28-32 prophesied that "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people," and that in those days there will be prophecies and visions and dreams and natural phenomenon. The use of "pour out" has a meaning synonymous with "baptize," and Peter quoted this prophecy at Pentecost, saying that it was fulfilled at Pentecost. (Acts 2:17-21)

At John 20:21-23, Jesus appeared to the disciples who were behind locked doors, breathed on them, and said "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Then there are four times in Acts where believers have radical experiences with the Holy Spirit. First, at Pentecost the disciples, 120 in number (Acts 1:15; 2:1), were

together when “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:4). Note that the word “filling,” and not the word “baptism” is used. Other God-fearing Jews were also nearby, and “each one of them heard them speaking in his own language.” They “were cut to the heart,” and three thousand “were added to their number that day.”

At Acts 8:9-17, Philip preached to Samaritans, who believed and were baptized. Later Peter and John arrived and they “prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them...Then Peter and John placed their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” A sorcerer named Simon was then interested in purchasing the power he observed, but Peter strongly rebuked him. (8:18-23)

At Acts 10:1-11:18, Peter shared the gospel with the Gentile Cornelius and his relatives and close friends, and “while Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The [Jews] were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.” (Acts 10:44-46) Later Peter equated this experience with Jesus’ promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 11:16)

Finally, Paul visited a dozen men who are referred to as “disciples” at Ephesus. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, but the Ephesians answered that they had not, that they did not know of the Holy Spirit and that they had received “John’s baptism.” Paul explained that John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, that John had told people to believe in the one coming, Jesus. The Ephesians were baptized into the name of Jesus, and when Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-7) It is not clear from the account whether these men were believers before Paul visited. They are referred to as “disciples,” but before Paul’s visit, the Ephesians may have believed only in the Messianic prophecies of John the Baptist, and not in Jesus as the Messiah.

Before we analyze these passages, it is worth making some fact comparisons of the four incidents in Acts.

First, although the experience of the believers is in each case very similar, the term “**baptism**” is used only by Peter in the case of Cornelius, when he remembers the words of Jesus (Acts 11:16). But Peter also relates the case of Cornelius back to Pentecost, saying, “God gave them [the Gentiles] the same **gift** as he gave us.” (Acts 11:17) Note he has also used the word “gift” here. The phrase used at Pentecost is that, “All of them were **filled** with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 2:4) The words “baptism,” “gift,” and “filling” are therefore not used distinctively.

Second, in the first three incidents, there is a widening of the reach of the gospel from disciples, to foreign Jews, to Samaritans, to Gentiles. But the fourth incident, with the Ephesians, does not readily fit the pattern of widening the reach of the gospel to new ethnic groups. The fourth group was comprised of disciples of John the Baptist. This is

not a new ethnic group to receive the gospel, and some of the early followers of Christ were disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:35-42).

Third, in the cases of Pentecost and the Samaritans there is a clear time interval between the time of belief and the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit. However, with Cornelius and the Gentiles, the work of the Holy Spirit was contemporaneous with their receiving Christ. Because it is not clear whether the Ephesians were believers until Paul came to them, it is unclear whether there was a significant time interval between belief and the extraordinary work.

Fourth, there is no definitive pattern to the way that the experience of the Holy Spirit comes. At Pentecost, there was no laying on of hands. There does not appear to be laying on of hands for Cornelius and the Gentiles, as the Holy Spirit came while Peter was speaking to them, effectively stopping the preacher in mid-sentence. However, believers laid hands on the Samaritans and the Ephesians.

Fifth, tongues were part of the extraordinary work at Pentecost, with Cornelius and the Gentiles and the Ephesians, but there is no express statement that the Samaritans spoke in tongues. However, in this Samaritan case there may have been tongues, because Simon the sorcerer saw something that made him wish to purchase the power of the Spirit.

There are other scripture references which are less obvious in their application to baptism of the Holy Spirit, but should be at least discussed here for reference. At I Corinthians 12:13, Paul says, “we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body.” In the context, we must determine whether Paul is making a point about church unity, or baptism, and if baptism, whether of water, or conversion, or baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that the word “baptize” when used in the following passages also is a reference to baptism in the Holy Spirit, as opposed to water baptism: Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; and Ephesians 4:5.<sup>15</sup> However, we do not find this persuasive in any case.

As we will discuss below, some people draw parallels between incidents in the life of Christ and the life of believers, so passages on the life of Christ become important.

## **B. A Digression on Interpretation of Scripture**

These are the Scripture references which bear on baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is interesting that there are no clear didactic (teaching) passages on the baptism. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is probably controversial for this very reason. The passages are almost entirely historical, anecdotal in nature. Different people, therefore, have drawn differing conclusions from these stories.

A discussion of a principle of interpretation is in order here. What use are we to make of example in Scripture? John Stott says we are to look primarily to the teaching

portions of Scripture to draw doctrinal principles, while still making use of the narrative parts of Scripture.

The “revelation of the purpose of God in Scripture should be sought primarily in its *didactic* rather than its *descriptive* parts. More precisely, we should look for it in the teaching of Jesus, and in the sermons and writings of the apostles, rather than in the purely narrative portions of Acts. What is described in Scripture as having happened to others is not necessarily intended for us, whereas what is promised to us we are to appropriate, and what is commanded us we are to obey.

“It would be easy to misunderstand the point I am trying to make. I am *not* saying that the descriptive passages of the Bible are valueless, for ‘all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable’ (2 Tim. 3:16). What I *am* saying is that what is descriptive is valuable only in so far as it is interpreted by what is didactic. Some of the biblical narratives which describe events are self-interpreting because they include an explanatory comment, whereas others cannot be interpreted in isolation but only by the light of doctrinal or ethical teaching which is given elsewhere.”

“...Here is ...[an] example. In two separate paragraphs of the Acts Luke tells us that the early Christians in Jerusalem distributed goods and money ‘as any had need’ (2:44, 45; 5:32-37). Are we to deduce from this that they set a pattern which all Christians are meant to copy, and that private property is forbidden to Christians? Some groups have thought so. Certainly the generosity and mutual care of those early Christians are to be followed, for the New Testament commands us many times to love and serve one another, and to be generous (even sacrificial) in our giving. But to argue from the practice of the early Jerusalem church that all private ownership is abolished among Christians not only cannot be maintained from Scripture but is plainly contradicted by the apostle Peter in the same context (Acts 5:4) and by the apostle Paul elsewhere (e.g. I Tim. 6:17). This example should put us on the alert. We must derive our standards of belief and behaviour from the teaching of the New Testament, wherever it is given, rather than from the practices and experiences which it portrays.”<sup>16</sup>

### **C. Questions as to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

These Scriptures raise a number of common questions as to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Will all Christians receive the baptism today? What is the relationship of the baptism to regeneration? What is the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? What is the relationship of the baptism to the filling of the Holy Spirit? How can we receive it today? Each of these questions will be examined below.

However, before we answer these questions, we will survey four views on baptism of the Holy Spirit and, to some degree, the filling and gifts of the Holy Spirit, although we have discussed the filling above and will discuss the gifts more thoroughly below.

### **D. Four Views of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

## 1. The Restorationist View.

The first position can be described as a “Restorationist” view. Restorationists see God working to regularly reproduce today all that he did in Acts.<sup>17</sup> This position can be characterized by two primary features: (i) that all Christians should have a second experience after conversion referred to as baptism in the Holy Spirit; and (ii) that the evidence of the baptism is speaking in tongues, which all Christians should also experience.

This view may be referred to by some as “charismatic” or “Pentecostal.” However, these names are deficient, because the word “charisma” should apply to any view of the Holy Spirit, and because the view is not limited to a particular denomination. We will here use the term “Restorationist” for this view, because the view is based on the premise that God will restore his church to the practices of the first century church.

The Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths, Sections 7 and 8, provides that, “All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. **This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church.** With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry...The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance.” (emphasis added) We see here both the characteristics and the rationale for the Restorationist position. The expectation is of baptism with speaking in tongues, and the underlying rationale is that God plans to restore in the modern church what he did in the early church.

Those who hold this view acknowledge that a believer receives the Holy Spirit at the new birth. However, “the baptism in the Spirit...is subsequent to and distinct from the new birth. Scripture makes it clear there is an experience in which the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13), and there is the experience in which Christ baptizes believers into the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). These cannot refer to the same experience since the agent who does the baptizing and the element into which the candidate is baptized are different in each case.”<sup>18</sup>

In the book of Acts there are several instances in which there is some lapse of time between initial belief and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For example, in the case of the Ephesian believers, there was, at very least, time after their conversion for them to be baptized in water, before the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and perhaps much longer between conversion and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Others of these cases will be discussed in greater detail below, but in summary, the Restorationists view these time separations as evidence that baptism of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily take place at conversion.

Some Restorationists, like Dennis and Rita Bennett in [The Holy Spirit and You](#), see Jesus as our model for baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus was conceived in the Holy Spirit in natural birth. He then lived in obscurity until his time for ministry. Just before

he began his ministry, he was baptized by John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit came upon him to give him power for the works ahead. In the same way, Christians should be born of the Spirit in conversion, and then expect to receive a second experience with the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for the power for ministry.<sup>19</sup>

Restorationists may have an almost mechanical formula for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. Dennis and Rita Bennett have set out the “ABC’s” of receiving the baptism and tongues which we will review as we discuss the gift of tongues.

As we will see when we look at John Stott’s view of the baptism, Restorationists sometimes are charged with making the baptism of the Holy Spirit an end in itself, and an inordinate focus of attention. At least some Restorationists do not view the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an end in itself. A position paper of the Assembly of God churches says, “The baptism in the Spirit is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The Scriptural ideal for the believer is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. The Baptism is the crisis experience which introduces the believer to the process experience of living a Spirit-filled life.”<sup>20</sup>

## **2. The Restorationist View as Eccentric, Neurotic or Demonic.**

On the other end of the spectrum, some do not believe that the Spirit of God inspires the charismatic movement represented by the Restorationist View at all. J.I. Packer presents this view in Keep in Step with the Spirit (although Packer does not subscribe to this view.) These people see no Biblical basis for the norm of a two-step entry into full Christian experience and would hold that the sign gifts, including speaking in tongues, were for the apostolic age only. The most radical dismiss the charismatic movement as eccentric, neurotic or even demonic.

Packer says that there are two Scriptural tests for determining whether God has inspired a movement or not.<sup>21</sup> These tests were applied by the apostles, and discussed in the epistles as helpful in determining whether certain “super-spiritual” versions of the faith were of God. One test is credal and one test is moral.

The credal test comes from two passages, I John 4:2-3 and I Corinthians 12:3. Essentially this test is the degree of honor paid to the person of Jesus Christ, because, “Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,” and “no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” Therefore a work that honors Christ is a work of God.

The moral test is given in I John, that he who truly knows and loves God will show it by keeping the commandments, avoiding sin and loving his brethren in Christ, for “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is any one who does not love his brother.” (I John 3:10) See also I John 2:4; 2:9; 3:6; 3:15; 3:24. A work which results in obedience and love for Christians is a work of God. These same tests were

applied by Jonathan Edwards in his evaluation of the First Great Awakening, The Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, discussed in greater detail in the Appendix.

When we apply these tests to the Restorationist View and the charismatic movement generally, it is clear at once that God is in it. It is plain that the results of the movement are great love for Christ, repentance, obedience and love for Christians, plus a zeal for evangelism that puts traditional churches to shame. The Restorationist View is a work of God and cannot be dismissed as eccentric, neurotic or demonic.

### **3. John Stott – Problem of Terminology and Caution about Second Experiences.**

John Stott presents a third view. In Baptism and Fullness, Stott has written that baptism of the Holy Spirit is given at regeneration, and that, although Christians may have a second experience with the Holy Spirit after conversion, this experience should not be referred to as “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Further he does not think that the post-conversion experience necessarily bestows gifts of primary importance.

First, it is Stott’s position that baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at regeneration. He makes the following points:

At Pentecost, there were two groups. The 120 disciples were already regenerate and received the baptism of the Spirit in a second experience after their conversion and receiving the Holy Spirit. However, the 3,000 converts received the baptism at their conversion. He says, “This distinction between the two companies, the 120 and the 3,000 is of great importance, because the *norm* for today must surely be the second group, the 3,000, and not (as is often supposed) the first. The fact that the experience of the 120 was in two distinct stages was due simply to historical circumstances. They could not have received the Pentecostal gift before Pentecost. But those historical circumstances have long since ceased to exist. We live after the event of Pentecost, like the 3,000. With us, therefore, as with them, the forgiveness of sins, and the ‘gift’ or ‘baptism’ of the Spirit are received together.”<sup>22</sup>

Next, Stott looks at the Samaritan experience. Stott says that, because of the bitter relations between Jews and Samaritans, God withheld the baptism in this case until two of the leading apostles came to investigate and, by laying on of hands, acknowledged and confirmed the genuineness of the Samaritans’ conversion. This experience is also abnormal and explained by historical context.<sup>23</sup>

The Ephesian experience must also be addressed. Stott understands that the Ephesians were not Christians at all until Paul prayed with them. They were called “disciples,” but they had only received John’s baptism. Therefore they were converted and received the baptism at the same time.<sup>24</sup>

Stott says that the very language of “baptism” is “initiatory.” He says that “the gift of the Holy Spirit is a *universal* Christian experience because it is an *initial* Christian

experience. All Christians receive the Spirit at the very beginning of their Christian life.”<sup>25</sup>

Stott concludes his argument as to the baptism by reviewing I Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greek, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” Stott says that in this verse Paul is emphasizing the unifying element of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. “What the apostle is doing in I Corinthians 12 is to emphasize at the beginning of the chapter the *unity* of the Spirit, the giver of spiritual gifts, before he goes on to unfold the *diversity* of the gifts themselves...His climax comes in verse 13...The baptism of the Spirit in this verse, far from being a dividing factor (some have it, others have not), is the great uniting factor (an experience we have all had). It is, in fact, the means of entry into the body of Christ... It is difficult, then, to resist the conclusion that the baptism of the Spirit is not a second and subsequent experience enjoyed by some Christians, but the initial experience enjoyed by all.”<sup>26</sup>

Stott argues, therefore, that the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit is identical with the “gift” of the Holy Spirit which is one of the blessings of relationship with God, and because it is an *initial* blessing it is a *universal* blessing for all Christians. Whatever post-conversion experiences there may be, “baptism with the Spirit” is not the right expression to use for them.

Our denomination, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, has developed a “Position Paper on the Holy Spirit,” which is available in an Appendix. The Position Paper takes Stott’s view on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at regeneration. The Position Paper is not an essential of the denomination, and the issue of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not addressed in the Westminster Confession, and so we understand that we are free to agree or disagree without reporting our position to higher courts.

Stott then turns to post-conversion experience with the Holy Spirit. He does say that such experiences are real, citing Paul, Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Brainerd and Moody as examples of Christians who have had some post-conversion experience. However, he downplays the significance of such an experience. “Moreover the overwhelming emphasis of the New Testament letters is not to urge upon Christian readers some entirely new and distinct blessing, but to remind us of what by grace we are, to recall us to it, and to urge us to live by it. This is a very important point and not sufficiently grasped. The horizons of some Christians seem to be bounded by a second and subsequent experience which they call ‘baptism in the Spirit.’ In conversation with them, if they think you have had it, then this is what they are looking back to, and this is the chief bond which unites you. If, on the other hand, they think you have not had it, then this is what they are looking forward to, and this is the chief longing they have for you. So whether they are looking to the past or the future, it is the ‘baptism of the Spirit’ as a second experience which fills their horizon.”<sup>27</sup>

Stott says that, while a post-conversion experience may be deeply moving, even exciting, no such experience can possibly compare with God's first work of grace when he had mercy on us and reconciled us to himself. We must be careful, he says, not to denigrate regeneration or to cast a slur on this first, decisive and creative work of God's love. We must also remember that such an experience is always incomplete, and that no one who as had such an experience should act as if he or she has "arrived."<sup>28</sup>

#### **4. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones – Baptism in the Holy Spirit as 'Something that Happens to Us' for Reassurance and Power in Witness.**

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones believes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to believers today, and has a much more positive view of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second experience than does John Stott, but within limits. In Joy Unspeakable and God the Holy Spirit, Lloyd-Jones says that the baptism is not the same thing as regeneration, but a second experience given to believers for reassurance, and for power of witness and testimony. He says that the baptism does not provide growth in holiness – that holiness comes by filling and fruit. The baptism is something that happens to us, and there is no formula for getting it, but that we should be careful not to quench the Spirit.

Lloyd-Jones' is emphatic in his first point, that the baptism does not always accompany regeneration – that people can be true believers who have received the Holy Spirit without having received the baptism. Lloyd-Jones agrees that no one can be a Christian apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Lloyd-Jones starts with several examples.

First he starts with Old Testament believers. These men and women were children of God based on their trust in God's testimony of the Coming One. But they were not baptized with the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> The same is true of John the Baptist. Jesus says there is no one born of woman greater than John the Baptist. (Matthew 11:11) Surely he was regenerate. However, we are not told he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

Then there are the disciples. Jesus told them that they "are clean." (John 15:3) In the High Priestly Prayer in John 17, Jesus keeps on drawing a distinction between the disciples and the world, and that they belong to Jesus and the Father. As we have mentioned, after Jesus' death, Jesus breathed on the disciples the Holy Spirit (John 20:22) These men, says Lloyd-Jones, are believers, they are regenerate men, the Holy Spirit has been given them, yet they have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit.<sup>31</sup>

In Acts 8 Philip preached in Samaria, and crowds heard him preach and paid close attention, saw miracles and there was "great joy," and men and women believed and were baptized. However, they did not receive the baptism until Peter and John came some while later. Again, they were believers, but had not yet received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>32</sup>

Lloyd-Jones says that the same thing happened in Acts 19. He interprets the passage differently than John Stott. He says that the Ephesians are called "disciples," and

that means that they were believers in Christ before Paul's visit, and before they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup>

In each case, men and women were believers, regenerated, but had not received the baptism. Therefore Lloyd-Jones says that we cannot identify regeneration and baptism. They are not always the same.

Further, Lloyd-Jones says that the idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit underlies and is assumed in all of the New Testament letters. The baptism of the Holy Spirit provides reassurance and joy to believers, and we get a sense of this in all the letters. Peter, for instance, sent his first letter to ordinary Christians scattered across a wide area and says that "you are filled with an inexpressible ['unspeakable'] and glorious joy." (I Peter 1:3) This is a mark of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Lloyd-Jones addresses the fact that there are no exhortations to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as there exhortations to be filled with the Holy Spirit, or to earnestly seek the gifts. "Why? Because they already had it [the baptism of the Holy Spirit]. In exactly the same way, when there is a time of revival and the Spirit is outpoured, you do not urge this. Indeed your problem then will be to deal with the tendencies to excesses and a certain element of riot that comes in and you have to preach order. In other words, you will be back in the position of the New Testament church."<sup>34</sup>

Lloyd-Jones also addresses I Corinthians 12:3, and whether that verse requires that regeneration and baptism in the Holy Spirit take place at the same time. His argument is much like that of the Restorationists, that regeneration into the body of believers is by the Holy Spirit, but baptism is into the Holy Spirit accomplished by Jesus, and that I Corinthians 12:3 is about baptism into the body of believers and not the baptism into the Holy Spirit. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized.' Of course we are. Our being baptized into the work of Christ is the work of the Spirit, as regeneration is his work, but this is something entirely different; this is Christ baptizing us with the Holy Spirit."<sup>35</sup>

What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an exceptional work of the Spirit in profusion or directly on the believer.

Lloyd-Jones divides the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer between "his regular work and his exceptional work – or if you prefer it in different language, his indirect work and his direct work." The great phrase for the baptism is "poured out." In the church God does regular work through the Holy Spirit, which we must not despise. However, from time to time God will pour out the Holy Spirit in great profusion, and the result will be revival. In the other classification, the Holy Spirit will generally work through means. The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures, the enlightening of our minds through the Scriptures, the use of the teacher and preacher, fellowship groups and the like. However, from time to time the Spirit will work directly and without these means. Baptism in the Holy Spirit, then, is a more profuse or exceptional or direct means of working than the usual filling.<sup>36</sup>

Lloyd-Jones uses an illustration which is helpful. “You may be walking along a country road and there may be a slight drizzle, but because you haven’t got an overcoat you go on walking through this drizzle, and eventually you get thoroughly wet; but it has taken some time because it was only a slight drizzle. But then you may be walking along the same road at another time and suddenly there is a cloud-burst and you are soaking wet in a matter of seconds. It is raining in both cases, but there is a great difference between a gentle drizzle, which you scarcely observe, and a sudden cloud-burst which comes down upon you.

“Now what is described here in Acts is comparable to the cloud-burst. Poured out! Coming with a kind of ‘drenching.’ Peter, you observe, in addressing the people on that very day, quotes from the prophecy of Joel, and the very point of doing that is to bring out and emphasize this aspect... ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...I will pour out in those days of my Spirit...’ Now the thing that is being emphasized there is this ‘gushing forth,’ this tremendous profusion.”<sup>37</sup>

Lloyd-Jones says that the purposes of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are (a) for reassurance of the believer, and (b) power in witness and testimony. In this respect, he says, the baptism is different from the filling. The filling of the Holy Spirit works to produce fruit, holiness, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for reassurance and power of witness. If we review the Scriptures, these are the purposes for which the baptism was provided in Acts. He also illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit for these purposes in extraordinary ways in the lives of well-known believers after Pentecost. Some of these stories are included in the Appendix.

“What, then, are the marks, the signs and manifestations of the baptism with the Spirit?... What is it that inevitably happens when one is baptized by the Lord Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit? Well, first and foremost I think we must put this – a sense of the glory of God, an unusual sense of the presence of God. This is something, it seems to me, that stands out in all the instances of the New Testament itself and in the subsequent history of God’s people. What the Holy Spirit does is make real to us the things which we have believed by faith, the things of which we have had but a kind of indirect certainty only.”<sup>38</sup>

Another characteristic that Lloyd-Jones says accompanies the baptism is assurance of the love of God. At the same time we see the glory of God and our own unworthiness, we also are assured of God’s love for us. It is the baptism with the Holy Spirit which gives us the highest form of assurance. The Scriptures assure us, the tests of life discussed above assure us, but the highest form of assurance comes from the Holy Spirit, for “the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” (Romans 8:16) Lloyd-Jones here uses an illustration from the Puritan Thomas Goodwin, of a father and child, “walking down the road and they are walking hand in hand, and the child knows that he is the child of the father, and he knows that his father loves him, and he rejoices in that and is happy in it. There is no uncertainty about it all, but suddenly the father, moved by some impulse, takes hold of the child and picks him up, fondles him in

his arms, kisses him, embraces him, showers his love upon him, and then he puts him down again, and they go on walking together.

“That is it!... The Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. This is the outstanding characteristic of the baptism with the Spirit.”<sup>39</sup>

The baptism is also given for witness and testimony. “The baptism of the Spirit is always associated primarily and specifically with witness and testimony and service...Go through Acts and in every instance when we are told either that the Spirit came upon these men or that they were filled with the Spirit, you will find that it was in order to bear a witness and a testimony.<sup>40</sup> Even though the disciples had been with Jesus, had witnessed the resurrection events and had received the Holy Spirit, they were told to stay in Jerusalem “until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

Lloyd-Jones also makes clear that the purpose of baptism is not the production of holiness or the fruit of the Spirit, which come from the filling of the Holy Spirit over a long time. “The first result of the baptism with the Spirit, therefore, is not the fruit of the Spirit, but the experimental [experiential] evidence of the direct work of the Spirit upon us...The fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, is a process. This is the result of the indirect, constant, regular work of the Spirit within us as he uses the word and the teaching and the example of others and fellowship with others – thus the fruit of the Spirit is produced in us.”<sup>41</sup> For example, Paul recognized that the church at Corinth exercised the sign gifts which may be characteristic of baptism of the Holy Spirit, but roundly criticized the church for its failure of holiness. We must be careful, Lloyd-Jones says, not to assume that one who shows the sign gifts should automatically be qualified for leadership of the church, because the fruit of the Spirit may be missing. Indeed, in many revivals, there may be sin and serious excess, because the baptism does not necessarily produce character qualities which are the fruit of the Spirit. The baptism is not given for this purpose, but for reassurance and power of witness. However, although there is not a direct correlation, there should be an indirect connection between the baptism and sanctification.

Lloyd-Jones says that the baptism is “something that happens to us.” It is not something that happens automatically to all who believe, he has shown that there is a distinction between regeneration and baptism. Sometimes there is a short interval, almost no interval for Cornelius and the Gentiles, between regeneration and baptism, and sometimes a long interval. Although Lloyd-Jones does not say this, for some there is no apparent baptism, as for John the Baptist or the Old Testament saints. “I am equally anxious to say that it does not happen as the result of anything that we do. Now there are many who teach something like that. They say, ‘You can have this whenever you like; as long as you do this or that.’ I do not find a single instance of that in the New Testament...Any teaching which would say that any blessing in the spiritual realm can be received in a kind of mechanical automatic manner – ‘Do this, and there it is’ – seems to me to violate a very vital principle in the whole realm of this teaching. In other words it is the Lord’s action. That is what comes out in the text, ‘He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’ ...All the variations establish the lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ in

this entire matter. It is he who is the giver, he who is the baptizer. He does so in his own way and in his own time, and we must never lose sight of this all-important principle.”<sup>42</sup>

However, Lloyd-Jones would not have us to be passive in this matter, either. We should not quench the Spirit. There is great need today for the power of the Holy Spirit. “To me the most urgent question of the hour is the need of this power for witness, the need of this power in our lives. The early church turned the world upside-down as the result of this baptism, and without it we shall avail nothing.”<sup>43</sup> “Our greatest danger, I feel, is to quench the Spirit. This is no age to advocate restraint; the church today does not need to be restrained, but to be roused, to be awakened, to be filled with a spirit of glory, for she is failing in the modern world.”<sup>44</sup>

We are now ready to draw some conclusions on the questions raised above.

## **E. Conclusions on Baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

**1. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and does it continue today?** We see great merit in the conclusions of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. First, Lloyd-Jones is correct that in Scripture there is an experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a direct way on believers which grants reassurance of the presence of God and great joy, and which also provides great power of witness. There is nothing in Scripture which would prevent this same experience today, and there is great evidence of this work in revivals and in individual Christians.

We are not persuaded that I Corinthians 12:3 can be relied on to end baptism in the Holy Spirit as a separate experience from regeneration. Several interpretations may be given to baptism in I Corinthians 12:3.

We also do not find persuasive the argument made by John Stott that the baptisms in the apostolic period were aberrations which cannot or will not be repeated today. We may concede that there were unusual circumstances in the apostolic period, and that God may have acted in an unusual way. But God is always in charge of history, and he is never surprised. At any time in history, God may work in an unusual manner. We should not limit him. Without clear direction from Scripture, we should not limit God’s use of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to apostolic times.

On the other hand, we do not find persuasive the position of Restorationists, that God necessarily intends consistently to do in the modern church what he did in the early church. There is no Scriptural authority for this position, and in fact Old Testament believers and John the Baptist, although regenerated, do not seem to have received the baptism. As we will see below when we discuss the gift of tongues, there are any number of other New Testament Christians about whom the Scripture says nothing about the gift of tongues. Again, without clear direction from Scripture, we should not necessarily expect God to provide the baptism of the Holy Spirit to all believers today. However, believers are encouraged to be open and let the Spirit lead them in this experience.

**2. What is the relationship of the baptism to regeneration?** We understand regeneration and baptism to be separate experiences. They may happen at the same time; but there may also be separation of time between the experiences, and some believers will be regenerated but never receive the baptism.

**3. What is the purpose of the baptism?** The baptism provides reassurance of God's presence, joy, edification, spiritual strengthening and power of witness and testimony. It equips the believer to provide ministry to others. The baptism does not necessarily provide holiness in direct connection, although there should be indirect correlation.

**4. What is the relationship of the baptism to the filling of the Holy Spirit?** The filling is God's usual way of working to produce fruit, but the baptism is extraordinary. The filling may use means, but the baptism is direct. The filling produces holiness gradually, but the baptism is a sudden drenching. The filling is within the control of the believer, in that the believer can ask to be yielded and will be filled; however, it is important to recognize that there are instances where people have asked for, but have not received the baptism. The believer should seek both filling and baptism.

**5. How can we receive the baptism?** There is no formula for receiving the baptism – Jesus gives it as he determines. We do not see any formula in the New Testament. However, the believers did wait in Jerusalem for the promised power. We should ask for the baptism, and we should be careful not to quench the Spirit.

#### **F. A Word about Terminology.**

Much of the controversy in the discussion of the baptism seems to stem from problems of terminology. All of the writers reviewed seem to agree that there are meaningful second experiences enjoyed by some or all Christians, but there is a question about what to call these experiences. Could we call the experience of Christians the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit" and reduce the level of controversy and forge unity in the body of Christ without giving up key truths?

## **XI. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **A. Scriptures on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

The New Testament develops the idea of gifts of the Holy Spirit which diversify the ministry of the church body. Four passages discuss these various gifts, I Corinthians 12, Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:7-12 and I Peter 4:10,11. From these passages we can discuss the nature and purpose of the gifts, the number of the gifts, their relationship to natural talents, whether some or all are miraculous, whether all are available today and then some of the particular gifts.

### **B. The Nature and Purpose of the Gifts.**

At I Corinthians 12:4-6, Paul says, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one." Paul emphasizes

that, although there are diverse gifts, the giver is God. He says this three times, each time relating the gifts to a different person of the Trinity (“the same Spirit,” “the same Lord” and “the same God.”)

Second, the Scriptures emphasize that each believer has at least one gift. Gifts are not just widespread – they are universal. No one can say that he or she has no gift to share. This is emphasized in each one of the passages on the gifts. “For I say to *every one* of you...” (Romans 12:3); “one and the same Spirit, and he gives them *to each one*, just as he determines...” (I Corinthians 12:11); “But to *each one of us* grace has been given...” (Ephesians 4:7); “*Each of you* should use whatever gift he has received...” (I Peter 4:10).

Next, Paul makes several points by his body metaphor. The gifts are given, not for our private enjoyment, but for the purpose of building up the body. Because the gifts are for the use of the body, no one member should feel pride in his part, or disappointment in his gift.

### **C. The Number of the Gifts.**

Some writers treat a relatively few of the spiritual gifts, sometimes the nine listed at the beginning of I Corinthians 12. However, the passages above together suggest a great number of gifts, and does not claim to be exhaustive. There are nine gifts listed at the beginning of I Corinthians 12, and nine at the end, and four of these are new. There is also a list of seven in Romans 12, five of which are not in I Corinthians; a list of five in Ephesians, two of which are new; and two gifts are cited in Peter, one of which is new.

In some cases it is difficult to determine if the gifts named coincide because the names are similar but not the same; however, there are about twenty or so gifts in total. However, there is also no indication that the lists are exhaustive – there may be additional gifts. No single gift is in all five lists, and thirteen appear in only one list, as if to emphasize the variety of the gifts.

### **D. Spiritual Gifts, Natural Talents and Miracles.**

What is the relationship between spiritual gifts and natural talents? The passages are unclear.

In some cases, our spiritual gifts may be natural talents given by the Holy Spirit applied to building the body of Christ. In some cases the spiritual gifts named are closely related to ordinary work, and are almost mundane. For instance, in Romans 12, Paul names serving, teaching and encouraging as spiritual gifts (v. 7), and says that he who contributes should do so generously; he who shows mercy should do so cheerfully (v. 8). In I Corinthians 12:28, Paul names the “gift of administration” as one of the gifts. These gifts – serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, mercy and administration – are probably all closely related to natural talents. These gifts are not what most people would classify as “miraculous,” except that God has transformed the heart of a person who was hostile to God so that the person now wishes to use their gifts to build the body of Christ.

In other cases, the gifts are miraculous in that they involve works beyond ordinary human capacity. These gifts include healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in and interpreting other tongues. (I Corinthians 12:9-10) However, all the gifts, whether mundane or miraculous are given of the same spirit for the good of the body.

#### **E. Three Positions on the Gifts Today.**

What is the place of these gifts today? Some believe that these gifts were only for the apostolic age and are not available for us today at all. Others believe the full array of the gifts is available, including the most boisterous and extravagant.

We will review three main positions with regard to the gifts of the Spirit, and then review some of the particular gifts and seek the best position with regard to each. Sinclair Ferguson's chapter on "Gifts for Ministry" in his book The Holy Spirit is a concise source for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each position. We will briefly state each position, **without critiquing the position as it is presented**. We should also acknowledge that there will be some variation of view, sometimes substantial variation, among those who hold the position.

##### **1. The Restorationist Position.**

The Restorationist Position has been discussed above with regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Restorationists see God working to regularly reproduce today all that he did in Acts. This position can be characterized by two primary features: (i) that all Christians should experience baptism in the Holy Spirit after conversion; and (ii) that the evidence of the baptism is speaking in tongues, which all Christians should also experience. Many Restorationists also would hold that the other gifts today are available in the very same way they were in the New Testament period. In support of their position, Restorationists point out the following:

a. Paul advises the Corinthians to "eagerly desire spiritual gifts." (I Corinthians 14:1) Spiritual gifts are not just to be tolerated. They are to be sought after!

b. The New Testament nowhere states that any of the gifts would be withdrawn; therefore they continue. The Cessationist position described below would imply that there are distinguishable ages after Jesus' death and resurrection, an apostolic age and a post-apostolic age. But, say Restorationists, the New Testament does not make this distinction.

c. In recognizing that prophecy will eventually cease, Paul indicates that this will happen only when "perfection comes" (I Corinthians 13:10). By "perfection," Paul meant the end of the world and the return of Christ. Implied is that prophecy and the other gifts will continue until Christ's return.

d. Millions of Christians in the contemporary world have experienced the spiritual gifts which Cessationists deny. Sinclair Ferguson, professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, a Reformed institution, has estimated

that 350 million people worldwide claim some experience of speaking in tongues, prophecy or healing.<sup>45</sup> Can they all be wrong? There are recent documented cases of unbelievers coming to Christ through messages miraculously spoken in a language unknown to the speaker, but specific to the listener, on the pattern of Pentecost.<sup>46</sup> These gifts are real.

## 2. The Continuationist Position.

The Continuationist position would hold that the gifts generally continue today, but that not all Christians will speak in tongues. Within this position one might include a “Modified Continuationist” position of (i) those who believe that a number of the gifts continue, but some have ceased, and/or (ii) those who believe that the gifts continue, but some of the gifts are qualitatively different than they were during the New Testament period.

Continuationist arguments would include all the arguments made by Restorationists above, but Continuationists would argue that the Restorationists are wrong to the extent that Restorationists insist on any particular experience, such as tongues, for all Christians. They would argue:

a. The New Testament does not prove that all Christians spoke in tongues during the apostolic period. In fact there a number of believers of whom there is no evidence that they spoke in tongues. There is no evidence any of the Old Testament believers spoke in tongues, or that John the Baptist or other believers such as Elizabeth or Simeon spoke in tongues. In Acts there are other believers who were converted, and there is no mention of their speaking in tongues. (Acts 2:31; 6:7; 8:36-39; 11:21; 13:48 ).

b. Paul indicates strongly that not all believers of the apostolic age spoke in tongues. At the end of I Corinthians 12, Paul is stressing the diversity of gifts, and asks a series of questions as follows: “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? **Do all speak in tongues?...**” (I Corinthians 12:29-30 - emphasis added) Surely the answer implied is “No,” and therefore not all Christians speak in tongues. (Restorationists would understand this Scripture to be discussing the use of tongues in prophetic utterance, and to mean that not all Christians will speak in tongues to prophecy, but that all may have a prayer language.)

c. Continuationists may differ with Restorationists in position on particular gifts and the degree of emphasis to be placed on the gifts.

d. Continuationists would argue that Restorationists and Cessationists have a heavy burden of proof – that if they want to prove that the Holy Spirit **always** acts in a particular way, or **never** acts in a particular way – there must be clear and convincing evidence from Scripture, and there is no clear and convincing evidence for either position.

## 3. The Cessationist Position.

The Cessationist Position would hold that a number of the gifts have ceased. The gifts which have ceased may include some or all of: apostles, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, healing and miracles. Some Cessationists take the position that some of the gifts may continue, but not to authenticate the messenger. Cessationists would argue along the following lines:

a. Contrary to the position taken by Restorationists and Continuationists, there has been a basic change in the position of God's people since the apostolic period. During the apostolic period, the church needed the authority of apostles and prophets. This was a foundation-laying period. The church needed to look to men who had been with Jesus, who had heard Jesus teach, who had seen Jesus in direct experience. These men had been entrusted directly with the treasure of the gospel, and could therefore be relied on to pass on that treasure and direct the early church.

We should not expect the New Testament writers to directly address changes to come in the work of the Holy Spirit after their generation dies out. But Paul does contemplate a period after the laying of the foundation. Paul says that the Ephesian believers, "are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on **the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ** as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and **rises** to become a holy temple in the Lord." (Ephesians 2:19-20 – emphasis added)

Cessationists believe that the work of building the foundation is completed in the work of Christ and during the lives of the apostles. Surely we cannot add anything to the work of Christ. We should also acknowledge that the building of the kingdom rises without additional apostles and prophets. We may add to the superstructure, but we do not add to the foundation. In Paul's analogy, the temple rises; it does not spread with the addition of the work of more apostles and prophets. The age of apostles and prophets is over.

b. At stake is the sufficiency of Scripture to guide God's people. All Protestants familiar with our heritage know that the issue of the sufficiency of the Scriptures was at the core of the Reformation. Roman Catholic Church authorities believed that the tradition of the church was divinely revealed to be set alongside the Scriptures to guide people in their faith, and that the Pope and councils could guide believers. But the Reformers believed in *Sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone, as all we need to guide our faith and practice. At the Diet of Worms, Luther stated that men may err, that he would not follow Popes or councils and that he would recant his beliefs only if convinced from the Scriptures that he was wrong. Protestants believe in a "closed canon," that nothing should be added to the Scriptures. The Westminster Confession says:

"The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which **nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men...**" (Chapter 1, paragraph 6 – emphasis added)

All Protestants would reject the claim of the Pope to speak with authority for God, or the claim of Joseph Smith that Mormonism represents a further authoritative revelation from God. Any claim of new revelation, whether by prophecy, or through speaking in tongues and translation or other gift, is error. Scripture alone is our guide.

Some Cessationists argue from I Corinthians 13:10 that, “We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.” The argument is that the canon of Scripture is the perfect, and imperfect knowledge and prophecy are no longer needed and have disappeared.

c. The Restorationist and Continuationist positions assume that the unusual and miraculous events of the New Testament period are God’s standard pattern, normative, and therefore ought to continue. In fact, in the Scriptures, these extraordinary occurrences are limited to a few periods, and are the exception, not the rule. Therefore, Cessationists argue, we should not expect miracles to continue today.

Cessationists point out that God provided miracles in Scripture during periods in Biblical history when they were needed to serve as confirmatory signs of new revelation and authenticate the messengers of the new revelation. Miracles therefore are clustered around four periods: (i) the work of Moses in bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt; (ii) the prophetic work of Elijah and Elisha; (iii) the work of Jesus; and (iv) the work of the apostles during the period of Acts. Each of these was a period during which God was operating in a new way, and therefore miracles were needed to attest to the new work and the authority of the messenger. There is no other explanation for such strange and otherwise trivial miracles as Elisha’s floating axehead (II Kings 6:1-5) or a coin in the mouth of a fish (Matthew 17:27) or the withering of a fig tree (Matthew 21:18-22). Between periods of frequent miracles, there are long intervals without miracles recorded.

Miracles therefore serve to announce God’s new works and authenticate its messengers, and are not normative. Paul said himself that miracles and signs were the mark of an apostle when he defended himself before the Corinthians, “For I am not in the least inferior to the ‘super-apostles,’ even though I am nothing. The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance.” (II Corinthians 12:11-12) See also Acts 2:22; Acts 14:3; Hebrews 2:3-4, which support the idea that signs, wonders and miracles authenticate the messenger’s authority.

Miracles are not necessary today, Cessationists claim, since the work of Christ is long-established, nor does God need to authenticate his messengers today as he did the apostles.

d. On the practical side, Restorationists have never provided any convincing theological explanation for the virtual disappearance, or at least de-emphasis, of the spiritual gifts during a long period of church history. There are clear counterfeits of the spiritual gifts – mistakes made in alleged prophecies, translations of messages spoken to groups in foreign languages which do not come close to the actual meaning of the

message, and so forth.<sup>47</sup> The use of these so-called gifts also causes terrible divisions within the body of Christ. Cessationists believe that we should avoid all these problems by avoiding the gifts.

As we will see, these positions may tend to flow into one another, depending upon which gifts are under discussion and whether we think they have ceased or changed qualitatively. As we will also see, some of the differences are more semantic than real. Let us now look at some of the specific gifts and draw some conclusions. We will look at apostles, prophets, tongues and interpretation, miracles and healing.

## **F. Particular Gifts.**

### **1. Apostles.**

The word “apostle” is used in three senses in the New Testament.

First, in only one text does it apply to all Christians. Jesus says that “he who is sent [*apostolos*] is not greater than he who sent him.” (John 13:16) Second, the word is used twice to refer to messengers sent by one church to another (II Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25). However, all the other references (about fifty in number) are to that small group of men who were the apostles of Christ, consisting of the Twelve (Luke 6:12-13), Paul (Galatians 1:1), James the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19), Mattias (Acts 1:23-26) and possibly one or two others. Surely it is the ministry of this group of men which is the gift of apostle contemplated in I Corinthians 12.

Only Dennis and Rita Bennett contend that the ministry of apostles still continues, but they state no reason for their view – just the statement that “the Apostolic Age has not ended, and the ministry of the apostle is still going on.”<sup>48</sup> Restorationist Donald Gee does not address the question.

It is hard to conceive of who present-day apostles might be, or what their ministry might be. We are persuaded with Cessationists that the ministry of the apostle was foundational and ended when the apostles of the first generation died. We must conclude that the ministry of the apostle is ended.

### **2. Prophecy**

Paul has said that the ministry of prophecy, like the ministry of apostles and the work of Christ, is a foundational ministry. Has the ministry of prophecy ended also? Paul advises the Corinthians to “eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.” (I Corinthians 14:1) But was this only for the apostolic period? Hebrews 1:1 says, “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son...” This verse would seem to make the ministry of prophecy a work of the past, having been replaced by the message of Christ.

Whether the ministry of prophecy continues today is largely a question of definition. What is meant by prophecy? If the ministry of prophecy continues today, it is a ministry qualitatively different than the ministry of Biblical prophets.

The word “prophet” is used today in ordinary conversation in a way quite different from the Old Testament usage. Today we might say that any person with insight or vision is a prophet – as in “Bill Gates is a prophet of technological change.” We may also talk about men and women with spiritual insight, as for instance Elizabeth Elliott or Charles Colson, as prophets.

However, the Old Testament prophets spoke the very words of God, acting as the voice for God (Exodus 4:12; 7:1; Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Jeremiah 1:4-9; 23:16, 18, 22) and starting their statements with the words, “Thus says the Lord.” This Old Testament prophecy was revelation of God, and was required to be infallible. To protect his people from false revelation, God provided that if one claimed to be a prophet speaking on his behalf, and any prophecy did not take place or come true, the prophet was to be put to death. (Deuteronomy 18:19-22)

New Testament prophecy is also claimed to be spoken by God. In Acts, Agabus prophesied a severe famine “through the Spirit,” and later proclaimed, “The Holy Spirit says,” Paul will be arrested and lead away by the Jews of Jerusalem. (Acts 11:28 and 21:10-11)

All must agree that prophetic revelation, on the level of the prophets of the Bible, speaking with the same accuracy and authority of Scripture, is at an end today. Donald Gee in his book Concerning Spiritual Gifts (which is described on the back cover as a “Pentecostal classic”) acknowledges that the prophetic gift is not on the same level as Scripture. He says that the New Testament “utterly disproves” the idea that the gifts had the authority of Scripture. “The Early Church always appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament (never to their own prophets, be it noted) for support for all doctrine and final settlement in every dispute (Acts 2:16; 15:15; 28:23). The ‘prophecy of Scripture’ (II Peter 1:20) provided a totally different level of authority to the spiritual gifts among them.”<sup>49</sup> In his chapter on prophecy, he says there are “varying degrees of genuine inspiration” – that there is the infallible inspiration of Scripture, and the ordinary inspiration of prophetic utterance which is not infallible, and which can cover a wide range of purity.<sup>50</sup> Gee says that prophecy may originate with the Holy Spirit (II Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9; Acts 19:6) or with evil and lying spirits (Isaiah 8:19,20; I Kings 22:22; Matthew 8:29; Acts 16:17) or with the human spirits (Jeremiah 23:16; Ezekiel 13:2,3)

Dennis and Rita Bennett also acknowledge that prophecy as a spiritual gift is subject to error. “A man may be strongly used in the prophetic office, and yet may be completely wrong from time to time. His words must never be accepted because of his ministry, but tested by the Word and the Spirit; this does not mean at all that he is a false prophet, but that he is still not perfected and therefore liable to error.”<sup>51</sup>

This gift of prophecy claimed by Gee and the Bennetts is not the same as the Biblical prophecy which is authoritative and infallible.

### **A Digression on Revelation/ Inspiration and Illumination.**

Sinclair Ferguson observes that theologians have long drawn a distinction between **revelation** and **illumination**. This distinction would be helpful to a reconciliation between Restorationists/Continuationists on the one hand and Cessationists on the other.

The word “revelation” is properly reserved to the Scriptures and the prophets who spoke the very words of God. These writers revealed what God wanted them to reveal. These words were “God-breathed” (“*theopneustos*” - II Timothy 3:16, translated as “inspired.”), as the writers and speakers were “carried along” by the Holy Spirit. These prophecies never had their origins in the will of men. (II Peter 1:19-21)

We have noted that Restorationists/Continuationist writers acknowledge that the prophecy of which they speak is not on the level of Scripture, that it is subject to error, and requires particular scrutiny. However, they still use the words “inspired” or “inspiration” with regard to such utterances. These prophecies, if they are fallible, are surely not inspired statements, and should not be represented as such. However, there is another level of knowledge of God, which is “illumination.” What is called prophecy today may fall into this category of illumination.

Illumination is provided by the Holy Spirit, and makes real to us that which has already been revealed. Although the word “illumination” is not used in Scripture<sup>52</sup>, the concept is commonly assumed by Christians. The idea is discussed in several places in Scripture. For example, at I Corinthians 2:9-15, Paul writes of what God has revealed by the Spirit, saying, “No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world, but the **Spirit** who is from God, that **we may understand what God has freely given us.**” (emphasis added) We need illumination provided by the Holy Spirit to understand what God has given us. This is not new and original revelation, it is understanding of that already given.

Similarly, Paul prays for the Ephesians, “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that **the eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and his incomparably great power for those who believe.” (Ephesians 1:18-19 – emphasis added) This is not new revelation, it is illumination of what God has already revealed. See also Psalm 119:18; II Timothy 2:7

Illumination may be additional understanding of what God has told us in the Scriptures or the application of what we know to changed circumstances. Understanding a verse for the first time is illumination given by the Holy Spirit. Answer to prayer rightly petitioned is illumination. When a newly-married man understands how God wants him to treat his wife, that is illumination. When a college student contemplates a professional choice asking for the influence of the Holy Spirit, that is illumination. A church should ask for the illumination of the Holy Spirit through its members, so long as that body takes care that it is looking for the application of what it knows to new

circumstances, and is not seeking additions to or changes in what God has revealed through the Scriptures.

Illumination makes no claim to inerrancy or infallibility.

Sinclair Ferguson thinks there is merit in two levels of prophecy. He says that, “If it were recognized by advocates of both views [Restorationists/Continuationists and Cessationists] that the form which continuing prophecy takes today belongs to a completely different authority-level from the revelatory prophetic ministry of the apostles, the tendency to create polarization, or antagonism, in discussion and debate would be minimized. Some differences would seem to be more semantic than real. Cessationists, like charismatics, may have unusual mental experiences; what one cessationist has called ‘feelings, impressions, convictions, urges, inhibitions, impulses, burdens, resolutions.’ If they recognized that this is virtually identical to what is intended by ‘prophecy’ [lower level], and if continuationists made more modest claims for ‘prophecy’, then mutual understanding and greater harmony could be attained. Continuationists would avoid such infallibilist expressions as, ‘This is what the Lord says’, so that there would be no question of their prophecies appearing to rival the authority of Scripture; cessationists and continuationists would then be able to recognize that they share similar experiences of spiritual illumination even if they describe or categorize them differently. Mutual agreement would be within reach.”<sup>54</sup>

Ferguson points out that there are two dangers here. A church seeking illumination may be deceived because the person speaking as if in prophecy does not speak illumination – the person may speak in error, leading to mistakes in direction, and even apostasy. However, there is also a danger, admittedly lesser, that a church which is resistant to prophecy as illumination fails to hear God’s direction.<sup>53</sup>

If prophecy is to be considered by the church, it would have to be under the authority of the church leaders, who would need to use discernment to consider the origin and value of the prophecy. This is a heavy responsibility, which the church leadership must take seriously.

In summary then:

Contemporary prophecy does not continue as in Biblical times, when it was foundational. The foundations have been laid, and cannot be added to. If prophecy continues today, it is qualitatively different than the prophecies of Scripture. Contemporary prophecy is not revelation, and it does not rival the Scriptures in authority.

Contemporary prophecy may continue as illumination, which is fallible, but which is helpful to make real to us the truths revealed in Scripture. It is inappropriate to use the word “inspiration” or “revelation” with regard to contemporary prophecy. It is inappropriate to use phrases such as “The Lord is telling me...,” or “God says...” or similar phrases indicating that a prophetic message is God-breathed and therefore infallible. Implicit in the use of such phrases is a dangerous claim of authority which

may cause people to fall into cults, or under the influence of people who may be moved to speak by evil spirits or the human will. One may say, “I have a strong impression that...” or “I believe that the Lord would have us...” or “I am convicted that...” without claiming inappropriate authority.

The church Session should govern the use of contemporary authority, being willing to take responsibility for the context of its use, and the evaluation of its origin and content.

### **3. Tongues and Interpretation.**

Speaking in tongues as an effect of the Spirit’s coming is explicitly mentioned in four contexts in the New Testament: Pentecost; at the house of Cornelius; by the disciples at Ephesus; and at the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 12-14.)<sup>54</sup>

Many Christians find the exercise of tongues helpful today, particularly as a prayer language which helps them to praise God, to pray under pressure in difficult circumstances or to pray for others when they do not know exactly what to pray for.

Tongues is not, like the ministries of apostles and prophecy, a foundational ministry. The use of tongues continues today. However, some of the points made with respect to prophecy and revelation and illumination are applicable to tongues. Tongues should not be regarded as revelation, but as illumination. A message spoken in a tongue and translated is not infallible, and is not on a level with Scripture. A message in tongues translated into vernacular speech becomes prophecy, and should be discerned as described above.

We are not convinced by the Restorationist position that all believers will receive the gift of tongues. We do not see any place in Scripture which commands speaking in tongues. We also are not convinced that there was any period during which all believers spoke in tongues. Paul’s question at I Corinthians 12:30 (“Do all speak in tongues?”) persuades us that not all believers in apostolic times spoke in tongues. Some Restorationists contend that the gift of tongues of which Paul wrote was of a particular type, speaking messages to unbelievers in a language unknown to the speaker, but that all believers did speak in a prayer language in tongues. We find this position unpersuasive.

This presents a pastoral problem which is common to all the spiritual gifts, but particularly for tongues. How should the church leaders instruct believers on the exercise of spiritual gifts? We do not want to quench the Spirit, and we want all believers to exercise all the spiritual gifts they have been given. On the other hand, we do not want Christians to feel pressure that they must have some particular gift, such as tongues, and that they should manufacture an experience in tongues. What is the proper setting and instruction for the exercise of tongues? Again, the Session has responsibility to provide guidance on this issue.

Tongues as most commonly given today is different in practice and function from the gift of tongues given in the New Testament. Tongues may be given today for any of

three purposes – (1) for use as a private prayer language which serves as a means of edification and spiritual strengthening of the person speaking; (2) to communicate the gospel in a language foreign to the speaker, but intelligible to an unbelieving hearer; or (3) for prophetic utterance.

Paul described tongues in I Corinthians as “a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers.” (I Corinthians 14:22) This tongue was therefore to communicate the gospel in a foreign language to an unbeliever. Paul also said that if possible, tongues should be translated, that a message which is not translated only edifies the speaker; but a message which is translated edifies the church, and is equivalent to prophecy. (I Corinthians 14: 3-5) At Pentecost, the message in tongues communicated to unbelievers. The difference between Pentecost and the church at Corinth was that at Pentecost, no translation was needed. But in both Pentecost and Corinth, the gift of tongues is given for unbelievers.

However, the gift of tongues as practiced today is usually as a prayer language for the believer. There are recent cases where tongues communicate the gospel in a foreign language foreign to the speaker, but intelligible to an unbelieving hearer<sup>55</sup>, but the usual use of a tongue as a private prayer language reverses Paul’s rule, in that the tongue is now given primarily for believers, not unbelievers.

It must be said that there is little evidence in Scripture for this use of tongues. Paul writes, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the Saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Romans 8:26-28) It is not clear that this groaning intercession by the Spirit is speaking in tongues. However, we believe that this use of tongues is valid, based on these verses, our understanding that the gifts listed in Scripture are not necessarily exhaustive and the relative commonality of the experience to Christians.

In summary:

The primary use of tongues today is as a private prayer language enabling supernatural communication by the power of the Holy Spirit. The continuing gift of tongues is therefore most commonly exercised differently than the gift exercised during the apostolic period. Prophecy in tongues continues today as illumination, not revelation. It is not infallible and it does not have the authority of Scripture. Not all Christians will speak in tongues. The Session has the duty of exercising both encouragement of and authority over the exercise of spiritual gifts.

#### **4. Healing and Miracles.**

Healing and miracles are also among the most controversial areas of the work of the Holy Spirit. Few Christians would doubt God’s ability to heal. Controversy centers around the place of healing in the present time and the part that believers play in healing.

We would quickly affirm that God provides healing and works miracles today. There are numerous instances of healings and miracles recorded in Scripture, and no statement that these will not continue after the close of the apostolic age. We should follow the admonition of James that if there is, “any one of you sick...He should call the Elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord” to be made well. (James 5:14) We should preach the gospel and pray faithfully for healing and miracles, and trust God for the results.

However, we also are persuaded that (i) healings and miracles are not God’s universal pattern, and unless the Lord returns during the life of a believer, all of us will eventually die; (ii) healing depends upon God’s grace, and not faith which we produce; and (iii) all healing is God’s healing.

First, healings are not God’s universal pattern, and God does not always intend to heal today.

Some Restorationists take the position that it is God’s will to heal in all circumstances. Dennis and Rita Bennett, for example, state that, “God has made it perfectly clear in His Word that it *is* His will to heal the sick – period!...In the case of healing we know the Father’s will: ‘I am the Lord Jehovah thy God that healeth thee!’ (Exodus 15:26). ‘Who healeth all thy diseases’ (Ps. 103:3 KJV). ‘I will take sickness away from the midst of thee!’ (Exod. 23:25)”<sup>56</sup> “We know from the Scripture that God wants His people to be whole in spirit, soul and body.”<sup>57</sup> “Wherever the Holy Spirit moves, there will be healing. God is not glorified in the sickness of His people, as is sometimes taught, but in their healing.”<sup>58</sup>

Other Restorationists, however, agree with Continuationists and Cessationists that it is not always God’s will to heal, at least not in this life. The position paper of the Assemblies of God on healing titled “Divine Healing: An Integral Part of the Gospel” states that the ministry of healing is closely tied to the redemptive work of Christ, that the atonement provided for the consequences of sin, including the healing of the body. Here is part of the position paper:

“[A]tonement provides for the consequences of sin. Even where sickness is not the direct result of sin, it is still in the world because of sin. Therefore it is among the works of the devil Jesus came to destroy (1 John 3:8) and is thus included in the atonement.

“The Bible indicates, however, that until Jesus comes we groan because we have not yet received the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23). Only when the dead in Christ rise and we are changed do we receive the new bodies which are like His glorious body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 15:51-54).

“From the parallel between redemption and atonement, we see therefore that the provision for our bodies is the redemption spoken of in Romans 8:23. We receive the forgiveness of sins now in connection with the redemption of our souls. We shall receive

the redemption of our bodies when we are caught up to meet the Lord and are changed into His likeness (1 John 3:1; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4). Divine healing is a foretaste of this, and, like all the blessings of the gospel, flows from the atonement.

“As the privilege of believers, the promise of healing does not rule out suffering for Christ's sake and the gospel's. We are expected to be prepared to follow His example (Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:19,21; 4:12-14,19).

“Nor are we to look to divine healing as a substitute for obedience to the rules of physical and mental health. Jesus recognized the need of the disciples to get away from the crowds and rest awhile (Mark 6:31). Jethro saw that if Moses did not delegate some of his responsibilities to others, he would wear away (Exodus 18:18).

“Neither is divine healing a means of avoiding the effects of old age. Moses did retain a clear eye and his natural strength until the day of his death (Deuteronomy 34:7). But this privilege was not granted to King David (1 Kings 1:1-4).

“The gradual breakdown of old age, pictured so graphically in Ecclesiastes 12:1-7, is the common experience of believers as well as unbelievers. Healing is still available to the aged, but the part that is healed usually continues to age like the rest of the body. We do not yet have the redemption of the body.

“Even we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan and travail in pain like the rest of creation, waiting patiently for the fulfillment of our hope (Romans 8:21-25). No matter what we do for this body, no matter how many times we are healed, if Jesus carries we shall die.

“However, the Bible does not tell us this to discourage us, but to make us realize that we must encourage and cultivate our life in the Spirit, for the Spirit quickens (resurrects), and that is our real hope (Romans 8:11). In fact, even though the outward man is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16).”<sup>59</sup>

As the position paper shows, total and permanent physical healing in this life has never been God's standard since the fall. The Bennetts cite certain Scriptures which do seem on their face to promise healing unconditionally, such as the passages from Exodus and Psalms cited above, and James 5:15. However we think that the verses cited by the Bennetts are to be explained in the context of salvation and eternal healing. We find the passages cited by the position paper more persuasive, and therefore conclude that physical healing is not God's universal rule today.

Second, faith is an element of healing, but not faith which we produce. As mentioned, this point relates to the first in a way that may not be immediately obvious.

First, faith is an element of healing. Jesus told the woman healed of bleeding that her faith had made her well (Matthew 9:1) told two blind men they received healing

according to their faith (Matthew 9:29) and told Blind Bartimaeus his faith had healed him (Mark 10:52). He commended the faith of the Canaanite woman as he healed her daughter (Matthew 15:28) and the faith of the centurion whose servant he healed (Luke 7:9). Unbelief impeded healing at Nazareth (Mark 6:5,6). However, the faith required is small. The disciples were described as “little faith ones,” in Matthew’s gospel. The father of the boy with the evil spirit confessed that he believed but needed help with his unbelief (Mark 9:24). Jesus healed his son anyway.

Many Restorationists are Arminian. As we have discussed above, this means that we cooperate in our salvation, and that our contribution in initiating salvation is necessary. The Reformed position is that we are radically fallen, but that God regenerates us with a changed nature which allows us to respond to God in faith.

The Arminian position may lead to the conclusion that healing depends on the faith we produce. Dennis and Rita Bennett seem to advocate this position, although they do not quite say so. “A person can be healed through another’s faith when he is too ill and weak to exercise his own faith (Mark 2:3-5), though he may be unconscious or in a coma. Healing can come through the faith (in Jesus) of the sick person alone (Matt. 9:22,29), or with the combined faith of the sick person and the one ministering (Mark 5:25-34). This last, of course is the most desirable situation...”<sup>60</sup>

The Bennetts go on to say, “In situations where we have desired to see healing, and have not seen it, **the fault is not with God, but with man.** We are quick to say: ‘God didn’t do it. I guess he isn’t ready to heal me.’ Yet the Word of God says that he is, and right now.”<sup>61</sup>

J.I. Packer comments on this line of thinking as follows: “Being generically Arminian...the Pentecostal theology regularly assumes that what God can do for his people is determined by whether they “believe for the blessing,” whether the blessing be Spirit baptism, deliverance from some sin, healing or some other divine gift. On this basis it becomes very easy – some would say, fatally easy – to conclude that God always wishes to do among his people all that he did in New Testament times, but will be unable to do so if his people neglect to seek from him each particular gift when and as they need it. The assumption here is that this seeking, so far from being itself God’s work, the fruit of his prevenient grace in our hearts, is our independent contribution to the total situation, and one without which his hands are tied.”<sup>62</sup>

The Bennetts have followed their understanding of Scripture to the logical conclusion. First, they understand Scripture to say that God always wants to heal. Second, they understand that faith of a certain magnitude is required to effectuate healing. Third, God cannot be at fault. Therefore if there is no healing, the fault lies with the persons asking for healing, presumably because they lacked sufficient faith for God to heal.

However, we do not agree with these assumptions. As discussed above, we do not understand that God always wants to heal in this life. Death is a part of life in our

fallen world, and will be until Christ returns. In any given case, God may simply choose not to heal.

Second, some degree of faith may be necessary for healing. Some party may have to ask for healing. But God is gracious to us, in that he instills faith in us. As discussed in the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, the Holy Spirit regenerates us. God is the initiator of our faith. Even the faith required is not our contribution. God, as the one who is sovereign over all, is never limited by our faith, or our lack of faith. The faith required is very small, and God will help us to have the faith necessary. Here is the statement of the Assemblies of God from the “Divine Healing” position paper:

“Just as salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8), so all God's blessings and gifts are ours by His grace or unmerited favor. We do not earn them. We do not deserve them.

“No one in the New Testament demanded healing. People came to Jesus beseeching Him. They did not look on healing as their right, but as a gracious privilege extended to them...

“Actually **it is this inner renewal that makes us best able to have the faith to claim the privilege of divine healing.** To the woman healed of the issue of blood, Jesus said, ‘Thy faith hath made thee whole’ (Mark 5:34)... The inner renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:10) is seen also in the great faith of the Roman centurion who recognized the authority of Christ's word (Matthew 8:5-13) and the Syrophenician woman who believed that even a crumb would meet the need (Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:28).

“Unbelief hindered reception [of healing] at Nazareth (Mark 6:5,6) and at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:14-20). There Jesus indicates the necessity also of expressing faith by praying and fasting (Mark 9:29). But Jesus did not turn away from those who had little faith or weak faith. Those who are sick often find it is not easy to express faith, and Jesus did a variety of things to help them. Some He touched (Mark 1:41; 8:22), took their hands (Mark 1:31, Luke 14:4), or laid His hands upon them (Mark 6:5; 8:25; Luke 4:40; 13:13). Others He helped by a variety of acts, some of which called for faith and obedience on their part (Mark 7:33; 8:23). Others found that to touch Him or His garments helped them express faith (Mark 3:10; 5:28; 6:56; Luke 6:19).

“The promise, ‘He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also,’ is closely connected with prayer, asking in Christ's name (John 14:12-14; 16:23,24). His name, however, is the revelation of His character and nature. We have that in us only if we abide in Christ and His words abide in us (John 15:7). Then our will lines up with His, and we can ask what we will, and it shall be done.”<sup>63</sup>

This statement is helpful. This Restorationist group recognizes that regeneration (here called “renewal of the inner mind”) precedes the faith to ask for healing. The ability to ask for faith is evidence that God is at work to regenerate. The faith required is

very small, and God works to provide that faith. Faith is not our contribution to an equation of healing, and God is not limited by our lack of faith.

Third, all healing is God's healing. Again, the statement of the Assemblies of God is helpful as a review of relevant Scripture, as follows:

“Others have tried to set divine healing in opposition to or in competition with the medical profession. This need not be so. Physicians through their skills have brought help to many.

“It is true that the Lord is the Great Physician. It is also true that the Bible condemns King Asa because ‘in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians’ (2 Chronicles 16:12). But Asa had already sought for help from Syria in an act of unbelief and disobedience when he refused to rely on the Lord (2 Chronicles 16:7). The emphasis is not that he sought physicians (which in this case may have been heathen physicians), but that he refused to seek the Lord.

“It is evident that physicians had an honorable place in Israel (Jeremiah 8:22). Jesus also presented the medicinal use of oil and wine by the Good Samaritan in a favorable light (Luke 10:34).

“When the woman with the issue of blood was healed, we are told she ‘had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse’ (Mark 5:26). If it was wrong for her to go to physicians, this would have been the perfect place for Jesus to have said so. But He did not. Instead, He accepted the faith she now expressed and commended her for it. Even today God has performed many miracles for those given up by doctors.

“Jesus also sent the 10 lepers back to show themselves to the priests (Luke 17:14). Under the Law the priests were in charge of diagnosis, quarantine, and health (Leviticus 13:2ff.; 14:2ff.; Matthew 8:4). Thus Jesus recognized that human diagnosticians have their place.

“The priests, however, were agents of the Lord, and in this sense it is possible to **take all healing as divine, whether instantaneous or gradual** (see Mark 8:24).”<sup>64</sup>

Our Reformed tradition would be even more positive about the work of physicians, nurses, hospital workers and the health care system generally, recognizing that God is sovereign over all, and that he uses all these means to work out his will

In summary, then: God does heal and work miracles today. However, (i) we live in a fallen world, to which the believer and the unbeliever are subject until Christ returns. (ii) God is sovereign, and healing depends upon God's grace, and although some faith seems necessary for healing, it is not faith which we produce. Faith may be required for miraculous healing, but God is the initiator of faith, and is not limited by our faith or lack of faith; and (iii) All healing is God's healing.

### **G. The Priority of the Gifts.**

In I Corinthians 12-14, and especially in Chapter 13, Paul makes clear that there is a priority to the gifts. Faith, hope and love are the greatest of the gifts, but above all is love. (13:13) Love is greater than tongues or prophecy or even faith (13:1-3). We should seek to have love over all the other gifts.

## **XII. CONCLUSIONS**

To most Christians, the Holy Spirit is the least understood and most mysterious of the three persons of the Trinity. However, as we have seen, it is the Holy Spirit which brings about the changes in men and women which permit them to become holy. The Holy Spirit works in us to regenerate us, and make us willing to come to a saving knowledge of God. The Holy Spirit works to sanctify us, to assure us, to help us persevere. The Holy Spirit produces fruit, and fills us for service. The Holy Spirit may pour out on us for power, and provides us with gifts for the edification of the body. The Holy Spirit is absolutely vital for the Christian life.

It is impossible in a paper of this kind to address all aspects of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. However, we hope that this paper may be used of God to help us grow in our knowledge and wisdom of the Spirit.

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **THE REFORMED TRADITION AND THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

It has been somewhat surprising to several of us to learn that Reformed people have historically been very important in developing a theology of the Holy Spirit, and that many Reformed people have written of their personal experiences of the Holy Spirit.

This Appendix outlines sets out, first, some materials on the development of the theology of the Holy Spirit by Reformed people, and second, some of the recorded experiences of Reformed people with the Holy Spirit. Third, we have included some of the experiences of other Christians from other traditions, particularly from earlier centuries. There is no attempt here to provide a comprehensive historical theology, but only some of the materials we have run across.

#### **A. DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Reformed people, such as John Calvin and the Puritans, were instrumental in realizing the importance of the Holy Spirit, and wrote and presumably preached and taught extensively on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Jonathan Edwards also

wrote valuable works defending the events of the First Great Awakening, and how to judge a work of God through the Holy Spirit.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pastor of Westminster Chapel in London (1899-1981) wrote as follows regarding the development of the understanding of the Holy Spirit.

“Now it is a remarkable and an astonishing thing that this doctrine of the Holy Spirit, His person and His work, has been so frequently neglected in the Church – yet that is an actual fact of history. It is quite clear that the first Christians believed the doctrine, they almost took it for granted. Then you come to the early centuries of the Christian era and you find very little reference, comparatively speaking to this doctrine. That is not surprising, in fact it was more or less inevitable, because the Church was constantly engaged, in those first centuries, in defending the doctrine concerning the Son. The Son of God had become incarnate: He had been here in this world. Jesus was preached, Jesus as the Christ, and, of course, the enemy was constantly attacking the person of Christ. This was the linchpin in the whole of the gospel and if it could be discredited, the whole scheme would collapse. So the attack was upon the person of the Son, and the Church had to give herself in defense of that doctrine in order to establish it.

“Tragically, the result was that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was comparatively neglected, until the time of the Protestant Reformation. Now it is our custom to say that the Protestant Reformation is primarily the epoch in the history of the Church in which the great doctrine of justification by faith only was discovered in the Bible, and that is perfectly true. But let us never forget that it is equally true that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was also rediscovered in a most amazing manner, and the great Dr. B.B. Warfield is surely right when he says that John Calvin was the great theologian of the Holy Spirit. With the whole Roman system the Holy Spirit was ignored; the priesthood, the priests, the Church, Mary and the saints were put into the position of the Holy Spirit.

“So the Protestant Reformation rediscovered this mighty doctrine... The doctrine of the Holy Spirit was, beyond any question whatsoever, worked out most thoroughly of all by a Puritan divine who lived in this country [Great Britain] in the seventeenth century. There is still no greater work on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than the two volumes by the mighty Dr. John Owen, who preached in London and who was also at one time, during the period of Cromwell, the Vice Chancellor to the University of Oxford. And not only John Owen. Thomas Goodwin and other Puritans also worked out the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It has never been done so thoroughly since, and certainly had never been done before.” (p. 4-5)

B.B. Warfield, professor of theology at Princeton Seminary (1851-1921), writes of the Protestant and Reformed thinkers and their contribution to our understanding of the Holy Spirit as follows:

“The doctrine of the Holy Spirit was only slowly brought to the explicit consciousness of the Church, and has even yet taken a firm hold on the mind and consciousness of only a small section of the Church.

“The developed doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is an exclusively Reformation doctrine, and more particularly a Reformed doctrine, and more particularly still a Puritan doctrine. Wherever the fundamental principles of the Reformation have gone, it has gone; but it has come to its full rights only among Reformed churches, and among them only where what we have been accustomed to call “the Second Reformation” has deepened the spiritual life of the churches and cast back the Christian with special poignancy of feeling upon the grace of God alone as his sole dependence for salvation and all the goods of this life and the life to come. Indeed, it is possible to be more precise still. The doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is a gift from John Calvin to the Church of Christ. He did not, of course, invent it. The whole of it lay spread out on the pages of Scripture with a clearness and fullness of utterance which one would think would secure that even he who ran should read; and doubtless he who ran did read it, and it has fed the soul of the true believer in all ages. Accordingly, hints of its apprehension are found widely scattered in all Christian literature, and in particular the germs of the doctrine are spread broadcast over the pages of Augustine. Luther did not fail to lay hold of them; Zwingli shows time and again that he had them richly in his mind; they constituted, in very fact, one of the foundations of the Reformation movement, or rather they provided its vital breath. But it was Calvin who first gave them anything like systematic or adequate expression; and it is through him and from him that they have come to be the assured possession of the Church of Christ.

“There is no phenomenon in doctrinal history more astonishing than the commonly entertained views as to the contribution made by John Calvin to the development of Christian doctrine. He is thought of currently as the father of doctrines, such as that of predestination and reprobation, of which he was mere heir – taking them as wholes over from the hands of his great master Augustine. Meanwhile his real personal contributions to Christian doctrine are utterly forgotten. These are of the richest kind and cannot be enumerated here. But it is germane to our present topic to note that at their head stand three gifts of the first value to the Church’s thought and life, which we should by no means allow to pass from our grateful memory. It is to John Calvin that we owe that broad conception of the work of Christ which is expressed in the doctrine of his threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. He was the first one who presented the work of Christ under this *schema* and from him it was that it has passed into Christian commonplace. It is to John Calvin that we owe the whole conception of a science of “Christian Ethics”; for he was the first to outline its idea and develop its principles and contents...And it is to John Calvin that we owe the first formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He himself gave it a very rich statement...and it is, as we have seen, among his spiritual descendants only that it has to this day received any adequate attention in the churches... It is simply true that these great topics receive their first formulation at hands of John Calvin; and it is from him that the Church has derived them, and to him that it owes its thanks for them.... [The doctrine of the Holy Spirit] has come down from Calvin only to the Puritans and from the Puritans to their spiritual descendants” (p. 150-152)

It may also be surprising to note how much discussion of the Holy Spirit there is in the Westminster Confession, a Reformed and Puritan document. When an additional chapter on the Holy Spirit was added to the Confession in 1903, B.B. Warfield wrote a brief commentary on the Westminster Confession, and its discussion of the Holy Spirit. Although Warfield was happy to have the additional chapter, he pointed out that the original Westminster Confession contained a great deal on the work of the Holy Spirit and that almost all of the additional chapter was in fact a condensation of more detailed material already in the Confession in other places. Warfield was right. Throughout chapters 10-18 of the Confession, the importance of the Holy Spirit and his work is emphasized in salvation and its outworkings. We would be mistaken to think that the 1903 chapter needed to be added to correct a neglect of the work of the Holy Spirit. (p. 157-161)

The Reformed churches were divided by the great fervor of the Awakenings in the United States. Some were opposed to the display of emotion, and would not open their churches to the preachers of revival, so much of the preaching took place in open fields and cities. However, others such as Jonathan Edwards defended the Awakenings. Edwards experienced the First Great Awakening in his own church in Northampton, Massachusetts. His book Narrative of Surprising Conversions from 1737 was widely circulated in the colonies and Great Britain, and The Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God which is a valuable tool today to evaluate whether a work is of the Holy Spirit.

Edwards first set out standards which are often applied, but which should not be used to evaluate whether a work is of God. Edwards said that no judgment should be made of a work, either positive or negative, based upon such criteria as: (1) whether the work is carried on in a way which is extraordinary; (2) whether there is an effect on the bodies of the participants; (3) whether the participants experience a kind of ecstasy; (4) whether example is a great part of the work; (5) whether there is imprudence in the conduct of the participants; (6) whether there is error and scandal in some participants as a judgement on the work in general; and (7) whether there is preaching of the terrors of God's judgment.

Edwards then set out standards which rightly should be applied to evaluate whether a work is of God. Right criteria for evaluation include: (1) that Jesus is trusted as Savior; (2) that Satan is opposed; (3) that the Scriptures are highly regarded; (4) that there is a love of truth; and (5) that there is a spirit of love of God and man.

Of course, Calvin, the Puritans and Edwards thought and wrote before the Azusa Street Revival of 1906-09 and the subsequent charismatic movement, so we should not expect them to reflect those events. However, historically, Reformed theologians have been very encouraging of the work of the Holy Spirit.

## **B. EXPERIENCES OF REFORMED PEOPLE**

The following accounts of the work of the Holy Spirit are taken from Martyn Lloyd Jones:

### **1. John Owen.**

I will start by quoting a statement from Dr. John Owen, one of the great (some would say the greatest of the) intellects amongst the Puritans of three hundred years ago. It is from his *Treatise on Communion with the Holy Ghost*. He says, referring to Romans 5:2---

*“That rejoicing in hope of the glory of God...which carries the soul through any tribulation, even with glorying, hath its rise in the Spirit’s shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts. Now there are two ways whereby the Spirit worketh this joy in the hearts of believers: (1) He doth it immediately by Himself without the consideration of any other acts or works of His or the interposition of any reasonings or deductions and conclusions. As in sanctification He is a well of water springing up in the soul immediately exerting His efficacy and refreshment, so in consolation (which means assurance) He immediately works the soul and the minds of men to a joyful and rejoicing and spiritual frame, filling them with exultation and gladness. Not that this arises from our reflex consideration of the love of God, but rather gives occasion thereunto. When He so sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts and so fills them with gladness by an immediate act of operation (as He caused John the Baptist to leap for joy in the womb upon the approach of the Mother of Jesus) then doth the soul even from hence raise itself to a consideration of the love of God whence Joy and rejoicing doth also flow. Of this joy there is no account to be given but that the Spirit worketh it when and how He will. He secretly infuseth and distils it into the soul, prevailing against all fears, and sorrows, filling it with gladness, exultations, and sometimes with unspeakable raptures of the mind.”*

### **2. Thomas Goodwin.**

Let me quote to you his contemporary, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, another bright shining star in this spiritual firmament, a man like John Owen. Owen taught at Oxford, Goodwin taught at both Cambridge and Oxford. He writes:

*“There is a light that cometh and overpowereth a man’s soul and assureth him that God is his and he is God’s, and that God loveth him from everlasting...It is a light beyond the light of ordinary faith.”*

### **3. John Howe.**

Isaac Watts tells us that when John Howe died they found that he had written some paragraphs on the blank leaf of his Bible. [Owen was also a Puritan, and pastor to Oliver Cromwell.] Notice what he writes:

*“December 26<sup>th</sup> 1689 – After that I had long seriously and repeatedly thought with myself that besides a full and undoubted assent to the objects of faith, a vivifying, savoury taste and relish of them was also necessary, that with stronger force and more powerful energy that might penetrate into the most inward centre of my heart, and there being mostly fixed and rooted govern my life....*

*“This morning I awoke out of a most ravishing and delightful dream, that a wonderful copious stream of celestial rays from the lofty throne of the Divine Majesty did seem to dart into my open and expanded breast. I have often since with great complacency reflected on that very signal pledge of special Divine favour vouchsafed to me on that noted memorable day, and have with repeated fresh pleasure tasted the delights therefore. But what of the same kind I sensibly felt through the admirable bounty of God and the most pleasant comforting influence of the Holy Spirit on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1704... - “...far surpassed the most expressive words my thoughts can suggest. I then experienced an inexpressibly pleasant melting of the heart, tears gushing out of mine eyes for joy that God should shed abroad His love abundantly through the hearts of men; and that, for this very purpose, mine own heart should be so signally possessed of and by His blessed Spirit, Romans 5:5.”*

#### **4. William Guthrie**

William Guthrie, a Scotsman from the same century, a typical Scot, the extreme opposite of the effervescent, emotional, unstable type; a great brain, and a theologian. He says:

*“It is a glorious divine manifestation of God unto the soul, shedding abroad God’s love in the heart. It is a thing better felt than spoken of. It is no audible voice but it is a ray of glory filling the soul with God as He is Life, Light, Love and Liberty, corresponding to the audible voice “O man, greatly beloved,” putting a man in a transport.....Oh how glorious is this manifestation of the Spirit! Faith here rises to so full assurance that it resolveth wholly into the sensible presence of God.*

*“This is the thing which doth best deserve the title of “Sensible Presence” and it is not given unto all believers, some thereof are all their days under bondage and in fear; but her “Love (almost perfect) casteth out fear.” This is so absolutely let out upon the Master’s pleasure, and so transient or passing or quickly gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious state into debate for want of it.”*

#### **5. John Flavel**

John Flavel was not one of the so called 'greatest' Puritans. He was rather a quiet man, a man who was used of God in a small sphere, in a very striking way. But this is something that happened to John Flavel: he was alone on a journey, his mind greatly occupied with self-examination and prayer, and thus describes what befell him.

*“In all that day’s journey he neither met, overtook, nor was overtaken by any. Thus, going on his way, his thought began to swell and rise higher and higher like the waters in Ezekiel’s vision, ‘til at last they became an overwhelming flood. Such was the intention of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys and such the full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world and all the concerns thereof. And for some hours he knew no more where he was than if he had been in a deep sleep upon his bed.*

*“Arriving in great exhaustion at a certain spring, he sat down and washed, earnestly desiring, if it was God’s pleasure, that this might be his parting place from this world. Death had the most amiable face in his eye that ever he beheld, except the face of Jesus Christ which made it so. And he does not remember, though he believed himself dying, that he ever thought of his dear wife or children or any earthly concernment.*

*“On reaching his inn, the influence still continued, banishing sleep, still the joy of the Lord overflowed him and he seemed to be an inhabitant of the other world. But within a few hours he was sensible of the ebbing of the tide and, before night, through there was a heavenly serenity and sweet peace upon his spirit which continued long with him, yet the transport of joy were over and the fine edge of his delight blunted. He, many years after, called that day one of the days of heaven and professed he understood more of the life of heaven by it than by all the books he ever read or discourses he ever entertained about it.”*

## **6. Jonathan Edwards.**

Jonathan Edwards was probably one of the greatest minds – I say it advisedly – that the world has ever known. He is certainly the greatest brain America has ever produced, a brilliant, outstanding philosopher, the last man in the world to be carried away by false emotionalism. Indeed, he wrote a great treatise on the subject, call *The Religious Affections*, to teach people how to differentiate between the work of the Spirit. So Jonathan Edwards was the last man who was likely to go astray at this point. This is what he says:

*“As I rode out into the woods, for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that was for me extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God as mediator between*

*God and man and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. The grace that appeared so calm and sweet appeared also great above the heavens, the person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent and an excellency great enough to swallow up all thoughts and conceptions, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me a greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust and be to be full of Christ alone, to love Him with a holy and pure love, to trust in Him, to live upon Him, to serve Him, and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity.”*

## **C. OTHER CHRISTIANS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **1. Thomas Aquinas.**

The most extraordinary illustration of this particular point is none other than the man who is honoured by the Roman Catholic Church by the name of St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1879 the Pope issued an official proclamation to the effect that Thomas Aquinas is the theologian and teacher of the Holy Catholic Church. He had been regarded as that for many centuries. He lived in the twelfth century, and most Roman Catholic teaching is based upon the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. It is interesting that at the present moment his famous work is *Summa Theologica*, a ‘Summary of Theology, or of the Knowledge of God,’ in a number of volumes. It has always been the standard work of the Roman Catholic Church.

The essence of his teaching was this---that it is impossible for a mortal man to have any direct experience of God. ‘Your position,’ he says, ‘rests mainly on reason, things that you can sense and see and feel, and then reason applied to them.’ So he has his famous ‘Proofs of God’---how you can prove the being of God; cause and effect, and so on; good---better---best, etc.---five great proofs of the being of God.

Then after spending the whole of his life demonstrating how man has no direct contact with immaterial reality, Aquinas shortly before his death had such an overwhelming direct experience of God that he wrote no more. Urged by a friend to complete his great work, *The Summa Theologica*, he answered, “I can do no more; such things have been revealed to me that all I have written seems as straw, and I now await the end of my life.”

### **2. Blaise Pascal.**

[Pascal may qualify as Reformed. He was Catholic, but a “Jansenist,” a follower of Cornelius Jansen, a Catholic who had rediscovered Augustinian theology, and whose theology was therefore Calvinistic.]

A ... remarkable example is the great Blaise Pascal, one of the great geniuses of all times. Again, he belonged to that seventeenth century but, of course, lived in France, and he was a Roman Catholic. Here was a man who developed a great concern about this soul and about his salvation. He was a brilliant thinker and philosopher, who used to read

and talk a lot; also he conducted mathematical experiments and gave mathematical lectures: he was the lion of scientific circles in Paris in those days. When he died they found he had written something on a bit paper and sewn it inside his shirt---an amulet in which he describes a remarkable experience that he had:

***“This day of Grace 1654;  
From about half past ten at night, to  
About half after midnight,  
Fire.”***

Now here you have not got one of these obvious, ‘psychological types,’ always seeing visions and imagining things. You have got one of the greatest mathematicians of all times.

***“Fire  
God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,  
Not of the philosophers and the wise.  
Security, security. Feeling, joy peace.  
God of Jesus Christ.  
Thy God shall be my God.  
Forgetfulness of the world and of all save God.  
He can be found only in the ways taught  
in the Gospel.  
Greatness of the human soul.”***

He just put these things down as best he could recollect them, these things that came upon him in such profusion.

***“Greatness of the human soul.  
O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee,  
but I have known Thee.  
Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.  
I have separated myself from Him.  
Thy God, why hast Thou forsaken me?...  
That I be not separated from Thee eternally.  
This is life eternal: That they might know Thee  
the only true God, and Him whom thou has sent, Jesus Christ,  
Jesus Christ,  
Jesus Christ.  
I have separated myself from Him; I have fled, renounced,  
crucified Him.  
May I never be separated from Him.”***

He is mixing his past with his present. He is made to feel by what was given to him what he had been in the past.

*“May I never be separated from Him  
He maintains Himself in me only in the ways taught  
in the Gospel  
Renunciation total and sweet.”*

## FOOTNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> John Stott, Baptism and Fullness (Downers Grove, Il.: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 14-16.
- <sup>2</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, God the Holy Spirit (Wheaton, Il.: Crossway Books, 1997), 7.
- <sup>3</sup> Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 97.
- <sup>4</sup> Lloyd-Jones, God the Holy Spirit, 18.
- <sup>5</sup> Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 98.
- <sup>6</sup> J.I. Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit, (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Fleming H. Revell, 1984), 63-67
- <sup>7</sup> Lloyd-Jones, God the Holy Spirit, 8.
- <sup>8</sup> Lloyd-Jones, God the Holy Spirit, 24.
- <sup>9</sup> B.B. Warfield, The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1997), 24-29.
- <sup>10</sup> Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 469.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 471.
- <sup>12</sup> Stott, Baptism and Fullness, 12.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 55.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 60-61.
- <sup>15</sup> Lloyd-Jones, God the Holy Spirit, 235-6.
- <sup>16</sup> Stott, Baptism and Fullness, 15-16.
- <sup>17</sup> Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit, 182.
- <sup>18</sup> “The Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” 2.
- <sup>19</sup> Dennis and Rita Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You (North Brunswick, N.J.: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 17-19.
- <sup>20</sup> The Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p. 2.
- <sup>21</sup> Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit, 184-85.
- <sup>22</sup> Stott, Baptism and Fullness, 29.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 33.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 34-6.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 36.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 39.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 71-2.
- <sup>29</sup> D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Joy Unspeakable, (Wheaton, Il.: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1984), 23-5.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 25.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 26.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 28.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., 29-31.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 43.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 23.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., 36-7.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 68.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 84-5.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., 95-6.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., 40.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 77.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., 42.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., 180.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., 75.
- <sup>45</sup> Sinclair Ferguson, The Holy Spirit, (Downer’s Grove, Il.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 235.
- <sup>46</sup> Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You, 87-97.
- <sup>47</sup> Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit, 212.
- <sup>48</sup> Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You, 107.
- <sup>49</sup> Donald Gee, Concerning Spiritual Gifts, (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1999), 21.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

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- <sup>51</sup> Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You, 108.
- <sup>52</sup> Carl F.H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1979), 220-21.
- <sup>53</sup> Ferguson, The Holy Spirit, 232.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 212.
- <sup>55</sup> Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You, 87.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 116.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 122.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., 123.
- <sup>59</sup> “Divine Healing, 3-4.
- <sup>60</sup> Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You, 118-19.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 124-5.
- <sup>62</sup> Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit, 182-3.
- <sup>63</sup> “Divine Healing” 3-4.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., 3-4.