Rediscovering the Holy Spirit

God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life



Michael Horton

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You don’t have to agree with everything that Michael Horton says in this important book, but the main lines of his thought are certainly right and utterly transforming. The Holy Spirit is not “shy.” Nor is he the member of the Godhead who fills in the bits and pieces of our experience that the Father and the Son neglected to take on. By displaying the sweeping work of the Spirit across redemptive history, Horton not only deepens our understanding of Scripture but our grasp of what it means to confess God as triune. And that calls us to deeper worship.

D. A. Carson

Research Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, President of The Gospel Coalition, and author of *Praying with Paul*.

Horton has given us a magisterial account of the person and work of the Spirit that is also a journey through the entire sweep of Christian doctrine. Along the way, he offers rich scriptural insights, engagement with key figures down the millennia and across traditions, and speaks into pressing contemporary concerns, drawing out the implications of a robustly scriptural and Trinitarian pneumatology for faith and life, worship and mission.

Suzanne McDonald

Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, author of *Re-Imaging Election*.

Rediscovering the Holy Spirit is a veritable voyage of theological discovery in the engaging company of expedition leader professor Michael Horton. Plotting a fascinating course through the ocean of biblical theology, he maps out the terrain of systematic theology and sets up landmarks for the faith of the church as she confesses “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” *En route* he points out some of the breathtaking vistas and glorious panoramas of the Spirit’s divine person and his creating, saving, and consummating activity. The whole expedition is a further demonstration of Mike Horton’s remarkable ability to tackle great themes with both freshness of insight and joy in exposition. Here is a work to which readers will return and find themselves, in concert with the church in every age, gladly bowing in worship to the Holy Spirit “together with the Father and the Son.”

Sinclair B. Ferguson

Teaching Fellow for Ligonier Ministries and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, author of *The Holy Spirit: Contours in Systematic Theology*.

Here is a carefully wrought work that reorganizes much of the material we expect to find in a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, connecting things too often bifurcated while distinguishing things too often conflated. This pneumatology pushes and pulls on some of our habitual categories because it attends so carefully to the Holy Spirit as the one who not only reconciles and perfects (the sections on the Spirit in creation and eschatology stand out) but also sanctifies and separates (the Spirit's role in judgment and consecration is strikingly accented). It is wonderful that Horton says considerably more here about the Holy Spirit than we have heard from him in previous books, but it is equally wonderful that what he says is in keeping with the main lines of his theological project: anchored in the Trinity, spanning redemptive history, and directly connected to the ordinary ministry of the church.

Fred Sanders

Professor, Torrey Honors Institute, Biola University, and author of *The Trinity: New Studies in Dogmatics*

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MICHAEL HORTON

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Acknowledgments

There are few topics that are as rewarding of our time and patient exploration than the person and work of the Holy Spirit and that fact has been confirmed to me as I have been working through these chapters over the past few years. The project was initiated by the kind invitation of Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, to bring their annual lecture series. Hence, it is to the faculty and especially to my friend and Moore principal, Mark Thompson, that I dedicate this work. I am also grateful to Michael Allen for his valuable input and corrections. I am deeply appreciative of the collegiality, wisdom, and expertise of the Zondervan team, particularly Ryan Pazdur and Christopher Beetham. And I am especially grateful once again to my wife and children for their interest and comments on the work and for encouraging me in this project.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
BDAG	F. W. Danker, W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
CD	Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics.* Ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957–1975.
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
KJV	King James Version
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	The Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint)
MT	Masoretic Text (the Hebrew Bible)
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NKJV	New King James Version
NPNF^2	*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series. Ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace. 14 vols. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
par.	parallel text
PG	Patrologia Graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.

PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

INTRODUCTION

"Bluish, but Hard to See"

Based on Todd Burpo's #1 *New York Times* bestseller (for forty consecutive weeks), the 2010 movie *Heaven Is for Real* recounted a three-year-old boy's alleged glimpse of heaven during an emergency surgery. Deceased grandparents were described in detail. So was Jesus. Sitting on his lap, the boy, Colton, discovered that Jesus—with "sea-green-blueish eyes"—had a rainbow horse. Even Gabriel was described in full color along with God the Father (also with blue eyes)—apparently a larger version of the famous angel. Yet the Holy Spirit was "bluish, but hard to see . . ."

"Bluish, but hard to see": that description may be a fitting way of opening our exploration. Who exactly *is* the mysterious third person of the Trinity? Why does he seem to possess less reality or at least fewer descriptive features than the Father and the Son? Is this only a problem in popular culture—and, by implication, in the churches that have helped to shape it? Or is the Spirit's profile blurry in the broader faith and practice of mainstream Christianity? According to Puritan divine John Owen, we enjoy "distinct communion with each person of the Trinity," including the Holy Spirit.[1] But do we? Or is our tendency to think of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as one person with three different names or "faces"? Perhaps we think of the Holy Spirit as a divine force or energy that we can "plug into" for spiritual power. Or as the kinder and gentler—more intimate—side of God. But a person—in fact, a distinct person of the Godhead?

It is always the right time to give sustained reflection on the Holy Spirit's person and work—known technically as *pneumatology*. Yet it is especially appropriate in our contemporary climate. "Until recently," notes Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "it was commonplace to introduce pneumatological treatises with a lament over the Spirit's neglect." However, "one of the most exciting developments in theology has been an unprecedented interest in the Holy Spirit."[2] This interest has come from and reached across various traditions. As with the renewed interest in Trinitarian theology more generally, there are opportunities for discovery as well as distortion. Crucial insights abound from a

variety of Christian traditions in recent years, along with criticisms (sometimes exaggerated) of ostensible neglect of the Spirit throughout the vast tracks of Christian history and consequent overcorrections.

Theology should attain to the highest (legitimate) academic standards, but it is done ultimately for the church and not for the academy. And it seems to be fairly evident that in our churches there is a serious polarization with respect to the Holy Spirit. Reacting against Pentecostal/charismatic movements, some Christians are suspicious of the topic. Many of us still remember the "Holy Ghost" from the old King James Version. For most modern people, a ghost is associated more with All Hallows' Eve (a.k.a. Halloween) than with Pentecost Sunday. Especially in our age, the Holy Spirit is regarded (when taken seriously at all) as the "spooky" member of the Trinity. If you're into that sort of thing—the paranormal and sensational—then the Holy Spirit is for you.

I want to challenge this association of the Spirit merely with the extraordinary. This is unfortunate all around, because it distinguishes his work too sharply from that of the Father and the Son and also because it distracts us from the vast range of his activity in our world and in our lives. On both sides of the Pentecostal divide, we too easily treat the Holy Spirit as a placeholder for the "extra" things in Christianity. Sure, we have the Father and the Son, but we also need the Holy Spirit. You may be redeemed, but have you been baptized in the Spirit? The Word is vital, but we must not forget the Spirit. Doctrine is important, but there is also experience.

Consequently, the Spirit becomes typecast into predictable roles—mostly cameo appearances, especially from the book of Acts—that provoke debates over whether we should expect the same signs and wonders today. We think of him when we are talking about regeneration and sanctification and when we are arguing about his more controversial gifts. Otherwise, he is out of sight and out of mind since the extraordinary gifts are seen as no longer in operation.

At the same time, Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia observes, "For all their talk about the importance of pneumatology, Pentecostals have yet to couch their narrow pneumatological interest in charismatic/missionary empowerment within a broader pneumatological framework."[3] At this point, the major area of difference is over what one thinks about these "extras," their centrality, and their continuing role in the life of the church.

Debates over signs and wonders have narrowed the Spirit's repertoire. The role of the Holy Spirit in our faith and practice shrinks to the extent that he is associated exclusively with that which is spectacular, unmediated, spontaneous,

and informal. When this happens, we easily settle for a false choice between formalism and enthusiasm. And when his significance is reduced to the inner experience of the individual, we miss some of the most interesting and essential features of his person and work.

Though a generalization, Benedictine theologian Kilian McDonnell puts the matter well:

> In both Protestantism and Catholicism, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, or pneumatology, has to do mostly with private, not public experience. In Protestantism, the interest in pneumatology has been largely in pietism where it is a function of interiority and inwardness. In Roman Catholicism, its dominant expression has been in books on spirituality or on the charismatic renewal, or when speaking of the structural elements of the church. In the West, we think essentially in Christological categories, with the Holy Spirit as an extra, an addendum, a 'false' window to give symmetry and balance to theological design. We build up our large theological constructs in constitutive Christological categories, and then, in a second, nonconstitutive moment, we decorate the already constructed system with pneumatological baubles, a little Spirit tinsel.[4]

Similarly, Abraham Kuyper lamented at the end of the nineteenth century, "Even though we honor the Father and believe on the Son, how little do we live in the Holy Spirit! It even seems to us sometimes that for our sanctification only the Holy Spirit is added accidentally to the great redemptive work."[5]

If the Spirit is too often an afterthought in our theology, it is not surprising to see sometimes a subtle demotion of the Spirit creep into our prayers, discourse, praise, and other aspects of daily piety. Obviously the Father is God, and faithful Protestants have battled mightily for the Son's full divinity. However, the Spirit can easily be seen merely as a facilitator of our relationship with the Father and the Son. But is the Holy Spirit fully God in the same sense as the Father and the Son? Does the Nicene Creed sometimes give us pause when we say that the Spirit "together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified"? If the tendency of some is to see the Son as inferior to the Father, then surely the *third* person can be easily seen as even lower on the scale of divinity, most obviously indicated by the impersonal pronoun "it" often used to refer to him.

Even short of these errors, usually implicit, we can bring in the Spirit too late in the story. One of my central concerns in these chapters is to explore the

Spirit's distinctive role in every external work of the Godhead. The Spirit is neither "shy" nor a freelance operator; his work is not merely supplemental to the creating and redeeming work of the Father in the Son but is integral to the divine drama from beginning to end. In short, I want to widen our vision of the Spirit's work.

The Father is the source of the Son and the Spirit—and of all good in creation and redemption. Christ is the lead character of the biblical drama: the Alpha and Omega, from Genesis to Revelation, creation to the consummation. "All things were created through him and for him" (Col 1:16; cf. John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2). Yet the Spirit is also introduced in the Bible's second verse, carrying out his own distinct role in creation. We cannot even talk about Christ's person and work apart from the Spirit's role in the incarnation, ministry and miracles, obedience, death and resurrection. The Spirit's work cannot be introduced for the first time under "the application of redemption." Any authentically biblical doctrine of creation, providence, Christ's person and work, Scripture, preaching, the sacraments, the church, and eschatology must include a robust account of the Spirit's agency.

Before summarizing the main emphases of this book, it might be helpful to address two questions related to our context: First, why has the Spirit's person and work (pneumatology) become front-and-center in recent decades? Second, what are some of the challenges as well as opportunities of this renewed interest?

Context: Renewed Interest in the Spirit

Theologians would like to think that their tomes trickle down to the masses and shape Christian discourse and prayer. However, it is often the case that theological trends emerge more in response to the actual life of the church and the insights and experiences of the faithful. Long before the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, the faithful were being baptized, praying and living as Trinitarians. Knowledge of the Father in Christ and by the Spirit was first of all an experienced reality, albeit revealed by God in history and preserved in canonical Scripture, which gave rise to a high view of Christ and the Holy Spirit as fully divine with the Father.[6] Subsequent theology was an attempt to wrestle with the drama (what God had done in history) and the doctrines (God's

interpretation of those events) as well as the doxology and discipleship revealed in Scripture.[7] A classic example of this in the postapostolic church is Basil's fourth-century treatise *On the Holy Spirit*. Hilary of Poitiers and Augustine of Hippo contributed rich reflections on the Spirit as the personal love and gift of the Father and the Son.

In subsequent centuries, especially in the West, it was frequently the case that the Spirit's work receded from view to the extent that his work was transferred to ecclesiastical control. Catholic theologian Yves Congar notes that, instead of being seen as means of the Spirit's operations, the sacraments often were regarded as efficient in and of themselves, rendering the Spirit somewhat irrelevant. The pope, the saints, and the Virgin Mary also could become "substitutes for the Holy Spirit."[8] In reaction, various spiritualist movements arose that set the Spirit in opposition to the church and its ministry of Word and sacrament. A cleavage developed between a hierarchical institution filled with abuses and charismatic individuals who sought a direct and personal experience of God through visions, miracles, and ecstasy even apart from the ordinary ministry of the church.

It is not saying too much, with B. B. Warfield, that the Reformation constituted a major rediscovery of the Holy Spirit. Whereas medieval theology emphasized grace as a created substance infused into the soul to aid its upward ascent, the Reformers proclaimed that the uncreated Spirit is the gift who unites sinners to Christ with all of his benefits. Despite Luther's vehement criticism of the "enthusiasts," Luther's *Small Catechism* states, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."[9]

It is widely recognized that among the magisterial Reformers, John Calvin especially contributed the richest pneumatological reflection. Of the Reformers, observes Pentecostal theologian Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Calvin's theology was the most thoroughly pervaded by pneumatology, although he was as critical as Luther of "enthusiasm" that separates the Spirit from the Word.[10] Roman Catholic theologian Brian Gaybba goes so far as to say that "with Calvin there is a rediscovery—in the West at any rate—of a biblical idea virtually forgotten since patristic times. It is the idea of the Spirit of God in action."[11] The great humanist Desiderius Erasmus wrote a scornful letter to Calvin's elder colleague Guillaume Farel reproaching Geneva: "The French refugees have these five

words continually on their lips: Gospel, Word of God, Faith, Christ, Holy Spirit."[12] Yet Calvin was hardly alone in this regard when one recalls the names of other Reformed leaders: not only the well-known such as Bucer, Vermigli, Cranmer, Knox, Jan Łaski, and Beza, but women writers such as Queen of Navarre, Jeanne d'Albret, and Olympia Fulvia Morata. Without any loss of Christ-centeredness, the Reformed confessions and catechisms give a prominent place to the person and work of the Spirit. In fact, mention of the Holy Spirit appears in the first answer of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Engaging Scripture as well as patristic and medieval sources, the era of what is often called Reformed orthodoxy reopened grand vistas on the Spirit in liturgical and devotional forms alongside more scholarly explorations. John Owen's lengthy treatises on the Holy Spirit are merely examples of the enormous influence of Puritan writers like William Perkins, Richard Sibbes, and Thomas Goodwin. One thinks of Scots such as Gillespie and Rutherford as well as Continental contemporaries such as the Czech Jan Komenský (Comenius), Voetius, Witsius, and à Brakel, Pierre du Moulin and Jean Taffin, to name only a few. The influence of such sources as these, as well as Abraham Kuyper's *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, will be apparent throughout this study. Whatever forgetfulness of the Holy Spirit may be evident in Protestantism generally and in Reformed circles particularly must be part of a forgetfulness of the rich treasures of our own past.

Just as the Reformation would have remained a university debate apart from the groundswell of popular concern, widespread interest in the Spirit today has been driven significantly by Pentecostal and charismatic movements over the last century. It may not be overstating things to suggest that groups that were considered sects in previous eras are now the mainstream of Christianity's explosive growth in the majority world. While Pentecostalism was seen typically by mainline Protestants as an alien tradition rooted largely in an extreme form of Wesleyan revivalism, the charismatic movement swept through Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. However one judges this impact, there can be little doubt that these movements have influenced and even altered the faith and practice of global Christianity in a variety of ways.

Consequently, a new generation of Pentecostal theologians reflects sophisticated engagement with the ecumenical movement, eschewing the more anti-intellectual tendencies of the past. More significant perhaps is the number of Roman Catholic and Orthodox as well as mainline Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian and Reformed, and Baptist scholars who are identified as "renewal

theologians." Methodist theologian D. Lyle Dabney, for example, encouraged a number of other non-Pentecostals, such as Baptist theologian Clark Pinnock, to consider giving primacy to the Spirit across all of the loci of systematic theology.[13] However, many who do not identify themselves with these labels nevertheless reflect this widespread interest today in the Holy Spirit.

And yet, as with the revival of interest in the Trinity, renewed interest in the Spirit does not always mean clarity or consistency with respect to historic Christian teaching. It is not to be assumed that the Spirit whom people have in mind is the Spirit identified in Scripture. Nevertheless, once theologians start talking again about Jesus as God incarnate, they inevitably become interested in the Trinity—and sooner or later, the Holy Spirit's person and work. This was precisely the course of development in ancient theology that led to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

Cautions and Concerns

The apostle Paul upbraided the Corinthians for tolerating false teaching: "For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough" (2 Cor 11:4 ESV). The super apostles proclaimed not only a different Jesus and gospel but a different spirit—someone or something other than the Holy Spirit. All who are committed to the evangelical faith recognize the Scriptures not as the revelation of our pious experience—either as individuals or communities—but as the revelation of God from God, leading us to the Father in the Son by the Spirit. Our churches and Western culture share much in common with the world inhabited by the first recipients of Paul's letters. One concern that I have is that many contemporary treatments move in the direction of depersonalizing the Holy Spirit. Since this concern is more implicit until the final chapter, I would like to explain what I mean.

Depersonalization of the Spirit in Academic Theology

It seems to me that we are living less in an atheistic era than in a pantheistic or at least panentheistic one.[14] Stoicism, Platonism, and Neoplatonism bequeathed to Western thought the idea of a world soul or spirit, the divine heart

of the cosmos that animates lifeless matter. With strong parallels in Eastern religions and philosophies, this has been a stubborn dogma that radical mystical traditions in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have found difficult to shake—or to square with their fundamental texts and teachings.

For the idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, the third person of the Trinity was depersonalized as "Absolute Spirit," indistinguishable from the process of history moving toward an entirely immanent consummation. Renewed interest in pneumatology among mainline theologians has gone hand in hand with renewed fascination with Hegel's conceptual resources. I will interact with this challenge more directly in chapter 2.

Beyond this direct influence, a more generally Romantic-pantheistic attitude is evident in academic as well as popular culture in the West. One might even say, "We're all 'enthusiasts' now." In various non-Christian religions and philosophies, "the Spirit" or generic "Spirit" becomes central precisely because it avoids the particularity of the incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, much less a Father who is seen as transcending the world as sovereign creator, ruler, and judge. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead most likely to be assimilated to the world, either to one's own spirit or to the spirit of the community (i.e., the church), or to the World Spirit as in Buddhism, Gnosticism, and New Age thinking. For those scandalized by the gospel's specificity, (the) Spirit becomes the preferred deity for those identifying as "spiritual but not religious."

The "universal fatherhood of God" was the central dogma of an earlier phase of Protestant liberalism. Here the emphasis was on universal morality and the feeling of absolute dependence. Jesus may have been divine "in some sense," but not in the sense confessed by Christians for two millennia as one in essence with the Father. However, confidence in "God the Father Almighty" has suffered at the hands of various theological schools, alleging that it is the font not of every blessing but of hierarchical (especially male) oppression. Furthermore, it is argued the Father-Son relationship—especially in traditional atonement theology—represents "cosmic child abuse." We are told increasingly that even Christ-centered theologies raise the specter of creedal divisions between religions and within the professing Christian religion in particular. Besides, the Christ of the creeds is the product substance metaphysics, we are told, which we all know or should know is wrong for some reason. It all seems a tangle, better left behind than sorted out, at least in the view of some notable theological projects today.

So the Spirit seems like just the right person of the Trinity for a pluralistic

age. Nearly everyone today is "spiritual." Furthermore, the Spirit—or just "Spirit"—is everywhere, empowering everyone for what they could do themselves but with greater difficulty. There are no vehement debates about the search for the historical Spirit. If Christ has been made into a wax figure by some Jesus scholars, the Holy Spirit seems even more susceptible to ideological and subjective manipulation and abstraction. So the Spirit becomes the obvious choice for a culture that eschews the particularity of the Father and the Son and the historical associations attending this particularity.

Depersonalized and universalized, the Spirit becomes *immanentized*—that is, confused with creation. Assimilated to the world or to one's own inner spirit, such "Spirit"-centered movements drift easily into neopaganism. In short, exuberant talk about the Spirit may become just one more way of talking about ourselves. Yet it is precisely the job description of the Holy Spirit to keep this from happening.

Depersonalizing the Spirit in Our Churches

Even in broader Christian piety, there is a tendency to treat the Holy Spirit as a force or source of power more than a person who is powerful. People are looking for "empowerment." We still want to be in charge, but we would like to know where we might find additional resources for physical and spiritual health so that we may fulfill our dreams. In Christian circles we speak of "appropriating the Spirit," drawing on the Spirit as if he were something like an electrical outlet or a generator that we "switch on and use," as Packer puts it.[15] No doubt, this tendency is part and parcel of an age obsessed with human autonomy, in which we try to find a place for God in our story of personal meaning, success, and achievement rather than allow ourselves to be written and cast into God's story of the cross and resurrection.

A common temptation is to collapse the hypostases of the Trinity into one person: the heresy known as *modalism*. If we tend to confuse the persons in our thinking and praying, the danger is especially apparent with respect to the Holy Spirit. Even when we hold the distinction between the Father and the Son clearly in our hearts, it is easy to collapse the Spirit into "God" (a generic essence) or to consider the Spirit a divine *something* (the power or energy of God) rather than a divine *someone* ("the Lord and giver of life"). Do we sometimes halt when we confess that the Spirit "is worshipped and glorified" together with the Father and the Son? It is the strength of good prayers—said and sung—to train our hearts in

the Trinitarian faith.

It is in the public service—the weekly gathering of the communion of saints—where this faith is won or lost. Whatever is received, done, or said there shapes our personal relationship with the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit. In the fourth century Basil of Caesarea revised the liturgy then in widespread use to more intentionally inculcate a full Trinitarianism, calling pastors "to keep the Spirit undivided from the Father and the Son, preserving, *both in confession of faith and in the doxology*, the doctrine taught them at their baptism."[16] One example was Basil's introduction of what we know as the *Gloria Patri*: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit," which stirred no small controversy among those who denied the appropriateness of worshiping the Spirit. It is not only a creedal *rule* that the Holy Spirit is to be "worshipped and glorified" together with the Father and the Son; these liturgies lead us to actually *invoke* the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit.

However, in many churches today prayers and songs have been stripped of Trinitarian references that had in earlier generations been woven into the warp and woof of worship. Not surprisingly, the result is often extemporaneous prayers that reflect our default setting of modalism. Even in doctrinally orthodox circles, one hears prayers that are confusing, as if the persons of the Trinity were interchangeable—perhaps even the same person. At least it seems that the person being addressed shifts back and forth without any specification. Sometimes the Father is thanked for coming into the world to save us, for dying for our sins, for indwelling us, or as the one who will return again. Very frequently, prayers conclude with "in your name, amen." In *whose* name? Scripture teaches us to pray *to* the Father *in the name* of Christ: it is not the Father or the Spirit but the Son who is our mediator.

Some contemporary praise choruses reflect and reinforce this confusion of the persons, with praises directed to the Father for specific acts of the Son or to the Son for specific acts that Scripture attributes to the Spirit, and so forth. For example, in the popular chorus, "You Alone," believers are led to pray as if they were Arians: "You alone are Father / and You alone are good. / You alone are Savior / and You alone are God."[17]

Worship songs are intended not merely to facilitate personal expression of one's feelings but to sing the truth deeply into our hearts: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," Paul exhorts, "teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in

your hearts to God" (Col 3:16 ESV). Luke reminds us that the early Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and *the* prayers" (Acts 2:42 ESV). Anyone reared in the synagogue would have known what "the prayers" meant. Like a trellis, the formal prayers (said and sung) were a way of not only directing public worship but of shaping informal worship in the family and when alone. We are baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We pray to the Father, in the Son, by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. This does not require a particular book of liturgies, but it at least suggests that we are as intentional as our forebears about inculcating the Trinitarian faith in the hearts of today's generation not only through explicit teaching but through our communication with the triune God in prayer and praise.

Why Do We Tend to Depersonalize or Marginalize the Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the easiest person of the Godhead to depersonalize—and not only because of cultural forces. Even if we do not take things in a pantheistic direction, it is easy to lose sight of the Holy Spirit precisely because of who he is and what he does as revealed in Scripture.[18] One might even say that, for the Spirit, being somewhat forgotten is an occupational hazard. In other words, some of our confusion about the Holy Spirit arises from a distortion of genuinely biblical truths.

First, God is an incomprehensible mystery. He has revealed enough about himself for us to apprehend him in faith, but we do not know his inner essence. Even the term "person" in Trinitarian discussions is used analogically and anthropomorphically. The subsistences of the Godhead are not persons in the way that three human beings are persons, with separate centers of consciousness, wills, and so forth. Scripture provides us with sufficient revelation of the Spirit's identity and mission, but it is often difficult for us to remain within these bounds.

Second, even when we embrace the incomprehensible revelation of God as Trinity, it is not easy to connect the Holy Spirit to our experience. We know what a Father-Son relation is in human terms, but where does the Spirit fit? Rounding out the familial image, Mary has sometimes been given something close to the status of the third person in popular Roman Catholic piety. Some recent theologians have even referred to the Spirit as Mother to make the triad more resonant with our familial experience. However, this move lacks exegetical

foundation. Even if the Spirit is likened to a mother or a hen in a few verses, this is in the Spirit's relation to creation, not within the immanent Godhead. Furthermore, theologically, such a notion renders the Son a procession of the Spirit. Quite different, but no less problematic, is the comparison of the relations of the Son and the Spirit to the Father to those of a wife and child, respectively.[19] Notwithstanding bold attempts to identify the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son, we simply do not have many passages about the Spirit's role in the immanent Trinity. Even in John's Gospel where we find the bulk of our Lord's teaching about the Spirit, the emphasis falls on the relation of Jesus as eternal Son to his Father. Nevertheless, we have a great deal of revelation concerning the Spirit's mission in the economy of creation and redemption—and it is that theater that will be the focus of our exploration.

Third, the Holy Spirit is so actively involved in our lives, subjectively, that we can take his presence for granted or identify him with our own inner self. Domesticating the Spirit to an individualistic mysticism, the Holy Spirit becomes one's inmost voice. But again, this is a distortion of a truth. The Holy Spirit *is* the person who works *within* us, even to the point of indwelling us and interceding in our hearts. But the Holy Spirit is not our spirit, and his voice is not to be confused with our own. The Spirit is a divine person within us, not a divine part of us.

Fourth, from a proper focus on Christ we may improperly infer that the Holy Spirit has a minor part in the biblical drama. As in the other dangers, this error is a distortion of the truth rather than an outright contradiction of it. After all, Jesus taught us to read Scripture with himself at the center (Luke 24:25–27; John 5:39). Jesus himself taught us that the Spirit "will bear witness about me" (John 15:26 ESV; cf. 16:14–15). J. I. Packer compares the Holy Spirit to a spotlight that illumines a glorious cathedral at night.[20] One does not stare into the light but beholds the Savior by that light. You can therefore be sure where the Spirit is active: wherever Jesus Christ is held up as the Savior of sinners. Therefore, even when we turn the spotlight on the Spirit, we find him engaged always in something related to Christ. Not only in the biblical drama but even in our own lives, our first experience of God is with the Holy Spirit. Yet it is he who makes us aware of and unites us to *Christ* through whom we meet a gracious *Father*. Precisely to the extent that the Spirit is active in our lives, we are focally aware of someone else!

The apostles exhibited this Christ-centered focus in their sermons recorded in

Acts and their use of the Old Testament in the epistles. In fact, the efficacy of the Holy Spirit's mission is measured by the extent to which we are focused on Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2 KJV). Throughout Paul's letters, the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Christ" because the Spirit's mission is inextricably bound to Christ's. The Holy Spirit wants nothing to do with a Spirit-centered Christianity. It is therefore understandable that precisely because of his success, the Spirit's ministry in our lives would bring more attention to Christ than to himself. In short, we can take the Spirit for granted precisely because we are depending on him while we are focusing on Christ.

And yet this same history of promise and fulfillment includes the Holy Spirit as well. The promise is not that the Spirit would become our incarnate Redeemer; yet, the incarnation did come about through the Spirit's activity. Together with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is at the center of the action from Genesis 1:2 all the way to Revelation 22:17. Christ is indeed the one who leads us to the Father, but it is only by the Spirit that this is possible. Ignoring the Spirit not only deprives us of encountering a person of the Godhead, but a weak pneumatology (i.e., a theology of the Spirit) inevitably encourages distortions of other important doctrines, including the person and work of Christ.

If we dare not depersonalize or marginalize, we should be wary also of overreacting by giving precedence to the Spirit over the Father and the Son. The very fact that the Holy Spirit indwells us may lead us to assume that he is the intimate and approachable person of the Trinity. Is the Father remote, perhaps even the angry parent who has to be coaxed into relating to us personally? Is the Son himself too distant and unconcerned, especially since he has ascended to the Father and will only return bodily at the end of the age? Does this mean that the Holy Spirit becomes the accessible, relevant, and friendly person of the Godhead?

Again we have a distortion of a biblical truth. The Holy Spirit's intimate relationship to us, even to the point of indwelling us, can be interpreted wrongly in a direction that gradually separates him from the Father and the Son. We must walk a tightrope—Scripture does underscore the Spirit's role in regenerating us; of uniting us to Christ and, in him, to the Father; of indwelling us and interceding within our hearts; of stirring us to love and fellowship with the Father and the Son as well as each other. Since our first contact with the triune God is with the Holy Spirit, who raises us from spiritual death and indwells us, we can wrongly conclude that the Spirit is the approachable person of the Trinity. Instead, we should see this work of the Spirit as initiated by the Father

and purchased and mediated by the Son. *Through the Spirit's operation, all three persons come near to us and bring us into their fellowship*.

For all of these reasons and more, we need to take a step back every now and again to focus on the Spirit himself—his person and work—in order to recognize him as someone other than Jesus or ourselves, much less some*thing*, such as a divine power or resource. We need to explore the vast territory of the Spirit's operations. And then, hopefully, we obtain by this contemplation a fresh dependence on the Holy Spirit in every area of our lives.

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1. John Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 95.

2. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Holy Spirit and Salvation: The Sources of Christian Theology*, ed. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), xi.

3. Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 18.

4. As quoted by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Holy Spirit: A Guide to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 82, from Killian McDonnell, "The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *Theology Today* 39.2 (1982): 142.

5. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), xii.

6. Gordon Fee elucidates this point helpfully in *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994).

7. I am alluding here to the coordinates I mention in *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 13–15.

8. Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Complete Three-Volume Work in One Volume*, trans. David Smith, Milestones in Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 1:160–66.

9. Theodore G. Tappert, ed., "The Small Catechism (1529)," in *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 329.

10. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical,*

International, and Contextual Perspective (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 46.

11. Brian Gaybba, *The Spirit of Love: Theology of the Holy Spirit* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 100. With Matthew Levering (*Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016], 321n43, from whom I discovered this reference, I think Gaybba overstates the point. Nevertheless, the richness of Calvin's pneumatological reflections is exhibited throughout his theological reflections and exegetical commentary in ways that were not typical in late medieval treatises.

12. Quoted in Emile G. Leonard, *The Reformation*, vol. 1 of *A History of Protestantism*, ed. H. H. Rowley, 2 vols. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), 306.

13. D. Lyle Dabney, "Why Should the Last Be First? The Priority of Pneumatology in Recent Theological Discussion," in *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 240–61. I appreciate Dabney's argument that every locus should be enriched by pneumatological reflection, and in fact I set out to defend and exhibit this in this book. However, a sound pneumatology must be an outworking of *Trinitarian* theology, since the Spirit and his work are inseparable from the Father and the Son. Consequently, it is only by recognizing the Spirit's relation to the other persons in both the processions and the missions (hence, across all theological loci) that our pneumatology remains biblical and tethered to the economy rather than a separate criterion that is more susceptible to speculation.

14. While *pantheism* holds that "all is God" and "God is all," *panentheism* teaches that *all is in God*. Unlike pantheism, panentheism claims that God is more than the world, but unlike traditional theism maintains the interdependence of God and the world. For an excellent treatment of the subject, see especially John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

15. J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step with the Spirit*, 2nd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 26.

16. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 10.26 (*NPNF*^{2} 8:17), emphasis added.

17. David Crowder Band, "You Alone," *The Lime CD* (Six Step Records, 2004).

18. I will be referring throughout to the Holy Spirit with the masculine

personal pronoun, not of course because I consider him to be literally gendered but in keeping with the language of Scripture and tradition.

19. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 257.

20. Packer, *Keep In Step with the Spirit*, 57.



CHAPTER 1

Lord and Life-Giver

The Holy Spirit is eternally at work within the Godhead, resting in the Father through the Son. In all of the external works of the Trinity—creation, providence, redemption, and the consummation—the Spirit makes the speech of the Father in the Son effective to complete the speaker's intention. The Father's speech never returns to him without effect because there is his Spirit who brings about within creation its "amen!" to whatever the Father has worded it to be in and for the Son.

I have two broad emphases in this study: (1) the *distinctness* of the Spirit's person and work along with his *unity* with the Father and the Son; (2) the identification of the Spirit's operations in Scripture not only with that which is extraordinary, spontaneous, and immediate but also—and even more frequently—with that which is ordinary, ordered, and performed through creaturely means. While reflecting on the unity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, I want to explore the distinctness and uniqueness of the Holy Spirit's person and work. My own experience discloses a tendency to regard the Spirit as a shadowy figure, somehow related to the other persons—at times even blurred with the more prominent identity of Jesus Christ. Much of what I have to say about the Spirit in this book will be tacking closely to the unfolding narrative of Scripture. But we have to begin with some crucial doctrinal coordinates.

"*The Lord* . . . Who with the Father and the Son Is Worshipped and Glorified"

We confess two chief points in the third article of the Nicene Creed: that the Holy Spirit is "Lord" *and* that he is the "giver of life."[1] By confessing his lordship, we proclaim that the Spirit is one with the Father and the Son both in essence and in operations. There are not three lords, but one; consequently, in

everything accomplished by the triune God there is one divine work. This point is expressed in the time-honored maxim, *opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt* —"the external works of the Trinity are undivided," about which I have more to say below.

The Holy Spirit is Lord in exactly the same sense that the Father and the Son are the Lord. The Holy Spirit is not a divine energy or a semidivine agent but the Lord God, YHWH. The Spirit is sometimes represented as a softer aspect of the one person who is God. The Father (the one true God) seems distant in his sovereign transcendence, but the Spirit is God in his more intimate and knowable form. According to James D. G. Dunn, "the Spirit of God" in Israel's texts "was, like Wisdom and Word, a way of speaking of divine immanence. . . ."[2] In this construction, the Spirit lies on the *revelational* rather than *ontological* side of the ledger: not a distinct person of God but a way of underscoring God's immanence. However, the Christian confession is that the Spirit is "worshipped and glorified" together with the Father and the Son, sharing in their sovereign transcendence and immanent activity in the world according to his own personal properties.[3]

Eager to discern the Trinity in the Old Testament, Christians often have seized upon Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Even if this verse does not yield as much as they claimed, their intuition was correct: to read the Old Testament in the light of the New. This is how Jesus interpreted Scripture (Matt 12:40; Luke 24:27; John 5:39, etc.) and the apostles as well in their preaching (Acts 2:14–36; 3:17–18; 15:13–19; 17:3; 26:23, etc.). Now that redemptive revelation has reached its climax thus far with the Father sending his Son and his Spirit into our world, we have new spectacles with which to read earlier Scripture. Hence, for example, John could begin his Gospel with an explicit echo of Genesis 1, hailing Jesus as the eternal Word by whom all things were created. This Logos motif was present already in early Judaism precisely because it was already present in the Old Testament, albeit in a more latent form.[4] Similarly, the decisive outpouring and indwelling of the Spirit since Pentecost is the standpoint from which we survey the vast field of the Spirit's operations across Israel's history.

A clearer argument for the Spirit's identity as a distinct person of the Godhead is found in the Bible's second verse: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." As in other places the phrase *ruakh*

’elohim may be translated here “a wind from God” (NRSV, for example): *ruakh* may mean wind or spirit. However, it is clearly God who is the subject of the creation-forming action, and yet the Spirit is distinguished from the one who speaks creation into being. The action itself—hovering—is personal; wind blows, but it would be odd to speak of wind as hovering, with an implied intentionality. Furthermore, it is taken for granted in later revelation that the Spirit is the giver of life, as in Psalm 104:30: “When you send your Spirit [*ruakh*], they are created.” The Spirit is not a *power emanating* but a *person sent*.

There are clear passages in the Old Testament that indicate also the distinct personality of the “eternal Spirit” (Heb 9:14) and yet identify this distinct person as God. It is by the Spirit that Moses performs miracles (Exod 8:19) and leads the Israelites through the waters of baptism in the Red Sea. The Spirit gifts certain people for special tasks (Exod 31:1–11; 36:30–35) and comes upon prophets so that they speak the word of God (2 Sam 23:2; Isa 59:21; Jer 1:2, 8, 15, 19; 2 Tim 3:14–17; 2 Pet 1:21). The Spirit is not merely an empowerment for teaching wisdom but is himself a divine teacher. He is not merely the glory of the Lord emanating from the temple but is the Lord whose glory radiates from the temple that he indwells. He came to the temple and departed from it. He is not merely a revealing and searching power of God but is the divine revealer and searcher (1 Cor 2:10).

As we will see, it is especially in the prophets that the Spirit is both divine and personal. He is to be “poured out” in the last days upon all of God’s people, indwelling them (Ezek 37:1–14; 39:29; Joel 2:28–32). One may shield himself from power or wind, but only a person can be grieved, as the Spirit was by Israel’s violation of the covenant (Isa 63:7–14) and is today when we resist his sanctifying influence (Eph 4:30). Identified by the divine name (Exod 31:3; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21), the Spirit also has divine attributes ascribed to him (omnipresence, Ps 139:7–10; omniscience, Isa 40:13–14; 1 Cor 2:10–11), as well as divine works (creation, Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; providential renovation, Ps 104:30; regeneration, John 3:5–6; Titus 3:5; resurrection of the dead, Rom 8:11). The Holy Spirit is also accorded divine homage (Matt 28:19; Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 13:14). The Spirit is referred to by Jesus and the apostles as the author of Scripture as the very word of God (Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; Heb 3:7; 9:8; 10:15; 1 Pet 1:11; 2 Pet 1:21). In fact, the phrases “the Spirit says” and “Jesus says” are interchangeable in Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

Just as Jesus reveals the Father, so he reveals the Holy Spirit; the Spirit, in turn, reveals Jesus as the Mediator and the Father as “our Father” to whom we

cry out, “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15). In his farewell discourse, Jesus taught his disciples to look for the other attorney (*paraklētos*) from heaven. The Spirit who delivered Israel, led the people to the promised land, and evacuated the temple when the nation broke the covenant will be sent to create a holy nation from all the families of the earth. In the discourse of John 14–16, which we will consider at greater length in another chapter, Jesus underscores the equality yet distinct person of the Spirit in terms of their respective missions of “coming” and “going,” “sending,” and “coming again.” This coming and going in and out of each other in the economy of redemption reveals the perichoretic relationship of these divine persons in their eternal fellowship without exhausting that incomprehensible relationship.[5]

In Acts 5, Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira by telling them that they have lied “to the Holy Spirit” (v. 3); they have “not lied to man but to God” (v. 4 ESV). In 2 Corinthians 3 the apostle singles out the Son and the Spirit as Lord: “But whenever anyone turns to the Lord [Jesus],” he says, “the veil is taken away” (v. 16). The reference is to Exodus 38 where Moses spoke to the Lord face to face without a veil. Then he turns to the Holy Spirit: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (v. 17). Both persons are mentioned in verse 18: “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s [Christ’s] glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” It is God the Spirit who unites us to God the Son and conforms us to his image.

This emphasis guards against the heresy of *subordinationism*, according to which the Son or the Spirit is regarded as ontologically inferior to the Father. But this classic formulation also rules out *tritheism*, the idea that the persons are actually three different gods whose unity consists merely in their agreement and common purpose rather than an essence that they share equally.[6] The Holy Spirit is *God* in exactly the same way and to the same extent as the Father and the Son.

“Giver of Life”

But the truth that the three persons are one God—the same in *essence*—must not lead us to conclude that they are the same *person*. Historically, this has been the danger of *modalism*. Also known as *Sabellianism*, after the third-century presbyter associated with this heresy, modalism holds that there is really only

one divine person who reveals himself now as the Father, now as the Son, and now as the Spirit. The persons are mere appearances or "masks"—like the "personas" of one actor who plays different roles. Both subordinationism and modalism are heresies that stress the unity of God at the expense of the genuine plurality of the persons.[7] These heresies have had defenders throughout church history but became especially attractive in radical forms of Protestantism (Socinianism, later known as Unitarianism) and came to characterize liberal theology in the train of Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Through great struggle, the ancient church formulated a common dogma of the Trinity that eschewed these heresies. Among others, two important distinctions came into play in this formulation. The first distinguishes between the *missions* and *processions*, also known as the *immanent* and *economic trinities*.[8] This does not mean that there are two actual "trinities," but that there is a distinction between the Trinity in its internal unity and processions (which are necessary) and the revelation of the triune God's operations in the world (which are contingent—or free).

Most basically, from the Father the Son is eternally begotten and the Spirit eternally proceeds. These are necessary acts *ab intra*—that is, within the life of the Trinity apart from the existence of anyone or anything external to this life (*ad extra*). In other words, the Father did not exist in solitude and then decide to beget the Son and the Spirit. There is no God and never has been a God who is other than the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: necessary, eternal, immutable. In the 1996 film *Jerry Maguire*, the lead character (played by Tom Cruise) tells his wife, "You complete me." But nothing in creation ever completes God. The triune God is eternally and unchangeably complete in the nature that the three persons share as well as in their mutual love and joy. The external works of the divine persons in the economy of creation, redemption, and consummation in no way constitute the identity either of the persons or the divine being that they share. God does not undergo any becoming or self-realization of his identity by his involvement in history.

But then there are the external works of the Godhead, which are freely willed, such as creation and redemption. These works are revealed in the economy of creation and grace. For example, the sending of the Son and the Spirit "in the fullness of time" is distinguished qualitatively from the eternal begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. And yet, the freely willed incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Spirit in history are "fitting" or

consonant with the eternal processions. Since it is the Son who is eternally begotten by the Father, it is fitting that he, rather than the Father or the Spirit, become flesh for us and for our salvation. But he is eternally the former even if the decision had never been made to create a world or to send the Son to redeem it. The economy—that is, what God chooses to do in history—reveals the truth about the intratrinitarian life but does not comprehend or exhaust it.

On the one hand, the immanent trinity is truly revealed in the historical economy. The missions (i.e., the sending of the Son and the Spirit) are consistent with the truth about God as he is in the eternal processions of begetting Father, begotten Son, and breathed-out Spirit. On the other hand, we cannot simply deduce the secrets of the immanent trinity from the economy. For example, the Spirit's formative role in the incarnation does not entail that the Son proceeds from the Spirit. Nor does Jesus's statement, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28), imply that the Son is inferior to the Father in eternity.

The second time-honored maxim, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, is that *the external works of the Trinity are undivided*. The works of the Godhead are not parceled out between the persons. Like the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is *Lord*—that is, sharing exactly the same divine essence and attributes. And the Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is engaged in every work of the Godhead. According to the doctrine of appropriations, we may refer to the Father as Creator, to the Son as Redeemer, and to the Spirit as Sanctifier. It is for the sake of instruction; one cannot say everything at the same time. Following the outline of the ecumenical creeds, systematic theologies often exhibit this pattern. However, there is always a danger in this approach of breaking this undivided-works rule. Everything that God does is done by the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. The Spirit, too, is Lord. As we will explore, the Spirit is engaged in creation and the accomplishment of redemption as fully as in the application of redemption.

Although the works are as undivided as the persons, there are nevertheless *three persons*: distinction without division. The Spirit is God, but he is also uniquely the person of the Trinity who gives life. "When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground" (Ps 104:30 ESV); "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). The Spirit is the unsubstitutable character in these scenes, sent by the Father to create and renew.

We must therefore distinguish between *essential* and *personal* properties (sometimes called *common* and *proper* attributes). With respect to the former, the

Holy Spirit is no less omniscient, eternal, unchanging, loving, just, and omnipotent than the Father or the Son. When it comes to the essential attributes, there is no difference between the persons. But there are differences in their personal attributes.[9] Most obviously, the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten, and the Spirit proceeds. The Son and the Spirit receive their personal existence from the Father eternally. Yet they are not essentially subordinate to the Father since they share the same essence with him.

What we meet in the unfolding biblical drama is not merely three "personas" but three concrete persons; not just three roles, but three actors. We encounter the Father as the *origin* of creation, redemption, and consummation, the Son as the *mediator*, and the Spirit as the one who *brings every work to completion*.

There are various ways of formulating this mystery:

- The Son is the Father's image; the Spirit is the bond of love between them. Consequently, in every external work of the Godhead the Father is the source, the Son is the mediator, and the Spirit is the consummator. Creation exists from the Father, in the Son, by the power of the Spirit; in the new creation Christ is the head while the Spirit is the one who unites the members to him and renews them according to Christ's image to the glory of the Father.
- Or we can say that the Father works *for* us, the Son works *among* us, and the Spirit works *within* us.
- God's works, both of creation and new creation, are typically described in Scripture as performed through speech, so we may also say it this way: Just as the Son is the Word of the Father and the Father (or the Father and the Son) breathes out the Spirit, all of the Father's speech in the Son brings about its intended effect because of the perfecting agency of the Spirit. We hear the voice of the Father, but we behold God himself in the face of Christ. Jesus could even tell Philip, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). But the Spirit is the one who brings about this recognition within us, as Jesus goes on to point out so clearly in the following verses (vv. 15–27). The Trinitarian reference is implied in 2 Corinthians 4:6 ESV: "For God [the Father], who *said*, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has *shone in our hearts* [by the Spirit] *to give the light* of the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ*."
- Or, if you will allow one more formulation: in the covenant of grace, the

> Father is the promise maker (Heb 6:13), the Son is the promise (2 Cor 1:20), and the Spirit brings about within us the "amen!" of faith (1 Cor 12:13).

The preceding examples of valid formulations lean heavily toward the economic trinity, that is, the distinct role of each person in every operation of the Godhead toward the world. And that is as it should be, since the weight of revelation falls on the external works of the Godhead "for us and for our salvation."

Already in the second century, Origen explored the distinct operations of the divine persons in each external work. All people participate in the Father (as Creator) and the Son (as Logos-Word-Reason). So they have their existence and reason from them, "but a share in the Holy Spirit is possessed, we find, by the saints alone."[10] "Here we see most clearly shown that there is no separation in the Trinity, but that this which is called the 'gift of the Spirit' is ministered through the Son and worked by God the Father." By the Spirit's work, those who participate already in the Son as Logos-Reason by nature now by grace "become capable of receiving Christ afresh in his character of the righteousness of God."[11] In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to participate in the Father and the Son by grace—in a qualitatively different way than we participate in them by nature.

Offering a more fully Trinitarian account, Athanasius observed that "while the Father is fountain, and the Son is called river, we are said to drink of the Spirit."

> For it is written that "we have all been given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). But when we are given to drink of the Spirit, we drink of Christ; for "they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:4). . . . But when we are made alive in the Spirit, Christ himself is said to live in us: "I have been crucified with Christ," it says, "I live, yet it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:19–20).[12]

Scripture gives sufficient reason to say with confidence that the persons, though distinct, are inseparable and are not different in essence. We are told *that* it is true but not *how*. "How can it be that when the Spirit is in us, the Son is said

to be in us, and when the Son is in us, the Father is said to be in us?" Athanasius answers, "The presumption of insane people is to enquire into these things with respect to God."[13] Similarly, the Latin father Ambrose:

> So both the Father and the Spirit sent the Son; the Father sent Him, for it is written: "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name." The Son sent Him, for He said: "But when the Paraclete is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth." If, then, the Son and the Spirit send each other, as the Father sends, there is no inferiority and subjection, but a community of power.[14]

It is not different *works* but different *roles* in *every work* that the divine persons perform. This can be something like a paradigm shift not only in our thinking but in our worship, living, and mission. As we begin to discern the Spirit's distinctive role across the whole canvas of biblical revelation, we begin to recognize his distinctive role in our own lives. This emphasis became especially formative in the work of the fourth-century Cappadocian fathers (Basil, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus). For example, Gregory of Nyssa wrote that none of the persons executes any work apart from the others, "but every operation which extends from God to the Creation . . . has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Spirit."[15] The Genevan reformer John Calvin frequently repeats these Cappadocian formulas, as when he expresses it in his own words: "To the Father is attributed the beginning of action, the fountain and source of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and arrangement in action, while the energy and efficacy of action is assigned to the Spirit."[16] This has no small impact on his entire theology.

Again, for emphasis: We will have a very narrow vision of the Spirit's person and work if we identify him only with specific *works* (like regeneration and spiritual gifts) instead of recognizing the specific *way* he works in every divine operation. In creation, redemption, and the consummation, the Spirit is the life-giver.

Let me suggest that this represents an apologetic point of engagement even with our post-Christian culture. We cannot go "down the ladder" from the Sovereign Father to the Savior, Jesus, to the supposedly vulnerable Spirit at the heart of the cosmos. The Spirit is *Lord*, in the same way as the Father and the

Son. *And yet he is also* "the giver of life," exercising his divine lordship within creation, making it fruitful, rich, and productive in the inherent capacities with which it has been endowed by the Father in the Son. Typically, green theologies today see the Spirit as the unique person for an ecological age, but this abstracts the Spirit's fructifying and perfecting agency from that of the Father as origin and the Son as mediator. This world is the great masterpiece formed and sustained, as well as redeemed and ultimately restored, by intratrinitarian love. Creation is not necessary to God's being or becoming but is summoned into existence and sustained by the nonarbitrary and yet utterly free speech of the triune God.

The Father is not a despotic monarch but the font of this loving enterprise, and the Son actually assumed worldly reality to himself forever. He is Immanuel: God with us. In his performance parable in John 13, Jesus washes his disciples' feet to teach them what he is about to do for them in his death and resurrection. In contrast with the disciples' jockeying for power like gentile rulers, Jesus says that this is what it means to say that Jesus is Lord. So the Father and the Son also reveal a sovereignty that is opposed to all earthly despotism. The Spirit is Lord and giver of life in the way that has been willed by the Father, in the Son. And yet the Spirit exercises this divine sovereignty *within* creation, winning creaturely consent and causing the creatures to bring forth the fruit that they have been "worded" to bear by the Father in the Son. Herman Bavinck observes that as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, "our God is above us, before us, and within us."[17]

So a lot is packed into the confession that the Holy Spirit is "Lord" and "the giver of life." These two identifications give us our coordinates. The Holy Spirit is not merely a divine force, power, or principle; he is God and "together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified." He is not an instrument of God but is himself the Lord God along with the Father and the Son. It is he alone who makes whatever creaturely means he uses effective. As Augustine emphasized in his *De Trinitate*, Jesus *reveals God* because he *is God*, while also being *with God* (the Father), as we read in John's prologue. Similarly, the Spirit "searches all things, even the deep things of God" because he is a distinct person of God (1 Cor 2:10).

The Holy Spirit is the one who forms a confused mass into a habitable home in creation, whose breath animates a mass of clay, turning it into "a living being" (*nephesh*; Gen 2:7) according to the pattern of the Son who will become incarnate. It is he who is at work within creation, within us, to sustain us in life;

and it is he who gives spiritual life to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1 KJV). Furthermore, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom 8:11 ESV). The Father sends the Son and the Spirit for different phases of the same mission. It is not the Spirit who becomes incarnate, bears our sins, and is raised as the Head of the body (the church). And yet it is not the Son who conceives himself in Mary's womb, or regenerates and raises our bodies in glory on the last day. In a very specific sense, the Spirit is "the giver of life" in all of God's external works. No less than the Father and Son, the Spirit creates and saves but in a different way with different effects. Apart from the Spirit's work within us, the Father's work for us in his Son would not be brought to completion.

In the chapters that follow, we explore the Spirit's perfecting agency in every external work of the Godhead—not only in redemption but in creation and in the consummation of that great work of God in the age to come.

The Holy Spirit *Changes* Everything

As I have said, we should not be looking for the *works that are done uniquely by the Holy Spirit* but the *unique role of the Holy Spirit in every work*. The Holy Spirit, notes B. B. Warfield, is "the Executor of the Godhead not only in the creation and upholding of the worlds and in the inspiration of the prophets and apostles, but also in the regenerating and sanctifying of the soul."[18] Even better is Abraham Kuyper's expression: "We begin with the general distinction: That in every work effected by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in common, the power *to bring forth* proceeds from the Father; the power *to arrange* from the Son; the power *to perfect* from the Spirit."[19] When we explore the Spirit's work from Genesis to Revelation, creation to consummation, a common conclusion emerges: he is the person of the Godhead who brings everything to completion. The Spirit *changes everything*. This will be the leitmotif of our explorations in this book.

The Perfecting Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the one who turns a house into a home—created space into a covenantal place where God dwells with his people. He separates the waters in

creation so that there is dry land for this communion. He comes in judgment to Adam and Eve after their transgression of this covenant. The same life-giving Spirit who hovered over the waters to make fruitful the seas and to survey creation to add his benediction appeared in the garden to survey the situation. Furthermore, in the light of further revelation it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit is identified with judgment and justification. This is why Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as "the Advocate" (*paraklētos*; an attorney)—who will *convict* the world of sin (John 16:7–8). This is already what the Spirit is doing in the garden after the transgression of the original covenant.

The Spirit divides the waters of the Red Sea, delivering his nation while burying his enemies in watery judgment. He is associated with circumcision, the rite of "cutting off" a portion of the flesh so that the whole person will not be "cut off"—excommunicated—from fellowship with God. Similarly, in the prophets the descent of the Spirit is associated with "the last days" (Joel 2:28, fulfilled in Acts 2:17–18)—specifically, with the coming judgment that all previous judgments merely foreshadowed. A key indication that it is the last days is when the Spirit has been poured out (Isa 2:2; 32:15–16; Ezek 11:19; 36:25–27; Mic 4:1; Zech 12:10). Whenever the Spirit appears, there is a courtroom scene. Jesus even speaks of the Holy Spirit as "another *paraklētos*," which is more accurately rendered "attorney" than "comforter" (John 14:16).

And now it is the Spirit who baptizes us in the waters of judgment, crucifying and raising us together with Christ. He not only rests above the tabernacle or above the ark of the covenant in the temple as a glory cloud but indwells each of God's people as living stones of his end-time sanctuary. Even this indwelling has judicial significance. For this Paul uses the legal term *arrabōn*, which is a pledge or "deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (Eph 1:14; cf. Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22). The Spirit makes us witnesses in God's courtroom of history, symbolized by the flames that appeared over the head of each disciple at Pentecost. Thus, even though they were eyewitnesses to Christ's work, the disciples were not ready to be witnesses of Christ to the world until they had been endowed with the Spirit (Luke 24:49).

Besides the legal or judicial aspect, the Spirit's "separating" work is identified with cleansing. Wherever the Spirit hovers, the land is made holy. This is why Moses was horrified by the prospect of the LORD refusing to maintain his presence with his sinful people. What will distinguish (separate) them from the nations as holy? Under the canopy of that hovering glory cloud, everything—from people to livestock to pots and pans—was holy to the LORD. It is by the

endowment of the Spirit that David and his hosts were to continually cleanse God's land of everything that defiles, fulfilling the mandate that God gave to Adam.

It was the Spirit who put into the breast of the prophets the longing and sure confidence of the coming of Christ. It was the Spirit who hovered over the waters of Mary's womb so that the one whom she bore was "holy"—the "Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32). Not only did Christ give us the Spirit; the Spirit gave us Christ. Further, it was the Spirit who equipped the Son for his mission as the Servant of Isaiah (Isa 61:1 with Luke 4:18). It was he who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, and it was he who upheld the Lord in his severe trial. It was by the Spirit that Christ cast out demons and performed miracles. In fact, to attribute these works to Satan was not to commit blasphemy against Christ's divinity but against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29).

By focusing only on Christ, we have too often attributed to Christ's deity what belongs more properly to the Holy Spirit. In doing this, we also marginalize the role of Christ's humanity in winning our salvation. Of course, he is not merely human but is as fully human as we are, yet without sin. In what he said and did, Jesus proclaimed the Father and relied on the power of the Spirit. Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the gift of both the Father and the Son.

And this same Spirit indwells us so that we say our "amen" to God in Christ (1 Cor 12:3), crying, " 'Abba, Father,' " as adopted children and coheirs with Christ (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). The Spirit performs the prophesied circumcision of the heart within us, cutting us off from the passing evil age—"the flesh"—and, uniting us to Christ, works within us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. He turns a house into a home. Immediately upon taking up his residence, he begins to cleanse our hearts from the defilements of sin.

In all of these ways, we see the Spirit as the one who *consummates* the work of the Father in the Son. And with respect to the new creation, that is why we see him poured out in "these last days," as he vivifies dead twigs and unites them to the living vine, Jesus Christ. The Father is God for us, the Son is God with us, and the Spirit is God within us, yielding our free consent to his unfailing word. In biblical eschatology, the spatial metaphors of "below" and "above" are transformed into temporal coordinates: "this present age" of sin and death and "the age to come." The Spirit's descent marks the entrance of the powers of the age to come into this present evil age. Already with Christ's resurrection-glorification in the power of the Spirit we have the inauguration of the new

creation. Like Noah's dove that brought the leafy twig as a harbinger of life beyond the watery grave, the Spirit brings us not only previews of coming attractions, but the renewing energies of the age to come.

Of course, the visible effects of this consummation will only be apparent fully and universally when Christ our Head returns bodily. Yet even now, the Spirit regenerates and gives us faith to be united to Christ for a sure resurrection in glory. The future verdict of the last judgment has been rendered in the present. We are even "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11), since it is the Spirit who gives us faith to embrace Christ and his imputed righteousness. By his own descent at Pentecost, the Spirit who was at work in Christ is now at work in us his coheirs. Through preaching and sacrament, the Spirit brings the powers of the age to come into this age of sin and death (Heb 6:4–5). We are already adopted and are being daily renewed and conformed to the image of God's glorified Son. This is why Jesus tells us that the Spirit not only convinces of sin and judgment and righteousness but tells us of "things to come" (John 16:13 KJV). "Things to come": eschatological completion is attributed distinctly to the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit who places and preserves us at the precarious intersection of the two ages, in that disorienting tension between the "already" and the "not yet." The Spirit who refreshes the streams of everlasting joy in God's everlasting Sabbath indwells us now so that our history is now "cut off" from the dreary genealogy of Adamic sin and death and even now our humanity is taken up with our ascended Savior into the glory of the age to come. In this marvelous unity and difference, the glory of the holy Trinity becomes the radiant vista of the life that we now live—from the Father, in the Son, and by his Spirit.

The Indwelling Spirit

In the light of this biblical-theological survey, we may draw at least two conclusions that will be retrieved at various points throughout these chapters.

First, because he is the Trinity, God's external acts are not simply brute force upon an object. At least in the ancient world, a sovereign ruled by issuing fiats that demanded a certain response. The ruler might use underlings to carry out the orders, but the relation of ruler to the ruled was simply cause and effect. However, Israel's God—the one true God—is tripersonal. He speaks, to be sure. However, his decrees are effective because they are spoken in his Son as mediator, and they have the Spirit as the one who works within them to win their

consent. No royal minister of a secular kingdom can cause the people to acquiesce with joy to the king's decree, but the Spirit can accomplish this because he is the king himself who opens us up to the Father's word and the reconciling work of the Son. This Trinitarian sovereignty contrasts sharply with the gods invoked by other religions, whether polytheistic or monotheistic. The Spirit is not merely a servant of God. On the contrary, precisely because he is none other than God, he can bring the Father's will to pass. And precisely because he is other than the Father, he can do so by working within us to win our consent. So God's power is exercised by a word that "goes forth" from the Father's mouth, is mediated by the Son—who himself becomes part of that history—and is "at work in you" (1 Thess 2:13) through the Spirit. This is evident not only in redemption (where the Spirit is the agent of sanctifying grace) but in creation and providence, where the Spirit is at work even in unbelievers by common grace to restrain sin and to fulfill their common callings.

Second, we learn that the Spirit ordinarily employs creaturely means in liberating creatures to "bring forth" the fruit that they have been worded to bring forth by the Father, in the Son. From the very beginning, the Spirit was at work within worldly reality, shaping and fertilizing it to bring forth specific kinds of existence, each with a life of its own and yet contributing its own part to the symphony of creation. He hovered over the waters, parted waters, came upon the prophets so that what they wrote was from God, and hovered over the waters of Mary's womb so that what was born of her was no less than the Son of God. This same Spirit works today through the frail creaturely means of preaching, water, and bread and wine, uniting physical signs to the reality: Christ with all of his benefits. A quasi-gnostic opposition between "spirit" and "matter" has no place in a biblical identification of the Spirit and his relation to the material world. Nature is his palette. He is at home in this world, as he was in the temple and as he now is in the end-time sanctuary that he is building and indwelling.

The Spirit also illumines his church to understand and to embrace Scripture as his word, yet without coercion. Regeneration is effectual neither because of divine coercion nor human free will, but because the Spirit "works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Phil 2:13). And the Spirit does this not by acting coercively upon us nor simply by setting forth the historical narrative of Jesus but through the creaturely means of grace. Because of the Spirit, Christ himself is present among us through his word (Rom 10:8), and we are washed and fed on our pilgrim way by his sacraments.

The same Spirit who clothed the Son in our flesh has raised us from spiritual

death and will also raise our bodies and glorify—indeed, deify—us. It is not a divine *thing* that indwells us as the guarantee of our final glorification but God himself. It was this connection with the doctrine of salvation that became one of the most important defenses among the church fathers of the Holy Spirit's divinity: if the Spirit is not God, then he cannot glorify us on the last day.

The Holy Spirit *changes* everything. He is the Spirit of the future—the everlasting Sabbath—who brings us harbingers of the age to come. The Father moves toward us in his Son, even among us, and the Spirit is at work within us to unite us to Christ for justification and sanctification. As John Owen puts it, "In every great work of God, the concluding, completing, perfecting acts are ascribed unto the Holy Ghost."[20] And the Spirit accomplishes this by working, as he always had, through ordinary creaturely means that Christ ordained for giving himself to us here and now.

It will be my pleasure in the coming chapters to explore with you this "Lord and giver of life" who is God and is yet different from the Father and the Son, so that with all God's people and heavenly hosts we can worship and glorify him together in this age and in the age to come.

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1. Although the final form was established at Constantinople I (AD 381) and is therefore 29 identified technically as the Nicene-Constantiopolitan Creed, I will be referring to it simply as the Nicene Creed.

2. James D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 126.

3. Dunn emphasizes, "Notably, *what we do not find is any hint that worship was offered to the Spirit of God*" (ibid., 74, emphasis original).

4. Daniel Boyarin, "Logos, A Jewish Word: John's Prologue as Midrash," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 546–49.

5. In passing it is worth observing that according to the relevant passages (especially in John 14–17), *perichoresis*—the mutual indwelling of the persons—is not an open relationship but refers strictly to the divine persons in their immanent relations. Contrary to Jürgen Moltmann's thesis (*Trinity and the Kingdom of God* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981], 172–78), perichoresis presupposes essential unity rather than being a substitute for it.

6. This tendency has been evident in recent "social Trinitarianism" advocated by Jürgen Moltmann among others. There is one God, and the Holy Spirit is as fully God as the Father and the Son. See chapter 10 for a summary of this view.

7. This is true also of *Arianism*, a christological heresy that denies Christ's divinity, regarding him instead as the first and noblest of God's creatures.

8. Bruce Marshall argues that the traditional distinction is between the processions and missions; the distinction between so-called immanent and economic trinities first appears as a category at least in the nineteenth century with Franz Anton Staudenmaier ("The Unity of the Triune God: Reviving an Ancient Question," *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 8.

9. Reformed orthodox writers typically went so far as to identify these personal attributes as "incommunicable." In other words, the Son and the Spirit can never be the unbegotten Father, nor can the Father proceed from the Spirit or the Son. Each person has a mode of existence that is his own.

10. Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 36–37 (1.3.7).

11. Ibid., 38.

12. "Letters to Serapion concerning the Holy Spirit," in *Athanasius*, trans. and ed. Khaled Anatolios (London: Routledge, 2004), 217–19 (1.19–20).

13. Ibid.

14. Ambrose, *The Holy Spirit* 3.1.8 (*NPNF*^{2} 10:136).

15. Gregory of Nyssa, *On "Not Three Gods" to Ablabius* (*NPNF*^{2} 5:334).

16. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 1.13.18.

17. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 2:260. It should be noted that I am discussing the Trinity after the attributes not because God's unity is more important than his plurality but because it makes sense to discuss first the characteristics that each person shares as God.

18. B. B. Warfield, "Introductory Note," in Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), xxvi.

19. Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 19.

20. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 93–99. After showing how this is true in creation, Owen displays the Spirit's perfecting role in the new creation. It comes from the love of the Father and Christ's mediation, but "it is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit to make those things of the Father and Son effectual unto the souls of the elect, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God" (190).



CHAPTER 2

Creator-Spirit

The Spirit is not the architect, nor is the framework of the cosmos or of the new creation "in him" as is true of the Word in whom all things hold together (Col 1:17). But he is the builder, carrying with him the plans of the Father and the materials purchased by the Son as he builds the sanctuary according to all that he has received. What are the specific missions of the Spirit in God's undivided works? When we begin with the Spirit's work in *creation*, the canvas of his operations widens. Jürgen Moltmann expresses a legitimate critique of tendencies to reduce the Spirit's work to the inner life of the individual believer—basically, to the application of redemption. "In both Protestant and Catholic theology and devotion," he asserts, "there is a tendency to view the Holy Spirit solely as the Spirit of redemption. Its [*sic*] place is the church and it gives men and women the assurance of the eternal blessedness of their souls." He continues:

> The redemptive Spirit is cut off both from bodily life and from the life of nature. It makes people turn away from this world and hope for a better world beyond. They then seek and experience in the Spirit of Christ a power that is different from the divine energy of life which according to Old Testament ideas interpenetrates all the living. The theological textbooks talk about the Holy Spirit in connection with God, faith, the Christian life, the church and prayer, but seldom with the body and nature.[1]

Introducing the Holy Spirit too late in the story—at the application of redemption—we miss much of the action. Worse, we distort our vision of the Spirit's work even in this important aspect of his ministry. The new creation narrows to the Spirit's operations in the individual soul, often seen in contrast rather than in continuity with the old creation as such. Such "crude superficialities," Kuyper complains, "confine the Spirit's operations entirely to

the elect, beginning only at their regeneration."[2]

The Spirit's Agency in Creation

The doctrine of *ex nihilo* creation—God's creation of everything out of nothing—fixes forever the ontological distinction between creator and creation. Neither divine nor demonic, this world is the theater of God's glory. Bound by no inner necessity or thirst for self-completion, the triune God created the wondrous speck of dust and water that we inhabit along with billions of galaxies for the sheer love of it—and of us. He created it all for his glory, but he did not need to display his glory in this way. Love and glory become virtually indistinguishable as the motivation and final end of God's creative act. God's glory is his love, and his love is his glory. Though far from arbitrary, the act of creation is grounded in God's free *and therefore* loving speech: from the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit.

The formlessness and void (*tohu wabohu*) that follow the announcement of God's creation of matter is not a hypostasized deity, as in Babylonian, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian creation myths.[3] Generally regarded as the earliest surviving work of literature, the Gilgamesh Epic (2100 BC) bears close resemblance to the Bible's stories of Adam and Eve in the garden and Noah's flood.[4] According to the most influential creation story, Enuma Elish, the founding deity—ocean-goddess Tiamat—is the font of creation. A massive serpent, she is the personification of the feminine stereotype: voluptuous yet chaotic. The process of creation from chaos is a series of violent skirmishes among the gods in which the original dragon-lady Tiamat herself is murdered.[5] Egyptian creation myths vary considerably from time and place. Yet, with the possible exception of the version centered in Thebes, the lifeless chaos-waters were personified in Egyptian theology as the deity Nu.[6]

In the context of this pagan milieu, the Bible's opening chapters take on the appearance of an obvious polemic. It has been pointed out frequently that there are parallels between Genesis 1–2 and Enuma Elish (not to mention Gilgamesh). After all, a good polemic requires some parallels. However, the contrasts could not be greater.[7]

The chaos in Genesis 1 is simply inert matter, called into being but not yet

fully formed or productive. The ocean is simply water, and the skies and lights in the heavens are merely natural phenomena visible to the naked eye of a farmer. Anyone who took seriously these two chapters of Genesis would no longer stare at the sky and call it by the divine name Nut, or the expanses Shu, or the earth Geb, or the sun Ra. Notice Job's hymn of Yahweh's act of creation:

> He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters
> at the boundary between light and darkness.
> The pillars of heaven tremble
> and are astounded at his rebuke.
> By his power he stilled the sea;
> by his understanding he shattered Rahab.
> By his wind the heavens were made fair;
> his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
> Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways,
> and how small a whisper do we hear of him!
> But the thunder of his power who can understand?
> (Job 26:10–14 ESV)

The first line echoes the Spirit brooding over the waters in a judicial role of separating and marking out in mathematical artistry. "Rahab" is code for Egypt —the "fleeing serpent"—whose cosmology is as flawed as its oppressive politics. Yahweh alone is sovereign. "By his wind" (*berukho*) here is another instance of a translation decision, and while "wind" may be the best rendering, "power," "understanding," and "wind" are frequently associated with the Spirit's activity in the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet all of these operations are but "the outskirts of his ways." We hear but a small whisper and cannot even interpret "the thunder of his power."

Job continues the Genesis polemic, as does Isaiah in the context of Yahweh's final judgment. "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead." Then the Lord will "punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain. In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa 26:19–27:1 ESV). Leviathan, the echo of the pagan serpent-god, is not a god at all; he is nothing more than a

creature and is entirely under the sovereign power of Yahweh (see also Pss 74:12–14; 104:26). The serpent's head will be crushed finally and forever (Rev 12:7–9), just as God promised in Genesis 3:15.

And the biblical creation story lacks the intriguing, if vulgar, violence of its rivals. Evil, personified in Satan, is not *something*; it is not a part of God's creation, always lurking beneath reality and vying for dominance. As noted above, not even the chaos in Genesis 1:2 is an evil force. There is no moral significance to "formless and empty." Creation at this point was simply a good house waiting to be turned into a beautiful and well-ordered home.

Evil is not ontological but moral; it is not necessary but is the result of willful rebellion. It is the corruption of that which is essentially good, the depravity of personal agents who abuse their freedom to turn their back on the good Creator. Even the demons are (like Lucifer himself) good angels turned bad. Just as the triune God was plotting our redemption in view of the fall, the demons were in assembly with their leader to plot the downfall of God's kingdom. This world arises not out of an ontological rift between good and evil divinities or forces but out of the freedom that is proper to a self-complete God who needs nothing and no one because he is who he always will be: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Here, there is not yet any discordant note of tragedy, only comedy—the beautiful sound of laughter between coconspirers in a venture of creative love.

Genesis 1 exhibits the following subplot:

Verse 1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," a comprehensive summation of *ex nihilo* creation. The Father created the world through the Son who "upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Heb 1:2–3 ESV). In fact, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible" (11:3 ESV).

Verse 2: Chaos. Again, not a divine something—divine or demonic, or both—but just the sort of thing that one expects from an artist's studio. The chaos is merely the material creation called into being and as yet unformed into an ordered cosmos. The Spirit was hovering over the waters, both to organize and fertilize it but also to cherish it.

Verses 3–10: " 'Let there be. . . .' And there was. . . ." This set of events fits the *ex nihilo* variety: the creation of light, land, and expanse. Each has its separation that makes the two into something without setting them in dualistic opposition: the light separated into day/night; the land separated into

oceans/continents; the expanse separated into heavens/earth.

Yet from this point in verses 11–25, the narrative reports a different type of speech-act. Alongside God's fiat word, "Let there be light!" there is the continuing speech that keeps creation reverberating with God's life-creating word: " 'Let the earth bring forth. . . .' And the earth brought forth. . . ." This too comes from God, but it is different. Under this heading of "Let the earth bring forth . . ." are the vegetation bearing its own seeds, waters swarming with swarms of swarming things (literally in the Hebrew), and birds flying across the heavenly expanse. There is no hint here of creation out of nothing; that initial act has occurred already. On the contrary, now in these speech-acts creation is conceived of as growing and propagating on its own steam—yet not quite. Every budding of a leaf now appears to be a new miracle of God, yet it is not a miracle, at least in the fiat ("Let there be . . .") sense; rather, it is the result of a wondrous working of the Spirit within nature. Both are the result of God's speech, but one brings a world *into being* while the other brings it *to maturity*. We will meet this distinction again throughout this study: the fiat type of word (an immediate act of creation) and the "Let the earth bring forth . . ." type of directive (the Spirit's work within creation to bring about the intended effect of the Father's command, in the Son).

The Spirit of *Creatio Continua* and Postmodern Critiques of Dualism

Scripture itself teaches the doctrine of *creatio continua*, the continuing development of the natural world after the fiat work of *ex nihilo* creation. The seeds are not eternal forms or even ideas in the mind of God but speech-acts—the words planted in the world by the Word himself and brought to fruition by the Spirit. We are dealing here with the living God, not a dead one who merely presses the "on" button to create matter, but who strives continuously with creation to bring cosmos out of chaos. As Calvin interprets the text, the Spirit's expansion "over the abyss or shapeless matter" demonstrates "not only that the beauty which the world displays is maintained by the invigorating power of the Spirit, but that even before this beauty existed the Spirit was at work *cherishing the confused mass*." This is a testimony to the deity of the Spirit, he adds.

> Nothing is more alien from a creature than the office which the Scriptures ascribe to him, and which the pious actually feel him discharging—his being diffused over all space, sustaining, invigorating, and quickening all things, both in heaven and on the earth. The mere fact of his not being circumscribed by any limits raises him above the rank of creatures, while his transfusing vigour into all things, breathing into them being, life, and motion, is plainly divine.[8]

Thus Calvin derives from *creation* a strong defense of the Spirit's deity.

Despite pretensions of being "scientific," the worldview that pervades the modern West is closer to the ancient pagan mythology. Violent conflict between humans and nature and between humans themselves—the war of the sexes, classes, races, and so forth—is generally assumed to be natural, just the way things are. It is the biblical narrative that actually *naturalizes* nature, removing any hint of evil lurking in matter as such. Unlike the natural chaos of Genesis 1:2, moral chaos was introduced with the serpent's admission into the sanctuary and the decision of God's viceroy to be someone other than what he was "worded" to be by the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. Now everything turns not on death as a natural part of the Spirit's work of bringing the Father's word to perfection but on human rebellion and death *upon the royal emissaries* as a judgment.

I have assumed some liberty in rendering *ruakh* as the Holy Spirit in these passages, particularly in Genesis 1:2 with the phrase *ruakh 'elohim*.[9] Yet the phrase "wind from god/the gods" lacks explanatory power in the light of this momentous event, and further I believe that a canonical interpretation requires "Holy Spirit" as the appropriate translation.[10] When we read that Jesus breathed on the apostles with the words, "Receive the Holy Spirit," all of the Old Testament episodes in question are cast in a fuller light.[11]

Even in the unique act of *ex nihilo* creation, the Father speaks his powerful word in the Son, who will himself become an incarnate creature, and the Spirit works within creation to bring to completion that creative word. It is significant that the biblical doctrine represents God's living *speech* as the means by which the Trinity creates the world. How unlike the analogy of physical force applied to a particular object, a clever watchmaker, or a world that causes itself is the analogy of the Father speaking in the Son and bringing the effect of that speech to fruition through the agency of the Spirit. As a result of this Trinitarian speech-

act the creation itself answers back in its own voice of praise:

> The heavens declare the glory of God;
> the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
> Day after day pour forth speech;
> night after night they reveal knowledge.
> They have no speech, they use no words;
> no sound is heard from them.
> Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
> their words to the ends of the world. (Ps 19:1–4)

The psalmist moves easily back and forth between the testimony of nature and that of God's historical revelation (vv. 7–14). The relation of God and world is analogous, then, to a conversation between persons. Creation is not the overflowing of God's being but the effect of God's word. The power of the speech is asymmetrical, of course: Yahweh's word never returns to him without accomplishing its intended purpose (Isa 55:11). Yet it is a genuine covenantal relationship, with the creature replying appropriately because of the mediation of the eternal Word and the liberating and fructifying energies of the Spirit within.

There is one further type of speech-act that God performs in Genesis 1, and once again the Spirit's role is at the very least implied:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen 1:26–28 ESV)

So we may distinguish these three types of speech-acts as *fiat* (" 'Let there be. . . .' And there was"), *fruitfulness* (" 'Let the earth bring forth. . . .' And the earth brought forth") and *faithfulness* (enabling humanity to multiply, fill, rule, and subdue as God's viceroy). And in all these speeches, the Spirit is the perfecting agent.

The “breath of life” (*nishmat khayyim*) that God breathes into Adam in Genesis 2:7 is from the Spirit, but must not be confused with him. As John Owen puts it, the name *Spirit of God* is “proper” while breath of God is “metaphorical.” The breathing of life into Adam was an act of God, while the Spirit is a person of God.[12] “Our bodies are an essential part of our natures,” Owen observed, “and by their union with our souls are we constituted individual persons.” In fact, “every moral act we do is the act of the whole person.”[13] Once more we see that the decisive ontological distinction is between creator and creature, not between spirit and matter. The uncreated Spirit breathes into the nostrils of Adam the creaturely breath of life to animate his glorious frame.

In the biblical conception, nothing in creation—including angels or the human soul—is divine. There is the triune God, and then there is everything else: creator and creation, with nothing in between. Yves Congar observes:

> *Rûah*-breath is not in any sense opposed to “body” or “corporeal.” Even in profane Greek and the language of philosophy, *pneuma* expresses the living and generating substance that is diffused in animals, plants and all things. It is a subtle corporeality rather than an incorporeal substance. The *rûah*-breath of the Old Testament is not disincarnate. It is rather what animates the body. It is opposed to “flesh,” but then “flesh” is not the same as “body.” “Flesh” is the purely earthly reality of man and is characterized by the fact that it is weak and corruptible. . . . The Greeks thought in categories of substance, but the Jews were concerned with force, energy and the principle of action.[14]

Thus, when the New Testament draws its contrast between the flesh and the Spirit, it is not the difference between material bodies and spiritual or intellectual essence but an eschatological contrast between this present age under the dominion of sin and death and the age to come that Christ has inaugurated by his resurrection from the dead. The age to come is the new creation, and it is the age of the Spirit because the Holy Spirit is bringing creaturely reality into the sphere of Christ’s eschatological life.

The qualitative distinction between God and the world, emphasized by the doctrine of *ex nihilo* creation, ensures that the cosmos is grounded in divine love and freedom rather than necessity and ontological violence. Creation is not a necessary emanation or overflowing of being from a divine fountain down the

ladder from angels to ants. Multiplicity is not the result of an ontological fall from the unity of being: first, because the source of all being is the triune God, with the plurality of persons being as ontologically real as the unity of essence; second, because the diversity of creatures belongs to the divine benediction ("It is good") in creation. Whatever oppositional dualisms that emerge later in the story are the result of the willful pride of human beings and their refusal to be grounded in this free act of divine love and its peace. In other words, the oppression of spirit over body, male over female, rich over poor, and so forth, is ethical rather than ontological. It is blasphemous to consider them somehow grounded in "the way things are" by the action of the holy Trinity in creation. Rather, they are the result of human pride in opposition to God's order.

To say that the Holy Spirit is *the giver of life* is to affirm that while he does not depend on creation, creation depends on him. The Father spoke creation into existence; the Son is the archetypal image of God, according to whose likeness we were created, but Adam became a "living being" (*nephesh khayyah*) when God breathed into his nostrils "the breath of life" (literally, "the breath of lives"). The same idea is conveyed in 2 Timothy 3:16 where it is said that the Scriptures are "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*), or when Jesus breathed on the disciples and they received the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). The soul is not therefore the eternal, immortal, and divine part of human beings but is as much a part of creation as fingernails and livers. Adam's existence as a physical body preceded his being endowed with a soul—that is, before he became a "living being." Already we recognize the Spirit as the one who brings order out of chaos and clothes the human representative with royal dignity and beauty. (Later, the priests will be similarly adorned, representative of the role that had been given to Adam in the beginning.)

The Spirit gives the kiss of life to mortals in creation, preserves them in natural life, raises us from spiritual death in regeneration, and indwells us and renews us in supernatural life. The Spirit will raise our bodies from the dead and glorify us by his perfecting energies. Life, both natural and supernatural, comes from the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit.

The Spirit in Providence

"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). Elihu's theology may be unreliable on many points, but here his

confession is consistent with God's interpretation of reality. In this conversation with Job, Elihu is speaking not of creation but of his own existence. The Spirit is still giving life to everything that lives. With the fall, nature—in the train of man—has become a ruined temple; though still betraying remnants of its original beauty, it has become the haunt of jackals: demons and the principalities and powers that corrupt and lead God's viceroy to worship the creation instead of the Creator.

Atheistic naturalism acknowledges, and even depends upon, development. But it is self-contradictory: it bases its system on randomness from start to finish while nevertheless attempting to retrieve an element of purpose (teleology), so long as the Logos of this development is immanent within nature. According to the Gilgamesh Epic, when Gilgamesh searches for eternal life, the gods tell him that he will never find it; it is in the hands of mortals to make of themselves what they will, and yet they are subject to fate. It is a contradiction with which Gilgamesh simply has to accommodate himself. But in the biblical account, the triune God who brought a cosmos out of chaos and both out of nothing will not abandon creation to Satan and his minions. These ghastly workers of iniquity enter the picture later in the story as part of the fall and not—definitely not—as an evil force inherent in nature. They enter the world only because Adam allowed them to, from the moment that he granted entrance of the holy sanctuary to the Prince of Darkness himself. Yet not even Satan is a god but a creature of a different kind—glorious by nature in creation yet corrupted by his own self-will.

The demonic unraveling of creation will not be the last word. The evil one has been cast out of this world by Christ's death and resurrection. Now the Spirit who hovered over the waters in creation, who fashioned created space into a habitable place for communion with humans and then animated them with natural life, has given them supernatural life. The Spirit draws them into a higher communion with God and each other than Adam and Eve knew before the fall.

Had Adam and Eve been allowed to reenter paradise and eat from the tree of life, they would have been confirmed—with their posterity—in everlasting death. Development, change, and the "new thing" God does are essential if there is to be space within history for God to bring redemption. But it is not deterministic in the sense that the seeds inevitably progress to full blossom; nor is it random. There is a purposeful development toward a *telos* because it belongs to the eternal decree of the triune God. Yet, further, in its execution the Father has spoken and continues to speak in his Son with the faithful and fructifying energies of the Spirit at work within creation. The Father's word may

seem to move in slow motion, stretching across the vast stretches of history, but it will not return to him empty without accomplishing every purpose for which he sent it. That is because the Word became flesh, and the Spirit will complete the effects of that creating, redeeming, and re-creating word.

In all of these operations, it is evident that the Spirit is not the soul of the world or the divine principle at the heart of the cosmos but rather is the "avian" Lord who *hovers over* the darkness and void to make it teem with life and love. It is not his essence that emanates but his energies that warm the cold cosmos and animate lifeless matter. Even in an apparently dead tree trunk, there springs forth life, notes Kuyper: "And what is this quickening and animating principle but the Holy Spirit? 'Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; Thou takest away Thy breath, they die.' This inward, invisible something is God's direct touch," even the "life-principle" of inanimate as well as animate creatures.[15] Note the importance of Kuyper's formulation, however: the Spirit's *touch*, not the Spirit himself, is the "life-principle." The same Holy Spirit "who *dwells* in the hearts of the elect" also "*animates* every rational being" and "sustains the *principle of life* in every creature."[16] In view of Genesis 2:3, Kuyper observes that the Father could cease his creation labors not because nature was complete in its flourishing but because the Spirit was commissioned with completing the work. "Thus to lead the creature to its destiny, to cause it to develop according to its nature, to make it perfect, is the proper work of the Holy Spirit."[17]

> The Hebrew text [of Gen 1:2] shows that the work of the Holy Spirit moving upon the face of the waters was similar to that of the parent bird which with outstretched wings hovers over its young to cherish and cover them. The figure implies that not only the earth existed but also the germs of life within it; and that the Holy Spirit impregnating these germs caused the life to come forth in order to lead it to its destiny. . . . Grant that the matter out of which God made man was already present in the dust of the earth, that the type of his body was largely present in the animal, and that the idea of man and the image after which he was to be created existed already; yet from Job 33:4 it is evident that he did not come to be without a special work of the Holy Spirit.[18]

Indeed, not only in the first creation but in the present tense is it true that "the Spirit of God made *me*, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me

life."[19] Thus, Kuyper reasons:

> If the bodies of existing man and of mammals are not immediate creations, but are taken from the flesh and blood, the nature and kind of existent beings, then it is more evident that the hovering of the Holy Spirit over the unformed is a present act; and that therefore His creative work was to bring out the life already hidden in chaos, i.e., in the germs of life. This agrees with what was said at first of the general character of His work. 'To lead to its destiny' is to bring forth the hidden life, to cause the hidden beauty to reveal itself, to rouse into activity the slumbering energies.

The Father finished his work, as did the Son, but the Spirit "completed the work thus prepared." "Such representations are not unworthy of God," Kuyper concludes. "There is a *distribution*, no *division*, in the divine activities; wherefore Isaiah declares that the Spirit of the Lord, i.e., the Holy Spirit, throughout the entire work of creation, from the beginning—yea, from *before* the beginning—directed all that was to come."[20]

John Owen argued a similar point more than two centuries earlier, in considering Psalm 104:30:

> The making or creation of things here intended is not the first great work of the creation of all, but the daily production of creatures in and according to their kind; for in the verse foregoing the Psalmist treats of the decay of all sorts of creatures in the world, by a providential cutting off and finishing of their lives. . . . That, under this continual decay and dying of all sorts of creatures, the world doth not come to emptiness and desolation, the only reason is, because the Spirit of God, whose office and work it is to uphold and preserve all things continually, produceth by his power a new supply of creatures in the room of them that fall off like leaves from the trees, and return to their dust every day. And whereas the earth itself, the common nurse of them all, seems in the revolution of every year to be at an end of its use and work, having death brought upon the face of it, and ofttimes entering deep into its bowels, the Spirit of God, by influential concurrence, renews it again, causing every thing afresh to bring forth fruit according unto its kind, whereby its face

receiveth a new beauty and adorning.[21]

Thus there is something to the pagan love of nature, even its myths and rituals tied to the changing seasons. However, biblical faith grounds this instinct in a transcendent and triune God who is ever active even in the regularities of nature. What is striking in all of the Old Testament references to creation is the pure *naturalness* of nature. Nothing in creation is to be worshiped but rather is meant to lead us from the artistry to the Artist. It is precisely this idea that opened up space for scientific observation and investigation with natural explanations of worldly phenomena in spite of cultural remnants of pagan superstition, magic, and arbitrary interventions of the gods. Indeed, even the methodological naturalism of the hard sciences is a product of a biblical distinction between the Creator and creation. Philosophical naturalism is the kind of heresy that could only have arisen in the milieu of a biblically informed culture.

The cosmos is neither divine nor demonic but natural—pronounced "good" by its triune Creator. While the Leviathan of the deep is used as an image of destructive agents, it is not a semi-divine being but is perhaps a Mediterranean whale or shark. As such, it is yet another comic dismissal of the pagan cosmos. The world is not even the body of God or the outer expression of the inner divine "life force" of reality. It is simply lifeless matter that is nevertheless impregnated with the seeds of its own construction, brought to health and vitality under the fluttering wings of the Spirit. "Nothing is more natural than for spring to follow winter; summer, spring; and fall, summer—each in turn," Calvin observes. "Yet in this series one sees such great and uneven diversity that it readily appears each year, month, and day is governed by a new, a special, providence of God."[22]

In providence as well, then, we are dealing not only with a Father who acts upon the world but with a Father who sustains the world *in his Son* and *by his Spirit*. Thus, God is not only transcendent but immanent. The triune God consists of the loving Father whose purposes are mediated in his Son and brought to completion by his Spirit. As the triune God, he is above us, among us, and within us. And the Spirit's work within us is not merely salvific or individual. The Spirit is not only at work in the hearts of individuals but hovers over the waters in creation to make them rich with life. This is true supremely in the unique national life of Israel in the Old Testament. Bezalel, the chief artist and engineer, was placed in charge of the tabernacle's construction, "and I have

filled him with the Spirit of God," Yahweh declared, "with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs" with precious jewels and metals (Exod 31:3–4 ESV). As Lord and giver of life, the Spirit may even commandeer a donkey as a momentary mouthpiece (Num 22:28). The Spirit not only came upon David to give him the victory over Goliath but moved the hearts of the covenant people's enemies to sweep upon Israel and Judah to execute the curses of the covenant, laying waste land, people, and temple and carrying the people off into exile.

Jürgen Moltmann is correct in his judgment that there has been a tendency in recent theology to elide the Spirit's work in nature. Doubtless there are many reasons for this, but I suspect that one major source is the philosophical naturalism that pervades our culture and overreaction among many Christians. The result is polarization: either all causes are natural and therefore exclude divine agency, or natural phenomena are ascribed to supernatural—indeed, miraculous—causes. Often, what is lost in this tug-of-war is a robust notion of *God's* activity in the world *through* natural causes. Consequently, the Spirit's activity is generally associated merely with the miraculous and, more specifically, identified almost exclusively with the application of redemption with little space given to the Spirit's role in creation and providence.

A more sinister denigration of the Spirit's faithfulness to creation is evident in American fundamentalism over the last century. Fascinated by end-time scenarios that reach their climax not in the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21) but in apocalyptic destruction, popular versions of dispensational premillennialism focus more on salvation *from* this world. Selling nearly thirty million copies, Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) was made into a motion picture narrated by none other than Orson Welles. The Hollywood actor and director had frightened America in 1938 with a radio adaptation of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*, premised on an earthly invasion by more highly evolved Martians. The novel's author, reared in evangelicalism, became an ardent critic of Christianity, and his novel was a popularization of the doctrines of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. The comparisons are striking, I think. Both works trade on the vision of an invasion of someone or something alien to the earth and a war of superior and inferior worlds in which earthlings and the earth itself belong to the latter that is destined to be destroyed. For all of their differences, both projects leave one with the sense that the regnant power or powers, whether personal or not, have no particular fondness for this world. There are religious and secular versions of this quasi-gnostic disdain for our

planet, often unaware of the similarity of their basic assumptions even as they are locked in hostile combat.

Contrast this portrait with the scene of the Holy Spirit hovering over creation's chaos, "cherishing the confused mass," in Calvin's description; with the Spirit preparing a body for the Son through the thoroughly natural history of a people, Israel, and conceiving the eternal Son in the womb of a virgin; with the Spirit empowering this Messiah for his ministry of redoing the human story in his own life by taking the old Adamic history of sin and death with him into the grave and by being raised as the beginning of the new creation. The Holy Spirit was not sent at Pentecost to lead us away from this world but to send us out into it. He was sent to indwell sinful creatures and unite them to Christ's glorified flesh as a deposit of their final redemption, the resurrection of the body. Contrast the ascent of the fittest, conceived in either spiritual/moral or physical/deterministic terms, with the descent of the Son from glory to poverty and of the Spirit from the age to come into this present evil age, saving and sealing us through the worldly means of human language, bread and wine, and the fellowship of other sinners. In many respects that are still insufficiently explored, the conflict between American fundamentalism and liberalism is rooted in a sibling rivalry.[23] In important respects, they are both closer to the radical trajectory of church history than to historic Christianity.

Regardless of the historical reasons, Moltmann correctly observes that this tendency is not limited to Protestant systems: "Yves Congar's great book on the Holy Spirit has almost nothing to say about the Spirit of creation or the Spirit of the new creation. It would seem as the Spirit of God is simply and solely the Spirit of the church and the Spirit of faith."[24] But we have seen that this has not always been the case; significant attention has been given to the Creator-Spirit in the history of Christian interpretation. There is a considerable line of thinking from the church fathers to the present that charts a path between viewing the Spirit's universal work in creation and providence as inherently redemptive and a Manichean surrendering of the world to Satan.

Common grace pertains to general providence, while saving grace is directed to the redemption and regeneration of the elect. Nevertheless, the ultimate end is the same. Even in providence, Christ rules the entire cosmos for the sake of his church (Col 1:16–18). According to the wise counsels of the Godhead, the Spirit's work within creation, within culture and its history, is directed finally to the preparation and glorification of a bride for the Son to the glory of the Father.

Furthermore, far from turning us in on ourselves in pious isolation, the Spirit speaks to human beings especially through the preached Word, "driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ," in the words of the Westminster Larger Catechism (question 155). Precisely because he is other than our spirit, he calls us out of ourselves to cling to Christ in faith and to our neighbors in love. The indwelling Spirit causes us not only to groan inwardly for our redemption, but to groan with and for the liberation of creation from the curse (Rom 8:26).

The Spirit in the World or the World Spirit?

This last point raises the question of dualism. Danger lurks in two directions on this score. On one hand, there is a metaphysical dualism that sets God and the world in opposition. Instead of the Bible's qualitative distinction between a good God and good creation, there is an ontological warfare between spirit and matter. With roots in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and even Gnosticism, this trajectory of radical mysticism divides reality into natural and supernatural spheres or worlds, correspondingly evil and good. Continuing through the Middle Ages in sectarian pockets, the early Anabaptists advocated a sharp opposition between God and the world with explicit appeals to these earlier sources.[25]

From the New Testament, Christian piety is steeped in a tension between wonder, tragedy, and hope. Because this world is the good creation of the same God who "so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son," there can be no place for a negative view of the world as such. The critical stance enters the picture because of human rebellion that has deformed and continues to infect the world in every nook and cranny. In other words, the opposition between God and the world is really that between God and intelligent moral beings (both human and angelic) who have set themselves against him; it is ethical, not ontological. The abiding faithfulness of the Spirit to creation in spite of its depraved condition is no less than that of the Father and of the Son. Thus, the Spirit's fructifying operations are universal.

> When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
> and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works (Ps 104:30–31 ESV)

Many of the early Anabaptists in the sixteenth century shared the sharp metaphysical dualism of the ancient gnostics. In the Schleitheim Confession (1527), for example, the Manichean antithesis between holy believers and the godless world, light and darkness, is absolute and unambiguous.[26] A considerable body of scholarship, including that of Anabaptist historians, has argued persuasively that early Anabaptism should be seen not as a radical version of the Reformation but as an extension of some of the more radical forms of late medieval mysticism.[27] The relationship between God and humans was constituted less by the mediation of the incarnate Son through the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit as someone coming to a person than by the ontological similarity between God and the soul.

Thomas N. Finger, a contemporary Anabaptist theologian, points up the influence of late medieval mysticism on the movement. "Historic Anabaptists," he acknowledges, "often overplayed Spirit and downgraded matter. I attribute this largely to the (conceptual) ontological barrier that prevented the two from interacting."[28] He adds, "Total personal renewal, where 'all creaturely desires are rooted out and smashed,' was a significant theme in such preaching. Grace was seen chiefly as a divine substance elevating the believer from creaturely reality to the realm of Spirit. This grace divinized people so fully that they passed beyond 'the creaturely.' "[29]

Behind Thomas Müntzer and other radicals stood Meister Eckhardt, a medieval Dominican preacher charged with pantheism. "Meister Eckhardt was the fountainhead of German mysticism," notes Werner O. Packull, especially with his "strong emphasis on the immanence of the divine in man."[30] "Basic to an understanding of Eckhardt was his explanation of the Trinity in terms of a Neoplatonic emanation theory of creation," says Packull. "Creation itself was conceived as a Trinitarian process."[31] In the eternal moment of the Father's introspection, the Son was spontaneously generated as a mirror in which he could contemplate himself, and the Spirit facilitates this recognition of love. The preincarnate Son is therefore not only the architect but the blueprint of the process of creation. And yet it leads us away from creation. "For only in total detachment (*Gelassenheit*) from all creatureliness could the 'inner Word' be

apprehended, . . . 'teaching us that we are *the same Son*.' "[32] On the one hand, Eckhardt's focus on the dignity of the soul disallows any notion of depravity. "On the other hand, the Neoplatonic matter-spirit dichotomy forced the conclusion that all preoccupation with externals and material things hindered man's communion with the Divine."[33]

The reference point for salvation, then, is not an act of human disobedience (i.e., the fall) but is "a reversal of the creation process, a bringing back together of all diversity into unity through the *unio mystica* [mystical union]." Packull continues:

> Through the higher powers lodged in the soul, man was directly connected with the Divinity. Eckhardt's bolder statements suggest that the 'nobler (rational) powers of the soul' were identical with the indwelling Logos. The problem for man was to recognize the divine in him. This could be achieved only by turning inward. The senses communicated only external and, therefore, secondary reality, but reason, the noblest power of the soul, could clasp naked divinity.[34]

These sources are important not only for understanding late medieval mysticism, including early Anabaptism, but for recognizing the influences upon Enlightenment and Romantic figures, particularly Schelling, Hegel, Goethe, and Schleiermacher—who are in turn major sources for contemporary theologians I engage below.[35]

In contrast with this metaphysical dualism, contemporary panentheism seeks to be radically world affirming. Despite significant differences, this worldview shares with the previous one a creator-creature confusion that is rooted in many of the same sources, including Meister Eckhardt, which found its way into the modern world through the radical pietist Jakob Boehme to Schelling, Hegel, and other Romantic idealists who supernaturalized nature and naturalized the supernatural.[36] However, whereas the dualistic brand of panentheism divided reality into spiritual and material spheres, modern panentheism typically seeks to integrate them.

It may well be that the chief rival to biblical theism today, as in the ancient world, is not deism or atheism but panentheism and outright pantheism. Unlike pantheism, *panentheism* maintains that God is *more than* the world, but it regards God and the world as mutually dependent. Rejecting many of the

attributes traditionally ascribed to God, panentheism also opposes the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* as implying a dangerous chasm between God and the world.

Reading the entire Christian tradition as a precursor to modern (Cartesian) metaphysics, a stream of critiques point to biblical religion as a major source for oppressive hierarchies. "We're told" that it is precisely this ontological gap between God and the world "that sanctions or grounds all sorts of other dualisms —not only spirit and body, but man and woman, and humanity and nature; if we *start* with a basic disjunction between an active and passive partner, and allot a massive metaphysical privilege to the former, we end up associating technocratic humanity, masculinity and distancing or dominating rationality with God."[37] More appealing to such critics is "the imagery of a God 'embodied' in the creation or a God who 'gives birth' to creation as something bound in with God's own being."[38]

We can see how far orthodox Christian thinking is from the familiar caricature of biblical religion as introducing a fatal dualism that is responsible for ecological violence. This is not the place for a thorough engagement with this important set of criticisms. However, it is relevant to our discussion to at least clarify the Christian doctrine in light of common misunderstandings. I will refer here briefly only to four.

First, critiques of this type presuppose a metaphysics that is bound to set God and the world in opposition. Assuming that being is univocal, this perspective pictures God as a being among other beings, perhaps greater (quantitatively) than humans or the world but not as truly other (qualitatively) than the world. From a traditional Christian perspective, however, human existence and agency are an analogy of God's. We are created in God's image and likeness but with no identical intersection at any point. Therefore, there is no negotiation of being where God must somehow restrict his own in order to "make room" for creatures; no negotiation of wills where God must somehow limit his freedom to give us power to choose and act. On the contrary, God *is* being and *gives us* our own way of being. Though limited to our creaturely frame, this existence and liberty does not infringe on God's (or vice versa) because they are not of the same type or on the same register.

Consequently, it is beside the point to critique Christian theism as conceiving of God as a being at the summit of a metaphysical hierarchy. Even when God chooses freely to create and interact with the world, he remains unchangeable and self-complete. God *is* life and *gives* life appropriate to creatures according to

his perfect wisdom. The only reason that we have the marvelous sort of creaturely freedom that we have at all is because God has created us as his analogy. So while there is a qualitative distinction, there is no ontological *opposition* between God and the world (or humans in particular) but only an *ethical* one due to willful rebellion.

Second, despite its laudable intention to give greater attention to the Spirit's role in creation and nature, the proliferation of panentheistic pneumatologies in recent decades has tended to depersonalize the Spirit, reducing the "Lord and giver of life" to something divine in the world rather than someone divine who is at work in it. Typically, this conclusion involves three key moves. The first is to *blur* the distinction between the Spirit and the Father and Son. The second is to *depersonalize* and generalize the Spirit as something at the heart of the world rather than someone who is at work within it. The Spirit is no longer a transcendent person who is active in the world but is rendered an immanent force of nature itself.

An example of these moves may be seen in the argument of Mark Wallace, construing the world as the Spirit's body along the lines of Sallie McFague's more general concept.[39] He thinks that the traditional concept of the Spirit as "the bond of unity" in the intratrinitarian life should be expanded "to include the Spirit's *biocentric* role as the power of healing and renewal within all creation."[40] Distinguishing this view from the traditional one in which the Holy Spirit is "a metaphysical entity," Wallace calls his model "ecological pneumatology." "This model understands the Spirit not as divine intellect or the principle of consciousness but as a healing and subversive *life-form*—as water, light, dove, mother, fire, breath, and nature."[41] Nature is seen as "the primary mode of being for the Spirit's work in the world."[42]

Wallace makes the first move (blurring the distinction between the Spirit and the other persons) by referring to the Spirit's incarnation: "In an earth-centered model of the Spirit, God is a thorough-going incarnational reality."[43] This statement calls into question not only whether Jesus is the *only* incarnation of deity but whether Jesus even represents a "thoroughgoing" incarnation at all. It would seem from Wallace's argument that God does not freely enter our history but is "a thorough-going incarnational reality" in his very essence. It is not clear whether "incarnational reality" includes *the* incarnation of the Son, but as the essay unfolds it becomes clear that he has the Spirit more than the Son in mind. Similarly, according to Hendrikus Berkhof, "So intimate is the Spirit to man's

life that we sometimes feel ourselves on the brink of pantheism."[44] The closest bond between God and the world shifts from the incarnation (which depends on the Spirit) to the Spirit (abstracted from Christ, unless Jesus himself is transformed into a cosmic Christ distinct from the historical Jesus).

Traditional theology emphasizes the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, "the Spirit *of God*," while Wallace wants to focus on the Spirit as "the Spirit *of creation*."[45] In fact, he wants to "reconceive the Spirit as the enfleshment of God's sustaining power in the biosphere. . . ."[46] "Insofar as the Spirit abides in and with all living things, Spirit and earth are *inseparable* and yet at the same time *distinguishable*."[47] "Under the control of this dialectic, the earth is the body of the Spirit. . . . As once God became human in the body of Jesus so continually God enfleshes Godself in the embodied reality of life on earth."[48] But this must mean that "*God as Spirit is vulnerable to serious loss and trauma just insofar as the earth is abused and despoiled*."[49] He turns to Moltmann's *The Crucified God* in order to apply to the Spirit the same logic that Moltmann applied to God in the death of Jesus. "As Jesus's death on the cross brought death and loss into Godself so the Spirit's suffering from persistent environmental trauma engenders chronic agony in the Godhead."[50] "God, then, is so internally related to the universe that the specter of ecocide raises the risk of deicide: to wreak environmental havoc on the earth is to run the risk that we will do irreparable harm to the Love and Mystery we call God."[51]

The second—depersonalizing—move follows. Since God (Spirit) and world are interdependent, Wallace reasons, our ecological violence can do "irreparable, even fatal harm to the Mystery we call God."[52] Indeed, it may lead to the "eventual destruction of the divine life itself."[53] The "Spirit" (or the anarthrous "Spirit") turns out to be simply the divine aspect of the cosmos. For this reason, Wallace can even invite us to "worship nature."[54] However, the Spirit cannot be the "*Lord* and *giver* of life" if he *is* the immanent principle of cosmic life itself. Along similar lines, Pannenberg conceives the Spirit as a "dynamic force field."[55] According to Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "The same Spirit of God *that* participated in creation over the chaotic primal waters (Gen. 1:2) is *the principle of human life* as well (Gen. 2:7)."[56] Of course, such expressions are much more radical than "bond of love," "fellowship," and "communion," but the tendency is

the same: to identify the Spirit as *something* more than *someone.*

The specific identity of the Spirit in this account is opaque, as is evident in Wallace's essay.[57] On the one hand, the Spirit appears to be a divine person: the definite pronoun "she" is employed, along with "who."[58] On the other hand, Wallace says explicitly that he envisions the Spirit "not as a metaphysical entity but as a healing life-force which engenders human flourishing as well as the welfare of the planet."[59] Both definitions appear even in the same sentence: "In this essay my thesis is that hope for a renewed earth is best founded on belief in the Spirit as *the divine force* within the cosmos *who* continually works to sustain all forms of life."[60]

The plausibility of this model rests to a large extent on the credibility of the panentheistic materials supplied by McFague and Moltmann, since Wallace basically applies their reflections on God generally to the Spirit. As I have argued elsewhere, McFague's construal of the world as God's body seems not only to threaten divine freedom but the reality of creaturely agency as well.[61] Typical of modern theology (long before Hegel), panentheism assumes a univocity of being in which God's being "transcends" creaturely being quantitatively rather than qualitatively. "The world exists in God, but God is more than the world" is the usual way of distinguishing panentheism from pantheism. However, this renders divine and human agency interdependent, such that God cannot be said ever to intervene miraculously; yet at the same time, all human acts are also divine acts.[62]

The (nonmetaphorical) concept of the world as God's body actually exacerbates the Cartesian dualism that it seeks to overcome. Ironically, it is the God-world relation conceived by panentheism that is more susceptible to the violence and oppression that worries anti-dualists. Does not the concept of the world as God's body, for example, encourage the picture of a passive material creation that is merely acted upon by a divine intelligence, like a world soul?[63] If every creaturely motion from the rustling of a leaf to the raising of an empire is *God's* motion, just as the soul animates the body to act, then the question is raised not only whether there is a Creator but whether there are creatures. Invoking an event metaphysics over substance metaphysics brings us no closer to coherence on this point. In either case, creaturely agency—and therefore worldly being itself—seems imaginary, and despite the effort to affirm the world acosmism becomes the most likely conclusion.

Some of the most prominent Pentecostal theologians today are drawn to this panentheistic paradigm.[64] In addition, mainline theologians inclined to panentheism are often inclined also to identify themselves as "Pentecostal" Lutherans, Reformed, Methodists, Anglicans, Catholics and Baptists. Their goal is a total reframing and reworking of systematic theology from a pneumatological perspective—to understand creation as well as salvation as the gift of the Spirit.[65] Philip Clayton believes that we need a theology that combines "a panentheistic understanding of the God/world relation with a richer theory of the nature of spirit that is shared by humans and God. . . ."[66] "Spirit is like the water in which the fish dwells; as the very medium of life, it is invisible precisely because it's pervasive."[67]

Given this assumption of a univocity of being, it is unsurprising that the incommunicable attributes of classical Christian theology are seen as generating the "dualistic" relation of God and the world that has sponsored the fatal and violent hierarchies in the first place. Evangelical Baptist theologian Stanley Grenz suggested that "it even lets us imagine the world as a relational universe evolving within the relational life of God. One might speak of a panentheism which is trinitarian."[68]

One example of migration from a traditional—indeed, conservative—evangelical position to a Spirit-centered theology within a broadly Hegelian construct is Clark Pinnock's *Flame of Love*: *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. A Christ-centered theology "has made it difficult to affirm the activity of the Spirit in the whole of creation and history, restricting it to the realm where the Word incarnate has been explicitly confessed."[69] Yet because the Spirit is at work even before the incarnation as well as afterward, says Pinnock, salvation is not restricted to those who trust in Christ.[70]

What would it look like if all of our doctrines, from creation and providence to salvation, from the church and missions to eschatology, were all interpreted through this lens? Pinnock says that one obvious difference would be a focus on "the power that transforms human life" rather than on "the Saviour and Messiah" or "the creator and ground of all being." Acknowledging the significance of D. Lyle Dabney's *Advents of the Spirit*, Pinnock suggests that starting with the Spirit could reorient our whole theology.[71] "It could help the church orient herself in the world and go about her mission in a manner more appropriate to this epoch. Giving the Spirit priority offers us (Dabney thinks) an angle of vision

on our mission in the world. It can help the church reconceive the relationship between the gospel and society."[72]

At the same time, *Flame of Love* is less a constructive engagement with these voices from a clear and well-defined tradition of his own than a somewhat eclectic blending. On one hand, he uses traditional grammar about the Spirit entering into our lives, enabling, and other effects of personal agency. On the other hand, he wants to move in a more panentheistic direction in which such terminology is seen as mythological, anthropomorphic, and contradictory of our modern intuitions. Even if one is interested in a Spirit-centered formulation of Christian theology, an ecumenical theology must offer some account of the Holy Spirit as both related to and distinct from the Father and the Son, but I did not find even an attempt along those lines in this book.

The two moves that I suggested above as intrinsic to the panentheistic paradigm are evident in *Flame of Love*. Recall that the first move is to collapse —or at least tend to collapse—the Father and the Son into the Spirit by identifying deity (the divine essence) almost exclusively with the Spirit. The second move is to collapse—or tend to collapse—the Holy Spirit into creation.

The first move is made in various ways. Why is the Spirit "the flame of *love*"? Beyond Augustine's formulation, Pinnock represents the Spirit as the unique bearer of all the remaining attributes of the divine essence. To put the matter starkly, Pinnock has identified a *person* with the divine *essence* and, consequently, depersonalized the Spirit. This tendency presents itself throughout the book. One may detect an implicit modalism (aided by the omission of definite articles) in statements such as the following: "If Father points to ultimate reality and Son supplies the clue to the divine mystery, Spirit epitomizes the nearness of the power and presence of God."[73] Are "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" just different pointers to "the divine mystery" or different persons of it? "Spirit," he says, "is the ecstasy of divine life, the overabundance of joy that gives birth to the universe and ever works to bring about the fullness of unity."[74]

Throughout the work, the Spirit is by turns "she" and "it" or the definite article is omitted, as in the quote above. "Most essentially," Pinnock says, "Spirit is transcendent and divine, not mere flesh; it is *the energy of life itself*."[75] In this one statement both moves are made: the essential attributes of all three persons are distinctive of the Spirit, while the Spirit now becomes simply "Spirit" contrasted with "mere flesh." On the heels of his elevation, the Spirit himself is demoted to "the energy of life itself" and to "the power that enables us to know

God."[76] But at some point one must choose between Christian Trinitarianism and panentheism: If the Spirit *is* the energy of life itself, then he cannot be the Lord and *giver of life*; indeed, though he may be a central part of the world, it is difficult even to affirm (with panentheism) that he is in any meaningful sense *more than* the world.

How then might we reconceive the Spirit's relation to the natural world? As *the Lord*, the Holy Spirit shares identically the same essence as the Father and the Son. The Spirit is not subject to becoming but is fully complete in himself, independent of the world, immutable, omniscient, and omnipotent. Because he is Lord in precisely this way, he is free to involve himself in the most intimate way with creation on the basis of love rather than lack, generosity rather than need. As the *Life-Giver*, the Holy Spirit is a unique person with incommunicable properties who never undertakes his own freelance operations but is always engaged lovingly in every work of the Godhead. The Father originates the creative and redeeming word, while the Son is the mediator. But only the Spirit can bring that word to completion.

There is no Holy Spirit other than the third person of the Trinity, who filled Israel's temple in Jerusalem with his glory, spoke by the prophets, united the Son to our humanity in both soul and body, raised Jesus, and is now creating in him "one holy, catholic and apostolic church" until that day when he will raise the dead and consummate the kingdom. Consequently, it grieves the Spirit to be celebrated as someone or something other than the one who leads us to the Father through Christ. The Holy Spirit is not something divine, but someone of the Godhead.

Advocates of panentheistic pneumatologies claim to be almost ineluctably drawn to their conclusions by the modern shift from substance metaphysics to subject metaphysics, but this is not the first time that cultural trends have been treated as normative. It may help to remind ourselves that panentheism is just another story, with its own history of reception. We have seen it all before, even if it has been formulated in different ways. Richard Muller relates that the so-called Libertines of the sixteenth century "held the apparently pantheistic doctrine that there was a single divine Spirit that is the sole substance of all things."[77] Against English "Libertines," Roger Hutchinson argued in 1550 that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, "not merely an inspiration, affection, or quality."[78] As Peter Martyr Vermigli argued, it was a person who was given at Pentecost, not just a divine energy, inspiration, or power. Jesus promised, "He

shall teach you all things . . .” and “shall speak whatsoever he shall hear,” which cannot be said of mere “inspiration and motion of mind.”[79] The “breath of life” that God breathed into Adam’s nostrils was not the Holy Spirit but the creaturely breath by which the Spirit animated the body and made the man “a living soul.” The whole cosmos is sustained and flourishes by the Spirit’s energies, not by any emanation of the Spirit’s essence.

The doctrine of *ex nihilo* creation remains the Rubicon not only between creator and creation but between pantheism/panentheism of all stripes and Christianity. The Spirit who hovers over creation, ordering and building, and works within creatures to bring them to what they have been ordered to by the Father’s speech in his Son is antithetical to any notion of the Spirit as world soul, life principle, or energy.

What many theologies of process and liberation today appear to be pursuing is a “Spirit” that is not “the Lord” and whose role as “giver of life” is assimilated to the immanent processes of this present age (“flesh”). And no matter how benevolent, a spirit that is akin to the world soul cannot rescue a world that is bondage to the powers of death and destruction. Despite all the hopeful talk in panentheistic theologies of the Spirit leading creation to an eschatological destiny of *shalom*, it is difficult to know exactly how such a condition is even possible. After all, according to this paradigm, it is as true that the Spirit (or “Spirit”) depends on us as it is that creation’s consummation depends on God. In more radical versions, the Spirit’s very existence is in jeopardy because of our ecological violence.[80] It is less a question of how God can save us than a question of how we can save God.

But I wonder if those who stop short of this with a tamer sort of open theism recognize that the difference between a “wounded Spirit” and a murdered Spirit is one merely of degree. Yet it is precisely because the Spirit is necessarily transcendent that he can be freely immanent. We may be grateful beyond words that the Holy Spirit is not the “vulnerable” member of the Trinity. The Spirit is the Sovereign Lord and giver of life “who, with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified.”

Far different from pneumatological panentheism is the biblical conception in which the Holy Spirit, as the Lord, is independent of the world that he nevertheless delights to indwell freely in love, as it pleases him. Creaturely freedom is real because although it derives its being from God’s Word, both being and agency are qualitatively different with respect to God and humans.

The Spirit does not act *upon* the world, on the analogy of Aristotle's Prime Mover, but *within* the world; yet the Spirit does so in such a way that the earth truly brings forth its own fruit in its own creaturely and therefore finite manner. And precisely because the Spirit is independent of the world—immutable, omniscient, omnipotent—he can save the world rather than depend on rebellious human beings for his own salvation. Romans 8 assures us that the whole creation will share in the glory of the resurrection. This conviction does not even for a moment imagine that our sins "may eventually result in permanent injury to the divine life itself."[81]

This Christian confidence in the Spirit can be taken in a passive direction where we surrender our responsibility now in the hope that God will take care of things someday. However, given the serious stages of ecocide that Wallace documents, despair seems the only intelligent response if the Holy Spirit is not a metaphysical person of the Godhead who is and will always be the Lord *and giver of life* in spite of human rebellion. Although we cannot murder the Spirit, we can quench the Spirit by our ecological violence. It might surprise some critics that some of the most trenchant opposition to this violence has come from Christian sources, from theological convictions intrinsic to biblical faith.[82]

At the same time, evangelical theology must become more attuned to the purposes of the Godhead in not only making all things new by the Spirit but also preserving the natural order by the Spirit. The Spirit is "the giver of life" not only in creation and redemption but in providence. If the world's redeemer is the same as its creator, then there is no justification for thinking of our souls as somehow escaping the clutches of the natural world to be saved. Created in the freedom of love rather than necessity, the world was cherished by the Spirit even as a confused mass. He will not allow us to destroy it but convicts us of our sin, and we dare not quench his searching judgment of our hearts and actions. We press on in our personal sanctification despite the seemingly overwhelming odds because we are confident that the one who began a good work will complete it. This includes our environmental stewardship.

Only when this burden of the salvation of the world is taken from our shoulders can we begin to live responsibly now in light of God's promise even when we might otherwise throw up our hands in despair. Precisely because this Spirit is not part of the world itself—even as its soul—creation is never at the mercy of its own immanent principles with which it has been originally endowed. Empirical sciences can indicate what will be the case, given the laws

and equations that define the ordinary unfolding of nature, but they cannot have the last word. No less in creation and providence than in redemption, “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17).

As Kuyper has argued, along with numerous other Reformed theologians, there is always a subtle Marcionite temptation to imagine that the God of creation is somehow other than the God of redemption—and that perhaps the latter saves us from the former. But this runs against the biblical narrative, with the Father redeeming his own creation, the Son assuming its very existence, and the Spirit turning a barren desert (because of sin) into a blossoming orchard (because of grace). The Spirit’s gifts in the new creation surpass those in the old, but there is an organic connection. Grace does not destroy nature but restores it and takes it into the consummated Sabbath rest. While the new creation is inconceivably *new* in its condition, it is *this world* that is redeemed and will be renewed. The *world will be different*, but there will not be a *different* world. Taking Christ’s resurrection as our clue, we should beware of setting creation and redemption in opposition. However different in condition and excellence, the Christ who was raised was the same person as the mortal son of David who nursed at Mary’s breast.

The same Spirit will raise us from the dead along with the whole creation. The same Spirit who brooded over the waters of creation, cherishing the confused matter, will renew it. But he is grieved when human beings—created in God’s image—turn their stewardship into tyrannical violence. In Scripture it is the ground that cries out in revulsion and judgment against the blood that falls upon it through human violence (Gen 4:9–11; cf. Heb 12:24); the earth was “subjected to futility” by human rebellion against God (Rom 8:20 ESV). God is the one who keeps the creation, now fallen, from being completely destroyed by sinful human beings. What does it mean for us to “keep in step with the Spirit” in his providential work of ordering, preserving, restraining, and fructifying creaturely reality to become what the Father has worded each species to be, in his Son as the mediator of creation? The Spirit is also the Lord of the age to come. He is the Spirit not of the world’s destruction but of its consummation. On that day, the mountains will clap their hands at the revelation of the children of God.

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1. Jürgen Moltmann, *Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Philadelphia:

Fortress Press, 1992), 8.

2. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 44–45.

3. Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

4. Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (New York: Penguin, 1959).

5. W. C. Lambert and S. B. Parker, *Enûma Eliš: The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

6. See for example Douglas J. Brewer and Emily Teeter, *Egypt and the Egyptians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. ch. 6; George Hart, *Egyptian Myths* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

7. Which only serves to remind us of the tragedy of New Atheists and "creation science" advocates alike that this amazing and divine literature is not about the "days of creation."

8. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1.13.14–15 (emphasis added).

9. See Robert W. Jenson, *The Works of God*, vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11–12: "If this phrase were to be translated 'wind from God,' as some modern versions do," Jenson observes, "again the narrative would be mythic," but such a translation just indicates the translators' prejudice. There is no reason to believe that by *ruach Elohim* the Spirit of God was not intended."

10. Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 29.

11. Ibid. Kuyper is exactly right in saying that the same reticence has been applied to the Son: Is it not gratuitous to see in Old Testament references to the word (*dabar*) the person of Jesus of Nazareth? "And to the reply, 'Our interpretation is as good as yours,' we answer that Jesus and the apostles are our authorities; the Church received its confession from their lips" (28). Furthermore, in application to the third hypostasis, Kuyper makes the fine point that "to speak of a Spirit of God that is not the Holy Spirit is to transfer to the Holy Scripture a purely Western and human idea" (29). Kuyper's reasoning is exactly right. Christian theology has no reason to adopt a post-Enlightenment interpretation of *ruakh* than a post-Enlightenment view of *logos*. The New Testament interprets the Old.

12. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 101.

13. Ibid., 420.

14. Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, Milestones in Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 1:3.

15. Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 26.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 21.

18. Ibid., 30.

19. Ibid., 31.

20. Ibid.

21. Owen, *Discourse*, 99.

22. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.16.2.

23. A notable exception to this lacuna is George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

24. Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 8; cf. Robert K. Johnston, "God in the Midst of Life," *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 76–93.

25. Among the many sources here, I include only Anabaptist historians. See Werner O. Packull, *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement 1525–1531* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1977), esp. 20–23; Thomas N. Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 474–75, 563.

26. *The Schleitheim Confession*, trans. and ed. John Howard Yoder (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1977), 8–12. There is an absolute antithesis between the world (hence, the visible church) and the elect who have "separated from the world." Since those who have not joined Anabaptist communities "are a great abomination before God, therefore nothing else can or really will grow or spring forth from them but abominable things. . . . Now there is nothing else in the world and all creation than good or evil, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who are [come] out of the world . . . and none will have part with the other. . . . Furthermore, He admonishes us therefore to go out from Babylon and from the earthly Egypt that we may not be partakers of their torment and suffering, which the Lord will bring upon them."

27. This is one of the main lines of argumentation in Packull, *Mysticism*. Steven Ozment refers to the thesis of Alfred Hegler in 1892: “The ‘radicals’ from Thomas Müntzer to the AntiTrinitarians (Socinians), he maintained, were inaccurately portrayed as those who simply exaggerated Protestant ideas. Rather, ‘they turn back to medieval ideas. . . . For what has most determined the theories of the radicals in a positive way is mystical soteriology in the form it received in Germany mysticism during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries’ ” (Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973], 14, quoting from Alfred Hegler, *Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Spiritualismus in der Reformationzeit* [Freiburg i.B.: J. C. B. Mohr, 1892], 13).

28. Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 563.

29. Ibid., 474–75.

30. Packull, *Mysticism*, 20.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 22, emphasis added. Notice that there is no distinction here between the divine nature of the Son and the sonship of human beings by adoption. This would lose the intrinsic and ontological *synteresis* between God and the soul. On the surface this scheme (adumbrated later by Hegel) resembles Augustine’s formulation of the Trinity. However, similarities remain only on the surface. Most obviously, there is no becoming in God and therefore no Trinitarian process of temporal unfolding; much less is this a happening between God and creatures. In fact, on just such grounds Augustine is frequently criticized.

33. Ibid., 23.

34. Ibid., 21.

35. Another important source for these figures was the radical pietist Jakob Boehme. See Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); cf. Cyril O’Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); idem, *Gnostic Return in Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

36. See M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973).

37. Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 60.

38. Ibid.

39. Mark I. Wallace, “The Green Face of God: Recovering the Spirit in an Ecocidal Era,” in *Advents of the Spirit*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney, Marquette Studies in Theology (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 460n9. Citing Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), Wallace notes his approving response to her portrait in his *Fragments of the Spirit: Nature, Violence and the Renewal of Creation* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 139–44.

40. Wallace, “Green Face of God,” 445–46.

41. Ibid., 446.

42. Ibid., 447.

43. Mark I. Wallace, “The Wounded Spirit as the Basis for Hope in an Age of Radical Ecology,” in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 51-72. See also Mark Wallace, *Green Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010); idem, *Finding God in the Singing River: Christianity, Spirit, Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), and idem, *Fragments of the Spirit: Nature, Violence, and the Renewal of Creation* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

44. Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1964), 95. And yet Berkhof embraces modalism, with the Spirit as one of the ways in which the one person (“God”) reveals himself (116–17).

45. Wallace, “Green Face of God,” 449.

46. Ibid., 450.

47. Ibid., 451.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.; emphasis original.

50. Ibid., 452.

51. Ibid.

52. Wallace, *Fragments of the Spirit*, 138.

53. Ibid., 144.

54. Ibid.

55. Wolfhart Pannenberg, “The Spirit of God and the Dynamic of Natural Occurrence,” *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994),

2:76–115.

56. Kärkkäinen, *Holy Spirit,* 5 (emphasis added).

57. Wallace, “Green Face of God,” 444–60.

58. Ibid., 444.

59. Ibid., 446.

60. Ibid., 445.

61. See Michael Horton, *Covenant andEschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 73–92.

62. David Ray Griffin observes that process theology actually affirms *more* divine involvement in *every* event than does open theism. See Griffin, “Process Theology and the Christian Good News,” in *Searching for an Adequate God: A Dialogue between Process and Free Will Theism,* ed. John B. Cobb Jr. and Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 13.

63. Among the many arguments for the analogy of the world as God’s body, see Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 30.

64. See D. Lyle Dabney, “Saul’s Armor: The Problem and the Promise of Pentecostal Theology Today,” *PNEUMA: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* 23.1 (2001): 128–40; idem, “Otherwise Engaged in the Spirit: A First Theology for a Twenty-First Century Church,” in *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. M. Volf, C. Krieg, T. Kucharz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 154–63; Andrew K. Gabriel, *The Lord is the Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Divine Attributes* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), esp. 6–8 for a terse statement of his project’s goal; Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); idem, *The Spirit and Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination*, Pentecostal Manifestos 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); idem, *The Cosmic Breath: Spirit and Nature in the Christian-Buddhism-Science Trialogue*, Philosophical Studies in Science and Religion 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

65. Affinities toward Hegel in Moltmann, Pannenberg, and process theology are well known. However, attraction to Hegel or Hegelian sources is increasingly dominant in pneumatological reflection across traditions. To take one (hardly scientific) measure, the important collection *Advents of the Spirit*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001),

the index of names includes no fewer than twenty-three page numbers for Hegel, sixteen for Joachim of Fiore. In contrast, there is one for Irenaeus, ten for the great patristic theologian of the Spirit, Basil, and four for Wesley (despite the strongly Wesleyan character of historic Pentecostalism). To be fair, there are, however, forty-seven for Augustine.

66. Philip Clayton, "Philosophical Resources for the Doctrine of the Spirit," in Hinze and Dabney, *Advents of the Spirit*, 196. This is a helpful essay for understanding the usefulness of Hegel for panentheistic pneumatologies and why its advocates find it a compelling alternative to traditional understandings of the Spirit.

67. Ibid., 202. For a fuller treatment along these lines, see Philip Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit: God, World, and Divine Action* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

68. As with other proponents of Trinitarian panentheism, Grenz sees the Spirit as the one who not only unites us to Christ but who brings us into what sometimes appears to be the immanent life of the Godhead. Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004). Also idem, "Holy Spirit: Divine Love Guiding Us Home," *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 1–13.

69. Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 196–97. Cf. Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 8–10.

70. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen concurs: "Pinnock rightly argues that access to grace is less of a problem for a pneumatologically based theology of religions than for an exclusively christologically anchored one. Whereas the incarnation of the Son was confined to a specific place in time and history, its universal effects through the ministry of the Spirit can be transmitted to the farthest ends of the earth. A truly revolutionary insight of Pinnock's is that the religions rather than being either futile human attempts to reach God (conservatives) or outright obstacles to a saving knowledge of God (the young Barth), can be Spirit-used pointers to and means of contact with God" (Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 235). For an example of a more universal, diverse, and open theology of religions from a pneumatological perspective, see Samuel Solvan, "Interreligious Dialogue: An Hispanic American Pentecostal Perspective," in *Grounds for Understanding Ecumenical Responses to Religious Pluralism*, ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

1998), 37–45.

71. D. Lyle Dabney, “Why Should the Last Be First?,” in Hinze and Dabney, *Advents of the Spirit*, 240–61.

72. Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, x.

73. Ibid., 9.

74. Ibid., 48.

75. Ibid., 14 (emphasis added).

76. Ibid., xx.

77. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 4:334. See Calvin, *Treatises against the Anabaptists and against the Libertines*, trans. and ed. Benjamin Wirt Farley (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 230–33, 238–41.

78. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:336, citing Roger Hutchinson, *Image of God or Laie Mans Book, in Which the Right Knowledge of God Is Disclosed* (London: John Day, 1550), 134–39. Muller observes, quoting Herman Witsius (*Exercitationes*, 13.3), that with respect to biblical references to “spirit” the Reformed orthodox typically distinguished between three categories of use: taken *essentially* (to refer to God as spiritual substance, as in John 4:24), *personally* (to refer to the Holy Spirit), and *metonymically* (referring to some signification of the effects of the Holy Spirit’s operations, such as “breath” and those gifts promised by the prophets) (*Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:341).

79. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Commonplaces*, 1.12.7, as quoted in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:344–45.

80. Wallace, “The Wounded Spirit,” 51–72; cf. idem, *Fragments of the Spirit*, 138.

81. Wallace, “Green Face of God,” 452.

82. To be sure, the Francis Bacons have been legion, appealing to the creation of humans in God’s image as justification for the exploitation of nature. What this meant for Francis Bacon, for example, was that nature was less a garden to be tended with care, wisdom, and respectful intelligence than a resource to be pillaged. The violent language is evident throughout Bacon’s *Novum Organum*, but especially in the infamous passage in *New Atlantis* that compares nature to a woman who is “put on the rack” and forced to divulge her

secrets. But Bacon's Puritan contemporaries took great offense to this orientation, as Thomas Keith has documented in *Man and the Natural World: Changes in England, 1500–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).



CHAPTER 3

Preparing a Body: The Spirit in Redemptive History

> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
>
> "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
> but a body have you prepared for me;
> in burnt offerings and sin offerings
> you have taken no pleasure.
> Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
> as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.' "
>
> When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Heb 10:5–10 ESV)

The writer to the Hebrews understands the Son's incarnation and active obedience as the sweet-smelling sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving that humanity was created to raise to the nostrils of God. In the first five verses, he tells us that the bloody sacrifices of animals cannot take away guilt; on the contrary, they are perpetual reminders of transgressions. The conscience is never at peace, even if these sacrifices cover over guilt until the advent of the true Lamb of God. In the previous chapter the writer adds that Christ offered his blood as a propitiatory sacrifice "through the eternal Spirit" precisely in order to "purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (9:14 ESV).

In other words, Jesus offered up a thank offering—the living sacrifice of obedient praise—*and* the guilt offering on our behalf. These two types of

sacrifice have traditionally been identified with Christ's active and passive obedience. Because Christ has fulfilled all righteousness and absorbed our curse, we may now participate in him as grateful children. In view of his mercies, we now offer ourselves to God—not to appease his justice for our guilt, but to be a "living sacrifice" of thanksgiving (Rom 12:1–2).

Here we have an important intersection for this chapter and those that follow. Indeed, one way of summarizing the whole Bible is the preparation of a body—a human body, animated by the Spirit. There is a progression from Adam to Israel to Mary to Christ and then to his worldwide ecclesial body.

Preparing a Body: Adam to Israel

The Old Testament is, as Luther observed, the manger in which the baby Jesus is laid. We see this preparation of a body first in the creation of Adam, as God breathed the "breath of life" (*nishmat khayyim*) into him and he became a "living being" (*nephesh khayyah*; Gen 2:7). It expands outward to include the whole family of Adam and Eve, though already with Cain appears the first murderer of the prophets and persecutor of the church (see Luke 11:50–51). Replacing Abel, Seth and his line are distinguished by the announcement, "At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26).

Eventually, the world is filled with corruption as the Spirit is grieved. "Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years' " (Gen 6:3 ESV). A better translation in my view is the older KJV rendering: "My Spirit shall not always *strive with* man. . . ." The Spirit's work in common grace is not to indwell the wicked but to restrain them and to fertilize the natural seeds of truth, goodness, and beauty that the Father has planted through his Son's mediation. The gist of this passage as a prelude to the flood is that human beings became so seared in their conscience that they were willfully dismissive of the Spirit's restraining impulses. It is significant that the apostle Paul identifies the root of sin in fallen humanity as ingratitude: "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom 1:21 ESV). As N. T. Wright has argued recently, the root problem is that human beings have rejected their vocation, surrendering the authority that God gave them as his stewards to the idols.[1] Better simply to limit the lifespan. Soon

even Noah's family was compromised. But God was still determined to prepare a body: a human person who renders at last a thankful life, the appropriate response of a covenant servant who has received everything already from the hand of a good Father. God called Abram and by his evangelical promise kept preparing a body from the patriarch's own loins and barren womb of aged Sarah.

Centuries later, God fulfilled his oath, leading his people out of Egypt toward the land of promise with the Spirit hovering above them to direct and to provide for their needs. At Mount Sinai, the church became a nation and once in Canaan the Spirit took up residence—eventually permanent residence—in the temple. The smoke of burning carcasses billowed up to heaven, providing merely a temporary and typological covering for sins until the Lamb of God should come. With a canonical reading we recognize that there is a close association between the heavenly cloud and the Holy Spirit (Neh 9:19–20; Isa 63:11–14; Hag 2:5; Acts 2), which may be implied already in Genesis 1:2. Yet as the northern and southern kingdoms turned their back on Yahweh as king, the Spirit evacuated the sanctuary and raised up enemies to cart the divided people into captivity: Israel to Assyria and, later, Judah to Babylon.

Through the prophets, however, the Holy Spirit kept preparing a body. Israel's whole history was the fate of the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham and David, who on numerous occasions the serpent attempted to cut off.

Thus, far from being a flight away from this world and its history, the unfolding plot of Scripture coalesces around the preparation of a body within space and time in order to liberate everything that has the breath of life in it, humans and beasts. Not only the goal but also the means are taken from creaturely reality. The Holy Spirit sanctifies ordinary people, places, and things for his extraordinary operations. Although he is never bound, he freely binds himself to these creaturely means that make him accessible to us: Moses's staff, the pillar and cloud, the brass serpent in the wilderness, the tabernacle and temple; the ark of the covenant, showbread, and incense; Samuel's anointing oil and the bloody sacrifices. Wherever the Spirit is in residence, the whole land flourishes with rich food and wine; when he evacuates the sanctuary, the land is no longer holy but common.

In all these ways, we see the inextricable bond between the Spirit's way of working in creation and in the new creation. "And if sin had not come in," Kuyper observes, "we might say that this work is done in *three* successive steps: first, *impregnating* inanimate matter; second, *animating* the rational soul; third,

taking up His abode in the elect child of God. But sin entered in, i.e., a power appeared to keep man and nature *from their destiny*."[2] The goal is not to destroy creation and create again, but to recover creation and even to raise it to a greater glory than ever before. "Redemption is therefore not a *new* work *added* to that of the Holy Spirit," Kuyper adds, "but it is *identical* with it. . . . He undertook to bring all things to their destiny either *without* the disturbance of sin or *in spite of it*; first, by saving the elect, and then by restoring all things in heaven and on earth at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ."[3] This is the end to which the inspiration of Scripture and the preparation of the body of Christ are means.[4]

Preparing a Body: The Spirit of Revelation

The revelation of the triune mystery unfolds progressively through the history of the covenant of grace. Gregory of Nazianzus explained, "The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself."[5] Yet all along it was the Spirit hidden behind the scenes who kept the promise moving forward, over the deep trenches and barbed wire that human beings had placed in his path, preparing a body for the Son from the flesh of Israel.

As I will explore below, the Spirit gave us Jesus in the incarnation. Yet even before preparing the virgin's womb, he was preparing Israel as his manger through the prophets. The Spirit's ministry of proclaiming Christ began not at Pentecost, nor even in the announcement to Mary, but all the way back in Genesis 3:15. Already the Spirit was taking that which belongs to the Son and making it the common fund of the saints. Israel was waiting for its Spirit-anointed deliverer because the Spirit had been spreading his wings of revelation over his people, fertilizing the seeds of hope.

The Trinitarian and christological maxim "distinction without separation" is evident in the way Scripture speaks of its own character as divine and human. The unbounded Spirit binds himself freely to creaturely means, separating and uniting. In creation the Spirit was working with the medium of water, dividing it from the land to provide a hospitable environment for covenantal communion. In

providence he is sent forth from the Father to sustain creation and to "renew the face of the ground" (Ps 104:30). Thus, nothing in creation that he takes to hand as his instrument is alien to him; it is already the product of his perfecting agency. He not only knows how every created thing or person works but is the one who makes it work. Of course, he could work immediately without bothering with such creaturely means, but that is not his ordinary way.

It is the Spirit who overcame the tendency of prophets and apostles to suppress the truth and to quench his light, not by sheer force but by liberating them from bondage and sweetly inclining their hearts to his will. There is a legitimate analogy between the Son's humiliation in the incarnation and the Spirit's inspiration. "For the joy that was set before him," the eternal Logos was willing to set aside his glory to assume our nature, the form of a servant, for which he was exalted above every name (Heb 12:2 ESV; Phil 2:5–11). Analogously, the Spirit was unashamed to descend to our level by uniting his ineffable communication to the comparative poverty of human language, and in the process created a work of simple and in some cases even rustic prose that is exalted beyond all other literature.

Scripture itself is the product of both types of speech acts. There is the objective *ex nihilo* fiat, " 'Let there be. . . .' And there was. . . ." (This is equivalent to "thus says the LORD.") But there is also the subjective fruit-bearing effect (" 'Let the earth bring forth. . . .' And the earth brought forth . . ."). The Holy Spirit is engaged in both, of course, but his work is especially evident in the latter. It is the Spirit who fulfills the word originating with the Father. For example, in the inspiration of Scripture the Spirit acts not only *upon* the human writers nor merely *with* them to bring to mind the central content (the Word in the words), but *within* them. The Spirit does not subvert but rather sanctifies their speech, employing their ordinary linguistic, cultural, social, and personal idiosyncrasies that he has himself brought forth in his providential activity throughout their life to that point.

Thus the Spirit employs many methods in the process of inspiring the sacred oracles, speaking "at many times and in many ways" (Heb 1:1 ESV). We do find direct divine discourse in places—even instances of dictation from God to humans. "Thus says the LORD" corresponds to the "let there be . . ." speech-act in creation. But the bulk of the Bible consists of no less inspired "let the earth bring forth . . ." types of revelation that point up the organic and natural aspects of the process. There is, for example, no reference to a vision or to any direct command from the Lord to Luke in either his Gospel or in Acts. Luke simply says that "it

seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3; cf. Acts 1:1). There is hardly anything more creaturely—indeed, more ordinary—than interviewing eyewitnesses and compiling a composite report. It requires a greater miracle to "bring forth" an inerrant text from sinful prophets and apostles than if their own personality and agency had been suspended, rendering them as mere secretaries of the Spirit's dictation.

And yet this creaturely mediation takes nothing away from the fact that it is God who speaks: "For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:10–11 ESV); "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16). The Thessalonians are commended for having accepted the apostolic proclamation "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess 2:13 ESV). "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21).

No doubt recalling Jesus's discourse—that the Spirit will "teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26 ESV) and "he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13), Peter writes:

> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Pet 1:10–12 ESV)

Paul explains that the apostles "impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor 2:7 ESV), adding:

> These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart

> this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (1 Cor 2:10–13 ESV)

It should not surprise us, then, that many if not most of the earliest patristic references to the Holy Spirit occur in the context of discussing the nature of Scripture and its inspiration. In the words of the Creed, "we believe in the Holy Spirit . . . who spoke by the prophets." In fact, the inspiration of Scripture became an argument for the Spirit's full divinity. Just as our salvation required no one less than God to regenerate, indwell, sanctify, and glorify us, so we could have no assurance that Scripture represents God's word to us unless the one who inspired it is God himself.

The Promise of the Spirit in the Prophets

The Spirit came upon Moses at signal moments to lead the covenant people toward the promise. There were others too who received this special anointing for their task. God singled out Bezalel of Judah as the supervisor of the artists and craftsmen in the building of the tabernacle. "I have filled him with the Spirit of God," Yahweh says to Moses (Exod 31:3; cf. 35:31). It was this same Spirit who had led his people through the wilderness by cloud by day and fire by night, and who had spread his wings over the confused mass in creation to turn a house into a home, erecting a terrestrial copy of the heavenly temple. Employing a cast of human characters, the Spirit builds and beautifies the homes that he indwells. Just as he was marking out boundaries and transforming chaos into an ordered cosmos in creation, he empowered Bezalel to build the tabernacle according to the Father's word, the content of which was ultimately nothing less than Jesus Christ. Already the Lord was preparing a body for himself, a faithful covenant son whose obedience would be better than sacrifices, and the tabernacle directed faith to the one who became flesh and tabernacled [*eskēnōsen*] among us (John 1:14).

When the people brought suit against Moses (and ultimately Yahweh), instead of wiping out the camp, the Lord condescended by calling Moses to appoint seventy elders:

> And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them

> around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" (Num 11:24–29 ESV)

Three noteworthy points arise in the light of later revelation. First, the Spirit is not said here to indwell Moses or the elders but rather to be upon them for carrying out their office. Second, a portion of the Spirit's presence upon Moses is given to the elders, in contrast with Jesus, to whom the Spirit was given and who himself "gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34 ESV). Third, Moses recognizes that the reason for the people's obstinacy is their hard hearts; they resist the Holy Spirit (described as "grieving the Spirit" in Isa 63:10 and Ps 78:40). His longing for Pentecost points up the weakness of the old covenant in comparison to the new.

In the midst of Israel's idolatry under Ahab and Jezebel, God raised up Elijah. Just before the Lord takes him to heaven in the whirlwind, Elijah tells Elisha, " 'Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me' " (2 Kgs 2:9 ESV). A chariot and horses of fire then appeared, and Elijah went up to heaven (v. 11). Tearing his own garment in two, Elisha takes up Elijah's cloak and immediately parts the Jordan as the inauguration of his Spirit-endowed mission and then crosses the river (vv. 9–14). Such episodes anticipate Christ's prophetic ministry, as we will see. Yet the point to make thus far is that the Spirit is preparing a body, Israel, from which the world's Messiah will come.

Besides prophecy, the Spirit is associated with kingship. God instructed Samuel to anoint David as king. "And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam 16:13 ESV). By contrast, "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him" (v. 14 ESV). It is intriguing that Israel's first king sought power by his own strength

and became deranged, filled with hatred and violence toward the Lord's anointed. By contrast, David faces Goliath armed only with a slingshot, "that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's," he tells his menacing opponent, "and he will give you into our hand" (1 Sam 17:47 ESV). It was by the Spirit who had "rushed upon" David at his anointing (1 Sam 16:13) that an ordinary, even unlikely, agent—a young shepherd—was given victory through the ordinary and unlikely means of a rock in a slingshot.

Yet not even David failed to quench the Spirit, as he confessed in Psalm 51 after his adultery and murder, pleading, "take not your Holy Spirit from me" (v. 11 ESV). And although they were not all equally bad, his heirs fall short of David's heart for the Lord, and we hear nothing about the Spirit "rushing upon" the kings of Judah.

As the focus of these office bearers narrows, all concentration is upon one anointed servant in whom all three offices of prophet, priest, and king will be united. This becomes especially evident in the ministry of Isaiah. In his day, Judah itself had succumbed to unbelief, idolatry, unrighteousness, and injustice. Yet like David's riposte to Goliath, Isaiah assures David's successors that God will bring judgment and deliverance. Only this time, the judgment is upon the covenant people, but the deliverance will include a remnant of Judah along with that of every nation. "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit" (Isa 11:1 ESV). Wherever we encounter the promise of fruit-bearing, we should expect to find the Spirit, and that is precisely what we find in the following verse: "And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD." Because the Spirit will be upon him, this Servant's "delight shall be in the fear of the LORD" and he will judge the earth with righteousness until the whole world is at peace (vv. 3–9).

In Isaiah 32 the holy land is envisioned as desolate—like the garden of Eden after the fall—barren, as cosmos returns to chaos. The women are to beat their breasts "for the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briers" (v. 13).

> For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; *until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high*, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then

> justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the *fruitful field*. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (vv. 14–17 ESV, emphasis added)

The key Servant-Spirit passage is Isaiah 42:1 ESV: "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations." This association of the anointer with the anointed is carried forward throughout Isaiah's prophecies. Yahweh pledges the outpouring of the Spirit in chapter 44:3 ESV: "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants." Then again: " 'Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there.' And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit" (48:16 ESV). The unidentified speaker is the Spirit-endowed Servant, which means that all three persons of the Trinity are in this scene: The promise-making Father, the Servant-Son, and the Spirit who is also sent upon the new Shepherd-King.

> "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore." (59:20–21)

On this basis Israel is cheered with the vision of nations streaming to the light that has dawned in her midst (ch. 60). The Father is preparing a body for his Son and by his Spirit.

The prophet recounts God's faithfulness again in chapter 63, with multiple references to the Holy Spirit as both the offended party and the merciful God:

> But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the

> midst of them his Holy Spirit. . . . Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name. (vv. 10–14 ESV)

Notice here that the central goal of the biblical drama—God dwelling in the midst of his people, giving them rest on all sides—is identified specifically with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descends periodically from the everlasting Sabbath into the trial of the work week that lies under the grip of sin and death, to keep history moving toward the promise of his everlasting rest (Heb 4:1).

But the new covenant that the writer to the Hebrews has in mind is far greater than the old in its vision. God will not only dwell in the midst of his people through the typological ministry associated with the tabernacle and the temple, but the eternal Son will be with us—indeed one of us—as the living temple. And yet as great as this is, God's presence still remains external to us, as a marvelous historical monument, until the Spirit is poured out. Then he will unite us to Christ, making us living stones with Christ as the cornerstone; members of his body, of which he is our head. The Spirit who was upon the prophets and upon the Servant, Jesus, "without measure" will *indwell* all of his people (John 3:34).

Nearly two centuries later than Isaiah, sharing the fate of Judah in exile, Ezekiel repeats the prophecies of the Spirit's outpouring: "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezek 36:26–27 ESV). Then there is the vision of the valley of dry bones, representing Israel. The prophet is told to prophesy—or preach—to the dry bones, through which God himself commands life to enter them:

> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live . . . And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD. (Ezek 37:5, 13–14 ESV)

Later God pledges, "And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD" (Ezek

39:29).

Ezekiel's prophecies climax in the departure of the Spirit from the temple (10:18–11:23) and the Spirit's return to the end-time sanctuary in chapter 43. In both cases, it is through the east-facing gate, just like the cherubim-guarded gate in Eden from which Adam and Eve were sent "east of the garden" (Gen 3:23–24). Ezekiel sees a vision:

> And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. . . . As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. (Ezek 43:2, 4 ESV)

Here God promises to dwell forever in the midst of his people (vv. 7–9). From below the eastern threshold of the temple, water gushed toward the east into a great river whose fresh water gives life to trees, and the nets of fishermen break with their catch. The leaves on the trees "will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing" (47:1–12 ESV). The entire series of visions directs us back to Genesis 1–2 and forward to the glorious temple of Revelation 21–22, with the Spirit as the vivifying and fructifying presence of God in the capitol of the new creation. The Spirit who evacuated the temple will return to it, only it will be greater than Solomon's temple in its glory days.

After the exile, Nehemiah acknowledges to the Lord:

> Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, "This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt," and had committed great blasphemies, you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. (Neh 9:18–20 ESV)

The prophets looked forward to a certain degree of restoration under Cyrus

king of Persia but far beyond it to a more glorious day. It will be a day not for restoring the geopolitical nation of Israel or the rebuilding of an earthly sanctuary but for the erection of the final end-time temple made without hands. In that vein, Joel delivered his famous prophecy:

> And it shall come to pass afterward,
> that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
> your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
> your old men shall dream dreams,
> and your young men shall see visions.
> Even on the male and female servants
> in those days I will pour out my Spirit.
>
> And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2:28–32 ESV)

Some take the prophet to be referring here to the end of the age. However, I am inclined to see the ominous portents—"wonders in the heavens and on the earth," including blood, fire, smoke, darkened sun, and bloody moon—as typical apocalyptic language where metaphors taken from *nature* signal cataclysmic turning points in *history*. Only such striking imagery can convey the fact that the old age is passing away and, with Christ's resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the new age is dawning.

Haggai prophesies the glory of the future temple: "My Spirit remains in your midst" (Hag 2:5 ESV). How can this be? There was no evidence at all that this was true. The remnant had returned to rebuild the ruins, and through Haggai God called them to rebuild the temple. But how can the Spirit already be present "in the midst" of his people without the temple or the restored theocracy in the land?

> My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the

> treasures of all nations shall come in; and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. . . . The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts. (2:5–9 ESV)

THE INCARNATION

No greater instance of the Spirit's working through creaturely media may be found than in the incarnation itself. Far from working above nature only through immaterial means, the Spirit works within complex mystery of genetics and gestation over which he has presided from the beginning, uniting the eternal Son to our flesh. Through the power of the Spirit, the Son assumes our humanity completely, not only in body but in soul. He is more than one of us, but not less. As history moves toward the Messiah's appearing, the spotlight narrows from Israel generally to the tribe of Judah and from Judah to the line of David. The Spirit is preparing a body, but that body has actually been narrowed down to one literal person, the true Israel, in whom all the families of the earth will be blessed. Hence, the body narrows to one person but then grows from that person to include people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" as the true nation of kings and priests (Rev 5:9–10).

The angel explains to Mary in Luke's Gospel that "the Holy Spirit will come upon you," ensuring that the fruit of her womb is no less than the Son of God (1:35 ESV). The description of the Spirit coming "upon" (*epi*) Mary as the "power" (*dynamis*) of the Most High to "overshadow" (*episkiasei*) her evokes the many instances of the Spirit's work throughout history. We recall the Spirit "hovering" (MT: *merakhepet*; LXX: *epephereto*) over the waters in creation (Gen 1:2). In the Song of Moses the LORD is compared to "an eagle that stirs up its nest, that *flutters over* its young, spreading out its wings . . ." (Deut 32:11 ESV). In the wilderness the cloud "covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud *settled* [LXX: *epeskiazen*] on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exod 40:34–35 ESV).

The same Greek verb (*episkiazō*) used in the LXX version of this last passage is used by Luke to describe the annunciation. Like the formlessness and void (MT: *tohu wabohu*) of Genesis 1:2, Mary's womb lacked any inherent potential for generating life. The virgin herself acknowledges this (Luke 1:34).

But the Spirit of God will move (brood, flutter, hover: *episkiasei*) over the waters so that what she conceived was nothing less than "the Son of God" (v. 35). The virgin replies, "Let it be done to me according to your word," (v. 38 ESV) because the same Spirit who was at work in her womb is already at work in her heart to bring about her "amen!" to the word of promise. Wherever we encounter not only the Father's speech in the Son, but the Spirit's bringing forth of inspired speech from human witnesses, the new creation dawns. The Spirit prepares a body for the Son.

Even prior to the conception of the Word, the Spirit has conceived faith in Mary's heart. Mary reflects the orientation of the faithful covenant servant to the Spirit. "Let it be done to me according to your word," she replies to Gabriel. Already, even before the "let there be . . ." fiat-word of the incarnation itself, the Spirit has "brought forth" the fruit of a faith-filled openness to the Spirit who has prepared Mary for this momentous announcement of the gospel. Even before hovering over Mary's womb, the Spirit fluttered over her heart to win her joyful consent even though she is overwhelmed with astonishment. It is the faith that says with the apostle Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20 ESV). This is the first miracle of the Christmas story: that a sinner would turn in faith to the word of promise through the power of the Spirit.

As confirmation, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" when she greeted Mary as blessed along with the fruit of her womb (Luke 1:41–42), as were Zechariah (v. 67) and Simeon (2:25–26). In each of these cases, mention of their being filled with the Spirit is the ground for the prophecy that they utter concerning the salvation that has dawned in Christ. After four centuries of no revelation, there is a trickle of Spirit-inspired speech—yet a portentous trickle indeed. The Spirit is preparing a body by his word.

The conception of Jesus was of the *ex nihilo* variety: " 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Gen 1:3). But his gestation and delivery were normal, though no less dependent on the Word and Spirit: they belonged to the " 'Let the earth bring forth. . . .' And the earth brought forth . . ." type of speech-act (cf. Gen 1:11–12 KJV). Jesus was not a child prodigy: "And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom"; these are typical associations of the Spirit's work in preparing Old Testament prophets (Luke 2:40 ESV). "And the favor of God was upon him. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:40, 52 ESV). "Although he was a son, he

learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:8 ESV). He was not born outside of time or our human nature, but was born in "the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4 ESV).

Once more we see that the Holy Spirit's work is not to be set in opposition to nature. Even when the Spirit's operations transcend natural possibilities, they remain extraordinary acts within and through nature. Thus, already in the incarnation Jesus begins to win our redemption. The Spirit will come upon Mary, the angel declares, and "therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1:35 ESV). The Spirit's preservation of "our Mediator" from original sin in "his holy conception" comforts us with the news that he "with his innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, in which I was conceived and born."[6] Jesus was not conceived under the headship of Adam, with original sin imputed, since he came to earth as the eternal Son to be a new Adam and the new head of his people.[7] Original sin is not essential but merely accidental to human nature; the Son could and did assume our humanity to the fullest extent without inheriting Adam's guilt and corruption.

And once again we see the impact of metaphysical dualism on the sixteenth-century radicals. The God-world antithesis was so marked that many Anabaptists held a form of docetism, with the Son believed to have assumed "heavenly flesh" rather than a true humanity from the virgin Mary in the power of the Spirit.[8] Following the doctrine of Kasper Schwenkfeld and Melchior Hoffman, Menno Simons argued that "there is no letter to be found in all the Scriptures that the Word assumed our flesh. . . ."[9] The Polish Reformed theologian John à Lasco took the lead in challenging this view as taught by Menno Simons, and Calvin criticized it in the *Institutes*, charging it with a gnostic (specifically, Manichaean) confusion of sin with humanness and invoking the anti-Apollinarian patristic rule that whatever the Son did not assume he did not save.[10] While the doctrine had an ambivalent reception among Menno's followers, Mennonite historian Leonard Verduin argues that it was grounded in a deeper divide between God and the world that included "discontinuity in the area of Christology."[11] In Verduin's view, the doctrine reflected the more general opposition between God and the world (including the visible church).[12]

Downplaying the reality of the incarnation is surely one way to undermine the significance of the Holy Spirit. In spite of the rhetorical emphasis on the *Spirit* over against creaturely reality, it is actually *spiritual* reality that this type

of piety has in mind. What is the need for the Holy Spirit in the incarnation if the Son merely donned a quasi-human nature from heavenly material? Yet there are more orthodox ways of downplaying the humanity of Christ and therefore the importance of the Spirit. I share Sinclair Ferguson's verdict: "This aspect of the Spirit's ministry has suffered considerable neglect in the history of theology, despite noteworthy exceptions. Abraham Kuyper was right when he wrote that 'the Church has never sufficiently confessed the influence the Holy Spirit exerted upon the work of Christ.' As early as the Isaianic portrait of the Messiah, he had been viewed as the Man of the Spirit *par excellence* (Is. 11:1, 42:1; 61:1)."[13] Given the fact that the Spirit's mission is to place the spotlight on Christ, it is not surprising that Christian theology has placed most of its weight on Christology. However, apart from a robust pneumatology, even Christology suffers, as the saving significance of Christ's humanity is eclipsed by the entirely appropriate emphasis on his deity.

It is important to see that even from his conception, Jesus was endowed with extraordinary gifts that were due not specifically to his deity, the glory of which he set aside, but to the rich bestowal of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was weak, as we are, but his face was turned wholly to his Father as a flower fastening its life to the sun. "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work' " (John 4:34 ESV). Not only in his incarnation but in his life and ministry, Jesus was always dependent on the Spirit as he fulfilled his Father's word (Matt 12:28). It is certainly true that his miracles reveal his divinity, as the disciples recognized: "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" (Matt 8:27). Yet these wonders also identify Jesus as the Spirit-endowed Servant hailed by the prophets.

Not only the gifts but the Giver himself was given to Jesus by the Father, as our Lord himself divulged: "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit *without measure*" (John 3:34 ESV). The prophets received the Spirit in varying measures. Elisha begged Elijah for "a double portion of your spirit on me" (2 Kgs 2:9 ESV). Jesus, however, is given the Holy Spirit entirely. He is not only a prophet, of course, but he is a prophet—the prophet greater than Moses—and his bestowal with the Holy Spirit here is not to be conflated with the eternal relations of the immanent Trinity. It is a redemptive-historical event that equips Jesus as the Servant of the Lord to fulfill his earthly ministry on our behalf. Even as he set aside the glory owing to his deity, Jesus was already receiving endowments *upon his humanity* in order to enrich us all. Furthermore, Jesus exercised these gifts and increasingly won greater blessings

by his obedience. He increased in wisdom, understanding, counsel, and the fear of the LORD (the very characteristics that would identify the Spirit-endowed Messiah according to Isaiah 11:2–3) and learned the Scriptures that spoke of him (Luke 2:52). "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:8).

At his baptism by John, Jesus was already beginning "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15)—not only for himself but for those whom he represented:

> And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matt 3:16–4:1 ESV; cf. Mark 1:12–13)

Luke's version reads, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit . . . was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil" (Luke 4:1–2a). In Matthew's version, the verb *anēchthē* translated above as "led up" is actually stronger: "drove out" or "launched," like a ship. The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness to recapitulate the trial of Adam and Israel for forty days and nights and upheld Jesus in this trial. Instead of demanding the food that he craved, he endured the test by invoking the Word of God in the power of the Spirit (vv. 10–11; cf. Luke 4:8–13).

The Spirit did not lead Jesus above natural life with its exposure to dangers, trials, temptation, and suffering, but deeper and deeper into it. We may with profit consider this in our own trials and temptations. We may think that the Spirit is the one who works miraculously—above this world and its dangers—to keep us from going through "the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps 23:4 ESV). However, not even in this unique life of the sinless Savior was the Spirit-anointed life one of hovering above ordinary existence in the world. The Spirit led the Savior into the wilderness where he experienced not only the demonic powers and principalities that ran riot like pirates pillaging and destroying, but beheld the face of their captain himself. And he did this *for us*, without any friends, but with the fellowship of his eternal companion, to rid us and his world of all that defiles.

John Owen observes concerning the beginning of the old creation that

> the Holy Ghost came and fell on the waters, cherishing the whole, and communicating a prolific and vivific quality unto it, as a fowl or dove in particular gently moves itself upon its eggs until, with and by its generative warmth, it hath communicated vital heat unto them; so now, at the entrance of the new creation, he comes as a dove upon him who was the immediate author of it, and virtually comprised it in himself, carrying it on by virtue of his presence with him.[14]

Owen appeals to an ancient Syrian baptismal liturgy that included this connection. Jesus's baptism also echoes "the dove that brought tidings to Noah of the ceasing of the flood . . . and proclaimed peace unto them that would return to God by him, the great peace-maker, Eph. 2. 14–17."[15]

Old Testament kings were anointed as God's designated servant with oil, symbolizing the Spirit. Yet the Messiah—the Anointed One—would be anointed with the Spirit without measure. This prophecy is especially clear in Isaiah 61:1–2, as we have seen. The one who finally fulfills the promise of the Year of Jubilee will be identified by this anointing of the Spirit. And it is precisely this text that Jesus reads in the synagogue at the beginning of his public ministry, announcing, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16–21 ESV). Because his hearers clearly understood Jesus's claim, he narrowly escaped being thrown down a cliff (vv. 29–30). It is as part of the gospel itself that Peter proclaims "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

The answer lies not in downplaying Christ's deity but in reintegrating the pneumatological and christological threads across the whole sweep of our theology, from anthropology to ecclesiology. When we attribute all of Jesus's miracles exclusively to Christ's deity, for example, a subtle Nestorianism presses us to imagine that Jesus switches from his divine nature to his human nature when he is tired, hungry, or lacks knowledge, and then flips the switch back again to his divine nature when he heals or performs other miracles. This does justice neither to the full humanity of Christ and the unity of his divine-human person nor to the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and giver of life" in relation to Jesus Christ. The attributes of deity are never transferred to his humanity. And yet the *person* is fully divine and fully human.

With Jesus, we are dealing with *God* assuming the nature and commission of

humanity in creation so that he can shower his compatriots with the riches that he achieved in our nature, as our human representative and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is God. But he is also the first human being who finally does not resist the Holy Spirit. Instead he obeys the word of the Father in full acquiescence to the Spirit's power—and he does all of this *for us*, in our name, as our new Adamic head. He gives the Spirit without measure because he first possesses the Spirit without measure, and through union with him we too are anointed as prophets, priests, and kings.

Throughout the Gospels the wonders that Jesus performs are not unlike many performed by prophets of old when the Spirit came upon them. He raises Jairus's daughter in Mark 5 in a scene reminiscent of Elisha's raising of the Shunammite's son in 2 Kings 4. Jesus is not only the covenant Lord who commands but the covenant Servant who obeys in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is more than the Spirit-filled prophet for whom Moses longed, but he is also surely not less. Jesus himself says that attributing his miracles to Satan is blasphemy—not against his divinity but against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29; cf. Matt 12:31–32; Luke 12:10).

Our Lord's dependence on the Spirit for his mission is evident also in the transfiguration scene. Just as the Spirit led the Hebrews through the Red Sea by the radiant pillar of cloud, he envelops Jesus and the disciples in the heavenly cloud with Moses and Elijah, discussing "his [Jesus's] departure [Greek: *exodos*], which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31 ESV). Yet the response of Peter, looking for shelter from the glorious majesty, points up that it is a temporary foreshadowing of a greater transfiguration that will envelope Christ with his saints in the age to come. Peter's response, though typical, is not unjustified. The cloud simply *is* the kingdom of heaven brought to earth, its glory emanating from the Spirit. The only other time this happens is in the ascension itself: "And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9 ESV). In both cases, the enveloping in the cloud occurs as Jesus is speaking his word.

Defending Christ's full humanity, Gregory of Nazianzus stipulated, "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved."[16] Similarly, we can say that whatever he did not do, as the Spirit-dependent covenant servant, is left undone. Remarkably, it was "through the eternal Spirit" that Christ offered himself "without blemish to God" (Heb 9:14 ESV), "and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead . . ." (Rom 1:4). "He was

put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit" (1 Pet 3:18). And our being raised to heavenly glory in Christ is just as dependent on the same Spirit. "It was the Holy Spirit who glorified the human nature of Christ," says Owen, "and made it every way meet for its eternal residence at the right hand of God, and a pattern of the glorification of the bodies of them that believe on him. He who first made his nature *holy* now made it *glorious*."[17] The Spirit is the Lord and giver not only of biological but eschatological life (2 Cor 3:6).[18] The same Spirit who raised Jesus will raise us on the last day (Rom 8:11).

Given this dependence of the incarnate Son on the Holy Spirit for his person and work, we may conclude with Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas that Christ's earthly ministry was not only conditioned but constituted by the Spirit's activity. To put it differently, the Spirit not only applies redemption but was a principal agent of it. He clothed the Redeemer in our humanity, led and upheld him in his ministry, and raised him from the dead as the eschatological firstfruits. Because of who he is and what he did in the power of the Spirit, and because by that same power we are united to his person and work, Christ is no longer for us merely an individual in the history of this passing age but is the representative *adam* of his new humanity; he is the head of his body, the church.[19]

How can a historical individual become for us this federal head of a new humanity? Origen and his theological heirs presuppose a cosmological map in which this question does not even arise. History, bodies, and federal heads all belong, in the line of thinking descending from Origen, to the lower world from which the deified soul seeks emancipation. The question does arise—again and again—in Irenaeus, with his emphasis on Christ's recapitulation ("re-headshiping") of humanity. It is the Spirit who creates this union: first of the Son's deity with our humanity, and then of each believer with Christ. Zizioulas explains:

> Here the Holy Spirit is not one who *aids* us in bridging the distance between Christ and ourselves, but he is the person of the Trinity who actually realizes in history that which we call Christ, this absolutely relational entity, our Savior. In this case, our Christology is *essentially* conditioned by Pneumatology, not just secondarily as in the first case; in fact it is *constituted* pneumatologically.[20]

Because the Father gives the Son to us in and by the Spirit, the Son brings us

into a relation to the Father by which we too, and by that same Spirit, can cry out, “Abba, Father” and address God as “our Father in heaven.” Just as the Logos can only become flesh by the work of the Spirit, we cannot say “ ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). Not only is the Holy Spirit the gift of the Son, but the incarnate Son is first of all the gift of the Spirit (together with the Father).

Even after spending three years at Jesus’s side, the disciples’ understanding of, much less testimony to, Christ’s person and work depended on the descent of another witness from heaven, the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus has a history, so do we, and because he has a place, we will have one also—where he is. And he will come again to take us there. In the meantime, his departure opens a fissure in history where the Spirit—for the first time in redemptive history—will not only lead, guide, and light upon the temple-people but will permanently indwell them. “I will not leave you as orphans,” said Jesus, but “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (see John 14:16–18).

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1. This is a principal motif of N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2016).

2. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 24.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 25.

5. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On the Holy Spirit* 26 (*NPNF*^{2} 7:325–26).

6. Heidelberg Catechism, Question 36.

7. Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 87.

8. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2.13.4.

9. Menno Simons, “The Incarnation of Our Lord,” in *The Complete Works of Menno Simons*, trans. L. Verduin, ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 829.

10. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.13.3–4.

11. Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 230.

12. Ibid., 256.

13. Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 37.

14. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 75.

15. Ibid.

16. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letters* 101 (*NPNF*^{2} 7:440).

17. Owen, *Discourse*, 182.

18. Basil's prose verges on poetry as he summarizes this point. Where does life come from? "Is it Christ's advent? The Spirit is forerunner. Working of miracles, and gifts of healing are through the Holy Spirit. Demons were driven out by the Spirit of God. The devil was brought to naught by the presence of the Spirit. Remission of sins was by the gift of the Spirit, for 'ye were washed, ye were sanctified . . . in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the holy Spirit of our God.' There is close relationship with God through the Spirit, for 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.' The resurrection from the dead is effected by the operation of the Spirit . . ." (*On the Holy Spirit* 19.49 [*NPNF*^{2} 8:30–31]).

19. John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 110.

20. Ibid., 110–11.



CHAPTER 4

The Spirit of Latter-Day Judgment and Power

What images come quickly to mind when we think about the Holy Spirit? Do we not associate the Spirit primarily with a gentle breeze, a still-small voice, peace, love, and a sweet dove? Comforting images are present, as we will see. Yet what should strike us immediately about Jesus's discourse is his association of the Spirit's outpouring with judgment and power, justification and renewal. Before exploring this discourse, it is good to trace these two functions of the Spirit throughout redemptive history.

The Spirit of Judgment

Modern theology has been especially allergic to judicial or forensic emphases. Typically, the location of alternative theories has been Christology, with Jesus being regarded chiefly as merely a mortal with the highest degree of God-consciousness and the forensic element submerged in mysticism (as in Schleiermacher) or moralism (as in Ritschl). It is a theological trend that continued in various fields, including biblical studies, as in the work of C. H. Dodd, W. D. Davies, E. P. Sanders, and many others.[1] In various ways, these scholars exhibited a wariness of propitiation and other judicial aspects of traditional Christian teaching. Rather than see Christ's work as involving the satisfaction of divine justice, they treated Christ's work as affirming God's solidarity with humanity and its attempts to overcome warped relationships and social structures.

However, a new critique of traditional teaching has emerged among Pietist and Pentecostal theologians in recent years. Some, like Stanley Grenz, have continued to locate alternative constructions in Christology.[2] Others, however,

appeal to pneumatology as a corrective to forensic categories.[3] Even if one grants a degree of truth to the argument that a Christ-centered soteriology emphasizes the theme of judgment and a redemption that is tied to the particularity of Jesus, a Spirit-centered theology serves as a counterweight. According to Clark Pinnock, emphasizing the Spirit "helps theology speak of salvation in 'relational, affective' rather than forensic and juridical terms" and allows for a "wideness in God's mercy" with respect to other religions.[4] "Access to grace is less of a problem for theology when we consider it from the standpoint of the Spirit," he adds, "because whereas Jesus bespeaks particularity, Spirit bespeaks universality."[5]

However, even some advocates of Spirit-centered theologies recognize the Spirit's association with judgment in the Bible. Mark Wallace writes about "the Spirit's Janus-faced role as both healing, and exacerbating, the plight of victims within the stories of the Bible" and argues that unless we face these texts (and apparently expunge them), we will perpetuate "the studied ignorance of the 'dark side' of the Spirit within contemporary theology."[6]

In the following argument I argue that this so-called "dark side" of the Spirit is the judgment that leads to salvation. I also call into question any opposition between the Son and the Spirit, either in terms of an allegedly relational versus forensic pattern or of a particular versus universalistic scope. From a biblical-theological vista, we can see the greatness of *the Spirit's* judicial operations.

The Holy Spirit is identified in Scripture with "these last days" (Heb 1:2) and "last things," because his role is to complete the work of the Father, in the Son. His presence is the harbinger of "things to come" (John 16:13 KJV): the consummation. This was true in Eden, and even earlier (Gen 1:2), as the Spirit hovered over the waters, surveying and separating. Like a foreman inspecting the foundations and reporting back to the architect and contractor, the Spirit joined his judgment to that of the Father and the Son: "It is good."

Creation was merely the beginning. As the federal head of the human race, Adam was to imitate his Creator by a six-day trial and then enter God's Sabbath consummation as a public representative for us all. The Spirit is the guarantee and guardian of this consummation, represented sacramentally by the tree of life. He finishes the work of turning a chaos into a cosmos (Gen 1:2) and the work of making man "a living being" by breathing into Adam "the breath of life" (2:7). He next appears "in the Spirit of the day"—that is, in judgment—to arraign Adam and Eve for breaking the covenant and thus forfeiting entrance into the

Sabbath glory (3:8).

The role of the Spirit as divine witness (a judicial-courtroom role) is central to this story.[7] However, it is obscured by the frequent translation of *ruakh* as wind in these verses (Gen 1:2; 3:8). This is particularly the case in Genesis 3:8. If it makes little sense to mention natural wind in the context of a judicial arraignment, it makes even less sense that the divine judge came "in the *cool* [*ruakh*] of the day." Rather, given the later associations of "the day of the LORD" (*yom yhwh*) with judgment, the phrase should be translated "in the Spirit of the day." On the heels of having transgressed the covenant, the royal couple take flight—not from a gentle breeze, but from the Spirit of judgment. This is why Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the "Advocate"—*paraklētos*; an attorney—who will *convict* the world of sin (John 16:7–8). This is already what the Spirit is doing in the garden after the transgression of the original covenant.

In the prophets the Spirit's visitation is inseparably connected to the day of the LORD, which is a day of judgment: "Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him. . . . Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18–20). Isaiah prophesies: "For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty. . . . And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth" (2:12a, 19). And yet, that same chapter begins with the vision of the nations streaming into Zion "in the latter days" (v. 2). The day of the LORD is identified both with the Day of Jubilee when prisoners are freed and with final judgment and everlasting peace. And the Spirit's role is clearly in view in both aspects of the event (Isa 42:1; 48:16), particularly in Isaiah 61, which Jesus announced as fulfilled in him (Luke 4:18–21). Interestingly, though, Jesus omits the second half of the prophecy, "the day of vengeance of our God," since this would await his return in glory.

Micah repeats the prophecy of Isaiah 2 nearly verbatim, as the day of the LORD brings judgment and everlasting righteousness and peace to the earth (Mic 4:1–5). Finally, in Joel the day of the LORD becomes the recurring theme. Of the eighteen times that the phrase appears in the prophets (Isa 13:6, 9; Jer 46:10; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Amos 5:18–20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Mal 4:5), five are found in Joel. The outpouring of the Spirit in the last days will not only bring conviction, vindication, and justification, but—because of this—will transform believers' experience of God (see for example Joel 2:28–32, which Peter quotes

in his Pentecost sermon).

The character of the Spirit as divine witness is closely related to "the angel of his presence" (Isa 63:9; cf. Exod 32:34; 33:2).[8] The covenant is therefore not something we arrive at only at Sinai or at best with Abraham; the whole creation narrative is rich with covenantal imagery and formulas that would become clearer in the Mosaic economy and even clearer in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit in the cloud witnessed for the Israelites and against Pharaoh and his hosts. "Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and *they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses*" (Exod 14:31, emphasis added). We will recall these words when Jesus promises the coming of the Spirit who will convict the world of judgment and lead his people to faith in his Servant Jesus.

The announcement to which I have referred is followed by the Song of Moses. Here the prophet and covenant mediator adorns the exodus recreation story with language from Genesis 1:2. The floodwaters raged:

> You blew with your wind [*ruakh*] and the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. . . . You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. . . . You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. The LORD will reign forever and ever. For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. (Exod 15:10, 13, 17–19 ESV)

The Spirit is the divine witness to his covenant people—not only in their defense but also in witness against them. He descends in his cloud covering Sinai: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever. . . . Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire" (Exod 19:9, 18 ESV). In this covenant Israel makes the oath to keep the law, and Moses splashes blood on them to confirm their pledge. It is a dramatic courtroom scene, terrifying even Moses (cf. Heb 12:21). The goal of his coming in the glory cloud is to bring conviction—to make his word accessible to the people and to certify Moses as the mediator.

The glory cloud hovers, glowing with fiery light. Yet this witnessing, judging, and justifying Spirit is always on the move in his chariot-throne, "propelled through the winged beings," as Kline observes. He adds that the cloud is really a "vehicle of divine judgment, moving with the swiftness of light to execute the sentence of the King. . . . Also, the dual columnar formation assumed by the Glory-cloud as pillar of cloud and pillar of fire is conceptualized in the Bible as the feet of God standing as divine witness."[9] "The ark of the covenant located beneath the enthroned Glory is accordingly called God's footstool (Isa. 60:13)."[10]

It becomes obvious, especially from Moses's plea in Exodus 33:14–17, that the divine presence (imaged in the cloud) has a judicial function of distinguishing Israel from the nations, not to mention certifying Moses's frequently contested leadership. When the cloud rested in any place along the journey through the wilderness, the camp of Israel rested; when the cloud lifted and began to move again, the people were once again marching according to tribe with Judah in the lead. In all of these ways, we see an arrow pointing forward from promise to fulfillment in the Lion of the tribe of Judah, with the Spirit as the promise's pledge.

Taking up residence in the earthly temple, the Spirit—wrapped in his glory cloud—remained a witness for and against Israel. *Hovering*, *covering*, *filling*: these are the "strong verbs" associated with the Spirit's work in history, and these verbs do greater justice to the personhood of the Spirit than "bond of love." The Spirit is anything but passive or shy or vulnerable, much less simply a benign comforter. He is the sovereign Lord who executes conviction, judgment, and justification.

The Spirit is associated with cleansing through judgment, often in the context of the guilt sacrifices:

> And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. (Lev 9:24 ESV)

> As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. (2 Chr 7:1 ESV)

> Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the

> wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. (1 Kgs 18:38 ESV)
>
> The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. . . . Over everything the glory will be a canopy. (Isa 4:4–6)

It is with a recollection of such events that the writer to the Hebrews could say, "How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb 9:14 ESV).

Underscoring the parallelism between the covenant with Adam and the Sinai covenant, the account of Moses's song in Deuteronomy 32 has the future of Israel rather than the recent past of Egypt as the focus of judgment. First, he reaches back to creation, with the Spirit's work of dividing, subduing, and filling. God "gave to the nations their inheritance, when he *divided* mankind, he *fixed* the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage" (vv. 8–9 ESV, emphasis added). God did not need a plot of land; his people are his place: "He found in him a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness, he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (v. 10 ESV). "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions," he carried them to safety (v. 11 ESV). If the creation imagery were not sufficiently clear, it is instructive that the only other place in the Pentateuch where the Hebrew word translated in v. 10 ESV as "waste" (*tohu*) is used is in Genesis 1:2.

Just as Yahweh gave Adam and Eve a land of lavish abundance, Israel was showered with prosperity. "He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field . . . and you drank foaming wine from the blood of the grape" (Deut 32:13–14 ESV). However, the song turns dark; feasting with God turns to mourning as Israel "grew fat, and kicked . . . then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation" (v. 15 ESV). Pressing the charges in the covenant lawsuit, Yahweh rescinds the blessings, with echoes of Genesis 3. Instead of enjoying the prosperity of his presence, the people will "[waste] with hunger; and [be] devoured by plague" (v. 24 ESV). Even the beasts that God placed under man will revolt at Yahweh's behest: "I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust" (v.

24 ESV).

The Spirit's judicial ministry is seen in the ministry of the prophets, God's attorneys in the case of Yahweh versus Israel. Just as the Spirit was hovering over the waters in judgment, dividing and allotting boundaries and creature-kings over each realm; just as he hovered over Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire, controlling Israel's experience of day and night as Jacob's sun and moon, so he stands in the witness pillar and in the judgment cloud to judge as well as defend. And, like Adam, Israel refused to follow the cloud into God's Sabbath rest. As Hosea would prophesy, "Like Adam, they have transgressed the covenant" (Hos 6:7 ESV). Again the Sabbath rest—though in this case, merely typological—was aborted by the infidelity of the covenant partner. The same Spirit whose presence judicially separates the people as his chosen nation testifies now to its covenant breaking by withdrawing his presence.

In truth, the exile did not begin when the people were carried off into Babylon but when they still were going about their daily lives, violating the covenant, and the Spirit evacuated the sanctuary. As long as the Spirit was in residence, the whole land had peace and lavish provisions. Yet when the covenant was thoroughly violated, the Spirit's departure left the grand edifice nothing but a shell of its former glory, nothing but a common public building to be claimed by weeds and jackals.

And yet, although Israel has violated the law, astonishingly Yahweh promises, "My Spirit remains in your midst" (Hag 2:5 ESV). His presence equals judgment but also comfort. He "will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in" and the majesty of the former temple will pale in comparison with the glory of this latter-day sanctuary (Hag 2:5–9 ESV).

In the new exodus re-creation, Jesus—the last Adam and faithful Israel, indeed the true temple of God's presence with us—is baptized, with the Spirit descending in avian form (like the eagle in Exodus). Hovering above the waters, the Spirit joins the Father in confirming Jesus's identity as Son and his messianic mission. Of crucial significance is that immediately after this—indeed, it is treated as a consequence of his baptismal anointing, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt 4:1 ESV). No closer connection between the Spirit and judgment—specifically, the covenantal trial—can be made. The Adamic scene is played in reverse. Instead of beginning with bounty and ending with a curse, this time the covenant Servant begins by sharing in hunger and deprivation but keeps God's word over the blandishments of Satan to choose the path of self-glorification rather than obedience.

Finally, in Revelation 10 we have a snapshot of the consummation itself:

> Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. (vv. 1–3a)

Given the imagery, it is difficult to imagine that this could be anyone other than the angel of the LORD of the Old Testament theophanies. The figure is wrapped in the Spirit (the cloud), beneath the symbol of God's sworn oath of peace (the rainbow), and is a lion with a face like the sun and legs like pillars of fire. Does the apocalyptic imagery not point to the Son of Man "coming on the clouds" at the end of the age in judgment and vindication of his people? (See Matt 24:29–31; 25:31–32.) The following verses of Revelation 10 report that this angelic figure stood with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, raising his hand in solemn oath (confirmed sacramentally by the rainbow). The scene suggests nothing less than the ascended Savior's welcoming of his people into the everlasting Sabbath that he has won for them.[11]

The Spirit's judicial function in this great courtroom drama is also underscored in Romans 1:4 (ESV): Christ Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead. . . ." It is common to associate the title "Son of Man" with Jesus's humanity and "Son of God" with his deity. However, in the Jewish context the connotations were exactly the opposite. The "Son of Man" in Daniel and Second Temple literature is no less than a divine person (as in 2 Esdras), while "Son of God" was a messianic title.[12]

Jesus is God, eternally one with the Father, and yet the Spirit's role in raising him from the dead pertains specifically to his humanity, and it is judicial. Of course, Paul taught that Jesus is the eternal Son who is to be worshiped as such. Nevertheless, the glorification to which he refers in Romans 1:4 is the result of his being publicly vindicated by the Spirit as the last Adam and therefore the beginning of the new creation. Elsewhere he even places the Spirit's resurrection-vindication of Jesus as an element in a creed: "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory" (1 Tim 3:16 ESV).

With echoes of Genesis 2:7, the resurrected Lord breathes on the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit in John 20:

> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” (John 20:19–23 ESV)

This postresurrection appearance occurs on the first day of the week, not the last, since it is the beginning of the new creation. The week of toil under the curse lies behind Jesus now. Yet all that he accomplished was for us. The apocalyptic scene in Revelation 10 of the mighty angel, rainbow-haloed, straddling sea and land with hand raised in an oath of everlasting peace, fits well with this episode in John 20. In order to confirm this and to equip them as his ambassadors of peace, he breathes the Holy Spirit into them as his coheirs of the new Spirit-filled humanity that he has inaugurated.

The chief effect is not that they will be miracle workers or hold power over nations, but that they will be given the power of the keys to forgive and retain sins in his name. Recall Jesus’s response to the seventy-two who return to report victory over demons in in his name. “And he said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. . . . Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven’ ” (Luke 10:17–20).

Just as the glory cloud in the earthly temple enveloped the judicial council of the Trinity and the hosts of heaven, the Spirit-filled apostles will pronounce his peace to the ends of the earth. Ultimately, then, to bear the image of God is to bear his scepter as viceroy, but this time not subduing and ruling creation from a geopolitical capitol, but with the judicial function of absolution and discipline in the ever-expanding temple that the Spirit alone can build.

Our Lord’s ascension-exaltation is far greater than a mere attestation of his divinity. This could only instruct us. However, in this event it is in his humanity that he shares with us that he is glorified, as the beginning of the resurrection

from the dead. And just as the Spirit's work was constitutive of his incarnate identity in its humiliation, his work of eschatological vindication is now constitutive of his identity in exaltation. In uniting us to Christ, the Spirit's work is constitutive of our identity as sharers in the new creation. The Spirit unites us not to Christ's deity but to the glorified humanity that is inseparable from the one divine-human person that he is.

In an explicitly Trinitarian formulation, Peter declares at Pentecost, "Being therefore [because of his obedience] exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the *Father* the promise of the *Holy Spirit*, he [*the incarnate Son*] has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:33). He continues by quoting Psalm 110:1: "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' " David could not have been speaking about himself, Peter adds, since he never ascended into heaven. The only proper response is to repent and be baptized in Christ's name "for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v. 38 ESV).

In all of these various ways, the appeal is to the old-covenant history of royal investiture that begins in Eden, with the Spirit's breath of life, followed by all of the priestly imagery of glorious vestments and the event of Christ breathing on his disciples. "When the investiture figure is used," writes Kline, "what is 'put on' is the new man created in the image of God (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), or Christ the Lord (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27; cf. Eph. 2:15; 4:13), or the resurrection glory of immortality (1 Cor. 15:53; 2 Cor. 5:2ff.). . . . In the vocabulary of Peter, 'partakers of the divine nature' expresses renewal in the image of God (2 Peter 1:4)."[13]

Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit "in the last days" is another key component of Peter's Pentecost sermon—and it is unmistakably judicial. Even the accusation of drunkenness by the onlookers reminds us of Jeremiah, who was called as God's attorney to execute the covenant curses against the false prophets: "Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and because of his holy words" (Jer 23:9).

Raymond Dillard states that Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 in English translations) is a direct reflection upon Numbers 11:1–12:8. He writes:

> God's Spirit in the Old Testament is primarily the Spirit of prophecy. In Num 11, Moses' desire for help with his burden (11:11, 17) prompts God

> to send his Spirit on seventy of the elders. . . . When we turn to Joel, several of these themes recur. Moses' prayer will be answered: God will pour out his Spirit on all Israel, and all of Yahweh's people will become prophets. Key vocabulary drawn from Num 11–12 is found in Joel 3:1–5. God's people will prophesy (Num 11:25–29; Joel 3:1): the revelatory means that characterize prophets (dream and vision, Num 12:6) will become the experience of all of God's people (Joel 3:1); the outpouring of God's Spirit will not be the experience of the few (Num 11:25; 12:6), but rather the experience of all (Joel 3:1). . . . Both contexts also reflect a judicial function in the possession of the Spirit. The seventy elders are to be Moses' surrogates and to serve as judges (Num 11:17; cf. Exod 18:13–27); in Joel, the eschatological outpouring of prophetic endowment is conjoined with the Lord's coming in judgment on the nations (Joel 3:4: 4:12). Multitudes come not to make a decision, but to hear the decision of God (4:14). . . . Both contexts also include a fire theophany appearing in judgment (Num 11:1–3; Joel 1:19–20; 2:3, 5; 3:3). In each the outpouring of the Spirit is in a context which includes judgment for some in Israel (Num 11:31–35; 12:9–15; Joel 3:5); not all survive.[14]

At Pentecost, however, God manifests himself not in a *devouring* fire but as a pillar of witness above each believer to the very word that Peter proclaims (Acts 2:3–4).

The Spirit has returned to the sanctuary, but not to the building complex that is only steps away from the Pentecostal site. Rather, the Spirit is now poured out upon and takes up residence within each of the witnesses. This personal occupation of individuals by the glory of God, the Spirit who divides and unites, was unknown in the old covenant. The divine presence will not dwell above the Most Holy Place but within his people who have become his temple (Acts 2:3; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19–22). This then gives rise to the "prophethood of all believers," notes Dillard.[15] He adds:

> In the Johannine material the Spirit is preeminently the Comforter to come, the agent of regeneration. In the Pauline corpus, the Spirit is preeminently the power of the new and coming age. However, it is in Luke/Acts that we meet God's Spirit in his most common role in the Old Testament as the Spirit of prophecy. It does not come as a surprise then that when Luke records Jesus's parting words to his followers, Jesus

promises them empowerment for witness bearing when the Holy Spirit comes upon them (Acts 1:8).[16]

Only because of what Christ has accomplished can the old covenant be called "the ministry of death" and "the ministry of condemnation," symbolized by the fading glory on Moses's face as he descended Sinai with the stone tablets (2 Cor 3:7–9). In contrast, the new covenant is "the ministry of the Spirit" and "the ministry of righteousness" (also vv. 7–9). Though I do not put too much weight on the point, it makes sense to me to translate righteousness (*dikaiosynē*) here as "justification," since Paul juxtaposes it with "condemnation" (v. 9). In any case, this is precisely the judicial mission that Jesus discloses as central to the Spirit's work in these last days. The resurrected Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit—the other divine attorney—on the disciples to equip them as his instruments for this judicial mission.

It is this contrast of "letter" and "Spirit" in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that enthusiastic sects have misinterpreted as the external versus internal word. However, in context, it is clearly not a contrast between preaching or Scripture on one side and an "inner word" on the other; nor is it a contrast between the literal sense of Scripture and its deeper spiritual meaning. Paul's point is the same as our Lord's when he said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Since his words are spirit and life, the contrast is between the Holy Spirit's sovereign grace and the attempts of human beings dead in sin to save themselves.

It is not because it is *written* that the "letter" is killing, but because the law of Moses itself is not salvific: it cannot *declare* us righteous and it cannot *make* us righteous. It can free us neither from sin's guilt or dominion. Yet the "ministry of the Spirit" accomplishes both. Thanks be to God that the Sinai covenant was temporary and is now "brought to an end" so that we can be bound to God in a covenant that "is permanent" (2 Cor 3:11). The same point is made in the conclusion to Paul's opening argument in Romans as it reaches its summit in 3:20–22.

Old Testament believers were justified as we are, "apart from the works of the law," but the terms of the Mosaic law itself are precise and promise temporal blessing on the condition of fulfilling its precepts. Through its cultic legislation, God mercifully provided temporary sacrifices for sin, but, as the writer to the Hebrews made evident, this was a mere "covering over" of sins that can only be finally taken away forever by Jesus Christ (Heb 10:11–12). Furthermore, not

only can forgiveness be found only in the gospel, but the new obedience can come about only when the Spirit writes his law on our heart, as prophesied in Jeremiah 31. Even in Deuteronomy itself there is the fascinating contrast between the command to the Israelites to circumcise their own hearts (10:16) and the divine promise, prophesying Israel's inability to do this: "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (30:6 ESV). This is a striking adumbration of the new-covenant promise in the context of the Mosaic law itself.

Therefore, the judicial function of the Spirit is not only related to justification but also to sanctification and glorification. The third person of the Godhead is the Spirit not only of judgment but of power. These two aspects of the Spirit's ministry overlap, with the latter presupposing the former, just as sanctification presupposes justification. "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:17–18 NRSV).

We see here the close connection between the judicial function of the Spirit and the concept of the image of God. Because of the ministry of the Spirit, believers see "the glory of the Lord" and are transformed by this vision, while the gospel is "veiled to those who are perishing" (2 Cor 4:3). We hear echoes of Jesus's farewell discourse in the verses that follow:

> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. . . . For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (vv. 4–6 NRSV)

Beyond the glorification of the saints, there is the vindication of God himself through the final judgment entrusted to Christ—yet not without the attending power of the mighty Spirit. "This standpoint precludes our viewing the work of the Spirit from that of the salvation of the redeemed," Kuyper observes. "Our spiritual horizon widens; for the chief thing is not that the elect are fully saved, but *that God be justified in all his works* and glorified through *judgment*."[17]

Thus, the Spirit's ministry is no less judicial than that of the incarnate Son and is no less concerned with the salvation of God's elect: "Those he predestined, he also called . . ." (Rom 8:30).

The Spirit of Eschatological Power: New-Creation Order Out of Chaos

Besides the judicial office, the Spirit is identified throughout Scripture with renewing and transforming power. He not only witnesses for and against sinners inwardly but also changes their hearts. He comes from above—that is, from the future, from *the age to come*—where he dwells eternally in Sabbath joy with the Father and the Son.

The Spirit cuts, divides, and apportions—activities associated with judicial operations—yet for the very purpose of filling and freeing creation with the power of his fructifying energies.

The Spirit not only came upon prophets as his covenant attorneys but also upon anointed kings to rule and upon Israel's warriors for victory in holy war. "The Spirit of the Lord came on [Othniel] so that he became Israel's judge and went to war" (Judg 3:10). The same is said of the warriors Gideon (6:34), Jephthah (11:29), Samson (14:6, 19), and even of Saul (1 Sam 11:6) and Balaam (Num 24:2).

Cyrus the Great, who amassed the largest empire in history to date, was also called God's "anointed" (Isa 45:1), the only non-Jew to have received the messianic title. God has grasped his right hand "to subdue nations before him" and "to open doors before him that gates may not be closed" (v. 1 ESV).

> For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things. (Isa 54:4–7 ESV)

The exiles should not be ashamed that their God should anoint a pagan king

for their redemption. “ ‘I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,’ says the LORD of hosts” (v. 13).

Yet it becomes clear that Cyrus merely foreshadows the greater deliverer-king. Like Cinderella’s slipper, the prophecies ultimately fit only Jesus’s feet. The Messiah proper is referred to repeatedly as an offspring of David, and yet “he will be called . . . Mighty God” (9:6). In addition, he saves Israel through his vicarious death and resurrection for their justification (ch. 53).

Returning to Isaiah 45, we discover allusions to creation in the past and the consummation in the future. First, God explains that he “created the heavens” and “formed the earth”—“he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited” (v. 18 ESV). This last statement echoes Genesis 1:2 with its connection to the Spirit’s fertilizing energies. God made the whole creation not as an empty place but as a realm filled with creatures, led behind their respective creature-kings in grateful procession before the review of the Great King. Second, the Lord declares that his people will be “saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity” (v. 17 ESV). Third, therefore,

> Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: “To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue swear allegiance.” Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who are incensed against him. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory. (vv. 22–25 ESV)

With the prophecy of the new temple in Zechariah 4:6 (ESV), Yahweh assures his people, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.’ ” He is the Spirit of judgment *and* power.

Emphasizing his powerful agency to bring into effect every word of the Father in the Son, the Spirit is described as the finger of God. By this finger the law was inscribed on tablets in Exodus 31:18. Unable to mimic the production of gnats during Yahweh’s plagues, Pharaoh’s magicians declared in horror, “This is the finger of God” (Exod 8:19). In that light Jesus declared, “But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you”

(Luke 11:20). It is only in Christ that all things hold together, whether in creation generally or in the church. But it is the Spirit who binds all things to him. From the Father and in the Son, the Spirit shares not only in declaring right but in making right. In both judgment and power for renewal, he is the *finger of God*.

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1. See Mark Seifrid, "In What Sense is 'Justification' a Declaration?" in *Churchman* 114 (2000): 123–36.

2. Stanley Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: An Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993).

3. See for example Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). I take this same thrust to be central to the work of Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen.

4. Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 149.

5. Ibid., 188.

6. Mark I. Wallace, "The Green Face of God: Recovering the Spirit in an Ecocidal Era," in *Advents of the Spirit*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney, Marquette Studies in Theology (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 462n17.

7. I am indebted to Meredith G. Kline on many of these points. See his dissertation, "The Holy Spirit as Covenant Witness" (ThM diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1972); idem, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); and idem, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999).

8. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 16.

9. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 18–19.

10. Ibid., 19n16.

11. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 19.

12. See Craig A. Evans, "Jesus's Self-Designation 'The Son of Man' and the Recognition of His Divinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 30–39.

13. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 29.

14. Raymond B. Dillard, “Intrabiblical Exegesis and the Effusion of the Spirit in Joel,” in *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*, ed. Howard Griffith and John R. Muether (Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 2000), 90–91.

15. Ibid., 92.

16. Ibid.

17. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 9.



CHAPTER 5

Trading Places: The Farewell Discourse

Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' " (John 20:17 ESV). As soon as this first resurrection appearance to Mary, Jesus is weaning his disciples from his bodily presence on earth—as John Owen notes, precisely so that they will "look after and trust unto the promise of the Holy Ghost." He continues: "Hence is that of our apostle, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more,' 2 Cor. v. 16; for although it was a great privilege to have known Christ in this world after the flesh, yet it was much greater to enjoy him in the dispensation of the Spirit."[1] Jesus has accomplished redemption, but it is he "whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago" (Acts 3:21 ESV). The great work of the Spirit is the proclamation of the gospel and the inward persuasion of its truth.

Jesus's farewell discourse (John 14–16) is about trading places. As it unfolds, we begin to see more clearly the importance of the difference that the Spirit *is* and *makes* in the work that he shares with Jesus. Jesus impresses upon the hearts of his confused and fearful disciples that his departure is a net gain. We need Jesus Christ—enthroned in our glorified humanity—at the Father's right hand, ruling and subduing the enemies of his kingdom and interceding for us. But we also need the Holy Spirit to accomplish what only he can: to work within us to bring about repentance and faith, and to intercede within us so that we relate to the Father in joy as his adopted children rather than in fear (Rom 8:15).

The Gift of the Father in the Son

Before his ascension, Jesus tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for "the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about." In just "a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:4–5, 8; cf. Luke 24:49). We do not have to speculate about what the disciples heard Jesus speak about concerning the Holy Spirit. Whatever else he said about the Spirit must have been an elaboration of what he had spoken to them in the farewell discourse.

Although John focuses on the sermon rather than the Supper, Jesus's discourse occurs in the upper room during Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper as reported in the Synoptic Gospels: "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28). And it is provoked especially by Jesus's announcement of his departure. This setting already points up the importance of the Eucharist as a busy intersection of Christology and pneumatology and where the age to come breaks into this present evil age.

But the scene sets before us a problem, a nearly insurmountable obstacle to the disciples at the time. How can Christ promise to be present always among his people at the same time that he announces his departure? If we do not wrestle frankly with Jesus's real absence in his ascension, we miss a crucial opportunity to appreciate the significance of his real presence in the power of the Spirit. It is of great importance that the sermon that Jesus preaches *at the institution of the Supper* is about "trading places," since it is especially the purpose of this sacramental meal that places *us* at that precarious intersection between the two ages.

> Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times." (John 13:36–38 ESV)

Thomas then chimed in. " 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I *am* the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' " (John 14:5–6 ESV, emphasis

added). Nevertheless, Philip pleads, “Lord, show us the Father” (14:8). Philip’s question is the last straw. Jesus seems exasperated by the failure of the disciples to understand that he *is* the way. “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (v. 9 ESV). Happily, for our sake, these questions provoked Jesus’s most thorough explanation of the Spirit’s mission. “Rise, let us go from here,” Jesus tells them (v. 31 ESV). The hour is drawing nigh and exodus is in the air. He will perform his exodus, assume his conquest-throne, and send the Spirit to distribute the spoils of victory.

We hear echoes here of the transition from the ministry of Elijah to Elisha. “Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind,” some sons of the prophets told Elisha, “ ‘Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?’ And he said, ‘Yes, I know it; keep quiet’ ” (2 Kgs 2:1–3 ESV). Then Elisha swore to Elijah, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you” (v. 4). Yet Elijah asked Elisha to make a last request “before I am taken from you” (v. 9 ESV). Elisha replied, “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit” (v. 9). Then he watched mournfully as Elijah was taken from him in the mighty wind (v. 11). Tearing his own clothes in pieces, he put on Elijah’s cloak “and struck the water [of the Jordan] with it,” asking, “Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” When he struck the water, “it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over” (2 Kgs 2:12–14 ESV). This is a little exodus, with a dejected Elisha discovering what his departed mentor meant when he said, “I will not leave you.” And the “double portion” of the Spirit was a little Pentecost.

The answer to the disciples’ anxious questions (John 14:1–14) is not to downplay the reality of his departure until he returns in the flesh; rather, it is to promise the Holy Spirit (14:15–31). Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah—and Jesus? They will know the answer fully at Pentecost. Jesus not only *shows* the way; he *is* the way. They cannot follow him now to where he is going. But they will be united to Jesus after his ascension in a new yet even more intimate way after Pentecost. Just as Jesus went to the cross alone and was raised alone, he ascended to the Father alone. Only he could perform this work. And yet he performed it not merely as a private person but as a public representative *for us*. Only when the Spirit comes in power will they—and we—become sharers in Jesus’s exodus.

Soon the disciples will no longer merely walk by Jesus’s side and eat and drink common meals with him “after the flesh” (2 Cor 5:16 KJV). The Spirit

will unite them to Christ like branches to a vine (John 15:1–5). Because of his work, they will be truly able to eat his flesh and drink his blood unto eternal life, as he promised in John 6. The disciples are already clean because they belong to him; they are already fruit-bearing branches because they belong to the vine. They are, says Jesus, no longer to be called servants but friends. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you" (15:16). The fruit is love, particularly for each other in the communion of saints (v. 17). They will be a new family, around which a new humanity will grow.

The Spirit is the answer to their anxiety about Jesus's departure. Why would Jesus desert them in this hour where they are on the brink of establishing the Messiah on the throne of his father David in Jerusalem? The pattern of Jesus's course over the next few days recapitulates the history familiar to the disciples: Israel's story of exodus, conquest, and the distribution of the inheritance to each of the twelve tribes. However, it is no rerun of past episodes. Rather, it is the reality for which the old covenant pattern was merely a preview of coming attractions.

Another Attorney

Jesus identifies the Spirit as "another advocate," another *paraklētos* (John 14:16). Commentators—and even translators—have frequently sought to distinguish the Spirit from Jesus by identifying the former as a "comforter" rather than an "advocate." Already in the early third century, Origen observed that "in the Greek [*paraklētos*] bears both meanings."[2] Nevertheless, "in regard to the Savior 'paraclete' seems to mean intercessor. . . . When used of the Holy Spirit, however, the word 'paraclete' ought to be understood as 'comforter,' because he provides comfort to the souls to whom he opens and reveals a consciousness of spiritual knowledge."[3]

Though possible lexically, the translation "comforter" hardly catches the courtroom image with which this term was frequently associated. In rabbinical literature, the Greek word was transliterated into Hebrew and used as a loanword to mean "advocate" or "attorney," contrasted with an "accuser."[4] Most translations render *paraklētos* as "advocate" in 1 John 2:1. Furthermore, Origen

seems to have overlooked Romans 8:26–27 when he says that "in regard to the Savior 'paraclete' seems to mean intercessor." After all, the apostle applies this intercessory role to the Spirit as well in those verses.

The decision for "comforter" in relation to the Spirit is therefore determined by a theological concern to distinguish Christ's work from the Spirit's. I think that this is the wrong distinction, and it opens the door to the kind of dangerous contrasts that we have encountered between an ostensibly Spirit-centered gospel of relational intimacy and a Christ-centered gospel of salvation through judgment. We saw in the previous chapter that the Son and the Spirit are engaged in the same judicial operation, and this fact comes into sharper focus in this discourse. Jesus himself said that the Holy Spirit is "*another* advocate" (*allos paraklētos*), and the role he attributes to the Spirit is obviously legal (John 14:16; see 16:7–8). If the Spirit's ministry is no less judicial than Christ's, it is also true that Christ's is no less comforting than the Spirit's. Far from excluding the idea of a "comforter," the translation "advocate" provides a deeper and more specific grounding for it. It is precisely because we have God himself for our legal defense that we experience his comforting presence.

The difference between Christ and the Spirit, then, is not to be found in that between legal judgment and relational comfort. Rather, it is to be found in the fact that Christ's courtroom role is exercised for us, outside of us, while the Spirit's is exercised within us, bringing us to acknowledge our guilt and to receive pardon in Christ before his return in judgment at the last day. Furthermore, it is significant that Jesus represents the Father as the one who sends the Spirit. Jesus as the mediator prays to the Father to do this (John 14:16), but the Father will send the Spirit *in Jesus's name* (v. 26). This underscores the point that all of the external works of the Godhead proceed from the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit. In this aspect of Jesus's discourse, the Spirit's arrival will provoke judgment.

First, there is the *world's* judgment of *the church* (John 16:2). Jesus had already told them in this discourse that as the world falsely accused him, it will do the same to his disciples (15:18–20). For all of the marvelous work of the Spirit in common grace, his saving grace is associated with bringing those whom he has chosen into union with his Son through the gospel. There is little support here for the notion that a Spirit-centered soteriology is more universalistic than the particularity attached to faith in Jesus Christ and being united to his ecclesial body. He will give them "the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive*, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with

you and will be in you" (14:17, emphasis added). Surprisingly, at least to the disciples, no doubt, Jesus identifies "the world" here with unbelieving Israel. His disciples will be excommunicated, cast out of the *synagogues*, and harassed—even killed (cf. Rev 2:8–10). The apostate church will expel the true church—and will even regard this persecution as an act of religious devotion, a "service" to God (*latreia*; John 16:2). (An obvious example of this will be the zeal of Saul of Tarsus: Acts 8:3; Phil 3:6.) The world's hatred and false accusations against Christ and his people are evidence that the Spirit is at work in the church, just as he was in the earthly ministry of her Lord.

Second, Jesus promises that *the Spirit* will judge *the world*. This is not the final judgment, which is given into Jesus's hands at his bodily return. Rather, this Spirit-executed judgment is worked within us, convincing us of our guilt and of Christ's righteousness that we receive through faith. Those who will receive the Spirit's judgment *now* will be justified and will therefore be able to stand before that great future tribunal without fear. This is why the Spirit's judicial work is so essential—and particularly suited—to this present phase of redemption. Only he can work within creatures to raise them from spiritual death and unite them to Christ so that they can stand in the final judgment without fear. As Paul also explains, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:1–2 ESV).

So the Spirit's work in the church through the Word will become, says Jesus, the anticipation of the great judgment in the future. The Spirit will not only bind them to the Jesus of the past but to the Jesus of the present and the future. The same Spirit who ushered into this present evil age the future resurrection of the dead by raising Christ will also raise those spiritually dead in anticipation of their bodily resurrection on the last day. The future has arrived, *but, paradoxically, only when Jesus leaves* are we swept into the wake of his triumph as he is enthroned in the age to come (see also 1 John 2:1–2).

Jesus's "hour" (a reference to the crucifixion throughout John's Gospel) means his defeat as far as his enemies are concerned, but in reality it means his victory. Not even the disciples understand this now, but they will when the Spirit brings Jesus's words to mind. They did not have to worry when he was with them because he would not be taken prisoner until he chose to be. But now is the "hour"—for himself, and then afterward for them. They are not just afraid of losing their friend and master but of losing their own lives when he leaves.

But he will send "another advocate," another *paraklētos* (John 14:16). When

this other attorney comes, Jesus says that "he will convict the world concerning *sin* and *righteousness* and *judgment*" (16:8 ESV). He will "convict" (*elenxei*), which means to expose as guilty. Satan is judged already (vv. 10–11). Through Jesus's victory, the prosecutor of the church is defeated so that the prosecutor of the world and justifier of believers can begin his recovery mission. The "strong man" is bound so that Jesus and his followers, empowered by the Spirit, can loot his cruel estate and liberate his prisoners (see Matt 12:28–29 and par.).

At Pentecost we see precisely what Jesus meant when he said that the Spirit "will convict the world concerning sin." Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2 reveals each aspect of the work that Jesus here attributes to the Spirit as the inner witness to his external word. Peter prosecutes the case against them ("You crucified," v. 23 ESV) while also proclaiming God's righteousness ("But God raised him from the dead," v. 24) and judgment ("it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him," v. 24). Therefore, through the external word of conviction, righteousness, and judgment, the Holy Spirit inwardly convicts and assures. Without this work of the Spirit within, the external proclamation would not have led to its profound effect: "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' " (v. 37 ESV). And "about three thousand were added to their number that day" (v. 41).[5] Everything that Jesus promised Peter and the other disciples in his discourse was actually fulfilled at Pentecost—and is still being fulfilled today.

This is the prophets' role: to witness to God's righteousness and the covenant partner's violation of the stipulations of the covenant. This is why the work of the prophets is always preceded by a report of the prophet's having been taken up into the Spirit, from whom he received his commission and his authority—his power of attorney—to speak in God's name. It is little wonder that the Spirit is called "the Spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10). "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:20–21). It is the same preaching in the church that Paul says brings conviction upon all, especially unbelievers who are present (1 Cor 14:24). We should also recall the repeated events throughout the ministry of Moses when God spoke his words in the cloud. At Sinai God tells the prophet, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever" (Exod 19:9). Given the identification of the Spirit with the glory cloud, the inseparable connection is made between the Spirit and the word that God speaks. Prophets speak "in the Spirit." Echoes of Exodus 19 are heard in Revelation 1:10–11: "I was in the

Spirit on the Lord's day," says John, "and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches. . . .'"

Jesus tells the disciples that they are qualified as apostolic witnesses, "for you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27). Unlike the false shepherds of Jeremiah 23, who proclaim words from God that they never received, the Twelve had been in the immediate presence of God incarnate. Yet Jesus also teaches here that the Spirit has been with him "from the beginning" in a far more primordial—indeed, eternal—sense. Jesus is not now primarily a witness but the one concerning whom witness is offered. He will send out into the world those who have known him from the beginning of his earthly ministry, but not until they are "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 1:4–5, 8) by the Spirit who has been with him from all eternity. Jesus has been sent from the Father by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. The Servant has been endowed with the promised Spirit. "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you" (Luke 24:49). The Spirit is the divine witness who will make Christ's disciples witnesses to the ends of the earth and will ensure that his elect will hear the voice of Christ.

The Spirit's ministry is not to add something to Jesus's work but to remind the disciples of what Jesus has said (John 16:13). This is the basis for the New Testament as revealed Scripture. These words were spoken first of all to the Twelve, not to the whole church. As Jesus didn't speak on his own authority but spoke what his Father told him, so the Spirit will speak the word of Christ and keep the church in the truth. The Trinitarian fellowship is obvious: the Father sent the Son, and the Son took what belonged to the Father and gave it to his people; the Son will return to the Father and then send the Spirit who "will take what is mine and declare it to you" (v. 14 ESV). Then his disciples, taken up into the fellowship of the Trinity, will be sent out in the power of the Spirit as witnesses in God's court.

We can therefore be certain where the Spirit is active in power: it is wherever Christ is being proclaimed in his saving office for the forgiveness of sins, justification, and an inheritance in the new creation. As Gordon Fee observes, "Thus, Paul's 'high christology' does not begin with doctrinal reflection but with experienced conviction. . . . Those who have received the Spirit of God have been enabled to see the crucifixion in a new, divine light. Those who walk 'according to the Spirit' can no longer look on Christ from their old 'according to the flesh' point of view (2 Cor 5:15–16). They now know him to be their

exalted Lord, ever present at the Father's right hand making intercession for them (Rom 8:34)."[6] The Holy Spirit is therefore the first person of the Godhead we experience in our life—and yet when he comes to indwell us it is *Jesus* whom we confess to the glory of the Father (1 Cor 12:3).

Pentecost signifies a qualitative difference. Even with Jesus among them, the disciples stand on the old-covenant side of the great divide of the two ages. Jesus distinguishes between the Spirit's presence now ("he dwells *with* you") and his presence after Pentecost ("he will be *in* you"; John 14:17). This is the day promised by the Lord through the prophets: "I will put my Spirit *in* you . . ." (Ezek 36:27). Jesus speaks in the future tense of the Spirit indwelling all of God's people. Indeed, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you," Jesus pledges (John 14:18). As Ferguson observes, Jesus refers here to Pentecost rather than to either his resurrection or his second coming. "So complete is the union between Jesus and the Paraclete that the coming of the latter is the coming of Jesus himself in the power of the Spirit."[7] Jesus will be with his people in a more intimate way after his ascension than before because his Spirit will live within them and unite them to Christ.

The Spirit was in the wings, waiting for the cry, "It is finished!" He must first raise and glorify the true temple and then he will fill its living stones, beginning with those gathered in the upper room. Before the final judgment he will execute on a global scale the arraignment, conviction, and justification of sinners, sanctifying them in anticipation of their sharing in Christ's glory.

Christ and the Spirit: Distinction without Separation

In relating the Son and the Spirit, there are two dangers to be avoided: *confusing* and *separating* them. It is certainly true that the Son and the Spirit exist eternally in an ineffable union of essence. There is also a perichoretic indwelling of the persons in each other, as Jesus teaches in this discourse and also in the concluding prayer in John 17. Remarkably, Jesus teaches that his people will share by grace in this mutual indwelling that the divine persons share by nature. "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (John 14:20; cf. 17:21–23). Let us pause to absorb this arresting truth: the persons of the Godhead live and move in each other. The Son rests in the bosom

of the Father with the Spirit, and this same Spirit gives us rest in the Father through the Son. Because of the Spirit, we are in Christ and Christ is in us even as the divine persons are in each other. Believers do not—and will never—step over the boundary from creature to Creator. The ineffable perichoresis of the divine persons will never be shared univocally with believers, but there is nevertheless a real analogical participation in God's uncreated energies.

The stress at this point in the sermon is not on the eternal relations of the immanent trinity but on the association of the Spirit with Jesus in the economy—in "these last days." The two are engaged in one mission, yet differently, as befits their distinct persons and roles. The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Christ"—but not with a lowercase "s," as if to identify the third person with Jesus's human soul or his divinity. While remaining a distinct person from Christ, the Spirit's presence in these last days nevertheless *is* Christ's presence. But they have distinct job descriptions befitting their distinct persons. Jesus says, "But when the Advocate 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. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning" (15:26–27, emphasis added). The Spirit never confuses himself with Jesus. On the contrary, it is by focusing his ministry on the work of Christ that the Spirit's difference as well as unity with him is demonstrated. Yet precisely in doing so, the presence of the Spirit is identified as the presence of Christ himself. If the Spirit never confuses himself with Jesus, we are ill-advised to imagine that the church replaces Jesus. On the contrary, it is Jesus's difference from the Spirit that paradoxically makes it possible for us to be united to Christ in the most intimate way possible, and it is the difference of both Christ and the Spirit from the church that allows the body of Christ to be redeemed and renewed at all. The announcement of Jesus's ascension—his real departure—is precisely what provoked our Lord's most focused discourse on the Spirit.

Therefore, we must not run too quickly past the ascension to Pentecost. Where is Jesus? He has ascended bodily to the right hand of the Father, whence he will return at the end of the age to judge the living and the dead. The same docetic logic that sees the Son taking his humanity from heaven rather than from the virgin Mary will turn the exalted Christ into a cosmic phantasm other than "this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven," but "will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11 ESV). As Douglas Farrow argues, if we explain away his real departure in the flesh, all particularity of Jesus is lost. The question, "*Where* is Jesus?" is not speculative. It determines the

larger question, "*Who* is Jesus?" If the answer to the first question is "everywhere," then the answer to the second must be, "everything." Claiming to be Irenaean, incarnational, and antignostic, such an approach becomes much nearer to Gnosticism. "Its chief characteristics are to be found in its universalism, its synergism, and its panentheism, all of which justifies us in labeling it as Origenist rather than Irenaean."[8]

Everything that Jesus had taught the disciples in the upper room before his death is now about to be fulfilled. And yet, just at this point when they are prepared for conquest—with the greater Joshua as their leader, Jesus leaves.

> And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9–11 ESV)

The stunned disciples must have felt as if they had been bereaved of their Master again. We must join the disciples in their anxiety over the Lord's heavenly repatriation before we can experience the full impact of the Spirit's advent. Raymond Brown comments, "The Paraclete is the presence of Jesus when Jesus is absent"—indeed, "another Jesus."[9] I concur with the main proposition. The Holy Spirit is truly the vicar of Christ. The apostles were ambassadors, but the Spirit is the one who not only represents Christ but makes him present and makes us present to him. However, with the secondary clause, "another Jesus," an important aspect of my argument is elided. Precisely what we do not need is "another Jesus." We need the same Jesus who lived, died, rose, and ascended to return in the flesh. We need him at present at the place of all authority and power, ruling and interceding. The Spirit did not become incarnate, win our redemption, and claim his glory as the mediator between God and humans. We do not need another Jesus, but "another advocate"—a different attorney, one who presses his case within us even as Jesus makes his outside of us, as one of us.

In one sense, Jesus is absent, and the church has to fully accept this fact. We cannot evade his departure in the flesh by talking about the church as his ongoing incarnation or the pope as his vicar or the Spirit as his replacement or "Jesus in my heart." His absence from us in the flesh underscores the difference

of the head from his members of this new commonwealth. Not even his omnipresent deity can save us from the longing for his bodily return. Instead of looking away from the absent Jesus, taken up from us in the cloud, we must reckon fully with this fact if we are to appreciate the glorified humanity that we share with him by the unique work of the Holy Spirit.

In another sense, though, Jesus is present—and not simply in his omnipresent divinity; still less, an omnipresent humanity. Again, these too are ways of evading the reality of the ascension that downplay both Christ's true humanity and the work of the Spirit. It would require the Spirit's descent at Pentecost for the disciples to realize the comfort of Jesus's earlier instruction: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (John 14:18–20 ESV). The promise given to Elisha of a double portion of the Spirit that was upon Elijah is far exceeded, "for [the Spirit] dwells with you and *will be in you*" (v. 17).

At Pentecost the disciples will come to know Jesus in a way that had completely eluded them. They will know Jesus not simply as a unique individual but as the eschatological vine, head, cornerstone, and firstfruits of the new creation in whom they share. Jesus can even say, "I will come to you," (John 14:18) *because* the Holy Spirit is the one who "will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14). Though he departed in the flesh, he is present not only in his divinity but in the power of his indwelling Spirit who unites us to his glorified humanity in heaven.

Once we accept the real difference between the ascended Savior and the indwelling Spirit, the real unity between them and their work becomes visible in the different things that they do in one and the same work of salvation. The Spirit is responsible for both the Son's departure in the cloud and for uniting us to the Son who has departed—in a new way never experienced until this point by the disciples.

This intimate relationship that Jesus divulges in the farewell discourse of John's Gospel is also apparent in the Pauline corpus. Strictly speaking, Jesus does not indwell believers. And yet, Jesus and the Holy Spirit become somewhat interchangeable characters in the Epistles. The Spirit by whom the Son became incarnate was also present at the cross, though differently from the Father and the Son. We are redeemed not by the Spirit's sacrifice but by "the blood of Christ, who *through the eternal Spirit* offered himself without blemish to God . .

." (Heb 9:14, emphasis added). The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 1:4; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18). Once more, the external works of the Godhead remain undivided: Christ's resurrection is attributed also to the Father (Acts 2:32; 17:31; Rom 6:4; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:15) and to the Son himself (John 2:19-21; 10:17–18). However, each is responsible for the resurrection according to his own distinct attributes and actions. The Spirit's role in the resurrection was to make Jesus's humanity the life-giving firstfruits of the new creation (Rom 1:4). Adam became "a living being" by the Spirit's breath, but the last Adam is for us "a life-*giving* spirit" (1 Cor 15:45–47). It is the Spirit who creates a body for Christ, the eschatological head. Otherwise, he is a head without a body, a forerunner without a team, a firstfruits without a harvest, a husband without a bride.

As Sinclair Ferguson observes concerning Romans 8:9–10, "Here, clearly, the statements 'Spirit of God lives in you,' 'have the Spirit of Christ,' and 'Christ is in you' are three ways of describing a single reality of the indwelling of the Spirit."[10] No longer a body of death, Christ's humanity has become a body of glory (Phil 3:21). It is now "spiritual"—not as opposed to physical, but as glorified and life-giving spirit. "Such is the fullness of the Spirit into which Jesus entered at the resurrection that Paul is able to say that 'the last Adam [became] a life-giving Spirit' (1 Cor. 15:45)."[11] "Thus, to have the Spirit is to have Christ; to have Christ is to have the Spirit," Ferguson observes.[12] He writes:

> In this sense, through the resurrection and ascension, Christ 'became life-giving Spirit.' The explanation for this is found in a further remarkable statement: 'Now the Lord [the antecedent is 'Christ,' 2 Cor. 3:13] is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit' (2 Cor. 3:17–18). . . . In effect, Paul is teaching that through his life and ministry Jesus came into such complete possession of the Spirit, receiving and experiencing him 'without limit' (John 3:34), that he is now 'Lord' of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). With respect to his economic ministry to us, the Spirit has been 'imprinted' on the character of Jesus. This is precisely what it means for Jesus to send him as *allos paraklētos*.[13]

Paul prays that the *Father* "may grant you to be strengthened with power

through his Spirit in your inner being, so that *Christ* may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:16–17 ESV, emphasis added). Only by acknowledging Christ's departure—and his difference from the Spirit—can we recognize their inseparable unity in the one mission of salvation. Jesus does not indwell us immediately, but because the Spirit unites us to him, Jesus is said to indwell us *by his Holy Spirit.*

From now on, the Son's identity is shaped by the Spirit; the Spirit's is shaped by the incarnate Son's ministry, and now we are being shaped into Christ's likeness by the Spirit "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:17–18 ESV).[14] Though the Godhead remains immutable in its essence, the relationships in the economy have changed. The Father welcomed back his Son in a triumphal procession in a way that even surpassed the glory that they enjoyed together before all ages. Now the Son has taken his rightful throne not only as God but as one of us, as the faithful Servant as well as Lord of the covenant. And it was the Spirit who clothed him in our humanity, equipped him throughout the execution of his mission—even in the offering of himself for our sins—and raised and glorified him in our nature.

The Spirit has changed the Son's identity forever, not by changing his divine nature but by clothing him in ours and then glorifying his humanity as our covenantal head. Yet in so doing, the Spirit's identity is now forever inseparable from the ministry of Jesus Christ. Moreover, our identity is forever changed; we are no longer isolated individuals who may join other individuals in a club or affinity group but are living stones in a temple, members of one body, branches of the vine. The Father has an adopted human family, the Son has a bride, and the bride is united to the bridegroom. Because of the Spirit's work of uniting in love, Christ does not consider himself complete as head apart from his body, and we cannot consider ourselves fully "humanized" until we are glorified with him. The Spirit will complete the work that the Father began and the Son accomplished.

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1. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 25.

2. Origen, *First Principles*, translated by G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 119.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. BDAG 519.

5. Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 70.

6. Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 62.

7. Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 56.

8. Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 220–21.

9. Raymond Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 13:2 (1967): 128.

10. Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 37.

11. Ibid., 53–54.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.



CHAPTER 6

The Age of the Spirit

Anticipating the Messiah, the rabbis of Jesus's day (at least the Pharisees) divided time into two ages: "this age" and "the age to come." Jesus invoked this division of history (Matt 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; 20:34–35), as did Paul (1 Cor 10:11; Eph 1:21; 2 Tim 3:1; Titus 2:12), Peter (1 Pet 1:20) and the writer to the Hebrews (Heb 1:2; 9:26). Echoing Jesus's Olivet discourse, John warns, "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18 ESV).

In short, this is the age of the Spirit: "these last days" of "this present evil age." The "age to come" dawned when the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and, in turn, was poured out upon the earth by the ascended King. History is therefore divided not only by Jesus's messianic mission but by the coming of the Spirit. He brings judgment, but in this phase it is inward conviction, leading to repentance and faith, until the Son of Man returns, wrapped in the glory cloud. Even the Qumran community seems to have drawn from the prophets significant threads of this radical division between the two ages. Not only did they refer to this distinction, but they claimed to be the new Adam, preparing to become the new Eden by their rigorous moral code. "As presumptuous as their claims may seem," notes John Levison, "they did not hesitate to wrest these claims from their Jewish brothers and sisters in order to lay exclusive claim to a belief that the spirit of holiness cleanses and incorporates individuals, fills the temple community, and will cleanse the faithful as a precursor to the inevitable new creation."[1]

The apostles were both more pessimistic and more optimistic than their Qumran compatriots. They were more radical in their conviction of the impossibility of entering the age to come by obedience to Torah, yet they were more radical in their confidence that God had returned to his exiled people and land in the person of the incarnate Son and with the Spirit's filling of the true end-time sanctuary at Pentecost. The postfall creation—this present evil age—

has no power to re-create itself any more than any one of us can raise the dead. Despite all the pomp and press, this present evil age is falling apart at the seams, decaying, dying, and fading. How do we know? Because the prophets foretold that the Spirit would be poured out "in the last days," and Peter announced its fulfillment at Pentecost. Just as our sin-and-death-soaked bodies must die and be buried, this present age—the history of Adam—must die before the final resurrection of all things in the new creation. In this era, the Spirit is building a temple that is *in this world* but is not *of this age*—far more glorious, with Christ for its cornerstone.

Experiencing the Spirit in the Old Testament

If the Holy Spirit is Lord and life giver, does he work in the same way throughout the history of redemption? If there are differences, especially between his work in the Old Testament and the New Covenant, are they qualitative or merely quantitative? After addressing these questions, this chapter explores our relation today to Pentecost and the church as depicted in the Book of Acts.

Spirit and Covenant

Of first importance in understanding the Spirit's role prior to Christ's advent is to identify the covenantal context in which he is operative. As Paul indicates, there are "two covenants" (Gal 4:24) that dominate the Old Testament horizon: the Abrahamic and the Sinaitic, "the promise" and "the law." Reformed (federal) theology distinguishes between the covenant of works, made with humanity in Adam, and the covenant of grace, with Christ as the mediator.[2] The question, though, is to what extent the Sinai covenant displays the characteristics of a covenant of works (or law) over against the purely gracious promise that God made to Abraham, fulfilled in Christ, and dispensed to us in the new covenant. On this particular point there has been considerable debate in the history of Reformed reflection, as in other traditions. I have waded into these exegetical controversies myself.[3] Below and in the notes, however, I will only summarize some of my conclusions that impinge directly on this topic.[4]

As we have seen, the Spirit was at the center of the judicial actions associated with the covenant with Adam (Gen 3:8), and the same was true of the Sinai covenant. The glory cloud led the covenant people through the waters on dry ground, through the wilderness to Sinai and from Sinai to Canaan, where he took up residence first in the tabernacle, then in the temple. Without his presence, Israel is like any other nation, as Moses recognizes in his plea for the Lord not to withdraw his presence (Exod 33:15). Wherever the Spirit takes up residence, there is *judicial approval* (separation from the nations as God's holy nation) and *creative power* (the land is flowing with milk and honey along with righteousness, peace, and long life). Where he executes the curse sanctions, there is judgment (*lo' 'ammi*, "not my people") and death (the land is made into an unsubdued wasteland—a *tohu wabohu*, without form and void). "But like Adam they [the Israelites] transgressed the covenant . . ." (Hos 6:7 ESV) and, also like Adam, were exiled from the land after the Spirit evacuated the temple.

As the New Testament interprets the Old, the new covenant anticipated by the prophets is not a continuation of the Sinai covenant. Rather, we see stark differences, especially in our Lord's series of judgments when he pronounced the covenant curses ("woes") on the nation's religious leaders in Matthew 23 and, indeed, on the nation itself, prophesying the destruction of the temple in chapter 24.

As in the Abrahamic covenant, the mediator of the new covenant is not a mere prophet like Moses but is God himself: the eternal Son who is also Abraham's offspring (Gal 3:20; Heb 3:1–6).[5] There are other significant differences: The Sinai blessings are temporal, conditional, and limited to a particular geopolitical nation, while the Abrahamic/new covenant blessings are everlasting, unconditional, and global. These contrasts serve as the basis for the apostolic contrast between "the law" (i.e., the terms of the Sinai covenant, sworn by the people, with Moses as mediator) and "the promise" (God's unilateral oath in Christ the Mediator). As the apostle Paul says, "Law" and "promise" refer to "two covenants," represented by two different mediators, two different mothers (Hagar and Sarah), and two different mountains (Sinai and Zion; see Gal 4:23–26). The writer to the Hebrews labors the point that the law of Moses—and everything pertaining to it (the land, the temple, the sacrifices, and the commands governing individual and social life in the theocracy)—was a typological shadow. "But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises" (Heb 8:5–6 ESV). It is the same point made in the

first chapter of John's Gospel: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

When the prophets prosecute God's case against Israel as a national theocracy, the basis of exile is the Sinai covenant. Yet beyond this they look back to the second promise that God made to Abraham and look forward to a new covenant that will be "not like the covenant" that the people swore at Sinai (Jer 31:32). God will unilaterally circumcise the hearts of his people, the Spirit will indwell them (writing the law on their hearts), and all of this on the basis of the forgiveness of their sins. His covenant people "will inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5), not just a sliver of real estate; in fact, the distinction between heaven and earth will disappear (Rev 11:19; 21:22).

The covenant of law (Sinai) is now designated the "old covenant." "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete" (Heb 8:13). We have not come to Mount Sinai but to Mount Zion—the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22). This is the point of the contrast between the letter and the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3.

The Old Testament believers longed for redemption from the curse that the law was unable to overcome and for an outpouring of the Spirit that would change the face of the world. Moses's longing in Numbers 11 for the day when the Spirit would be poured out on all of God's people was played *fortissimo* in the prophets as they announced the "new thing" that God would do "in the last days."

It was this hope of Moses that Peter saw being fulfilled not only with thousands of Jewish converts (including some priests) but with the conversion of the gentiles. Peter rebuffed the circumcision sect decisively at the Jerusalem Council, declaring God's fulfillment of his promise "that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:7–9 ESV). Peter even casts the circumcision party as the faithless generation in the wilderness: "Now, therefore, why are you *putting God to the test* by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will" (Acts 15:10–11 ESV, emphasis added).

It is therefore because of God's pledge to Adam and Eve after the fall and to Abraham and Sarah that there was any hope of God's saving presence rather than judgment. Looking to Christ from afar, the old-covenant saints believed in

realities that they themselves had not experienced. They could actually enjoy the heavenly blessings only together with us—that is, with the dawning of the new covenant (Heb 11:40). Justified through faith, they were preserved and kept by the Spirit. At this level, the difference seems more quantitative than qualitative. Yet the Spirit's presence was also conditioned on *the national-theocratic level* by the provisional, temporary, and contingent nature of the Sinai covenant.

Though resting upon Moses, the Spirit led the whole people corporately to the promised land by pillar and cloud. The Spirit filled the earthly temple, spreading his holy rays throughout the land. The Spirit would come upon prophets, priests, and kings at various times to empower them for a significant mission. Nevertheless, the Spirit's presence—like the Sinai covenant itself—was always dependent on national obedience. When grieved, he could withdraw himself, as he left Saul. In his confession of sin, David also prayed that the Lord would not take his Holy Spirit from him (Ps 51:11). It was not that David feared losing his salvation but rather the Spirit-anointing for royal office. Furthermore, the Spirit evacuated the temple when the nation had thoroughly violated the Sinai treaty.

But this was not the end of the story. The Spirit who heaped up the waters and made dry land to appear in creation, in the "new creation" after the flood and in the exodus from Egypt, will do it again once and for all in the future. There will be a new exodus and a new conquest.

In Isaiah 34 we learn that it will be a day of "confusion and emptiness" for the wicked—terms reminiscent of the creation account. But God promises in this passage to bring all the animals, each with its mate, into the new creation by his Spirit: "For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them. . . . They shall possess it forever" (vv. 16–17 NKJV).

But this future outpouring of the Spirit depends on the advent of the Messiah:

> Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope. This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that

> springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:
>
> "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. . . ." Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth. (Isa 42:1–7, 10)

In a remarkably Trinitarian passage, the preincarnate Christ says, " 'Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there.' And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit" (Isa 48:16 ESV). In the words that Jesus will apply to himself, Isaiah prophesies: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor . . . to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD" (Isa 61:1 NKJV). So we see the close relationship between the Spirit and the anointing for the sacred task of witnessing to God and his plans. And then the Father who sent the Son will also send the Spirit at the Son's behest.

Ezekiel prophesies even more broadly of the Spirit's outpouring: the sprinkling with "clean water" and gift of "a new heart." "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezek 36:25–27 NKJV). The law will not be a bare command but will be accompanied by the gospel and the Spirit's regenerating work in the hearts of all of the Lord's people, from the least to the greatest. In Ezekiel especially, the sound of God's voice is like "the roar of rushing waters" (Ezek 1:24; 43:2). There is an almost deafening sound of rushing wind as the glory cloud, teeming with cherubim and seraphim, descends. "Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake: 'Blessed be the glory of the LORD from its place!' It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great earthquake" (Ezek 3:12–13). Throughout the prophets, and especially in Joel 2 (which Peter's Pentecost sermon cites), the Spirit's advent "in the last days" is something unheard of in the previous history of Israel.

The Holy Spirit had already made his debut in Jesus's ministry. When it began, Jesus announced that he is the Spirit-anointed Servant who fulfills the

typology of the Year of Jubilee (Luke 4:16–21). Later (Luke 10), Jesus sends the seventy out to proclaim good news to the surrounding towns, going ahead of Jesus, two by two. We are meant to recall the appointment of the seventy elders to assist Moses in Numbers 11:25. A portion of the Spirit that was upon Moses would be given to the elders. Similarly, here the Spirit is upon the seventy disciples, and they return with the report that even the demons are subject to them in Christ's name. However, this was but a preview of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

On one hand, therefore, we must affirm that the believers of old were not only under the old covenant ministry of Moses; they (including Moses) were also the spiritual children of Abraham through faith alone (Rom 4:11–12; Gal 3:6–14, 23–29). Especially in its running controversy with Anabaptists, Reformed theology has emphasized the unity of the one covenant of grace. Such a view seems to me entirely proper as the baseline for thinking about the history of redemption. There is no break in the *Abrahamic* covenant of promise across the two Testaments.

On the other hand, there is a clear discontinuity—even contrast—between the Sinai covenant and the Abrahamic and new covenants. The old covenant is the ministry of "the letter that kills," "the ministry of condemnation," "the ministry of death," while the new covenant is the ministry of "the Spirit [who] gives life," "the ministry of righteousness" (2 Cor 3:6–9 ESV). "For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. . . . For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory" (vv. 9, 11 ESV).

This contrast is the heart of Paul's argument in Galatians, which reaches a crescendo in Galatians 3:17–18 (ESV): "This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the [Abrahamic] promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise." It is striking that we find both of these points—continuity of the covenant of grace and discontinuity between old and new covenants—in the same two passages (Romans 4 and Galatians 3 and 4). This point of contrast is not unique to Paul. Jeremiah says that the "new covenant" is going to be "not like the covenant" of Sinai "that they broke" (Jer 31:31–32 ESV). In the new covenant, God is the promise maker: he will write his law on the hearts. "And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (vv. 33–34).

This line of argument is no different from John the Baptist's own testimony to Jesus's incomparably greater dignity. The Fourth Gospel uses a present participle for the Baptizer's announcement that Jesus "is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33 ESV); it is part of the Messiah's identity in distinction from John's ministry, which still belonged to the old order.[6]

Therefore, the key interpretive question is not whether to embrace continuity or discontinuity in the abstract but to determine the sense in which there is continuity (Abrahamic promise/new covenant) and discontinuity (Sinai law/old covenant). The proper emphasis on the unity of God's saving plan should not keep us from recognizing the clear discontinuities in its historical unfolding as indicated by Scripture.

Differences between the Spirit's Presence in the Old and New Covenants

The two main coordinates, then, for discerning the newness of the Spirit's work since Pentecost are *covenant* and *eschatology*. Having distinguished the covenants, we turn now to the eschatological turning of the times. The sheer repetition in the prophets of God's promise to "pour out" his Spirit in the last days (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 39:28–29; Joel 2:28) indicates a qualitatively new manifestation of the Spirit in the future. Elijah may have given to Elisha a double portion of the Spirit that was upon him (2 Kgs 2:9), but Jesus was given the Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34 ESV). And, as baptism visibly signifies and seals, we are sharers in Christ's anointing. As the Heidelberg Catechism instructs, Jesus is "Christ" because he is the one anointed by the Spirit as Prophet, Priest, and King, and we are called "Christians" because through faith we "share in his anointing."[7]

However, even Jesus received this anointing prior to the eschatological fullness of the Spirit's outpouring and indwelling that his resurrection and exaltation achieved for us. Before the Spirit could be poured out to create the living stones of the end-time sanctuary, Jesus—the cornerstone—had himself to be glorified. So something fundamentally new was experienced at Pentecost than even had appeared in the ministry of Jesus on earth. Jesus can even promise his disciples that they will do "greater works" than the signs he was performing—precisely because he was going to the Father in exalted glory and would send the Spirit from the Father (John 14:12). The explosive effects of the apostolic mission, still reverberating to the ends of the earth, is confirmation of this

staggering promise.

The coming of the kingdom is associated not only with the coming of the King but with the sending of the Spirit. Just after reporting Jesus's baptism (with "the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove" [Mark 1:10 ESV]) and temptation ("The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness" [v. 12 ESV]), Jesus begins his public ministry by "proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (vv. 14–15). Our Lord's anointing by the Spirit inaugurates the kingdom in power (John 3:34; Acts 10:38), but the oil drips down his neck to his entire body, anointing all of his people, beginning at Pentecost.

We have seen that the verb that Mark uses in the temptation narrative is particularly strong: Jesus is "driven out" (*ekballei*)—even "cast out" is not an exaggerated translation—by the Spirit (Mark 1:12). As Ferguson notes:

> His testing was set in the context of a holy war in which he entered the enemy's domain, absorbed his attacks and sent him into retreat (Mt 4:11, and especially Luke 4:13). In the power of the Spirit, Jesus advanced as the divine warrior, the God of battles who fights on behalf of his people and for their salvation (cf. Ex. 15:3; Ps. 98:1). His triumph demonstrated that 'the kingdom of God is near' and that the messianic conflict had begun.[8]

Jesus is driven out by the Spirit into battle to drive out the ancient serpent from God's garden. Even the demons seem to know that their free reign in the world is about to end (Matt 8:29). When the Son of Man casts out the demons, you know that the kingdom has come (Matt 12:25–29). The strong man (Satan) has been tied up so that his dark castle can be looted, its dungeons emptied, and the spoils distributed to his former victims (Matt 12:29). This is the force of those prophetic words that Jesus assumed to himself from Isaiah 61:1 (ESV): "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . ." (Luke 4:18). Yet it is clear that it is only with his ascension—"exalted to the right hand of God"—that Christ, "having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit," has now at Pentecost "poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:33 ESV).

In addition to Jesus's teaching, the apostles interpret Pentecost as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and not simply as a continuation—even a heightening—of the Spirit's work in previous days. The Holy Spirit will descend

in power when the glorified King gives the word. As Paul's ascension theology in Ephesians 4 makes clear, it is only with the triumphal entry of the Warrior-King into the heavenly throne room that the spoils of victory can be distributed liberally to those whom the Father has chosen as his coheirs. And in this light, even the love command takes on a new aspect as a result of the turning of the times:

> Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, *because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining*. (1 John 2:7–8, emphasis added)

It is not simply that the Spirit brings communion with Christ and therefore with his members but that there is an eschatological turning point in history. Love is not just a bare command, without the power to fulfill; it is a *living reality* that is "true in [Christ] and in you, *because*" of this dawn of the new age in the Spirit. We are reminded of John 15, where Jesus grounds his command of sibling affection in the present reality of their already being united in one vine. We should bear in mind that this was not a separate sermon but belongs to the discourse on the coming of the Spirit. The communion of the saints in this age is a reality that transcends the covenantal bonds of the Israelites as a national theocracy. Love is possible in this age in a way and to a degree that eluded the saints of old.

We may wonder why this unique outpouring of the Spirit occurred in "these last days." Why not long before? Why did the Father not send the Spirit in this way when Moses cried out for it? Or when John was preparing the way—or at least when Jesus proclaimed his kingdom? The timing was not arbitrary. Just as Jesus died "at the right time"—that is, "while we were still weak," still "enemies," and "the ungodly" (Rom 5:6–10 ESV)—so also the Spirit is poured out at just the right time. We have considerable indications about what made it the right time. The Spirit, after all, is the perfecting agent of God's works. The Spirit had first to unite the Son to our flesh in order for there to be one who would render faithful obedience to the Father on our behalf, bear our guilt, and be raised and glorified for our justification and glorification. It is not to the eternal deity that the Spirit unites us but to his glorified humanity. As Ephesians

4:8–10 confirms, the exalted King had to enter his glory before he could dispense the spoils of victory.

John 7:37–39 makes this same point. At the climax of the Feast of Booths—the water-drawing ceremony celebrating the miraculous provision of water from the rock in the wilderness, Jesus identifies himself as that Rock (cf. 1 Cor 10:4). Just as he gives himself as true food and drink (John 6), he now adds that "whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, *for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*" (John 7:38–39 ESV). Literally the text reads "for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Appropriately, the ESV translators supplied the implicit verb, but the stark form of the original underscores the contrast between the Spirit's work after Jesus was glorified and before. "What then can it mean to say that *the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified* (John 7.39)," Augustine asks, "except that that giving or bestowal or sending of the Holy Spirit was going to have some special quality about it that there had never been before?"[9]

As late in the story as his farewell discourse, Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit was already "with" them, but in the future he will be "in" them (John 14:17).[10] Indeed, he promises, "I will come to you," referring to Pentecost, as we have seen (John 14:18). Thus not even during his ministry to this point has there been a fulfillment of the Spirit's outpouring that we see at Pentecost. It is not merely a gradual intensification of the Spirit's presence, as it was in Jesus's ministry. Rather, Pentecost inaugurates a qualitatively new era. It is so new that not even the Twelve are ready to be witnesses to Christ until that day, and they are told to wait for it. Because of this new mode of the Spirit's presence, there will also be an unprecedented intimacy with Jesus—and with the one we are now entitled to address in him and with him as "Father." This whole level of the experience of intimacy with the triune God is new in the history of redemption. It is different not only in its extensiveness (all of the people now anointed prophets, priests, and kings) but in its intensity (beyond the nearness that even Abraham, Moses, and David experienced).

Jesus Christ is Lord, the victorious and exalted Son of the Father, who reigns over history. Previously, he himself had been the beneficiary of the Spirit's work, but now he is the benefactor, sending the Spirit (with the Father) from his heavenly throne. Therefore, the missions of the Son and the Spirit are mutually

dependent. Christ's ascension is not simply an exclamation point to the resurrection but a new redemptive-historical event in its own right. According to Luke, John, and Paul, the ascension-glorification of Christ was the basis for the sending of the Holy Spirit. Christ first had to be made like us in every respect (except for sin) and in that nature fulfill all righteousness to become the eschatological firstfruits. Having accomplished this mission for us in the power of the Spirit, the time is right not only for Jews but for the remnant from all nations to be united to Christ as his redeemed body.

Now we come closer to answering the question about the continuity between the Spirit's work before and after Pentecost. Surely the episodes in which the Spirit is said to be "upon Christ" (Matt 12:18; Luke 4:18) or joins his benediction to the Father's at Christ's baptism or empowers Christ in word and deed are at least a quantitative advance on the bestowal of the Spirit in the past. And surely the event in John 20:22–23 is significant: "He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.' " It is significant that Jesus did this after his resurrection. For now he is not simply another man (*adam*) who like the first was a "living being" who died, but Christ is the last Adam—the eschatological life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). He not only receives the breath of life from the Spirit as the first man had (Gen 2:7) but is the source of resurrection life for all.

That this scene in John 20 is an ordination service seems implied by the fact that they are now entrusted officially with the power of the keys: no longer merely disciples, they are the apostles. Andrew Lincoln argues that John's Gospel compresses into one day all the events that Luke spreads out in chronological detail (the resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost).[11] Though this is a plausible interpretation, it seems to me rather that John 20 reports a distinct episode with the Twelve as the unique nucleus of witnesses in anticipation of the ever-broadening concentric circles that include all the faithful. Before, Jesus forgave sins directly, bypassing the temple—thereby provoking the ire of the religious leaders (Mark 2:7). But now he is giving the Twelve this authority. Then, with Pentecost we find the prophesied outpouring of the Spirit on all and the ministry of the keys being exercised through ordinary pastors and elders—indirectly, through the calling of the church, rather than immediately by the direct calling of Christ.

In these passages we discover intimations of something new, a gift that exceeds anything in previous eras. We cannot help but sense that a *qualitative*

change occurs with Pentecost. It not only distinguishes the new covenant from the old, but distinguishes the disciples' endowment of the Spirit in John 20 from the one that they receive together with all the Lord's people at Pentecost. Indeed, after the Spirit is poured out, bringing inward conviction of sin and faith in Christ, the proclamation of the gospel will yield far greater success than it had in Jesus's earthly ministry. So Jesus prepared them even now (in John 20) by authorizing them to bind and loose in his name. At this moment the true Israel was standing on the verge of the greater conquest. It was necessary for our salvation that he be exalted and enter into his glory. And it was just as necessary that the Spirit be given in order to unite us to him as sharers in his estate.

The Spirit had not been given, even during Jesus's ministry, in the way that he would be "poured out" at Pentecost. Since Moses's hope for the Spirit's being poured out on all the people is repeated as late as the Minor Prophets (e.g., Joel 2) without any appeal to a previous era of analogous outpouring and indwelling of the Spirit, we have no reason to believe that God answered Moses's request until Pentecost. God went beyond the request, putting his Spirit *in*, not just on, all of his people. As Cyril of Alexandria explained, "Certainly the holy prophets received in abundance the enlightenment and illumination of the Spirit, capable of instructing them in the knowledge of future things and in the understanding of mysteries; nevertheless, we confess that in the faithful of Christ there is not only an illumination but also the very dwelling and abode of the Spirit."[12]

Given this connection between the giving of the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins, one way of tracing the continuity and discontinuity of the former is by comparison with the latter. In the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem noted this close association of the gift of the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. However, he distinguishes John's baptism as bestowing "only the remission of sins," quoting Romans 6 as the culmination of the Spirit's gifts in baptism.[13] Like Cyril, Calvin says that the gifts of the Spirit "poured out on those who had received John's baptism differ from the grace of regeneration."[14] I do not disagree. In my view, though, the difference is not between the gifts that are given: namely, forgiveness without the Spirit's indwelling presence. Like the sacrifices, the "baptism of repentance" brought forgiveness of sins only in virtue of faith in the coming Messiah: that is, only typologically, inasmuch as John is the forerunner of Jesus. John's own testimony to Jesus as the one who baptizes with the Spirit suggests that this gift, along with remission of sins, is only realized fully in the ministry of Christ that culminates in Pentecost.

There are clear passages indicating that “the forgiveness of sins” is unique to the new covenant (“remember their sins no more”; Jer 31:34). This is not because Old Testament saints were under God’s wrath but because God overlooked their sins; he covered them over through the sacrificial system. This I take to be Paul’s point in Romans 3:25 (ESV), referring to Christ “whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.” They were forgiven truly but only by anticipation and were not yet propitiated in history. The old covenant was successful only to the extent that it directed faith and hope toward Christ, but it could not in itself bring this reality into history. These sacrifices could never “take away sins” once and for all. They had to be offered repeatedly, reminding the worshiper’s conscience of transgressions (Heb 10:1–4). “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (vv. 12–14). From there, the writer quotes Jeremiah 31:33, which I have cited above, linking forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit.

If this is accurate, then Old Testament believers were forgiven and justified through faith in the one to whom the sacrifices pointed (continuity); however, the sacrifices could not themselves provide this experiential assurance to the conscience (discontinuity). On the contrary, the Mosaic covenant by itself could only keep the covenant people under supervision until they reached their maturity and could inherit the estate by promise (Gal 3:24–25). Kuyper seems to confirm this conclusion. He argued that the energies of the Spirit at Pentecost worked retroactively in the lives of the old covenant saints.[15]

The analogy of the typological sacrifices still does not account for all of the differences, qualitative as well as quantitative, but it may provide an important clue for understanding how it was that Old Testament believers experienced regeneration while nevertheless lacking the fullness of the Spirit that God promised for the latter days.

The Spirit was present in the whole nation but representatively, through anointed prophets, priests, and kings. Most evidently, the Spirit indwelled the temple. However, the Spirit is now present not only in a corporate sense, through representative officers, and in an earthly capitol, but indwells every believer. Because we are in Christ, and the Spirit who anointed him has also anointed us in him, we are prophets, priests, and kings. This opportunity was held out to the

nation of Israel as well. Just before the giving of the law, God tells Moses to announce to the people, “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:5–6 ESV). It was a goal, not a present possession, and it was conditional. By contrast Peter declares, “But you *are* a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, *that* you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. *Once you were not* a people, but *now you are* God’s people; once you *had not* received mercy, but *now you have* received mercy” (1 Pet 2:9–10 ESV).

If we see the giving of the Spirit as inextricably linked to the forgiveness of sins in the new covenant, there is warrant in saying that, on one hand, the Old Testament saints enjoyed the Spirit’s presence just as they received God’s pardon: as the types and shadows led them by faith to the reality.

Yet beyond and, indeed, underlying this national life of Israel there was also the continuation of the Abrahamic promise, with the election of particular individuals within the holy commonwealth to inherit the everlasting promise. This I take to be the basic argument of Romans 9–11. John Owen points out that “the condition of all men, as unregenerate, is absolutely the same” ever since the fall; consequently, so is the condition of the regenerate. “Men may be more or less holy, more or less sanctified, but they cannot be more or less regenerate.”[16]

I concur, then, with John Stott’s conclusion that Old Testament believers were justified (Rom 4:1–8, based on Gen 15:6 and Ps 32:1–2), which assumes regeneration. Further, “they claimed to love God’s law (e.g., Ps 119:97). Since the unregenerate nature is hostile to God and resistant to his law (Rom 8:7), they seem to have possessed a new nature. We sing the Psalms in Christian worship because we recognize in them the language of the regenerate.”[17] And yet, Stott adds that “the Holy Spirit came upon special people for special ministries at special times.” He continues:

> But now his ministry is wider and deeper than ever it was in Old Testament days. . . . First, all believers of all flesh now share in the blessings of the Spirit. Second, although Old Testament believers knew God and experienced a new birth, there is now an indwelling of the Spirit which they never knew, which belongs to the new covenant and the

> kingdom of God, and which both the prophets and the Lord Jesus promised (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26–27; John 14:16–17; Rom 14:17). Third, the Holy Spirit's distinctive work now relates essentially to Jesus Christ.[18]

Sharing Stott's basic conclusions, I think nevertheless that Sinclair Ferguson brings out more clearly the tension between continuity and discontinuity. On the one hand, he rejects the idea that "there is a major dichotomy between the Spirit's ministry in the old and in the new covenants."[19] Although Nicodemus did not understand the meaning of the new birth (John 3:4), Jesus said that he should have had some knowledge of it especially from the prophetic expectation of the Spirit's regenerating work in the new covenant. On the other hand, Ferguson warns against "flattening the contours of redemptive history, and of undermining the genuine diversity and development from old to new covenants." He continues, "Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 3 indicates that there is an epochal development from the old to the new, precisely in terms of the ministry of the Spirit."[20] As with the Son, "there is an incompleteness about the Old Testament's revelation of the Spirit. . . ."[21] Ferguson writes:

> The Spirit had been active among God's people; but his activity was enigmatic, sporadic, theocratic, selective and in some respects external. The prophets longed for better days. Moses desired, but did not see, a fuller and universally widespread coming of the Spirit on God's people (Nu. 11:29). By contrast, in the anticipated new covenant, the Spirit would be poured out in a universal manner, dwelling in them personally and permanently (cf. Joel 2:28ff.; Ezk. 36:24–32). There is more to this principle than may appear at first glance. For it is not only *because of* Christ that we come to know the Spirit more fully, but actually *in Christ.*[22]

Ferguson adds:

> The baptism that Jesus received in Jordan and the baptism that he initiates at Pentecost are epochally different, yet intimately related. . . . What John the Baptist could not understand clearly himself was that the 'fire' of which he spoke would fall upon the Messiah himself, in the

> judgment-dereliction of the cross [see Luke 12:49–50]. In fact, later John expressed his doubts about the significance of Jesus's ministry, apparently because it lacked 'fire' (Luke 7:18–23). Luke's researches were not lacking then, when, in his record of Jesus's post-resurrection words to the disciples about being baptized with the Holy Spirit, he makes no mention of fire. Its flames had been exhausted in Christ. Part of the symbolism of the 'tongues of fire' which the disciples saw on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3) may well lie in the hint that this is a baptism of gracious rather than of destructive power because of the judgment which Christ had vicariously borne in his passion.[23]

John Owen refers to "the times of the gospel" anticipated in the prophets. "But wherever it is mentioned, the time, state, and grace of the gospel are intended in it: for the Lord Christ was 'in all things to have the preeminence,' Col. i. 18; and, therefore, although God gave his Spirit in some measure before, yet he poured him not out until he was first anointed with his fullness." The Spirit was given in various ways before, "but not in the way and manner that he intended now to bestow him."[24] With a little more specificity, Owen adds:

> Whatever the Holy Spirit wrought in an eminent manner under the Old Testament, it had generally and for the most part, if not absolutely and always, a respect unto our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel; and so was preparatory unto the completing of the great work of the new creation in and by him . . . for the chiefest privilege of the church of old was but to hear tidings of the things which we enjoy, Isa. xxxiii. 17.[25]

Just as the object of Abraham's faith is the same as ours yet dimly understood from his vantage point in redemptive history, Owen argues that the regenerate saints in the Old Testament had far less understanding of regeneration. Jesus upbraided Nicodemus not because he knew nothing of a "reformation of life," dear to the moralistic deists of Owen's day (and ours), but because he, being a teacher of Israel, was unaware of the new birth.[26] And yet, "Although the work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit was wrought under the Old Testament, even from the foundation of the world, and the doctrine of it was recorded in the Scriptures, yet the revelation of it was but obscure in comparison of that light and evidence which it is brought forth into by the gospel."[27]

Furthermore, Owen adds that "more persons than of old were to be made partakers of the mercy of it. . . ."[28]

Yet there is something beyond regeneration that is given at Pentecost. Owen continues:

> But this dispensation of the Holy Ghost whereof we now proceed to treat is so peculiar unto the New Testament, that the evangelist speaking of it says, 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified,' John vii. 39; and they who were instructed in the doctrine of John the Baptist only, knew not 'whether there were any Holy Ghost,' Acts xix. 2.[29]

The fathers under the old covenant, according to Hebrews 11:13, 39, " 'died in faith, not having received the promise'; that is, the thing promised was not actually exhibited in their days, though they had the promise of it, as it is expressly said of Abraham, chap. vii. 6."[30] Owen says further:

> The promise, therefore, itself was given unto the Lord Christ, and actually received by him in the covenant of the mediator, when he undertook the great work of the restoration of all things, to the glory of God; for herein had he the engagement of the Father that the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the sons of men, to make effectual unto their souls the whole work of his mediation; wherefore, he is said now to 'receive this promise,' because on his account, and by him as exalted, it was now solemnly accomplished in and towards the church."[31]

Even in the ministry of Jesus, the Spirit is active in a degree superior to prior history, and yet Jesus himself introduces a qualitative distinction between pre- and post-Pentecost. Even his act of breathing on the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit was but a harbinger of the gift of the Spirit. Whatever continuities Scripture affirms, they cannot override the fact that Pentecost was, quite literally, the watershed in history. The river of life had yet to gush from its heavenly springs "for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39 ESV). Jesus said, "[The Holy Spirit] *lives with* you and *will be in you*" (John 14:17). Only at Pentecost is it said in the present tense, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4).

Pentecost: The Difference a Day Makes

As we have seen, the disciples found it difficult to understand Jesus's words, even in the farewell discourse, not because they were duller than we but because they were working with a different paradigm. For the most part, the prophets envisioned the coming of the Suffering Servant, the gift of the Spirit, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the everlasting messianic reign as one event. Sitting in jail awaiting his beheading, John the Baptist was understandably confused. He sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus directly: "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matt 11:3 ESV).

In a crucial sense, John's expectations were exactly right: these outcomes of the Messiah's ministry are all phases of a single operation. Even the resurrection of the dead has begun with Jesus as the "firstfruits"; the last judgment has been inaugurated with the Spirit's convicting and justifying work; and the age to come has indeed dawned in this present evil age. However, as Jesus taught clearly in the Olivet discourse (Matt 24), there is between his two advents an intermission in which the Spirit empowers his witnesses and their hearers to be brought into the kingdom of Christ—even gentiles—before the dreadful day of the Lord.

There is another stumbling block to the disciples' understanding. It is clear enough from the Gospels that the evangelists saw Jesus's work as a fulfillment of the exodus-conquest-rest pattern under the leadership of Moses and Joshua. This pattern echoed creation in the past and points forward to the messianic age in the future. And yet, it was only afterward that they could interpret Jesus's ministry as its fulfillment. Indeed, until Jesus presented himself as raised, the disciples exhibited the disillusionment that Albert Schweitzer imputed to Jesus himself (Luke 24:13–16).[32] "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel," they told the Lord whom they did not recognize (v. 21). What is more, there were rumblings afoot that Jesus has been raised—it was all very confusing. "And [Jesus] said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' " (vv. 25–27).

After making himself known in the breaking of bread (the same grammatical formula as the institution of the Supper), Jesus opened their hearts to understand that his death was not simply his own but was a substitution for them, and that his resurrection really was the beginning of the new creation. And when the

Spirit descended at Pentecost, everything fell into place. The exodus-conquest-rest pattern exhibited in creation and played out in the nation's founding events foreshadowed a greater exodus-conquest-rest than temporal prosperity in Eden or Israel. They were eyewitnesses to the birth of nothing less than the new creation.

The allusions to the giving of the law at Mount Sinai in Acts 2 are obvious, with "its repeated emphasis on the *sound*, and the 'descending of God upon it in fire,' " notes Luke Timothy Johnson.[33] However, instead of terrifying the covenant people so that they beg that no further word be spoken, the Spirit's descent at Pentecost brings comfort, empowerment for witness, and unity in the gospel—which prepare the disciples for their witness to the world. We have not come to Mount Sinai but to the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:18–29). Henceforth, Christ's followers will not only hear the word gladly but will proclaim it joyfully even to the point of martyrdom. However, in my view the echoes of Ezekiel are even more pronounced. As in the prophet's visions, there is God returning to his end-time sanctuary that he has evacuated. "And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory" (Ezek 43:2 ESV). It also looks forward to the vision of heavenly worship in Revelation 14:2 (ESV), where "a new song" is sung: "And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder."

The prophecies of the regathering of scattered Israelites in Jerusalem reach their fulfillment not in the restoration of a geopolitical theocracy but in the erection of the end-time sanctuary. At Pentecost, the Spirit announced his decisive advent with wind and fire—yet not a destructive wind or consuming fire. The flames of fire appear over each believer as a pillar of testimony, making the whole community witnesses to Christ. They are not only enveloped in the glory cloud but are indwelled and empowered by the Spirit. And what is the consequence of this eschatological outpouring? The apostles proclaim Christ. Filled with the Spirit, they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4 ESV).

The Gift of Tongues: What Was It?

Before we ask whether the gift of tongues continues in our day, we should not take for granted that we agree on what they were in the first place. Greek religion knew of ecstatic utterances—that is, trance-like speaking of unintelligible sounds, but *glōssai* ("tongues") refer to known languages. Luke

says that the believers at Pentecost spoke "in *other* tongues" (Acts 2:4) and the hearers marveled not that they were speaking unintelligible words but rather asked, "And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?" (Acts 2:8 ESV).

From the days of Plato's Socrates, divine inspiration was associated with ecstasy. To the extent that the spirit (*daimonion*) possessed one, such as the prophetesses at Delphi, the person's own agency was suspended. Plato says that in Socrates's view "the greatest of blessings come to us through madness, when it is sent as a gift of the gods," in contrast to what they speak when they are "in their right minds."[34] It is "an enthusiastic spirit (*pneuma enthousiastikon*)" that possesses one, according to Strabo, Plutarch, and other Greek and Roman writers.[35]

In sharp contrast, Levison notes that "there are but slivers of ecstasy, if any at all, in Israel's corporate memory." It appears a bit in Philo, Josephus, and 4 Ezra, but especially in the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, under heavy Greco-Roman influence.[36] However, the apostles—like Israel's prophets—are not placed in a trance or overwhelmed by the Spirit. Rather, the Spirit empowered them to proclaim the intelligible message of the gospel. Stephen was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5), and the result was his proclamation of the gospel from the history of Israel leading up to Christ. Levison continues:

> These men, in short, are the heirs of Bezalel, whom God filled with spirit, wisdom, intelligence, and knowledge (Exod 31:3), of Joshua, who was full of spirit of wisdom (Deut 34:9), of Daniel, who had spirit to the nth degree and wisdom like the wisdom of God (Dan 5:11), and of Ben Sira's scribe, who is filled with a spirit of understanding through the arduous labor of study, prayer, and meditation (Sir 39:6). Here, then in the Jerusalem church lies an authentic vestige of the scriptural perspective that a disciplined spirit within yields a harvest of wisdom.[37]

In the Old Testament, the Spirit is the giver of life but also of knowledge and wisdom. Far from suspending their judgment and reasoning, the Spirit heightens their natural gifts and reveals truths to their minds. It is striking how many New Testament references focus on the Spirit as teacher (Luke 12:12; John 14:25–26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 20:23; 1 Cor 2:6–16; Eph 3:5; Heb 9:8; 10:15).

Further, the Spirit equipped the apostles and then the whole community to be

witnesses to Christ. “For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus” (Rev 19:10), just as Jesus promised in his farewell discourse: “He will bear witness of me” (John 15:26). You know that the Spirit is present wherever the gospel is preached and confessed, says John: “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already” (1 John 4:2–3 ESV).

What then are the “other tongues” at Pentecost? They are languages known to the hearers but not by the speakers.[38] Levison points to the similarity between Luke’s phrase *heterais glōssais* (“other tongues”; Acts 2:4) and the preface of Ben Sira’s grandson to his forebear’s translation of Sirach from Hebrew into Greek, “using the words *eis heteran glōssan* in the context of describing the difficulties of translation.”[39] Also, in Acts 10:46 Peter and his Jewish associates heard gentiles (including Cornelius) praising God in tongues. “There must have been a comprehensible dimension to this sort of speaking in tongues, for Peter and his Jewish companions were able to recognize that the ability to speak in tongues was associated with the comprehensible act of praise.”[40]

Luke avoided “making ecstatic tongues-speaking the *sine qua non* of the early church,” says Levison, “for the introduction of speaking in tongues at Pentecost rather than speaking in other dialects would have drawn exclusive attention to the ecstatic dimension of inspiration, and it may have allowed Luke’s readers to draw a conceptual bee-line from Pentecost to the practice of tongues-speaking at Corinth.”[41] He continues: “Though the Corinthians may have regarded such tongues-speaking as the language of angels, they certainly employed the practice to generate a communal hell in which a gift that, according to Paul, was intended to lift the whole church became the hinge pin of spiritual hierarchies.”[42]

Paul’s discussion of tongues in 1 Corinthians must be interpreted in the context of a disciplinary letter. The Corinthians were immature, proud, chaotic in worship, and undisciplined in their lives. His rebukes point to tongues speaking in public worship as contributing to this set of problems. “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1 ESV).

Prophecy is better, he says, because it builds up the church (14:5). As in the Old Testament, for Paul the Spirit is associated with knowledge, understanding,

and wisdom—centering on Christ as God's wisdom. The Spirit inspires apostolic witness and empowers the community as witnesses to the gospel. Thus intelligibility is essential to the Spirit's ministry, which is remarkable when we recall that Greeks (and Romans) prided themselves on reason and yet fall back ultimately on unintelligible gibberish to determine their destinies. "Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?" (v. 6 ESV). Otherwise, it is like chaotic noise rather than instruments playing "distinct notes" (vv. 7–8 ESV). "So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air" (v. 9).

The Corinthians seem to have confused the gift of tongues with pagan ecstasy. The similarity of tongues here to the "other languages" at Pentecost seems apparent: "There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church" (vv. 10–12 ESV). The problem with tongues apart from interpretation is that a foreigner does not know the language.

It is quite clear that in public worship at least there is nothing to be done that is unintelligible and does not communicate truth to the mind. When Paul says, "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful" (v. 14), he is not giving a positive definition of tongues. Rather, he is speaking of its inadequacy in public worship. "What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also" (v. 15).

It is inconceivable to Paul that any act of worship should circumvent knowledge or suspend the mind of the worshiper. "Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say 'Amen' to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up" (vv. 16–17). We do not come to church to engage in private devotions together but to build each other up and witness to outsiders. "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you," Paul writes. "Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (vv. 18–19).

Paul is forbidding virtuoso performances of personal spirituality. The goal of

all spiritual gifts is public wisdom that builds up, not private ecstasy that puffs up. “Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized” (vv. 36–38). The people he had in mind regarded themselves as spiritual elites, when in truth they were immature, proud, and divisive. “Brothers, do not be children in your thinking . . . but in your thinking be mature” (v. 20).

Just at this point Paul introduces a surprising point about the redemptive-historical significance of tongues:

> In the Law it is written, ‘By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord’ [Isa 28:11–12]. Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. (1 Cor 14:21–23)

By invoking Isaiah 28:11–12, Paul is identifying tongues as a sign of temporary judgment. In Romans 11, he argues that a “partial hardening” has occurred among his fellow Jews “to make Israel jealous.” When the “fullness of the Gentiles” is brought in, then the Spirit will soften the hearts of ethnic Jews, “and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!” (vv. 11–12 ESV).

For now, then, tongues is a sign of judgment especially in the sense that foreigners—gentiles—are preaching the gospel even to the Jews, a gospel that the Jews themselves should have embraced first and foremost. Pentecost did not result in a full-scale conversion of the Jewish people, but it did set into motion the end-time ingathering of a remnant from Israel and the nations. The Jewish believers would now be witnesses to the gentiles, and together with the gentiles they would proclaim the gospel in tongues previously unknown to the Jews. But, Paul adds, this is precisely why prophecy (i.e., preaching) rather than speaking in foreign tongues should be used in public worship. Otherwise, if “outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?” (1 Cor 14:23 ESV). However, when they hear intelligible preaching and teaching of the word, they will be convicted and believe that word: “So, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you” (v. 25 ESV).

Whatever it means to speak in tongues, Paul says that it must not circumvent

the mind and it must not take place in public worship apart from interpretation. “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (v. 33 ESV) and “all things should be done decently and in order” (v. 40 ESV). In any case, speaking in tongues is inferior to prophecy and teaching. (In the list of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, led by the ministry of the Word, it comes in last and is not even mentioned in the list in Romans 12.) In view of verses 10 and 11, I am inclined to think that Paul also thought of tongues as the intelligible utterance of *the gospel* in actual languages unknown previously to the speaker.

The remarkable thing about tongues in Acts 2:4 is that the foreigners gathered there hear the gospel, *each in his own language*. This report is followed by a “table of nations” (vv. 8–12), echoing the table of nations in Genesis 10:1–32 where the Spirit descended in judgment to confuse the languages and scatter the proud builders of the tower of Babel. Now the Spirit is descending in grace rather than judgment, to unite rather than divide, and to enable everyone to understand the gospel without subverting the differences of language. Spiritual gifts, including tongues and their interpretation, are given “for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7).

The Spirit hereby equips the church to be *witnesses to Christ*—that is the whole purpose of Pentecost. Furthermore, this speaking in other languages was meant to be a sign. Miraculous signs are not normally ongoing events but remarkable signposts of something new that God is doing. Here, it is the sign, first of the ingathering of diaspora Jews. Yet as Acts unfolds, it is the harbinger of God’s ingathering of the nations, crossing all ethnic and linguistic barriers. The Glory-Spirit breaks down the walls that had been symbolized by the partitions of the temple itself, which separated the court of the gentiles from that of the Jews, for now the true sanctuary is in heaven where we are raised and seated with Christ (Eph 2:11–22).

The Goal of Prophecy

Paul’s focus was on the message of the gospel. Everything—in worship, outreach, discipline, and the order and offices of the church—is to lead toward the building of the church and its proclamation of this gospel to the ends of the earth. As Levison observes:

> It is not merely the demeanor of the messenger or the miracles accompanying Paul’s speeches that the rulers and rhetoricians of this age cannot comprehend. They simply cannot grasp that God’s power can be

> demonstrated in the weakness of the cross. That is, unbelievers simply cannot accept the *central content* of the gospel. This is the content that the spirit reveals; this is the lesson that the spirit teaches. . . . Yet the contrast between the spirit of the world and the spirit of God leads away from the arena of experience and toward the cross-centered *content* of Paul's preaching. Paul appears to recognize how easy it may be to lose sight of the content of preaching in the presence of powerful experiences of miracles. However, to allow an overpowering *experience* of the spirit, however wholesome it may appear to be, to eclipse the importance of *content* is to truncate the work of the spirit that is from God, for this spirit is no less a revealer and a teacher than it is the inspirer of miracles and the source of an experience of adoption.[43]

Those gathered in the upper room will indeed be the "firstfruits" of the harvest. Visitors to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost were witnesses to this remarkable event. They were confused not because they did not understand the message but because each person was hearing this gospel in his or her own tongue, with power, from uneducated Galileans (Acts 2:7–12). As in every harvest, there is wheat and chaff. God's saving acts always divide, as they do here (v. 13). Some believe and are saved (which again underscores that they understood what was being said); some reject and are judged. These "others" who mocked could only attribute this strange event to drunkenness.

The climax of this outpouring of the Spirit is a sermon by Peter (Acts 2:14). He had denied even knowing Jesus, but now he is proclaiming Jesus as the Christ. And he is doing so on the steps of the temple itself. Moreover, his message is full of power and conviction. Everything that Jesus said about the Spirit's work is evident here. Peter is the external preacher, while the Spirit inwardly convicts.

Three things are remarkable about this. First, it is a measure of how seriously God takes preaching. Today, we might be inclined to think of other effects of such a momentous fulfillment of prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Spirit. But, as Ezekiel 37 reminds us, it is by preaching that the Spirit miraculously raises those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Nothing could be more spectacular, miraculous, and dramatic than that which happens whenever the gospel is preached. The second remarkable point is how Peter constructs his sermon. Jesus had rebuked the Pharisees for thinking they had mastered Scripture, even though they failed to see Christ as the center of its message (John

5:39). After his resurrection, on the Emmaus road, he opened the Scriptures with his disciples and showed them how everything pointed to him (Luke 24). And now Peter preaches the first public sermon of the new covenant, and it is a promise-and-fulfillment sermon with Christ at the center. He weaves together Old Testament passages and their New Testament fulfillment, and this is the pattern for the rest of the apostolic sermons in Acts. This is precisely the preaching that will form the New Testament text.

Peter links Pentecost to Joel's prophecy and then links this event with the person and work of Christ—his crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation "to the right hand of God," which then gave him the authority from the Father to send the Holy Spirit. Pentecost cannot be separated from Good Friday and Easter and can only be conceived in terms of the latter. As Richard Gaffin Jr. notes:

> The great majority of references to the Holy Spirit are found in the last half of the NT. Approximately 80% are in Acts, the Epistles and Revelation, with only a relative handful in the Gospels. More significant is the nature of the distribution of references. In the Gospels, so far as the present work of the Spirit is concerned, the accent is on Jesus and his activity. For the disciples, the Spirit is largely a matter of promise, a still future gift. In Acts and the Epistles, however, emphasis is on the present reality of the Spirit as he is active in the church and at work in believers.[44]

First there must be a cross and resurrection; otherwise, we could not bear the descent of the Spirit. "Peter explains the coming of the Spirit by preaching Christ."[45] Gaffin continues:

> The work of the Spirit is not some addendum to the work of Christ. It is not some more or less independent sphere of activity that goes beyond or supplements what Christ has done. The Spirit's work is not a 'bonus' added to the basic salvation secured by Christ. Rather the coming of the Spirit brings to light not only that Christ has lived and has done certain things but that he, as the source of eschatological life, now lives and is at work in the church. By and in the Spirit Christ reveals himself as present. The Spirit is the powerfully open secret, the revealed mystery, of Christ's abiding presence in the church.[46]

Also notice the “proclamation” character of the sermon (typical of all the sermons in Acts). Even the “application” part of the sermon is bounded by the proclamation of the promise:

> Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. . . . Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. (Acts 2:36–39 NKJV)

Perhaps before all of this the people would have expected the sort of preaching that merely instructs and guides, encourages and exhorts—yet none of this can convert. It cannot usher those who are spiritually dead into the age to come. Only the Spirit-inspired and Spirit-empowered announcement of the new thing that *God* has done to bring liberation can effect this work. This is not to discount exhortation and encouragement, both of which are replete in Scripture, but it is to suggest that to the extent that Christian preaching loses its “announcement” character, it ceases to be Christian by apostolic standards. It is also to suggest that to the extent Christian preaching forgets its dependence on the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, as well as regenerating and illuminating our hearts to embrace Christ, it becomes little more than a school or a motivational seminar.

The effect of such preaching was to expand the walls of this temple-dwelling of God’s Spirit exponentially. Even in the extraordinary ministry of the apostles, where the sign gifts were obviously in abundance, it was not by spectacular displays or clever techniques that the church grew, but by the ordinary means of preaching, prayer, sacrament, and fellowship (Acts 2:42–43). It is no wonder, then, that Jesus answered the disciples’ last query before his ascension, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” by telling them to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Spirit.

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1. John Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 217.

2. This consensus is reflected in the Westminster Confession, chapter 7. For further context and description see Richard Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the*

Development of a Theological Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); idem, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), esp. volume 1, *Prolegomena to Theology*.

3. Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), among other places.

4. The Sinai covenant is an administration of the covenant of grace. That is, it is in service to the promise that God made to Adam and Eve after the fall, to Abraham concerning an heir in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed, and to the new covenant. The Sinai covenant was never an alternative way of salvation: by law rather than by promise. It was not a way of salvation at all. Rather, it was a temporary way station between the desert and Zion, as the church became a geopolitical nation as part of God's larger plan to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Like Hamlet's play-within-a-play, the ministry of Moses—identified in Scripture simply as "the law"—is a parenthesis within the larger unfolding of the Abrahamic promise. Its laws, purification rituals, priesthood, and sacrificial cult form one vast typological system that pointed forward to Christ. Yet as typological, there is nothing in this system *itself* that actually takes away sins, regenerates, or bestows the Spirit. The Sinai covenant is strictly temporary and conditional, a geopolitical treaty between Yahweh and one nation in the land of Canaan. The Sinai covenant promised "long life" for the nation in the land of Canaan on the condition of obedience to the law through the mediation of Moses, not "everlasting life" in God's heavenly kingdom through the mediation of Christ. Therefore, Old Testament believers obtained everlasting life on the basis of the (Abrahamic) promise rather than the (Mosaic) law, just as we do today.

5. See S. M. Baugh, "Galatians 3:20 and the Covenant of Redemption," *WTJ* 66 (2004): 49–70.

6. John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, IVP Classics (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 30–31.

7. Lord's Day 12, Questions 31 and 32.

8. Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 48–49.

9. Augustine, *The Trinity: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, 2nd ed., trans. Edmund Hill; ed. John E. Rotelle, Works of Saint Augustine: A

Translation for the 21st Century (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012), 4.29.

10. Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 68.

11. Andrew Lincoln, *The Gospel according to Saint John*, BNTC (London: Continuum, 2005), 500.

12. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joannem* 5, from PG 73.757 as cited in Aidan Nichols, *Figuring Out the Church: Her Marks, and Her Masters* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2013), 159.

13. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Procatechesis and The Five Mystagogical Catecheses*, ed. F. L. Cross (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986), 62: "John's baptism bestowed only the remission of sins. Nay we know full well, that as it purges our sins, and conveys to us the gift of the Holy Ghost, so also it is the counterpart to Christ's sufferings. For this cause Paul, just now read, cried aloud and says, 'Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.' "

14. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Acts Vol. 1*, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 451–52, on Acts 10:44.

15. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 51.

16. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 215.

17. John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 35n5.

18. Ibid., 36.

19. Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 25–26.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 30.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 58–59. I would only add to this last statement that the reference to Jesus baptizing "with the Spirit and with fire" encompasses the final judgment as well, when those who do not trust in Christ must bear God's wrath themselves.

24. Owen, *Discourse*, 114.

25. Ibid., 126.

26. Ibid., 210.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 212.

29. Ibid., 152.

30. Ibid., 192.

31. Ibid.

32. I refer to the argument of Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery, J. R. Coates, Susan Cupitt and John Bowman (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001). Of course, Schweitzer was aware of the resurrection narratives as well as the Olivet discourse, but in his view these were later traditions of teaching that attempted to overcome the facts of Jesus's ineffectual death.

33. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 46.

34. *Phaedrus* 244A–B, as cited in Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 155.

35. Ibid., 155–56, 161, 173.

36. Ibid., 219.

37. Ibid., 242–43.

38. Levison notes, "Even the understanding of the scribes who wrote what Ezra dictated increased, for 'the Most high gave understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was dictated, in characters which they did not know' (4 Ezra 14:42)" (*Filled with the Spirit*, 200).

39. Ibid., 341n13.

40. Ibid., 341.

41. Ibid., 337–38.

42. Ibid. Levison adds here: "Even the analogy of musical instruments Paul draws—flutes and harps and bugles are intended to give distinct notes (14:7–8)—bears a family resemblance to the analogy adopted by Plutarch's Cleombrotus, in *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 431B, to explain the demise of Delphi—'when the demigods withdraw and forsake the oracles, these lie idle and inarticulate like the instruments of musicians.' "

43. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 280–81.

44. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1993), 13.

45. Ibid., 16.
46. Ibid., 19–20.



CHAPTER 7

Baptism with the Spirit

In the order of *redemptive history* (examined by biblical theology), the Spirit's work moves from the external and universal-cosmic to the personal. Sent from the Father, in the Son, at the end of the age, the Spirit is poured out on "all flesh"—Jews and gentiles, male and female, slave and free—in order to begin the new creation. Consequently, the Holy Spirit enters into the inner recesses of individual hearts, liberating them from bondage to sin and death and making them citizens of the age to come. Among others, Geerhardus Vos and Herman Ridderbos reminded us of the dangers of reducing the "new creation" to individual believers.[1] This is a perennial danger, especially in the wake of pietism and revivalism where the Spirit's work of applying Christ's redeeming work is reduced to a psychological process within the individual soul. The new creation is not merely each individual believer nor even a conglomeration of such; it is first of all a reality as extensive in its scope as the first creation.

However, in the *application of redemption* (examined by systematic theology), this order is reversed: we first *experience* the Holy Spirit within us, individually, as he unites us to Christ and, in Christ, grants us free access to the Father. Uniting us to Christ as our head, he simultaneously unites us to his body, the church. Once more, it is important to recognize the broader redemptive-historical horizon when we come to baptism with the Spirit and his gifts. It is particularly associated with holiness.

"Holy to the Lord": Consecration in Old Testament Perspective

There are few distinctions as definitive in the law of Moses than clean/ unclean and common/holy (Lev 11:47). Mary Douglas points out that this distinction is bound up with "the relations of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to

formlessness, life to death."[2] Through such an expansion of categories we are reminded of Genesis 1:2 (ESV): "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." "Formless" (*tohu*) and "void" (*bohu*) do not as yet carry overtones of personal, much less ethical, agency. Yet after the fall, *tohu* and *bohu* do bear that connotation, as transgression leads to disorder, uncleanness, and death, and the land itself shrivels away from a flourishing garden to a howling wasteland. Personified as Jacob, Israel was discovered by Yahweh. "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deut 32:10 ESV). The wilderness between Sinai and Canaan as "a land of deserts and pits . . . a land of drought and of the shadow of death . . . a land that no one crossed and where no one dwelt" (Jer 2:6 NKJV). And yet, this is precisely the state to which Canaan itself succumbed when the Spirit evacuated the temple (Isa 13:20; Jer 9:11; 10:22; 49:18, 33).

The creation narrative, with its division of the chaos into distinct spheres and the filling of each sphere with creatures and their rulers, with Yahweh entering his Sabbath enthronement, is echoed in the exodus-conquest-rest pattern of Israel's history. Having covered this ground, there is no need to dwell on this further except to underscore the crucial point that all the laws given at Sinai pertaining to purity, diet, and time (weeks, months, years) as well as space (land) focused Israel's attention on the God who separates Israel from the nations. In this context, even an obscure and seemingly pointless prohibition of wearing clothes of mixed fabrics (Lev 19:19) is intelligible.

Common and Consecrated

Under the old covenant, there are three categories for the status of people, places, and things: *corrupt*, *common*, and *holy*. We could even reduce the categories to two: the *consecrated* and the *common*. Obedience is a crucial component of the biblical doctrine, but these terms do not refer in the first place to a moral quality but to a status; they refer not to a claim we have on God but to a claim that he has on us. For example, where human beings are concerned, to be holy to the Lord is to be placed within the visible sphere of his covenant people. To reject the covenant is to be "cut off" (excommunicated). Common persons, places, and things are never *cut off* because they were never holy in the first place.

Motivated by a proper concern to affirm God's gracious upholding of all things, including the kingdoms of this age, many Christians today have challenged any sacred-secular distinction. But this blurring of holy and common has no exegetical basis. Furthermore, it flattens out the dynamic history of revelation, overlooking the distinguishing characteristics of the various administrations of the covenant of grace. There was a time when there was no secular/sacred (or common/holy) distinction. The creation mandate given to Adam and Eve in Eden was to "be fruitful and multiply" with the intent of ruling and subduing creation to Yahweh's ultimate suzerainty. Every moment and every activity was holy and a direct furtherance of God's kingdom in the world. Moreover, the theocratic kingdom of Israel was holy, set apart from the nations as God's special possession. There will be such a time again when even beyond anything experienced in the first creation there will be an order that is entirely subservient to the righteous, loving, and just rule of the Great King.

Yet in this time between Christ's advents, the redemptive program centers on the calling out of a people from the kingdoms of this age. Those who remain outside of the covenant of grace are not holy, but they are consecrated. As God's image-bearers, all human beings are "set apart" to the Lord for covenantal obedience. However, precisely as consecrated (i.e., as set apart as belonging to the Lord), they are in a state of rebellion and are therefore under God's wrath. For the time being, God has lifted "martial law."

This is not the era of holy wars and holy land. Even those who are presently under God's wrath today may be united to Christ by the Spirit tomorrow. For this conquest by the Word and Spirit, all borders must be *lifted*, not defended. All land must be common, not holy. It is a stay of execution. In this time between Christ's two advents, God sends providential blessings to the evil and the good alike (Matt 5:45). Those who do not believe are even now set apart to the Lord for destruction: "The wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:36 ESV). But this verdict is not yet final! And until it becomes final, the kingdoms that the ungodly build are neither holy nor condemned but are common. To raise any one of them to the rank of holy would be to invoke God's immediate judgment upon them. Instead, they serve an important but far-from-ultimate role in history. Even pagan rulers who persecute the church are ministers of God for good (Rom 13:4). Even the kingdom that Jesus and the apostles knew, which crucified Jesus and his followers, was—paradoxically—legitimate, as Jesus himself said to the astonishment of the Pharisees (Matt 22:21) and yet was destined to perish as belonging to "this present age" that is dying.

Christ's death deprived Satan of ultimate triumph. "This Is My Father's World," as we sing. This is true not only in creation but especially in the wake of Christ's victory (1 Cor 15:27). "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control" (Heb 2:8 ESV). Nevertheless, the writer to the Hebrews adds, "At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Heb 2:8–9 ESV).

The whole earth and everything in it is under God's covenantal claim by right of creation. However, as we have seen, God took Israel to himself as his holy nation. The exodus cut away Israel from Egypt, and circumcision cut away the foreskin (representative of the passing down of original sin), so that the whole person may be saved. Once more in history, Yahweh claimed people, places, and things as his own—either for destruction or for deliverance. The Spirit divides and fills. Canaan was his footstool, the stage for his dramatic parable. And once again this means that Yahweh will rule directly as Israel's Great King, with "holy war" rather than common defense ("just war") as the policy. By God's command and the presence of his Spirit, Canaan was no longer a common land, but a holy land. The ordinary rules of common war were suspended as God acted directly and immediately as Israel's warrior-king. Like Adam, Israel was to drive the serpent from God's holy land. Everything in the land that is corrupt must be eradicated, and the holy people of God must keep the commands or the land will vomit them out (Lev 18:28). The Spirit's presence was as much judgment as comfort under these circumstances, as the nation was bound to Yahweh as its Great King. God threatened to bring upon them exactly what he had just brought upon the godless nations that he had driven out from before them (Deut 28:1–68; 29:10–29; 30:11–20).

I have argued that the Sinai theocracy is like Hamlet's play-within-a-play: a grand parable of the larger human story. Israel too is found to be "in Adam," but with the system of laws and sacrifices that direct them to Christ for redemption. In this direct reign of Yahweh, heaven actually occupies a sliver of earthly real estate: whether Eden or Noah's ark, the burning bush encountered by Moses, Mount Sinai (during the covenant-making ceremony), the tabernacle, and the land of Canaan. Anyone or anything that lives within that consecrated zone is devoted to God, either for destruction or deliverance. "Holy to the Lord" can mean death as well as life. A holy zone is not a playground. The Holy Spirit was Israel's judge, not its mascot. "Holy to the LORD" is, quite literally, a double-

edged sword. It is dangerous to be set apart covenantally to the Lord and spurn his blessings (a running theme especially in Hebrews chapters 4, 6, and 10). Even in the new covenant, to abuse the Lord's Supper is to invite temporal judgment according to 1 Corinthians 11.

Even within these places, such as Eden and Canaan, there were concentric circles of increasing holiness—and therefore danger. The tree of life in the garden of Eden was the nucleus of concentrated holiness. The holy of holies (with the ark of the covenant and its mercy seat) was the innermost locus of the divine presence in the Jerusalem temple from which God's holiness radiated throughout the land. The specific instructions that God gave in the law created a replica of heaven on earth. The vertical was made horizontal, with the most holy in the center. And yet, the horizontal aspect underscored a holy history, as the cloud kept moving the people toward the promise, with the tribe of Judah out in front leading the way to the Lion of the tribe of Judah.[3]

The goal of the priest is to "guard and keep" the sanctuary so that nothing unclean enters its sacred precincts. When Adam failed to expel the serpent and even succumbs to his temptation, he was cast out—again, for his own good. To remain in the holy place, much less to eat the fruit of the tree of life, would ensure his (and our) confirmation in everlasting death. Mercifully, the Lord saw to it that idolatrous curiosity would not overthrow his plan of redemption. Posting the cherubim at the entrance of the holy of holies in Eden, Yahweh ensured not merely his own sanctity but the safety of his fallen creature and expelled the couple from his holy land. Removing his sacred throne to heaven, God mercifully *deconsecrated* the land, rendering it common. And in prosecuting God's case against Israel, the prophetic writings draw explicitly on the imagery of the curses brought upon creation with Adam's breaking of the covenant: "Like Adam, they transgressed the covenant" (Hos 6:7 ESV), and Yahweh cuts them off from the temporal land. The kingdom of God was no longer associated with a geopolitical theocracy on earth. Now the elect and reprobate both live "east of Eden," intermingling but forbidden to intermarry.

However, the prophets long for the day when the types and shadows will give way to the reality. It will be a new Eden, even greater than the first paradise. They will not only be living, biologically, but alive in the Spirit. "And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. . . .And they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek 11:19–20). Yet separated from Christ, the last thing that we should want is for the Spirit to be poured out on all flesh. It would be a plea for destructive fire from heaven apart from our being united to

Christ. To be consecrated is to be no longer common, under God's patient reserve; rather, it is to be either set apart for destruction or for reconciliation with the Holy One.

Jesus Underwent Our Judgment-Consecration in the Power of the Spirit

Jesus underwent the ultimate cutting-off, not merely circumcision but excommunication. "By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?" (Isa 53:8). Imagining that the arrival in Jerusalem would culminate in the consecration of the messianic king, James and John asked to be seated on his right and left hand. "Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?' " (Mark 10:38–39 ESV). The royal consecration of Jesus was his baptism into death, the devotion of his body and soul to condemnation for us. And now all who are baptized into him pass through the waters of judgment unharmed.

As Paul reminds us, "our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank of the same spiritual drink" (1 Cor 10:1–4 ESV). No one was baptized into Christ through this typological exodus and cloud; it was a different covenant, with different promises and terms, particularly because it had a different mediator: Moses, a servant, rather than Jesus, the Son. And yet everything in it pointed to Christ. The context of Paul's remark is the seriousness and holiness of communion—both the sacrament and the *koinōnia* that it generates—over against the Corinthians' profanation of both by chaotic worship and sectarianism. While the typological baptism drowned Pharaoh's hosts, it saved the Israelites who passed through safely on dry ground "and all ate the same spiritual food" (the manna), and "all drank of the same spiritual drink" (the *Rock*, which was typologically Christ himself [v. 4], although Christ identifies the Spirit as the *water* [John 7:37–39]). He adds, "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (v. 5). While all were baptized into this covenant with Moses as mediator, not all made it into the promised land. Rather, "most of them" failed to enter his typological land of rest. They are "an example to us" (v. 6) because now that Christ—the reality—has come as the mediator of the new

covenant, we are especially obligated to embrace our baptism and participation in his flesh and blood through the Lord's Supper with all seriousness.

The signs must lead us to the reality. Some who had been outwardly baptized into Moses failed to enter the earthly and typological land—indeed, including Moses himself. How much greater then is our loss if we fail to enter the everlasting rest even though we have been baptized. Paul's argument here is echoed in Hebrews 4, 6, 10, and 12.

It is this biblical theology that we should bear in mind when we speak of the Spirit of holiness. The Holy Spirit is not a harmless dove. All talk of the Spirit as the vulnerable person of the Trinity, the shy one, the "still-small voice," which often becomes the Archimedean point for finding a weak spot in the Godhead, must be put to flight. The Holy Spirit is the sovereign God. He brings judgment throughout the history of revelation: in Eden, in Israel, and now in the new covenant as he works inwardly to convict us of our guilt and lead us to Christ. This unique work of the Spirit is evident at Pentecost, when hearers of Peter's proclamation of guilt and grace are "cut to the heart" and trust in Christ (Acts 2:37). Because of the Spirit, the seventy return with the news that the demons are subject to them in Jesus's name, and the Lord himself says that he saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Yet they are not to consider this cosmic conquest of the spirits but rather the fact that they are chosen and forgiven (Luke 10:20).

The Holy Spirit cuts us away not only from that which is corrupt but even that which is common. Jesus uniquely could say that he set himself apart or "sanctified" himself, as he did in his high priestly prayer: "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified" (John 17:19).

Consecration and Eschatology: Jesus, the Spirit, and a New Creation

"Circumcise your hearts," God commands Israel (Deut 10:16). Yet in chapter 30, after prophesying the people's failure, the new covenant far off in the distance is proclaimed: "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (v. 6 ESV). Thus even in the Torah itself—the very charter of the Sinai theocracy—the gospel is announced.

Intriguingly, the same command for the nation to circumcise its heart is issued in Ezekiel 18:30–32. But by chapter 37 it is absolutely apparent that there has been no repentance. People, prophet, priest, and king alike are spiritually

dead, and all calls to repentance now are vain. With the cherubim packing up as it were, the Spirit evacuates the sanctuary; heaven is no longer on earth. Jerusalem will be laid waste. Yet the future is not closed. In spite of Israel's disloyalty to the covenant *the people* swore at Sinai, Yahweh will not—cannot—be faithless to *his* promise to Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, and David. God will circumcise their hearts, replacing their heart of stone with a fleshy heart and putting his Spirit *in* them. Remarkably, Ezekiel is given the privilege of speaking the equivalent of "let there be light!" in this new creation. As he proclaims life into the valley of dry bones, the Spirit enters them and clothes their parched, lifeless, and naked skeletons with flesh and life. Not only mere existence—like resuscitation, but lavish and abundant resurrection life appears as the whole community stands on its feet like an army ready for battle. The grand vision of Ezekiel 37 is of a whole people brought into the new creation by the Spirit of life.

Yet there is a danger of overreaction against the individualistic emphasis. We see this tendency especially (in rather different ways) in Karl Barth, Ernst Käsemann, in the various versions of the new perspective on Paul where eschatology and ecclesiology are set over against "getting saved," and in liberation theologies wherever cosmic and sociopolitical revolution eclipse personal salvation.

In many ways, these various proposals are to be faulted more by what they leave out than by what they affirm. As with election, the recipients of redemption and its application are particular people. So too is regeneration. While it is indeed proper to see this new creation first and foremost as a sweeping eschatological reality encompassing the whole cosmos, the *palingenesia* (re-creation) of which Jesus spoke (Matt 19:28), it is just as true that each believer is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). Every believer is a microcosm of the renewed cosmos anticipated in Romans 8:18–30. Precisely because this new age has dawned, the individual is included. It is a question of logical priority. The *historia salutis* not only comes before the *ordo salutis*; the former is the canvas on which the particular figures are painted. In other words, the individual is part of the new creation because there is a decisive, epochal and cosmic new creation in the first place with Christ's uniquely redemptive work as its achievement and "firstfruits."

Although indisputably central in the biblical drama, the cross of Jesus is the culmination of an entire life of suffering and obedience on behalf of his people. The incarnation itself was an act of sacrificial love as the eternal Son set aside

his regal splendor to assume the form of a servant, obedient throughout his life even "to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6–8 ESV). By assuming our humanity, the eternal Son became the last Adam, undoing the first Adam's treason. Nevertheless, we are not yet redeemed merely by his having taken our nature to himself nor even by his fulfillment of all righteousness and curse bearing in our place. He who was laid in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is the same *person* who was raised but in a radically new *condition*.

The difference in these two conditions—and its significance for us—is explored in 1 Corinthians 15, especially verses 20–57. Gordon Fee notes that Paul's argument targets those who considered themselves too "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) for a resurrection. "In their view, by the reception of the Spirit, and especially the gift of tongues, they thought that they had already entered the true spirituality that is to be (4:8); already they had begun a form of angelic existence (13:1; cf. 4:9; 7:1–7) in which the body was unnecessary and unwanted, and would be finally destroyed."[4] Here we meet again the metaphysical dualism that I have touched on before. On the contrary, for Paul the flesh-Spirit contrast is that of the old age under sin and death versus the new age of righteousness and life.[5] Christ is raised as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20). Thus, Jesus's resurrection and ours are part of the same event; his is the beginning of the new creation, "but each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (v. 24 ESV).[6] Already the age to come has dawned in the middle of the history of this fading age of sin and death. Death is "the last enemy to be destroyed" (v.26). Carried along in the violent current, humanity is rushing toward a waterfall, plunging the race into everlasting death. Christ has emerged from the raging foam not merely as a survivor but as one who has in fact died but then emerged in an entirely new condition.

A farmer does not sow the plant that he harvests but a kernel. Every living thing has its own body with its own seed that determines its species, even if the seed is quite different in appearance from the plant it generates.

> So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:42–44)

Jesus had to die not only to bear our guilt but to put an end to his existence (and ours) as corruptible flesh. Even the righteous Servant was a "living being" (*nephesh*) like all children of Adam, who could not live forever (Isa 53:12; see Gen 2:7). If he was to become the "life-giving Spirit," his old existence—however untarnished from original and personal guilt—had to be buried in the earth before he could be reborn in everlasting glory. In the power of the Spirit, the risen Christ is not a different person but is a different sort of person than he was before, and not only as a private individual but as a public representative:

> Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:45–49 ESV)

A striking comparison and contrast has been drawn frequently between 1 Corinthians 15 and Philo of Alexandria's exegesis of Genesis 2:7. A contemporary of Paul, Philo was a Jewish philosopher who is also recognized as a founder of Middle Platonism. Like Stoics and Platonists generally, Philo believed that the highest and most refined creaturely material was a spiritual ether, akin to the idea of the world soul in Neoplatonism. However, like the Word (*Logos*), the Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Scriptures is taken by Philo to be something or someone still more transcendent than a mere creature.[7]

Engaging Philo's treatment, John Levison notes that Philo describes the spirit as " 'something if such there be better than aether-spirit, even an effulgence of the blessed, thrice blessed nature of the God' (*On the Special Laws* 4.123), as 'a genuine coinage of that dread [unseen] Spirit, the Divine and invisible One, signed and impressed by the seal of God, the stamp of which is the Eternal Word' (*On the Planting of Noah* 18), and as the 'divine breath that migrated hither from that blissful and happy existence for the benefit of our race a copy or fragment or ray of that blessed nature' (*On the Creation of the World* 146)."[8] Regardless of whether there was a direct influence on the Corinthians (or Paul), the parallels are as striking as the contrasts. Philo's *On the Creation of the World* 134 cites the LXX translation of Genesis 2:7 exactly: "God formed man by

taking clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life."[9] Philo argues that the first man was an ideal form (according to God's image), "consisting neither of male nor female and 'by nature incorruptible.' "[10]

> The man of Genesis 2 is a copy of this ideal, a mortal made of body and soul, man or woman. In another treatise, he interprets Gen 2:7 even more tersely: "There are two types of men; the one a heavenly man, the other an earthly. The heavenly man, being made after the image of God, is altogether without part or lot in corruptible and terrestrial substance; but the earthly one was compacted out of matter scattered here and there, which Moses calls 'clay' " (*On the Allegorical Laws* 1.31).[11]

Paul, however, reverses the order and makes Christ the "last Adam."[12] The first Adam is not spiritual and immortal (an eternal archetype) as in Philo, but earthly and not yet confirmed in immortality. This *adam* was living—he had existence from the Spirit who breathed the breath of life into his nostrils—but Christ is the source of resurrection or new-creation life for all united to him. Appealing to Romans 1:3–4, Levison notes the inseparability of the Spirit and Christ's resurrection, but concludes that Philo is more consistent with the Hebrew Scriptures than Paul. This is part of Levison's central thesis that according to the earliest and most dominant Israelite texts, "spirit" is something that God breathed into humankind in creation and that each living creature—human and nonhuman—has from the beginning rather than an endowment given later. "Philo recognizes, in a way that Paul does not, that the man of clay received the divine breath in full measure."[13]

However, even if one accepts his thesis with respect to important and early texts (I remain unpersuaded), the main deficiency in Levison's learned study is an underappreciation of eschatological and redemptive-historical development. Nothing in Genesis 1–3 suggests that Adam and Eve possessed the Spirit "without measure." In fact, the first time that we encounter that description is in John 3:34–35 with reference to Jesus. Further, Levison's chief presupposition (assumed rather than defended) is his identification of the Holy Spirit (understood in Christian terms as the third person of the Trinity) with the created spirit or breath of life that animates humans and animals.

Paul disagrees on both counts. First, the animating breath is creaturely, distinct from the animator who is God the Spirit. Second, Paul (like John)

regards Jesus as the eschatological firstfruits of the new creation. Only with his resurrection and glorification can the Spirit be poured out on all flesh to bring all believers into this new relationship and condition in which humans possess not merely biological life (spirit/breath) from the first Adam but eschatological life (the indwelling and regenerating presence of the Holy Spirit) from the last Adam. Dunn writes that "the implication is clear . . . that in Christ, the last Adam, God's purpose in creating Adam/man had been fulfilled" and that "Christ, that is the Christ who died and has been resurrected, provides the pattern for God's saving purpose."[14] Thus, as we have come to expect, the Holy Spirit *completes* the human person, endowing the immortality and glory that Adam never experienced because he forfeited his vocation.

Born from the seed of Adam, even apart from the fall we would have been creatures of dust. Jesus too was "from the earth" with respect to his incarnation (cf. 1 Cor 15:47 ESV). Yet he is now "the man of heaven" (v. 48 ESV). By his resurrection and ascension, he has taken our humanity and its history with him into the glory of the age to come. He did not give this present age a new lease on life, improving the unregenerate through moral uplift. In his own person he took our unclean and mortal humanity into the grave, ending its existence under the curse. Yet he did not leave the nature that he shares with us in the grave but raised it to the right hand of the Father on high in a glorified condition.

Consequently, our confidence is not that we will leave behind our human nature as such but that it will be transformed into the image of the last Adam. Paul emphasizes that "we shall all be changed," not into someone or something else but into a new condition of existence beyond our wildest imagining (vv. 50–52 ESV). It is not that our human nature will be replaced with a different body, but that "this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality" (v. 53). The same body sown in dishonor will be raised in honor. What Paul elsewhere calls "this body of death" (Rom 7:24 ESV) will not be repaired or even resuscitated but instead will be buried with all of its sin, suffering, and misery. Only by thus dying can this body be raised immortal. Further, Paul identifies the causal chain that leads to death in the first place: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (v. 56). Or elsewhere, "The wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom 6:23).

As long as the law has dominion over our destiny, the death sentence due to our transgression (both in Adam and our personal sin) remains in effect. But Jesus has been buried as the vicarious transgressor, "cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people" (Isa 53:8 ESV). He has left

this condition—sin and death—in the grave, but not himself. Death has therefore lost, for himself and for us, its sting as a curse, the harbinger of the "second death" (Rev 20:14). Instead, death becomes the end of the old and the beginning of the new. This happens inwardly in regeneration but will happen publicly and visibly on the last day when Christ returns and the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead will raise us with him in immortal glory (Rom 8:11). "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57 ESV).

Consequently, the history of salvation (redemption accomplished) finds its proper and inseparable intersection with the order of salvation (redemption applied). Properly speaking, Christ himself is the new creation. He has been rendered such by the Holy Spirit, and everything united to him by the Spirit is not only a living being as in the first creation but fully alive in a way that no one before Christ's advent had experienced. The same Spirit—who fashioned the human nature of the Son in the virgin's womb, drove Jesus out into the wilderness for his temptation, upheld him in his distress, and empowered him as the righteousness-fulfilling, wonder-working, and Father-revealing Servant, and who also raised Jesus from the dead—this same Spirit now regenerates hearts by uniting us to Christ and indwelling us as the pledge and guarantee of our final resurrection. Jesus Christ indwells believers and the church, but by his Spirit, not immediately in the flesh (2 Cor 1:22; cf. Rom 8:17, 26; 1 Cor 3:16; Gal 4:6; Eph 5:18).

This new creation is *the work of God*. Not even the chosen people could circumcise their own hearts, but God has done this. How different is this vision from that of the Qumran community that separated from Jerusalem in order to consecrate themselves, believing that they were the new temple and Eden. The rigorous rules to which the members dedicated themselves were the means not only of their own participation in the new creation but of making atonement for their compatriots. Whether Paul had any explicit knowledge of the Qumran sect, it was this sort of confusion of the new covenant and its Spirit-powered emphasis with the Torah-observance of the old order that he had in view.

Further, this new creation is really *new*. It is not a return to paradise before the fall but something far greater: the Sabbath consummation that Adam forfeited as our representative head. Kuyper explains that "the dust of the ground out of which Adam was formed was so wrought upon that it became a living soul, which indicates the *human being*."[15] He continues:

> The result was not merely a moving, creeping, eating, drinking and sleeping creature, but a *living soul* breathed into the dust. It was not first the dust, and then human life within the dust, and after that the soul with all its higher faculties in that human life; nay, as soon as life went forth into Adam, he was a *man*, and all his precious gifts were *natural* endowments.[16]

Only if he had succeeded in his commission would Adam together with Eve and their whole posterity have been endowed with supernatural grace.

Kuyper adds, "*Sinful* man being born from above receives gifts that are *above* nature. For this reason the Holy Spirit merely *dwells* in the quickened sinner. But in heaven this will not be so; for in death the human nature is so completely changed that the impulse to sin disappears entirely; wherefore in heaven the Holy Spirt will work in the human *nature itself* for ever and ever."

> Adam differed from the child of God by grace in *not* having eternal life; he was to attain this as the reward for holy works. On the other hand, Abraham, the father of the faithful, begins with eternal life, from which works were to proceed. Hence a perfect contrast. Adam must attain eternal life by works. Hence for Adam there can be no indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There was no antagonism between him and the Spirit. So the Spirit could *pervade* him, not merely *dwell* in him. The nature of sinful man repels the Holy Spirit, but Adam's nature attracted Him, freely received Him, and let Him inspire his being.[17]

But now the Spirit "must come to us from *without*."[18] Jesus's in-breathing upon the disciples, as a sign of Pentecost, showed that this fuller indwelling was now necessary.[19]

When we come to this subject, it is true that we should begin with the broadest eschatological horizon rather than with the individual's experience of the new birth. The new creation is not simply the sum total of regenerate believers making a difference in the world. "Jesus said to [the Twelve], 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' " (Matt 19:28). The ESV translation of *palingenesia* ("new world") is more accurately rendered in the NIV as "the renewal of all

things," although the most precise would be "the *regeneration* of all things." There is both an individual and collective import to this *palingenesia*, as implied in 2 Corinthians 5:17. The ESV reads, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation," but I think that here also the NIV is closer: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come." Both versions offer nearly identical renderings of the next clause: "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (ESV) and "the old has gone, the new is here!" (NIV). However, the ESV rendering of the first clause already prejudices a more individualistic and less eschatological view of the "new creation" (*kainē ktisis*).

So Moltmann, liberation theologians, and others are perfectly right to broaden the eschatological horizon, but an implicit postmillennialism fails to do justice to the difference between the Spirit's work "in these last days" and his work when Christ returns "on the last day" of the old order. Paul points this up in 2 Corinthians 4: "Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. . . . And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing" (vv. 1–3 ESV). But for those whom the Spirit is drawing, "God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (v. 6 ESV). Christ's ambassadors follow him now in his humiliation, suffering for the sake of the gospel, to reign with him in glory in the future. For now, we are "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (v. 10 ESV). "So," he repeats, "we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (vv. 16–17). Notice that in both cases of his stating that "we do not lose heart," Paul's reason is not that things are getting better visibly. The world and our own bodies are falling apart—*but* we have a ministry that is powerful, advancing by Word and Spirit, and we are regenerated and being renewed inwardly in anticipation of the resurrection.

This is hardly the picture of a gradual conquest of the nations and cultures of this age. On the contrary, the installment of the new creation that dominates this present age is the regeneration of sinners and their incorporation through Spirit-given faith into the body of Christ, his church. Any notion of this world being destroyed would be anathema to the apostles, a denial of Christ's resurrection. Nevertheless, there is no expectation in the New Testament that this phase of the *palingenesia* is going to transform the kingdoms of this age into the kingdom of Christ. Christ is saving his church by his Word and Spirit. The church is that part

of the world that is being penetrated by the powers of the age to come, and whatever effects (sometimes notable) that the church has on the wider cultures it inhabits as sojourners is indirect fallout from Christ's kingdom reign through his Spirit in his ecclesial body.

Thus, there is an alternative to either a truncated view of the new creation as simply something that the Spirit does within our hearts or an overrealized eschatology that makes us the agents rather than Christ of realizing the full effects of his cosmic redemption. According to this alternative (amillennial) view, the *palingenesia* occurs in two stages: first, an inward renewal of the elect by the Spirit; then, at Christ's appearing the resurrection of the body and life everlasting in a wholly renewed cosmos. Despite all appearances to the contrary —including the continuing decay of our own bodies—our final resurrection-glorification is guaranteed by the Spirit's indwelling presence as a security deposit. And the whole creation will rejoice to share in this release from the curse of sin and death (Rom 8:18–24). "But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (v. 25 ESV).

Consequently, the Spirit's descent brings disturbance and conflict into this present evil age. His indwelling presence brings both assurance of participation in Christ's victory and warfare with the "old self." The Spirit gives us new birth in that precarious intersection of the two ages. The Spirit's work in our lives now is precisely what Jesus had indicated: "He will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14 ESV). The Spirit is at work wherever Christ is exalted in his saving office. Paul was so profoundly struck by the wonder of his identification with Christ that he thinks of Christ's death and resurrection as his own—not because he was a profound mystic or had a vivid imagination by which he can place himself in Jesus's shoes; much less because he saw Jesus as a model in whose footsteps he could strive toward Mount Zion. Rather, all of this is because the Holy Spirit is the one who united the former persecutor of the church to Christ.

The world thinks that what is necessary is a better creation, not a new one; it teaches that we need a more earnest dedication to bringing about the dream of a united humanity in service to an ethical kingdom through the education of the human race. Western culture is particularly dedicated to the natural heresy of the fallen heart: Pelagianism. But to the extent that regeneration is valued the Spirit will be valued as well. There is an analogy with Christology. If one thinks that postlapsarian humanity is basically healthy but lacking good examples and instructions, it follows that the remedy is a moral reformer who leads us back to

God. Jesus gets us back on the right path after we have strayed. By following his example, we can regain our coordinates and make our way toward moral improvement. If instead we are the "ungodly" under divine condemnation, we require nothing less than *divine rescue*. Similarly, if we are merely sick, not "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1 KJV), then we need divine *assistance* and persuasive exhortation, not regeneration by the direct act of *God himself* who indwells us.

Baptism with the Spirit: What Is It?

At last we are in a better position to consider baptism with the Spirit. Although it is first of all a cosmic, eschatological, and sweeping redemptive-historical reality, the new birth is something that can only be received personally. God has not only poured out his Spirit in history; in doing so, he has "saved *us*, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5 ESV, emphasis added).

The regeneration of all things began with Christ's bodily regeneration-resurrection and will be consummated with the resurrection of our bodies and the restoration of the entire creation. Until then, each of us becomes inserted into this *palingenesia* by baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, as Titus 3:5 above attests (cf. Rom 6:1–10). To paraphrase Sinclair Ferguson, this *palingenesia* works from the outside in, not from the inside out. It is not first of all something that happens within us that may have some effects in the world but "transformation from without and from above, caused by participation in the power of the new age and more specifically by fellowship through the Spirit with the resurrected Christ as the second man, its first-fruits, the eschatological Adam (*ho eschatos Adam*, 1 Cor. 15:45)."[20] He adds, "This is the note which became muted in the teaching of the post-apostolic church but which must be recovered."[21] Certainly growth in Christ requires effort on our part as we attend to the means of grace. Yet just as the fundamental reality is *union with Christ*, not just *imitation of Christ*, baptism in the Spirit is not something that the individual believer attains by ascesis (self-discipline) and ascent (mystical contemplation). It is first of all an objective reality, the Spirit who comes from the age to come, enveloping us in his cloud of glorious energies.

Seen in this light, our new birth is no longer treated *merely* as something that happens within us *because of* what Christ accomplished so long ago; it is a participation *in his death and resurrection* by the baptism of the Spirit. We are not only raised spiritually (and one day bodily) *because* Christ died and was raised; his resurrection and ours *belong to the same event*, as we have seen already from Paul's analogy of firstfruits and full harvest. Before that consummation of the regeneration of all things, the Spirit is at work within us to raise us from spiritual death.

Baptism with the Spirit is Union with Christ

Strictly speaking, Jesus Christ is the new creation, and baptism with the Spirit is union with Christ. We have seen how the Spirit gave us Christ (in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension). The Spirit unites *Christ* to *our humanity* and then, after glorifying that humanity, unites *us* to *Christ* as our federal head (Rom 5). In Romans 6, Paul's answer to the question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" is to give more gospel (v. 1 KJV). All who are united to Christ in his death for forgiveness are united to him in his resurrection for new-creation life. One is either "in Christ" or not, but one cannot choose which aspects of his saving work to embrace.

One tragedy of contemporary debates is the separation of baptism into Christ from Spirit baptism and the separation of both from the sacrament of baptism. I will touch on this second point in the next chapter, but I want to focus here on the first problem. While there is, I believe, a distinction-without-separation between the sacrament of baptism and regeneration, I am not aware of a single passage that suggests even a distinction between baptism into Christ (for salvation) and Spirit baptism (for power). We are only "in the Spirit" because we are "in Christ." It is better to say that we are baptized *into Christ by the Spirit*. Union with Christ through one and the same act of faith gives us every spiritual gift. There is "one baptism" (Eph 4:5) that is administered "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit" (Matt 28:19). To see the Spirit as a distinct source of heavenly blessing is to make him another mediator alongside Christ. Yet, as I have emphasized, every good gift comes from the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit.

In Christ our humanity has not only been restored but has been glorified—an exalted status that no human eye has ever seen, something beyond anything Adam and Eve experienced before the fall. Unlike Adam, Christ has passed the

test and after his “six days” of labor entered the Sabbath glory of his Father in conquest over the powers of death and chaos. When we hear that Christ is “the radiance of God’s glory” (Heb 1:3), we should think not only of his deity but of the whole Christ, including his humanity. It is the Spirit’s active presence in us that keeps our eyes focused neither on himself nor on his work within us but on *Christ* to whom he has united us; and, not to Christ in general but to the Savior who died, was raised, and is seated at the Father’s right hand in glory. Contrary to popular misconceptions concerning the Spirit’s work, this actually keeps us from an unhealthy subjectivism.[22] The Spirit’s ministry is to rivet our entire focus to Christ, “the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2 ESV). Any view that separates these two unions or baptisms is seriously in danger of undermining the gospel itself.

If pressed to identify the two principal gifts of the new covenant, the biblical answer seems clear: the *forgiveness of sins* and the *outpouring of the Holy Spirit*. There is a remarkable consistency on this point from the Old Testament prophets to the New Testament epistles. In the lodestar passages in the prophets anticipating the “new covenant,” it is these twin benefits that are especially highlighted (Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:25–27). Similarly, John the Baptist identifies Jesus as both “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) and as “the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (v. 33 NRSV). The double benefit of the good news of salvation and forgiveness brought by the Jubilee-Lord is bound up with the work of the Spirit when Jesus read Isaiah 61:1–2 in his first public appearance at the synagogue and announced himself as the Servant on whom the Spirit rests (Luke 4:18–19, quoting Isa 61:1–2).

At Pentecost, Peter proclaims forgiveness of sins in Christ as well as “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Only after establishing the judicial basis—the ratification of the new covenant in his blood—could Jesus give the Holy Spirit to his people as the indwelling presence and pledge of Christ’s own dominion over sin and death. And, as John Stott points out, “Paul designated Christian ministers ‘ministers of a new covenant’ and went on at once to describe it as both ‘the dispensation of righteousness’ (i.e., justification) and ‘the dispensation of the Spirit’ (2 Cor 3:6–9).”[23] Just as we have both justification and sanctification (and let us not forget glorification) in union with Christ, the Spirit’s baptism is the sign and seal of both. He is the Spirit of judgment *and* power.

Union with Christ is the motif that encompasses all of the gifts we receive in salvation. Paul uses the phrase “in Christ” around 160 times.[24] Its goal is to

make us adopted children of the Father and coheirs with Christ. As Calvin observes, we do not seek for some saving gifts in Christ and others elsewhere, even in the Spirit. We find even our anointing with the Spirit by being united with Christ in his baptism. "Therefore, let us drink from that fountain, and no other."[25] Yet, Calvin adds, "No particle of grace from God may come to us except through the Holy Spirit."[26] The danger of identifying Jesus and the Spirit as two sources of different baptisms is that we forget that every good gift always comes from the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit's work. We do not look to Christ for one level of salvation and to the Spirit for another, but we look to Christ who works by his Spirit through the word.

To Israel God says that as long as the people obey his law, it will be "my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Exod 19:5–6 NRSV). And yet, in Christ this same designation is true of all believers because of what Christ, the true Israel, has accomplished and the Spirit has applied. Not only the common but even the *ungodly* can be justified and cleansed, even those who "were not a people" and "had not received mercy" (1 Pet 2:9–10; cf. Eph 2:12–13).

Jesus's baptism by John was merely typological of the baptism that he experienced for us at Calvary. In his active obedience, we are holy (John 17:19). Because he was cut off for us in his hellish baptism and was raised and glorified, in our baptism we pass through the waters of judgment safely on dry ground. We have been saved out of the world. Therefore, even before Jesus tells the disciples about their own fruit-bearing life as part of the vine he declares, "You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you" (John 15:3 NRSV).

Spirit Baptism: A "Second Blessing"?

If it is true that the Spirit unites us to the whole Christ for *all spiritual blessings*, the New Testament just as emphatically teaches that *all believers* share equally in the Spirit's baptism (2 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4). There is no difference in legal status among adopted and justified heirs, and there are no degrees of regeneration: one is either dead or alive. Even in sanctification, though some believers are more mature in their faith and love, all are definitively holy, set

apart to the Lord as his own special people.

Exceptions in Acts

Advocates of a separate baptism of the Spirit appeal to examples in Acts. In Acts 8, some Samaritans who had "received the word of God" and had been baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" received the Spirit only when the apostles arrived to pray and lay hands on them (vv. 14–17). Something similar happened in Ephesus, reported in Acts 19. "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" Paul asked a group of believers (v. 2 ESV).

> And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. (Acts 19:2b–6 ESV)

Here is an instance of the limits of inductive Bible study. The meaning is obvious and noncontroversial to both sides in the debate. The decisive question is more deductive: the interpretation of particular passages in the light of other relevant passages. Pentecostals come to Acts 8 and 19 presupposing that they are paradigmatic for us today, and non-Pentecostals come to the same passages presupposing that they are unique episodes in the first generation of believers. For example, John Stott comments:

> Because this Samaritan incident was so clearly abnormal, it is difficult to see how most Pentecostal and some charismatic Christians can regard it as constituting a norm for today that the Holy Spirit is given subsequently to conversion. It is equally difficult to justify the Catholic view that the Spirit is given only through the imposition of apostolic hands (which they understand as meaning the hands of bishops regarded as 'in the apostolic succession'). Is it not clear from the rest of the New Testament that both the timing and the means of the gift to the Samaritans were atypical?[27]

For exegetical-theological reasons that I hope to have demonstrated above, it should not surprise anyone that I share Stott's perspective. The book of Acts is less a blueprint than it is the announcement of the acts of Christ by his Spirit through the apostles, of whom there are no living successors. There is no reason to assume that all of the marvelous signs of the Spirit's outpouring in the apostolic era are normative today. This is true especially when the norm for all Christians is spelled out so clearly in the Epistles, which teach that baptism into Christ *is* the Spirit's baptism and that all those who are in Christ share in his anointing.

The Samaritans in Acts 8 had been dazzled by Simon the Magician's tricks (vv. 9–11). "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (v. 12 ESV). The contrast between Simon's magic and Philip's preaching of the gospel and baptism seems more than passing. "Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip"—but the next clause is telling: "And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed" (v. 13 ESV). (Later, he tried to purchase the apostles' power to bestow the Spirit [vv. 18–24].) Rejoicing at the news of the gospel's success in Samaria, the apostles "sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (vv. 14–17 ESV). They had not received the Spirit when they believed, but not because their case was normative; rather, the explicit reason given for their not having received the Spirit is that they had "only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." It is a step beyond John's baptism, but it is still not the triune formula that Jesus mandated in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20). Pentecost is now being brought to the next ring, from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria. Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, "preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans" along the journey (v. 25 ESV). We are not told whether the gospel met with success in these villages, but if it did the apostles would have baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

If Samaria is one ring outside of Jerusalem and Judea, Ephesus belongs to "the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8 KJV). So it is not surprising that the Ephesians were even more deficient in their understanding than the Samaritans. Acts 19 identifies them as "disciples" (v. 1). Paul asks them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (v. 2). This is not a normative question for

us to ask believers today, but it is a reasonable question for an apostle to ask Ephesian disciples who had not yet known about, much less received, the Holy Spirit and had received only John's baptism. "They answered, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit' " (v. 2). And notice the logic in Paul's response: "Into *what* then were you baptized?" (v. 3 ESV, emphasis added). Assuming that Jesus is the author of the triune formula for baptism in the Great Commission and that this formula was already standard for legitimate baptism in Paul's day, I would insert "name" into Paul's question: "Into what *name* then were you baptized?" This interpretation is supported by their answer at v. 3: "Into John's baptism," which of course lacked a Trinitarian formula.

Now it all makes sense, Paul must have been thinking. John's baptism was different from the one that Christ inaugurated. It is not that John was non-Trinitarian (at least implicitly) but that the Spirit by whom we are baptized had not yet been poured out. Paul explains to them, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus" (v. 4 ESV). So Paul laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and prophesied (v. 6).

The Lord's commission to send the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and then to "the uttermost part of the world" is already being fulfilled at Ephesus. There were no gentiles (apart from converts to Judaism) at Pentecost, but now a little Pentecost is brought to them, and the apostles interpreted these episodes as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the speeches of Peter and James at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:15–18). Explaining how by his own mouth gentiles were embracing Christ, Peter says that God gave "them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith" (vv. 8–9 ESV).

In this foundation-laying era of the extraordinary ministry of the apostles, we would expect extraordinary foundation-laying episodes that are not normative for our era of the ordinary ministry. Luke concludes this report in Acts 19 by saying, "There were about twelve men in all" (v. 7). Perhaps it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that Luke finds the number significant. Though hardly the twelve apostles, they represent the movement of the Great Commission from the inner and second rings to the third.

In any case, even if these instances are normative, they would be only in relation to a specific set of circumstances—with disciples who profess faith in Christ but are unaware of the Holy Spirit and have been baptized by John or "in the name of Jesus" apart from the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit. If

anything, these passages press us to see not only a closer relationship between Christ and the Spirit but between the sacrament of baptism and baptism into Christ by the Spirit.

Baptism, Filling, and Sealing

I appreciate Stott's argument that while Spirit baptism is enjoyed by all who are united to Christ through faith, there are degrees of "filling." He notes that the emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12:4–13 on all believers sharing in one baptism by one Spirit prohibits the idea that "some have it, others have not"; rather, "it is the great uniting factor."[28] Paul makes the same point in Ephesians 4:4–5: all believers share equally in "one body and one Spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism. . . ." Therefore, Stott concludes, "When we speak of the baptism of the Spirit we are referring to a once-for-all gift; when we speak of the fullness of the Spirit we are acknowledging that this gift needs to be *continuously and increasingly appropriated*."[29] He notes, "No apostolic sermon or letter contains an appeal to be baptized with the Spirit. Indeed, all seven New Testament references to baptism with the Spirit are in the indicative, whether aorist, present or future; none is an exhortation in the imperative." Nowhere are believers called to be baptized with the Spirit, but they are called to be filled more and more with the Spirit—that is, "under the influence" of his intoxicating grace (Eph 5:8, 18–21).[30] The "unspiritual" in Corinth (1 Cor 3:1–4) "had been *baptized* with the Spirit, and richly *gifted* by the Spirit, but they were not (at least at the time of his visit and letter to them) *filled* with the Spirit."[31] I would only want to emphasize that this "filling" is continual and fluctuates. It is not necessarily the case that we become more filled with the passing of years in Christ. Like natural breathing, there are times when we take in pleasant aromas more deeply. We long for the Spirit's indwelling presence to fill every nook and cranny of our thoughts, hopes, dreams, loves, and actions—to be led by him rather than by our sinful passions.

As with consecration, "filling" deserves to be placed in its broader redemptive-historical context. In Exodus 28 God commands Moses to bring Aaron and his sons to him "to serve me as priests" (v. 1 ESV). "And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood" (vv. 2–3 ESV). Once more, "a spirit of skill" is a translation decision. However, the verb "filled"

seems to suggest that the Holy Spirit is intended: *God* has "filled [them] with *the Spirit of wisdom*" (*ruakh khokmah*), so that these artisans may deck Aaron and his sons with "glory and beauty," frequent associations with the Spirit. The garments mark the priests out as new officers of the Adamic vocation. A similar event occurs when God calls Moses to set apart Bezalel to construct the tabernacle and its furnishing along with the garments for Aaron and the priests. "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft" (Exod 31:3–5 ESV). (The ESV translation does render the phrase "the Spirit of God" here, supporting the same translation in Exodus 28:3.)

Stringing together seminal examples, John Levison observes that in both cases, *filling* is central. "They are filled with all that it will take to design and to construct a tent for God's presence in a desert that otherwise is apparently empty, void of God."[32] He continues:

> This verb's sense of full-filling is especially apparent in temporal contexts, when periods of time must be completed or fulfilled. A period of purification could be completed—'filled' (Lev 12:4, 6). A vow could be 'fulfilled' (Num 6:4). Sieges [*sic*] could come to an end—'be filled' (Esth 1:5). Babylonian exile would eventually be over—*be filled* (Jer 25:12). All of these sorts of completion are depicted by the verb *ml'*, which functions synonymously with the verb *tmm*, to indicate completeness, fullness, or an end (Lev 25:29–30). . . . This verb, which takes us to the experience of completion, of fulfilling, also appears in spatial contexts. God is able to fill the tent of meeting (Exod 40:34), the earthly temple (1 Kgs 8:10), and the heavenly temple (Isa 6:1). . . . This is very much the case with respect to the glory of God, or the cloud, which fills the temple (1 Kgs 8:11; Ezek 43:5).[33]

Thus, "Filling connotes completion, full-filling, fruition, wholeness, fullness."[34] In Exodus 40:35, Moses couldn't even enter the tent because God's glory filled it.[35] This is consistent with the many examples that we have seen of the Spirit's identification with completion of the Father's work in the Son—hence, his identification especially with the "last days."

This great work of the Spirit within us is not only described as a baptism and

a filling but also as a *sealing*, as in Ephesians 1:13–14 ESV: "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." A similar form of expression occurs in Romans 8. The indwelling Spirit is a guarantee of our sharing in Christ's resurrection glory (v. 10), even as his presence also makes us "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (v. 23 ESV). All believers are equally sealed by the Spirit for glory. As the other "attorney" (*paraklētos*), the Spirit inwardly convicts us of our guilt but also of righteousness—that is, our justification in Christ. The legal aspect of his job description is uppermost. It is by this Spirit's inner testimony to the gospel that provokes us to cry, "Abba! Father!" (v. 15). "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs . . ." (vv. 16–17).

We have encountered this close connection between the Spirit and judgment several times. Not only does Jesus speak of it directly in John 16:8, but Peter's Pentecost sermon is judicial—the announcement of God's vindication of Jesus Christ, and the Spirit brings inward conviction that leads to repentance and faith as the people are "cut to the heart." Yet there is one more possible connection: the ruse of Tamar in Genesis 38. Having survived her husband and brothers-in-law yet without issue, Tamar poses as a prostitute, and her father-in-law, Judah, impregnates her. In order to have proof of his intention to make the child an heir, she demands his staff, cord, and signet ring as a pledge. If Paul has this story in mind when thinking about a seal or pledge, then it is probably for the reason suggested by John Levison:

> Perhaps the most obvious answer is that Perez, one of the twins who was conceived by this sexual union, was the ancestor of David, the messiah. Tamar herself is included among the ancestors of Jesus in Matthew's genealogy (Matt 1:3). In other words, Judah and Tamar occupy a pivotal point in a long lineage of promise. . . . This story of promise fits perfectly the context of the conclusion to 2 Corinthians 1. Paul is passionate in his affirmation that all of God's *promises* are fulfilled in Christ Jesus.[36]

It is within this context that we can better understand the sealing of the Spirit in Ephesians 1:13–14. First, it assumes adult converts are the audience (especially gentile converts, since he switches from "we who were the first to

hope in Christ" to "in him you also, when you heard . . . and believed in him, were sealed . . ." [1:12–13 ESV]). Adult baptism must always follow a credible profession of faith. Second, this sealing is consequent upon trust in Christ. This faith is not merely adherence to certain facts but is the result of hearing "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (v. 13 ESV). Here again the Spirit and the Word are intertwined. The Spirit does not give faith directly or immediately but through the preaching of the gospel. Third, trusting in Christ, these converts were then "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit," which is the New Testament way of saying "baptized" (v. 13 ESV).

The Spirit is the "guarantee" or "pledge of our inheritance" (v. 14). The old covenant law forbade requiring a poor person's cloak as a ransom or a pledge for repayment. Closer to our experience is the credit system. Jesus Christ has already purchased our entire redemption. Nevertheless, we do not presently enjoy our salvation in its fullness. Paul says in Romans 8 that we will not experience our adoption as children of God in the fullest sense until our bodies are raised. But the Holy Spirit has been given to us as the Trinity's down payment, guaranteeing the disbursement of funds from the treasury of Christ's infinite merit until one day we are not only justified and in the process of being sanctified but stand glorified and untouched by temptation in the world to come. That may be a future hope, but the present possession of the Holy Spirit is a pledge and in some sense a foretaste of that great and glorious day. Like baptism and unlike "filling" with the Spirit, the sealing with the Spirit is an objective reality. The Spirit witnesses within us, subjectively, but he appeals to the external Word. One may not "feel saved" in every moment. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is the pledge that one is saved, feelings notwithstanding. As I argue below, water baptism is the sign and seal of this objective promise, which is why the Reformers and their heirs have encouraged those with an anxious conscious to look to their baptism as God's pledge of goodwill.

Further, this sealing is for the praise of God's glory in Ephesians 1. The ultimate aim of this plan of salvation, from election in v. 4 to our glorification for which we hope, is God's everlasting glory. This phrase "to the praise of his glory" (*eis epainon [tēs] doxēs autou*) or "to the praise of his glorious grace" (*eis epainon doxēs tēs charitos autou*) appears in v. 6 in connection with our election in Christ, in v. 12 in connection with our trusting in Christ, and finally in v. 14 in connection with our glorification. This sealing with the Spirit orients us toward the future. Levison notes:

> Filling with the holy spirit [sic] is intended to provide certainty of the future and an orientation toward the future. If it does not—if this filling yields a preoccupation with the present, a spiritual narcissism—then the fullness of that pledge, the wholeness of that seal, the power of the holy spirit (Rom 15:13), is sadly diminished. Filling with the spirit, in brief, sets believers in the context of a magnificent drama that stretches from Abraham and Sarah to an unknown future. The seal and pledge of the holy spirit confirm for believers that their future is secure, that the God who fulfilled ancestral promises will fulfill the promise made to believers.[37]

This sealing is not just our personal possession but is a guarantee of our sharing in the family of God's love. On the basis of its personal assurance, this sealing turns us outward to others.

> The sealing, sending, and receiving of the spirit convey the transformation of a slave into a human subject, into a son or daughter. This is a jarring experience that turns a property owner and his or her property into brothers and sisters, that supplants a spirit of lifelong anxiety with a fresh influx of familial embrace, and that produces a passionate love affair stronger than death.[38]

God in his grace is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. This is the logic of the whole chapter of Ephesians 1: God chose us in Christ, not in ourselves. That is the only reason we are holy and blameless before him. He loves us in Christ, not because we are lovely in ourselves. He gathers us together in Christ, in whose sonship with the Father alone we enjoy our adoption. Even our trusting in Christ is attributable only to God's grace to us in Christ by his Spirit. God does it all, so he must receive all the glory.

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2. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 5. See also Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); David P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean (OT)," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:729–41. Cf. *The Mishnah*, trans. Herbert Danby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), especially Kelim 1:1–9, and appendix four, "The Rules of Uncleanness" (800–804).

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7. See B. A. Stegmann, *Christ, the 'Man from Heaven': A Study of 1 Corinthians 15, 45–47 in the Light of the Anthropology of Philo Judaeus* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1927); cf. Matthew Goff, "Genesis 1–3 and Conceptions of Humankind in 4QInstruction, Philo and Paul," in *Studies in Scripture and Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Craig A. Evans, LNTS 15 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 114–25.

8. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 247.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 310.

12. Ibid., 310–11.

13. Ibid., 311.

14. James D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 137.

15. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 34.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 35. He adds, “To Adam spiritual things were not a *super*natural, but a natural good—except eternal life, which he must earn by fulfilling the law.”

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., 35–36.

20. Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 118.

21. Ibid.

22. See Sinclair Ferguson’s helpful comments along this line in *Holy Spirit*, 99–100.

23. John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, IVP Classics (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 32.

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25. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2.16.19.

26. John Calvin, “1539 Institutes,” in *John Calvin: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 294.

27. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 43.

28. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 51.

29. Ibid., 62.

30. Ibid., 65.

31. Ibid., 66 (emphasis original).

32. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 56.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 57.

35. Ibid., 57–58.

36. Ibid., 257–58.

37. Ibid., 259.

38. Ibid., 278–79.



CHAPTER 8

The Gift of Salvation

The Father and the Son are, of course, engaged in this powerful work of new creation. Yet the Spirit's role is unique in its own right. The Spirit does not become incarnate. However, the Spirit by whose power the Son assumed our humanity also glorified our representative head. And he kept and still keeps the Jesus of history from slipping away into the past by uniting us to him now. The Son became history so that he could redeem our humanity, but the Spirit ensured that his history would not end in the grave. It is the Spirit who creates this intersection between history and eschatology, making Christ's life, death, and resurrection in *this present age* the site of the in-breaking of the powers of *the age to come*. "The Spirit makes of Christ an eschatological being, the 'last Adam,' " as John Zizioulas observes.[1]

Even though Jesus is separated from us in the flesh, the Spirit unites us to Christ, our federal head. In baptism, he has broken our alliance with death. He has "raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). Therefore, our lives even now are not defined by this present evil age but by the same powers of the age to come that Christ enjoys in a consummated manner. "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God" (2 Cor 7:1 ESV). "By this we know that we abide in [Christ] and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4:13 ESV; cf. 1 John 3:24).

The focus of this chapter is on the Spirit's gifts that we all share equally in Christ; the next chapter examines the variety of gifts that the Spirit distributes among the saints for the good of the whole body.

The Spirit's Chief Gift

One tragedy of prolonged debates over the spiritual gifts is that the gifts can

become more important than the Giver. Above all, the greatest gift that Christ gives in his ascension is the Spirit himself. For our salvation the Father gave his two greatest gifts, John Owen observed. "The one was the giving of his Son for them and the other was the giving of his Spirit unto them. . . . To these heads may all the promises of God be reduced."[2] And now, in applying redemption, "there is no good communicated unto us from God but it is bestowed on us or wrought in us by the Holy Ghost."[3]

It is the Holy Spirit's presence within us that brings about our "amen!" of faith to the word and that defines the age in which we are now living as "these last days." We were chosen by "God *the Father*, in the sanctification of *the Spirit*, for obedience to *Jesus Christ* and for sprinkling with his blood" (1 Pet 1:2 ESV, emphasis added). The Holy Spirit broods over the darkness and void of our heart, "cherishing the confused mass,"[4] as he infuses life into us. Only in this case, unlike the first creation the chaos is not merely raw material waiting to be shaped but is a whirlpool of idolatry and immorality. Thus the new creation is more astonishing than the first. The triune God creates a new world this time not out of nothing but out of sin and death, not only without assistance but in the face of hostility from the creatures he made in his image. It is the Spirit who completes the salvation accomplished by the Father in the Son. He prepares a *natural* body for the Son and then, as we will see in chapter 10, forms an *ecclesial* body for Christ. The Spirit is the Lord, who makes us sharers in the new creation by uniting us to our glorified Head and indwelling us as the deposit on our final salvation. The Spirit who made the Son the door of salvation now opens the door of our hearts to embrace Christ with all of his benefits (cf. Acts 16:14).

I have argued that Jesus's reference to the Holy Spirit as *paraklētos* hails from the language of the courtroom. Precisely because he is an advocate or attorney, the Spirit is also a comforter who comes to our defense. But the Spirit is *another* advocate because whereas Jesus came *alongside* us, as one of us, in the place of us, and intercedes for us now in heaven, the Spirit exercises his advocacy *within* us, convicting us of guilt and assuring us of our election, justification, and adoption. He is the attorney who offers himself as the surety or deposit on our glorification. And on the basis of this judicial work within us here and now, fastening our faith on the judicial work that Christ accomplished for us in history, the Spirit begins his powerful work of renovation, conforming us more and more to Christ's image. Thus the entire golden chain of salvation from

election to glorification is comprehended under the broader rubric that all good gifts come from the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. The Spirit's intimate presence is the basis for Jesus's assurance that he will not leave his disciples as orphans in the world. Despite the world's hostility Christ has overcome the world, and they too will be overcomers in him through the power of the Spirit in spite of their temporal insecurity (John 16:33). Both divine persons are *paraklētoi* in both senses, as advocate-comforters, but in different ways due to their different persons and therefore operations.

What then does the Spirit seal? We turn now to the Spirit's application of redemption to the elect: the *ordo salutis*. Just as there is a historical progression from the initial promise of salvation in Genesis 3:15 to the incarnation and, eventually, the consummation, there is a logical golden chain leading from election in eternity past to redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Rom 8:30 ESV).

Regeneration

The Spirit is our first contact with the Holy Trinity,[5] bringing us to our adopted Father by uniting us to the Son. "The Eternal and Ever-blessed God comes into vital touch with the creature by an act proceeding not from the Father nor from the Son, but from the Holy Spirit," writes Kuyper.[6] To be sure, it is always the Father, in the Son, who meets us through the Spirit. Yet "Christ never entered into a human *person*. He took upon Himself our human *nature*, with which He united Himself much more closely than the Holy Spirit does; but He did not touch the *inward man* and his hidden *personality*."[7] This should not surprise us when we know already that "the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, that He brings forth the host of heaven and earth, ordered, animated, and resplendent." But he enters the very precincts of the human heart.[8] Thus his disciples only knew Jesus after Pentecost in the way that all believers have ever since: after the Spirit, not merely as rabbi and master but as the eschatological head of his body. Throughout its liturgy, *especially* in its focus on Christ and the Father through him, the church is always crying, "Veni, Creator Spiritus" ("Come, Holy Spirit, Creator!"). "There is always the same deep thought: the

Father remains outside of the creature; the Son touches him outwardly; by the Holy Spirit the divine life touches him directly in his inward being."[9]

For those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1 ESV), nothing short of regeneration will do: "Even when we were dead in our trespasses, [he] made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved" (v. 5 ESV). The old Adam is not merely wayward, requiring better advice and habits. The condition is dire: "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit, "even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive," but who indwells his elect (John 14:17). Apart from regeneration, we cannot even repent and believe in Christ (John 3:5; 6:44); even faith is a gift (Eph 2:8–9). The Spirit does not enter hearts that prepare him room or sweep the floor and dust before his arrival (an optimistic set of tasks to expect of the dead); rather, he enters, hovers, infuses life, gives faith, and begins immediately to renovate the mansion in which he once breathed merely the natural (i.e., biological) life but now breathes the breath of eschatological—new creation—life.

Effectual calling is not the brute force of an agent acting upon an object but a speech act from the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit, winning our consent to the gospel and through the gospel. When God says, "Let there be light!" whether in the first creation or the new creation, it is so. Nevertheless, he also commands, "Let the earth bring forth . . ." (Gen 1:24 ESV). The new birth, in which we are passive recipients of a life-giving fiat declaration, yields to conversion, in which we respond in Spirit-given repentance and faith. This is how actual instances of conversion are described in the New Testament, as in the case of Lydia: "The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul" (Acts 16:14 NRSV). This is not violent coercion; it is life-giving liberation.

The word never returns to God without effect (Isa 55:11). This is not only because it comes from the sovereign Father, nor even merely because it has Jesus Christ as its content, for even then it would fall on deaf ears, as it did typically in Jesus's ministry. It achieves its effect because the Spirit opens the ears to hear and believe. God's word is not therefore only the speech of the Father concerning the Son which we then make effective by our own decision, but the instrumental action through which the Spirit brings about within us the appropriate response. "Therefore I want you to understand that . . . no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). "For in [Christ] every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.' For this reason it is through him that we say the

‘Amen,’ to the glory of God” (2 Cor 1:20 NRSV).

Furthermore, the Spirit uses creaturely means for this regenerating work that do not detract from God being the ultimate source and author of life. The Spirit regenerates us through this external preaching of the gospel (1 Pet 1:23, 25). “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth . . .” (Jas 1:18 ESV). “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). We “were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13 ESV). Those who by nature “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom 1:18 NASB) are swept into the story that God is telling the world. “Those he predestined, he also called” (Rom 8:30).

JUSTIFICATION

Paul adds to Romans 8:30 (ESV), “And those whom he called he also justified. . . .” Paul proclaims the gospel “concerning [the Father’s] Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead . . .” (Rom 1:3–4). The verb *horisthentos* means marked off, separated by boundaries, set apart or declared. It is a public and legal announcement. The Spirit publicly vindicated—justified—the risen Christ, and now he unites us to Christ to receive that same justification. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 6, after a list of perversions that mark human rebellion, Paul writes, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* and *by the Spirit* of our God” (v. 11).

Typically, we think of justification as a transaction between the believer and Christ. For that reason, some scholars see the pneumatological turn as a way of subordinating the forensic aspect of salvation to the transformative. Both options offer a false choice based on a misunderstanding of the Spirit’s operations. Having established the Spirit’s association with judgment in God’s courtroom, we should not be surprised that he is involved specifically in the act of justification. As Jesus taught in the farewell discourse, the Spirit brings *conviction* of guilt and *faith* in Christ, so that we are assured even now of the verdict that will be made publicly visible when we are, together with all the saints, raised with Christ in vindication-glory. Through the Spirit’s work, we receive the eschatological verdict of the final judgment in the present: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1

ESV).

It is not the Spirit's obedience that is imputed to sinners or whose death bears our sins and who "was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25). Nevertheless, as Calvin puts it so well, "As long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us."[10] There can be no exchange of debts and riches apart from a marriage.

The language of union and marriage were staples of patristic soteriology. Bernard of Clairvaux especially emphasized this theme in the Middle Ages, which Luther credited as a major influence in his own understanding of union with Christ.[11] Calvin quotes Bernard directly twenty-nine times in the section of the *Institutes* treating this subject.[12] However, for both Reformers the major source was the New Testament—especially John's Gospel and Paul. Union with Christ means that we are "engrafted into him" (Rom 11:17) and that we "put on Christ" (Gal 3:27 ESV). We are not saved by Christ "from a distance" but by being united to Christ through faith in the most intimate bonds. The basis of this marriage bond is Christ's redeeming work, but the bond is actually effected through the secret energy of the Holy Spirit. We have been chosen by the Father, said Peter, "in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood" (1 Pet 1:2 ESV). Jesus gave his blood, and the Spirit sprinkles it on us, baptizing us into Christ for everlasting life.

The righteousness that justifies remains external to the believer because it is accomplished by Christ, who became one of us but is now in heaven. Yet we receive this verdict because the Spirit convicts us inwardly of our guilt and gives us faith to embrace Christ in the most intimate union. Again, this is precisely why we need *both* advocates—the one outside and above us and the other within us.

The Spirit of Adoption

It is the Spirit who enables us to cry to the Father in the Son. Apart from this work, we could not pray as Jesus taught us, "Our Father. . . ." When Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb, Jesus told her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father *and your Father*' " (John 20:17 ESV). Similarly, Paul

explained:

> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. . . . For all who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. . . . The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom 8:11, 14, 16–17 ESV)

He continues a bit further in the letter: “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (vv. 26–27).

Typically we are drawn toward two errors. The first is to assume that God is our Father even apart from Christ and the Spirit’s regenerating grace. The second, more common especially in the church, is to regard the Father as too distant and too lofty to be approached “boldly” and “with confidence,” as the writer to the Hebrews invites (4:16). The writer gives us such confidence by proclaiming Christ as our mediator. But it is also the Spirit who enters the courtroom—not the heavenly courtroom, as Christ has, but the courtroom of our own hearts, to assure our conscience that Christ has fully discharged the debt of justice on our behalf. Here we meet another paradox. We do not turn away from Christ and his objective work outside of us in history when we encounter the Spirit’s ministry within. On the contrary, the Spirit’s witness within directs us not to what is happening in our own hearts but to the external word in its promise that Christ is witnessing on our behalf in the heavenly court surrounded by the holy angels in festive assembly. Furthermore, the Spirit not only testifies but translates, taking our foolish and inadequate prayers to the Father, in the Son. We are not even quite sure what we should pray for or how, but he makes our prayers intelligible (Rom 8:26). We are free to offer laments, sighs, praises, and supplications that are in themselves unworthy of the Father’s majesty, not only because of his paternal clemency toward us in Christ but also because the Spirit is our intercessor within. The Spirit is the other Paraclete whom Jesus sent from the Father.

Sanctification in the Spirit

Paul speaks on occasion of sanctification as something that believers already possess (Acts 20:32); in his letters he typically greets churches as those who are called to be "saints [*hagiois*]" (Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2 [ESV]), and he even addresses the immature and undisciplined Corinthians as "those sanctified [*hēgiasmenois*] in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:2 ESV). Similarly, Peter addresses his first letter to Christians of the Jewish diaspora as those "chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified [*hagiasmō*] by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood" (1 Pet 1:2 NRSV), and his second letter, "To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 1:1 ESV).

All that is found in Christ is holy because it is in Christ. He is our sanctification—"the Lord is our righteousness" (Jer 23:6 ESV; 1 Cor 1:30). He is our holy land and holy place. The sprinkling of Christ's blood is vastly superior to that of blood of goats and bulls for sanctification since it purifies "our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!" (Heb 9:13–14 NRSV). "And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all" (10:10). It is this "blood of the covenant by which they [covenant members] were sanctified" (v. 29 NRSV). Jesus suffered outside the camp "in order to sanctify the people by his own blood" (13:12 NRSV). God "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:9–10 NRSV). All of this belongs especially to that consecration that we encountered in the previous chapter.

At the same time, the Spirit's ministry also renovates as he brings us into the new creation that Christ has inaugurated: a ministry not only of judgment but of power. As in all of the external works of the God, the Spirit is sent to complete the work that has been initiated by the Father and accomplished in the Son. Sanctification is part of the gospel.

We should not hesitate at the threshold of the Spirit's marvelous renewing work as if it were somehow a threat to the article of justification. This false choice between justification and sanctification joins antinomians and legalists in

an unholy alliance. Nor should we yield to the temptation to see ourselves as saved objectively and yet subjectively in the same condition after regeneration that obtained before. To be still sinful, still prone to wander, still weak in repentance and faith (which I take to be the argument of Romans 7) is not to be "dead in trespasses and sins" and "children of wrath" like the rest of humanity (Eph 2:1–3 KJV).

In regeneration, we are passive—we are the dead who are raised: "Let there be light!" But in conversion (viz., faith and repentance), we are active: "Let the earth bring forth . . ." Both are the result of the word of the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit. The sovereign grace of the Spirit does not obliterate human agency; on the contrary, it frees us to be—and to become more and more—the image of God in Christ.

Thus, even in our sanctification the Spirit does not save us from nature but restores nature. He works within creatures through ordinary creaturely means. John Webster draws our attention to this point nicely:

> The sanctifying Spirit is *Lord*; that is, sanctification is not in any straightforward sense a process of cooperation or coordination between God and the creature, a drawing out or building upon some inherent holiness of the creature's own. Sanctification is *making* holy. Holiness is properly an incommunicable divine attribute; if creaturely realities become holy, it is by virtue of election, that is, by a sovereign act of segregation or separation by the Spirit as Lord. . . . From the vertical of 'lordship' there flows the horizontal of life which is truly *given*. Segregation, election to holiness, is not the abolition of creatureliness but its creation and preservation.[13]

As the Spirit sanctifies us, cutting us away from this passing evil age and its corrupt fruit, he enables us to bear his fruit of righteousness. His saving word does not smother our speech but liberates it to sing his praises; the Spirit gives us our voice back to reply to the word of the Father in the Son with the "amen!" of faith. But this tension between the "already" and "not yet" is what the New Testament intends by the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. Unlike election, regeneration, justification, and adoption, our sanctification is incomplete in this life. Nevertheless, it is real and decisive. The eschatological newness that has come with the ascension and Pentecost is so striking that John can speak of the old commandment to love neighbor as "at the same time . . . a

new commandment . . . because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" (1 John 2:7–8 ESV). There has been a qualitatively new transition in history from the age of sin and death to the age of righteousness and life.

There is already a consecrating or "cutting away" in a certain sense with our election in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4 ESV). Already in eternity, the triune God has separated unto himself from the mass of condemned humanity a people for his Son. It is for "those whom the Father gave me," Jesus says repeatedly, that he has given his life (John 6:37, 39; 10:11, 15; 17:9). And it is this bride whom the Holy Spirit unites to the risen Son in an everlasting marriage. "To sum up," wrote Calvin, "the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself."[14]

Against both Rome and the Anabaptists, Calvin emphasizes with Paul that we do not find Christ by ascending into heaven or by descending into our hearts, but by the work of the Spirit through his Word. We are "one with the Son of God; not because he conveys his substance to us, but because, by the power of his Spirit, he imparts to us his life and all the blessings which he has received from the Father."[15] "Since we are clothed with the righteousness of the Son" in justification, "we are reconciled to God and renewed by the power of the Spirit to holiness."[16] For "with a wonderful communion, day by day, [Christ] grows more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us."[17]

So, for the Reformers the mystical and subjective aspects of union are inseparable from the objective and legal, just as the Spirit's judicial work is inseparable from his renovating power. Nevertheless, we do not find Christ by descending into our hearts but by being drawn out of ourselves to Christ as he is clothed in his gospel. "If you contemplate yourself," Calvin counsels, "that is sure damnation."[18] He continues:

> But since Christ has been so imparted to you with all his benefits that all his things are made yours, that you are made a member of him, indeed one with him, his righteousness overwhelms your sins; his salvation wipes out your condemnation; with his worthiness he intercedes that your unworthiness may not come before God's sight. Surely this is so: We ought not to separate Christ from ourselves or ourselves from him. Rather we ought to hold fast bravely with both hands to that fellowship by which

> he has bound himself to us. So the apostle teaches us: 'Now your body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit of Christ which dwells in you is life because of righteousness' [Rom 8:10].[19]

Through the same act of faith, one receives the *whole* Christ, Lord and Savior, with *all* of his gifts, including justification and renewal. The Holy Spirit operates upon us as Lord and life-giver while we were dead (Eph 2:1–5). But having made us alive together with Christ, the Spirit empowers us by grace for good works (v. 10).

It is a serious narrowing of the good news to announce merely the forgiveness of sins and justification, as if now that we are "off the hook," sanctification is either "our part" or something that we can take or leave. The Scriptures know nothing of two acts of faith—one that receives Christ for justification ("making Jesus your personal Savior") and another that submits to him as Lord. We do not make Jesus anything. Faith merely embraces him for all that he is, does, and gives.

When this question of the relation between justification and sanctification arises, the New Testament repeatedly invokes the organic analogies—vine and branches, head and members—to make the point that one cannot be united to Christ for some gifts (such as election, redemption, justification, adoption), but not for others (sanctification and glorification). In Romans 6 Paul argues that those who are baptized into Christ are sharers not only in his death for the forgiveness of sins but in his resurrection life. They *have been* renewed by the Spirit: this is as much in the past tense as their having been justified. The regenerate cannot return to a state of spiritual death. Sin therefore no longer has dominion over them.

After treating the Ten Commandments, the Heidelberg Catechism asks, "But can those converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?" The answer: "No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience. *Nevertheless*, with earnest purpose they do begin to live not only according to some but to all the commandments of God."[20] We cannot keep God's law for justification. Nor can we become perfectly sanctified by keeping it. We are always in a position of confessing our sins and, indeed, our ongoing sinful condition, and anyone who claims perfection makes God a liar (1 John 1:9–10). Nevertheless, we can obey Christ, follow his example, and lead a new life. We can rejoice in God's law with even greater alacrity than David, who hymned,

“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Ps 119:97 ESV). Our experience may tell us otherwise: that we do not love God’s law and do not—even cannot—follow his commands. However, the promise trumps our experience. Anyone who refuses categorically to obey any one of God’s commands is not united to Christ.

Growing in holiness is a constant struggle. However, to say that it is an impossibility for the regenerate is to deny the Holy Spirit. Jesus invites, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt 11:28–30 ESV). In sharp contrast with the religious leaders who tied people down with heavy burdens, Jesus’s lordship is easy and his burden is light. This is so not only because he has eliminated the Pharisees’ manual of rules but because his law of love—which actually demands more of us—is no longer an external threat but an inner disposition that is furnished by the Spirit’s indwelling, regenerating, and sanctifying presence. The day the prophets longed for has arrived when the Spirit would put the law in our hearts. If we are seeking justification or any good gifts from God from the law itself, then it is anything but an easy yoke and a light burden; rather, it leads to utter despair. But if we are delivered from the curse of the law in Christ, we have freedom from guilt and the dominion of sin. In the age of the Spirit, believers are never to conclude that they are unable to love and obey God’s commands.

Repentance is always unfinished, but it is always comprehensive: unfinished because our best works are halfhearted and fall short of meriting anything from God, but comprehensive in that we no longer claim any right to determine what we believe or how we live. We are not allowed to pick and choose which teachings we will believe or which commands we will keep. God has claimed us wholly and entirely for himself. Getting used to that takes a lifetime, of course. Just when we find ourselves yielding to the Spirit in a particular area, we discover a new front of battle opening on another side. Even at our death we remain justified before God and yet far from that glorious workmanship that will be revealed in us when Christ returns.

With good reason the term *synergism* (“working together”) is viewed with suspicion by many Protestants. Through a long history, the term has been associated with a system of applied soteriology (the *ordo salutis*) that blurs any distinction between being declared righteous in Christ alone (justification) and being gradually conformed to Christ’s image (sanctification)—and, we might

add, between regeneration and sanctification. Such synergism easily slides toward a semi-Pelagian or even Pelagian notion that salvation is our achievement rather than a pure gift of grace. According to these theories (judged heretical by the early medieval church), grace is merely divine assistance in response to the believer's decision and effort. Even in classic Arminian teaching, prevenient grace makes it possible for people to be regenerated if they so choose; thus, Arminians accept the label *synergist*.[21] From the perspective of Reformation exegesis, however, the new birth is never treated in the Scriptures as the result of human cooperation any more than resurrection depends on the cooperation of one who is dead.

But we are no longer dead. Alive in Christ through the power of the indwelling Spirit, we are now able to cooperate with God subsequent to regeneration. If synergism is too loaded a term given its associations, its synonym—cooperation—is not. I do not know how else we can interpret straightforward passages such as the following, from the apostle Paul no less:

> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Rom 6:12–13)

> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 5:16–25)

> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. . . . (Phil 2:12)

Passages could be multiplied. In these examples, the moral imperative is grounded in the gospel indicative. Cooperation does not lead to the new birth, but from it. We are not to give sin free reign *because* we "have been brought from death to life" (Rom 6:12–13 ESV). "For sin will have no dominion over you, *since* you are not under law but under grace" (v. 14 ESV). We are to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16)—indeed, even to "keep in step with the Spirit" (v. 25b) *because* "we live by the Spirit" (v. 25a) and are no longer under the law's condemnation (vv. 5–13). And immediately after his imperative to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12), Paul adds "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (v. 13). Recalling the distinction I drew from Genesis 1, regeneration belongs to the " 'let there be. . . .' And there was . . ." type of speech act, while sanctification comprehends the " 'let the earth bring forth. . . .' And the earth brought forth . . ." type. The Spirit is gradually producing the effects of regeneration and union with Christ—hence, the fruit of the Spirit in, with, and through our own activity.

On the one hand, there is a clear call to cooperate with the Spirit in our sanctification. On the other hand, the asymmetry is just as apparent. No less than in regeneration and justification is sanctification attributed to God's gracious operation. There is no synergism in the sense of each partner contributing something toward the work of salvation. Rather, the work that we are called to do is in response to a gift, and even that response itself is a gift and remains so until we die. But cooperation it is still. From the above imperatives it is clear that if we yield our bodies to the Spirit we will bear the fruit of the Spirit; if we offer ourselves to our sinful nature we will bear the fruit of the flesh that leads to death. Sanctification is God's work, the fruit of Christ's victory that is being applied to us by the Spirit. At the same time, in our growth as Christians we can quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19) or yield to the Spirit (Rom 6:13). Again notice the logical order of dependence: "*Since we live* by the Spirit, let us *keep in step* with the Spirit" (Gal 5:25).

"We tread carefully here to avoid the impression that this relies on us," Edith M. Humphrey observes, "for all of it comes from the initiative of God. Yet we are called, in a certain sense, to 'co-operate.' (Perhaps we could coin the word 'sub-operate')."[22] Formal terminology must always be bent to godly use, and in

spite of its novelty I think “sub-operate” gets at the uniqueness of the covenantal understanding of sanctification. Sanctification is due entirely to God, *and* we are responsible for attending the means of grace and responding in daily faith, repentance, and obedience. We are not the sanctifiers of ourselves, even with God’s assistance. Only God is qualified for the role of sanctifier. Yet we are the subject of sanctified action. Only God can make us grow, but we are the ones who repent and believe, exercise and eat a balanced spiritual diet. We are in Christ and live only in that union. “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18).

As John Owen points out, Adam and Eve were created upright; their righteousness was not a superadded gift but was intrinsic to their created dignity. But they were also upheld continually in their integrity as God’s image bearers. “And all these things were the peculiar effects of the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost.”[23] Thus, in regeneration, the Spirit “doth thereby restore his own work”; “so also the Holy Spirit renews in us the image of God, the original implantation whereof was his peculiar work.”[24] According to that first covenant, “it was possible that they should utterly lose him, as accordingly it came to pass. He had him not by especial inhabitation, for the whole world was the temple of God. In the covenant of grace, founded in the person and on the mediation of Christ, it is otherwise. On whomsoever the Spirit of God is bestowed for the renovation of the image of God in him, he abides with him for ever.”[25] Later he writes, “There is, therefore, nothing more to be abhorred than those carnal low and unworthy thoughts which some men vent of this glorious work of the Holy Spirit, who would have it wholly to consist in a legal righteousness or moral virtue.”[26]

Even before there is a gradual renovation, notes Owen:

> Sanctification is an immediate work of the Spirit of God on the souls of believers, purifying and cleansing of their natures from the pollution and uncleanness of sin, renewing in them the image of God, and thereby enabling them, from a spiritual and habitual principle of grace, to yield obedience unto God, according unto the tenor and terms of the new covenant, by virtue of the life and death of Jesus Christ.[27]

Along with the satisfaction of Christ and justification by his imputed righteousness, this doctrine of sanctification is attacked as undermining all

diligent obedience. But Scripture represents these doctrines of grace as the only genuine basis of the pursuit of godliness.[28]

Owen's opponents reduce regeneration to mere amendment of life according to the laws of nature.[29] But this is merely to abandon the covenant of grace for the covenant of works. Like the diseased woman who grasped the hem of Jesus's garment (Matt 9:20–22), notes Owen, the poorest sinner with the most meager faith is healed. "Multitudes press and throng about Christ in a profession of faith and obedience, and in the real performance of many duties, but no virtue goes forth from Christ to heal them. But when any one, though poor, though seemingly at a distance, gets but the least touch of him by special faith, this soul is healed. This is our way with respect to the mortification of sin."[30] Faith in Christ brings love in its wake.[31] Believers no longer hear God's commands from Mount Sinai as a legal covenant but as "inseparably annexed unto the *covenant of grace*."[32]

The Spirit is not merely conforming us to the image of Adam before the fall, but to Christ—who is the very "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). Even more, this image is now the exalted Son, who, glorified in our humanity, is the consummated image-son that Adam failed to be. We have seen that this is a principal reason why the Spirit could not be given until Christ had ascended in glory. His humanity had to be glorified in order for the prototype of the new humanity to actually exist and to be enthroned at the Father's right hand. Thus our sanctification now is a transformation—a transfiguration—"from glory to glory," which will be fully realized on the last day (2 Cor 3:18 KJV). This is far above natural improvement, moral development, the education of the human race, or the betterment of humankind. It is a supernatural, utterly miraculous, gift from heaven as we are not only swept into Christ through baptism but being conformed by degrees to the glorious image of Christ himself.

Believers are the only people in the world who feel the tension of living between the "already" and the "not yet" of this union with Christ by the Spirit. They experience their lives now as liberated from sin, and yet are frequently disappointed by the quality of their growth in Christ. It is the Spirit's indwelling presence and the union with Christ we enjoy by his operations that make us to feel the inner contradiction between our objective identity and our ongoing struggle with sin. Clearly from Scripture, our ongoing sanctification always rests on the security of our election, justification, and adoption. Equally as clear from Scripture is the truth that the goal of our justification is sanctification and

ultimately glorification (treated in chapter 11). Both of these points are made in numerous passages, even from Paul alone, where he moves from the indicative to the obvious imperatives that issue from it (e.g., Rom 6:13; 12:1; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 2:10; 4:1; Col 1:9–10; Titus 2:14; 3:8). Our sanctification in the present therefore takes its bearings from God's promise concerning what he has already done for us in the past and what he will do in the future. With those anchors comes the assurance that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).

The Fruit of the Spirit

Unlike the various gifts distributed to each believer for the health of the body, the fruit of the Spirit is produced in all believers. Not just some but all believers are baptized by the Spirit into Christ and are therefore obliged to express love and humility toward one other. One may recognize special gifts of hospitality in other saints that one lacks in the same degree, but no one is exempt from bearing all, not just some, of the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus teaches that he is the vine and we are his branches. To be united to him is to be alive, bearing the fruit of love and good works. Similarly, in Galatians 5 the apostle Paul specifies the "fruit of the Spirit," contrasted with the fruit of the flesh: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:22–25).

This way of stating the matter highlights the dynamic movement of sanctification. The Spirit has not only regenerated us but by his indwelling presence leads us. He is "out in front," enabling us to keep up with him. The fruit he describes could be enumerated in any number of ethical treatises of the pagan philosophers. And yet, the flesh—shorthand for the potentialities of this present evil age—has no power to bring them forth. They may be civil virtues, but they are not fruit of participation in the new creation. It is also significant that Paul's exhortation to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18) entails thankful singing of Christ's word and greater submission to one another in our ordinary relationships (vv. 19–33).

Much of popular devotion is focused on the inner life of the individual believer. In contrast, the Scriptures place the emphasis on the Spirit's work of

opening us up and turning us outside of ourselves, looking up to God in faith and out to our neighbors in love. The fruit of the Spirit has to do with the way we relate to others. How do I, as a finger or an elbow, contribute to the whole body's health? Wherever Paul refers to the Spirit's power in our lives, the effects are to teach and persuade us of the truth and to bear the fruit of good works: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph 4:30–32). The fruit of the Spirit that Paul describes in Galatians 5:21–22 are graces that we do not normally associate with spiritual gifts. The evidence of being filled with the Spirit is not speaking in tongues or healings or new revelations, but patience, joy, love, peace, self-control, and so forth.

When Paul rather shockingly equates the natural law (*stoicheia tou kosmou*) of the Greeks with Torah, he is not condemning either. The physical and natural laws that govern the universe are God's, as provident Creator and Lord. They are good ordinances, as surely as the Mosaic law. They keep calling us back in our conscience to the way in which God has ordered nature. Nevertheless, given our fallen condition, they cannot save us; they only condemn us. We break ourselves against them. Not because of their character but because of ours, these good laws become part of the futility of human existence. But there is another reality—the new creation that is being brought into this age by the Spirit. Only the Spirit has the power to bring an end to the old age of death and inaugurate the new age of righteousness. Whether written on the conscience or on stone tablets, the law is nothing like the "new heart" that God will give in the new covenant (Jer 31:31–34). We are slaves to the law—whether the "elementary principles" or Torah, but in Christ the Spirit makes us heirs. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:12–21, 23, 29; 1 Cor 12:3; Gal 4:1–7; Rev 21:7).

As Paul interprets prophetic revelation, he explains, "For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code" (Rom 7:5–6). To be "in the Spirit" is to be living in the reality that we are part of the new creation that he is bringing into this age through the resurrection of Christ.

When we look at the fruit of the flesh, we see as if in a mirror the vices that our own culture often regards as virtues. Sexual liberty (Gal 5:19) is regarded

increasingly in Western societies as self-authenticating and self-affirming, while self-control is considered immoral. This attempt at self-creation, even against the grain of the obvious facts of nature, demonstrates the passion for self-deification: to make ourselves gods rather than be made like God by God. Even if we have avoided any explicit assimilation of Christian doctrine and rites to paganism or "drunkenness" and "revelries," mention in the same breath of "enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, [and] factions" stops the mouth of the rest of us (vv. 20–21 NRSV). Far more than any need for new prophecies today is a serious concern for self-control. Of far greater value than a thousand "tongues" that no one else understands is edifying instruction concerning how we are to conduct ourselves with kindness, humility, and love, avoiding personality cults and angry insults on blogs.

We have seen how the Spirit's ministry is associated particularly with bringing the word of the Father, in the Son, to completion—to full effect. Where the Spirit is, there is not only liberty but fruitfulness—a garden blossoms in the wasteland. The Holy Spirit came upon the watery depths in creation, dividing the waters from dry land, and then he made the implanted seed fruitful. He gave breath—spirit—to man in creation. He saves Noah and his family both from and through the waters, once again separating the waters from dry land to make a fruitful place for covenantal communion with Yahweh. A dove returns with a leafy twig as the seal that judgment is passed, the family is saved, and a new creation is appearing. As the down payment on our final redemption, the Spirit gives us the "already" of our participation in Christ as the new creation, and it is the Spirit within us who gives us the aching hope for the "not yet" that awaits us in our union with Christ (Rom 8:18–28; see 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). The *more we receive* from the Spirit of the realities of the age to come, the *more restless we become*, having already received a foretaste of the future.

The Chief Fruit: Love

This eschatological *hope* breeds love. The traditional order is crucial: faith, hope, and love. According to Roman Catholic teaching, faith only becomes justifying when it is perfected by love and its meritorious fruit. But the traditional order from 1 Corinthians 13 is exactly right. Faith comes first and remains the source of hope, love, and good works. Faith puts forth the fruit of love. No one who is united to Christ through faith is devoid of love. Even before one knows precisely

how to exercise it, where to direct it, or how to channel it, trust in Christ immediately blossoms in love toward God and neighbor.

This love is the transition from faith to good works. Love is not the completion of justifying faith but its fruit. In justification, faith clings to Christ—not by loving and hoping, but only by an act of "receiving and resting," in the words of the Westminster Confession.[33] But even faith is not ultimately the greatest gift of salvation. It is now the vital root, because we do not yet have what we hope for (Rom 8:25). Justification is the present verdict of all who trust in Christ. We know how things will turn out with us in the end. But it is quite significant that Paul declares that the most excellent gift is love (1 Cor 13:13).

Love is an attribute of the one divine essence: "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and *each person* of the Trinity expresses that love according to his personal attributes. The Father "so loved the world that he gave his Son" (John 3:16). As for the Son, he himself said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). Yet the Holy Spirit binds us here and now to the Father in love through the mediation of the Son, as we see in the farewell discourse and Jesus's prayer with which it closes. The Holy Spirit is not the love of God, which would hardly distinguish him from the other persons who bear this essential attribute. Rather, we discover the uniqueness of the Spirit once again in the *way that he loves*. The Father extends his love *toward* us, and the Son shows his love *for* us. But "God's love has been *poured into* our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5 ESV). Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, the love of God for us remains outside of us. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us faith, and it is faith that bears the fruit of love, and it is love that bears the fruit of good works.

What endures into eternity is love. There will be no need for faith once we behold the reality. No more promise and trust. We will no longer be dependent on hearing the word and seeing the sacraments ratify the promise visibly. And hope will give way to full sight, to realization. After all of this, into eternity there will be love.

The apostles are absolutely convinced here that love is the ultimate goal of the vertical relation to God and the horizontal communion of saints. Love is the ultimate bond. In the communion of saints, bound together in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," love is the rule. There is to be no proud jockeying for position, backbiting, or devouring one another, precisely because in the new city all of us have everything that we need. But we have not arrived at this perfect city yet. Faith must lead the way to hope in Christ by the powerful working of

the Spirit through the gospel. This kind of love—based on the ultimate perfection of the holy city—cannot be deduced from anything in this present age. Even the church is but a pale reflection of this unity. But it is a reflection. Even now this enduring love begins to blossom from the root of gospel-fed faith. Just as we live in hope because of the certain faith that we are justified and adopted, we love others in hope from the faith that sees our brothers and sisters from the perspective of the age to come. They too are imperfect, but they are coheirs with us of the Father's inheritance in Christ. As we will love Christ without a veil, face-to-face, we will also love these others into all eternity. Let us begin now to bear the fruit of the Spirit, whose greatest issue is love.

In this context, prayer has its inestimable place. Prayer belongs in that nexus of faith-hope-love. Like the cry of a child at birth, the first springs of prayer are that of dependence, lament, need, and trial. Prayer is the filial cry of the child. But one day there will be no more prayer, any more than there will be preaching and sacraments. We will no longer lament, invoke, weep, confess, or long in an inchoate way for the "new song" that God has written for his symphony. It will be the everlasting song in the immediate presence of the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit.

Conclusion

It is worthwhile to pause for a moment to take in the grand vista—the astonishing security that we now have in the new covenant through the ministry of the Spirit. Even after the flood of Noah's day, corruption mounted. "Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years' " (Gen 6:3). Here "abide" could just as easily be translated "strive." "God gave them up," after sending servants like Enoch to preach to them (cf. Rom 1:24, 26, 28 ESV). The Spirit will put up with it for the time being, however, in commitment to the promise to Noah. But the Spirit will only "strive" again within the boundaries of Israel, and eventually even there the Spirit evacuates the sanctuary and leaves the temple and land to be destroyed, a haunt of jackals.

At Pentecost, however, a new creation dawns with the Spirit once again transforming chaos into cosmos. From the rubble he will build not a restored temple of stone but a living sanctuary consisting of "living stones." And now, striving with everlasting tenacity even against our quenching of his righteous

love, he will never abandon his temple. With respect to his anointing as king, David could say after his adultery and murder, “Take not your Holy Spirit from me” (Ps 51:11 ESV). But with respect to regeneration the Lord pledges to his saints, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5 ESV).

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1. John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 130.

2. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 23.

3. Ibid., 157.

4. I am referring to Calvin’s description of the Spirit’s activity in brooding over the waters, cited in chapter 2.

5. See on this point Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 32–33.

6. Ibid., 32.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 33.

9. Ibid., 43.

10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 3.1.1.

11. Martin Luther, “Against the Antinomians,” in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–86), 47:110: “This doctrine is not mine, but St. Bernard’s. What am I saying? St. Bernard’s? It is the message of all of Christendom, of all the prophets and apostles.” Cf. idem, “The Freedom of a Christian,” *Luther’s Works*, 31:351; idem, “Two Kinds of Righteousness,” *Luther’s Works* 31:298, 351.

12. Especially 3.20.1. For the calculation of references to Bernard see François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 127n43.

13. John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2003), 27.

14. Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.1.

15. Ibid.

16. John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, in *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*, trans. Ross Mackenzie, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 8:138.

17. Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Lord's Day 44, Question 114; emphasis added.

21. Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 281.

22. Edith M. Humphrey, *Ecstasy and Intimacy: When the Holy Spirit Meets the Human Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 72.

23. Owen, *Discourse*, 102.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 376.

27. Ibid., 386.

28. Ibid., 394–97.

29. Ibid., 526.

30. Ibid., 562.

31. Ibid., 564.

32. Ibid., 606.

33. Chapter 11.



CHAPTER 9

The Spirit Gives

From the beginning of this study we have been reminded of both the unity and plurality in the Trinity: with respect to the essence, one, with no variation or degree, yet three persons who exhibit their distinct personal properties in every external work. Analogously, the church is one because of the spiritual gifts that all believers share equally and in equal measure. However, also analogous to the divine essence, the church only exists as persons. Thus, it is also diverse, with a plurality of gifts and with varying measures, through which the Spirit builds up the whole body.

The Spirit Distributes the Spoils of Christ's Victory

Again we begin with the broader biblical-theological horizon within which we may better interpret the particular gifts. In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul especially links the doctrine of the church to the ascension of Christ.[1] Here too we see very clearly the apostolic interpretation of the exodus-conquest-rest pattern. The intriguing discussion in this chapter of the distribution of the spoils alludes significantly to Psalm 68.

A song of ascent, Psalm 68 was sung antiphonally as the pilgrims made their way up to the temple mount for worship. It may even have been composed for the inaugural entrance of the ark of the covenant into the sanctuary. In the words of Jewish scholar Jon D. Levenson, Psalm 68 "records a march of YHWH from Sinai, a military campaign in which the God of Israel and his retinue . . . set out across the desert."[2] The worshipers are reenacting this march from Sinai to Zion each time they make this procession at Pentecost.

"May God arise, may his enemies be scattered" is the war cry of the opening verse (v. 1). "O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched

through the wilderness, the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel" (vv. 7–8 ESV). Yahweh is clearly the focus of attention as the chief, even sole, warrior with the Israelites as beneficiaries. There follows the amazing picture of the men sleeping while Yahweh triumphs and the women divide the spoils (vv. 11–13). This is consistent with the narrative of the book of Joshua, where Yahweh is victorious in cleansing the land and giving it over into his people's hand. His people are merely recipients of his spoils. "The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary" (v. 17 ESV). "Sinai is now in the sanctuary" because the ark of the covenant represents in miniature the whole covenant that Israel swore at Sinai.

However, the focus shifts from Sinai to Zion in vv. 18–36. "You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there" (v. 18). Leading captivity captive, ascending, giving gifts to and receiving gifts from even his enemies, crushing the head of the serpent, and dwelling forever in Zion, this is the King who "daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation," from whom alone we receive "escape from death' (vv. 19–23 NKJV).

Therefore, as important as Sinai is in the march, it lies midway between Egypt and Canaan (Zion). The focus shifts from Sinai to Zion, for example, in Psalm 97 (cf. Deut 33:2; Pss 50:2–3; 68:8–9). Levenson explains, "The transfer of the motif from Sinai to Zion was complete and irreversible, so that YHWH came to be designated no longer as 'the One of Sinai,' but as 'he who dwells on Mount Zion' (Isa 8:18). . . . The transfer of the divine home from Sinai to Zion meant that God was no longer seen as dwelling in an extraterritorial no man's land, but within the borders of the Israelite community."[3] And in the Zion traditions, "there will emerge something almost unthinkable in the case of Sinai," an unconditional divine oath that somehow, above all the vicissitudes of human disobedience, God himself will arise and scatter his enemies and save his people. So Zion takes on a cosmic, universal role that Sinai never did. "Not only Jerusalem and the land of Israel, but even the people of Israel can be designated as Zion," as in Isaiah 51:16 and Zechariah 2:11.[4] In the final verses of Psalm 68, the victorious procession of God enters the sanctuary, with kings and nobles from Egypt, Cush, and elsewhere bringing tribute to the Lord of heaven and earth (vv. 29–34). The principalities and powers of darkness are subdued under the feet of the Israel of God. Not only a greater exodus, through Christ's

resurrection, but a greater conquest is anticipated in Psalm 68.

The mission of the seventy-two in Luke 10 is merely a foretaste of the worldwide conquest of Satan and his demonic hosts by the Spirit-empowered witness of millions to Jesus Christ. And, as in the conquest reported in the book of Joshua and Psalm 68, victory will belong to the Lord; his people are merely beneficiaries and heralds. He will gain victory and dispense its spoils to his coheirs. The role of his people is simply to announce the victory and unlock the prison doors. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32 ESV). “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18 ESV). It is not one more rising and falling kingdom that we are building, but “we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken” (Heb 12:28). On the basis of his victory (“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”), his disciples will go to the ends of the earth, unlocking the doors of Satan’s prison by the preaching of the gospel and baptism (Matt 28:18–20). The conclusion of Psalm 68 with the triumphal procession of God and his retinue into the sanctuary is but a faint picture of Christ entering heaven in his ascension, declaring (in the words of Isaiah 8:18), “Behold, I and the children God has given me” (Heb 2:13).

Now back to Ephesians 4. Like the first section of Psalm 68, Paul pictures the church as a people on a march, walking together in unity (Eph 4:1–6). The source of that unity is “one Spirit” (“the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”; v. 3 ESV); “one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (vv. 5–6). Every believer shares equally in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When it comes to Christ and his benefits—including the *gift* (singular) of the Spirit, there are no ranks, hierarchies, or degrees. We are all one in Christ, with no greater or lesser degrees of election, redemption, regeneration, justification, or baptism and sealing by the Spirit (Eph 1–3). All believers share “the inheritance of the saints”: the gift of grace and “the calling to which you have been called” (4:1 ESV). There is no ontological transubstantiation of an ordinary believer into a priest through the infusion of an indelible imprint in ordination, any more than there is an elite class of those who are not only saved but are Spirit baptized. In his ascension, “he led a host of captives” (v. 8 ESV). This is common to all believers.

Yet, in addition “he gave gifts to men” (v. 8 ESV), and these vary according to the Spirit’s apportionment (like the apportioning of the land of Canaan after Yahweh delivered the nations into Israel’s hand). By the first century, the Feast of Pentecost celebrated the giving of the law at Mount Sinai “in the seventy

languages of the world," notes Ferguson.[5] Psalm 68 would almost certainly have been the anthem of the feast in Jesus's day. "But even if that association in Judaism is questioned, a Sinai-Pentecost parallel is established in the New Testament itself."[6] He continues:

> The revelation of God to Moses had been accompanied by fire, wind and a divine tongue (Heb 12:18–21). Moses had ascended the mountain. When he descended he had in his possession the Ten Commandments, the law of God. Christ too had recently ascended. At Pentecost he comes down, not with the law written on tablets of clay, but with the gift of his own Spirit to write the law in the hearts of believers and by his power to enable them to fulfill the law's commands. Thus the new covenant promise begins to be fulfilled (Cf. Je. 31:31–34; Rom. 8:3–4; 2 Cor. 3:7–11).[7]

Interestingly, the Jewish targum reads, "You have ascended to heaven, that is, Moses the prophet; you have taken captivity captive, you have learnt the words of the Torah; you have given it as gifts to men."[8] Regardless of the version Paul had in mind, however, the fulfillment of Psalm 68 bursts the wineskins of promise. Since Moses is merely typological of Christ, the inspired apostle can—and does in fact—change the psalm to reflect the greater redemptive-historical reality. It is not Moses's ascent of Sinai, but the ascension of the victorious Son of God. Instead of *receiving* gifts, God is *giving* them. Paul interprets Psalm 68 in the light of Christ's ascension having actually occurred. Moses ascended Mount Sinai, but Christ has ascended "far above all the heavens," says Paul (Eph 4:10), and his gift is not Torah but grace (v. 7).

Paul sees this as an ideal psalm of ascent for Pentecost, but for a different ascension and a different Pentecost than Judaism recognized. Moses did indeed descend and was barred from entering the promised land. However, Christ descended lower and ascended higher than Moses at Sinai.[9] Where Moses failed even to lead the Israelites into the typological land, Christ took his seat at the Father's right hand as King of kings and Lord of lords. He ascends Mount Zion—the heavenly sanctuary rather than the earthly copy—with captives in his train, to be installed as King of kings and Lord of lords. His filling of the whole cosmos (v. 10) refers not to his physical presence but to the extent of his dominion. And instead of giving the law at Mount Sinai and receiving gifts in

return, this mediator of a better covenant is announcing the gospel and giving gifts to those who did nothing to deserve them.

As the victorious conqueror, he now divides the spoils and showers his people—even erstwhile enemies—with gifts. In his descent (birth), he received gifts from gentile rulers; now in his ascension, he loads down his liberated captives with the spoils of victory. In southern California, birthday celebrations often include a piñata. Filled with candy, the papier-mâché form, often an animal, is struck by children with a stick until it bursts and its treasure is scattered and snapped up eagerly. At his ascension, Jesus Christ burst open the piñata, and the Spirit now distributes the gifts. These are not gifts that we have acquired by our efforts and cultivation but are spoils of Christ's victory. This is pointed up by the repeated phrase, "he gave" (vv. 8, 11; cf. v. 7).

"The Gifts He Gave"

However, the *gifts* (plural) being distributed here by Christ in his ascension refer specifically to offices in the church. Verses 7, 8, and 11 of Ephesians 4 repeat the point: "Has been given," "Christ apportioned it," he "gave gifts," and "so Christ himself gave." The church is always on the receiving end in its relationship to Christ; she is never the redeemer but always the redeemed; never the head but always the body; never the ruler but always the ruled.

The gifts are people—specifically, fellow believers who are set apart as church officers—and yet more specifically, the ministers of the word: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers" (v. 11). Although there are references to the act of shepherding in the NT (using the cognate verb of *poimēn*, "shepherd"), its application to pastoring is used only of Christ in the New Testament (John 10:11, 14; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25). This verse is the only exception. The officers he mentions are associated with the proclamation of the Word, since it is through this gift that the Spirit makes us all cosharers in *the* gift.

The verses that follow (Eph 4:12–13) have in recent decades become the basis for the now common assumption of "every-member-ministry." According to this view, the priesthood of all believers means that every believer must find his or her ministry in the church. The most recent English translations lend support to this interpretation: these officers are given "to equip the saints for the work of ministry . . ." (v. 12 ESV).

Significantly, this rendering is of recent vintage. For example, according to the King James Version's translation of v. 12, these officers are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The key question concerns the best rendering of *katartismon*: Does it mean "to complete/perfect" or "to equip"? That is, does Paul mean that these ministers are given to prepare the people of God for the work of ministry or to complete the people of God by their work of ministry? Briefly, my reasons for favoring the first view are as follows.

First, cognates of *katartizō* are rendered elsewhere as "complete," "perfect," "supply" (e.g., 1 Thess 3:10; 1 Pet 5:10 [KJV; NKJV]), so why not here? Lexically, it can go either way. Only the context can push us toward either "equipping" or "completing." For example, it makes more sense to say that the universe was *created* or *completed* [*katērtisthai*] by the word of God than *equipped* (Heb 11:3). Obviously, Paul is not saying in Ephesians 4 that the ministers create the church, but equipping does not quite work either. Here the building analogy is foremost in his mind, as it is in 1 Corinthians: "We are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Cor 3:9), and the ordinary ministers who follow are building on that foundation (vv. 10–14). The point is stronger in the Greek: "We are coworkers (*synergoi*) of God." The same claim is made in 2 Corinthians 6:1 for the role of Paul and his fellow ministers; they are God's "co-workers" in making his appeal through them. The apostles are the builders, laying the foundation, and everyone else is part of the building being erected. The Great Commission that Christ entrusted to his apostles includes the proclamation of the gospel, baptism, and "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded" (Matt 28:20) Surely more gifts are needed for the proper functioning of the body, but apart from this ministry of Word and sacrament, *there is no church*.

Second, the three clauses form a threefold job description: perfecting the saints, the work of the ministry, and the building up of the body of Christ. Actually, it seems like a use of parallelism typical of Hebrew poetry, where the same idea is repeated in different words. It is the job description of those just named (apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers). By contrast, the more recent rendering breaks the symmetry, with an abrupt shift from "the gifts he gave" (ministers of the word) to the whole body as ministers. In this construction, ministers of the word are the subjects only of the first action ("to equip").

Third, the explicit mention of the ministers of the word at the beginning and

their threefold job description fit best with the effects of their labors: "Until we all attain to *the unity of the faith* and of *the knowledge of the Son of God*, to *mature manhood*, to *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*, so that we may *no longer be children*, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by *every wind of doctrine* . . . (vv. 13–14 ESV). All of these purpose phrases fit naturally with the ministry of the word. Through this ministry, we come to know Christ and are built up into Christ together as complete, being perfected or "put together" as mature believers. As a result of this ministry, the whole body is served, with every member "speaking the truth in love" and being built up in love (vv. 15–16).[10] This is consistent with the apostle's view of his ministry in Colossians 1:28: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature [*teleion*] in Christ" (Col 1:28 ESV).

Paul does not even mention other church officers (e.g., elders and deacons) in Ephesians 4, though he does do so elsewhere. His focus in this passage is on Christ's ongoing ministry, by his Spirit, through the means of grace. This is how the whole body becomes complete and mature in Christ, continuing day by day to grow up into its head instead of being tossed around by fads and heresies (v. 14). Until he returns bodily, Christ is dispensing the spoils of his victory by his Spirit through the word. Even here, the church is on the receiving end of Christ's work; he has gifted ministers to do the work of ministry so that "we all" can become mature in Christ. Other gifts are given for the wider health of the body, as Paul highlights in the fuller list of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, but Paul's focus here is the gift of the ministry of the word by which the Spirit creates and sustains his church.

A church that lacks hospitality or is deficient in gifts of administration or service may be unhealthy, but a church that lacks the faithful proclamation of the word is not a church at all. Recall that this is the epicenter of Pentecost: the Spirit endowed Peter to proclaim the gospel. Peter—who had repeatedly chastened Jesus for his talk of the cross, misunderstanding his mission, and denied Jesus three times, even to a little girl—now proclaims Christ from the Old Testament Scriptures. Throughout the book of Acts, as we have seen, the advance of the kingdom is identified by the announcement that the word of God spread. Ministers proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments, absolving sinners, and this *is* the spread of the kingdom throughout the earth.

The priesthood of all believers therefore means that we are all equal sharers in Christ and his Spirit, but it does not mean that every member is a minister.

There is no ontological subordination, but there is an economic order in the church, as there is in the undivided works of the Trinity itself. As the Pastoral Epistles make evident, some members are called to formal offices of service. The modern trend is a threat not only to more hierarchical ecclesiologies but to the properly New Testament distinction between and equal affirmation of the *general office* (held by all believers from Christ's anointing) and the *special office* (held by pastors, elders, and deacons).

At the same time, a church is unhealthy when it regards its ministers as proxies or substitutes for their own exercise of Spirit-endowed gifts. Having and exercising a gift does not require having and exercising an office. Pastors are called to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments, and elders are called to spiritual oversight (e.g., Acts 14:23; 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1–7; 5:17; Titus 1:5), but all believers are exhorted to teach, exhort, rebuke, encourage, and keep an eye out for each other's spiritual welfare. Indeed, the older members are to take younger members under their wing, without any mention of special office (Titus 2:4). Deacons are entrusted with official acts of hospitality and administration on behalf of the whole body (Acts 6; 1 Tim 3:8–13), but there are myriad opportunities and needs for these gifts in everyday expressions of care by nondeacons (Gal 6:10; Heb 13:2).

The two principal lists of spiritual gifts (Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12) encompass all of the saints. There are not only the gifts of prophesying and teaching and exhorting (Rom 12:6b–8a) but also of generosity, leadership, and mercy (v. 8b). The list in 1 Corinthians also moves from the gifts associated with the ministry of the word (v. 8) to miracles, prophecy, discernment, languages, and their interpretation (vv. 9–10). "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues" (v. 28). In the apostolic church the gift of tongues carried the gospel to foreigners in languages unknown to the speaker; the gift of interpretation translated such speech, and the gifts of healing confirmed the divine authority of this message that has come to us in the form of the canonical New Testament.

After Acts: Sign-Gifts Today

Most of the contemporary debates over tongues, prophecy, and healing turn on whether these gifts continue in our day. In my view, this is a secondary question.

The deeper and primary question is twofold: first of all, what these gifts were in the first place, in their apostolic context; second, why we tend to identify these gifts particularly as the fruit of Pentecost, when the chief evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit was the preaching of the gospel that led so many people to conviction of guilt and trust in Christ. I call it a twofold question because both are inextricably linked. It is clear from Acts that the purpose of the gifts whose continuous operation is disputed were from the beginning in service to the spread of the word. All sides can agree that the book of Acts is filled with signs and wonders attesting to new-covenant revelation. The Pauline epistles refer to the activity of apostles and prophets, as well as to gifts of healing, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

The Nature of Sign-Gifts in the Apostolic Church

First, all of the gifts (charismata) *that the Spirit gives, as identified in Acts and the epistles, are " for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7).* Each must "use it to serve one another" (1 Pet 4:10 ESV). On identifying our gifts, notes Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "such an attitude may betray more of our contemporary Western mentality with its penchant for the specialist than genuine New Testament spirituality."[11] Gaffin continues:

> The way to determine our spiritual gifts is not to ask, "What is my 'thing' spiritually, my spiritual specialty, that sets me apart from other believers and gives me a distinguishing niche in the church?" Rather, the NT on the whole takes a much more functional or situational approach. The question to ask is, "What in the situation in which God has placed me are the particular opportunities I see for serving other believers in word and deed (cf. 1 Pet. 4:10f.)?"[12]

It is not merely that people are different and therefore need different gifts to help them to reach their spiritual goals, but that each of us is given by the Spirit a gift that the whole body needs in order to function properly. In a fuller list of spiritual gifts, Paul teaches that "all these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor 12:11), attesting once again to the divine sovereignty and distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are not given for private gain (as Simon Magus desired, Acts 8:18–19), nor even merely for personal blessing, but "for the common

good" (1 Cor 12:7).

Second, all of the gifts were given, first and foremost, to advance the gospel throughout the world and to build up the saints. They all derive their power from the ministry of the word and serve to propagate that ministry in all sorts of formal and informal ways in word and deed. As we have seen, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles associate the coming of the Spirit especially with the conviction and forgiveness of sins and empowerment for proclamation of this good news. That is why these offices are singled out in Ephesians 4, I have argued above.

I argued in chapter 6 that the miracle of tongues in Acts 2 was the ability of the speakers to proclaim the gospel in a language (or dialect) that they had never learned. If that is the case, then the burden of proof would seem to be on those who would argue that the meaning of the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians is different from the intelligible languages of Acts 2. As Stott argues,

> there is a strong theological and linguistic presumption that the phenomenon referred to in 1 Corinthians is the same. First, the Greek phrases are almost exactly the same, and one of the first rules of biblical interpretation is that identical expressions have an identical meaning. Second, the noun *glōssa* has only two known meanings: the organ in the mouth and a language. There is no linguistic warrant for the NEB rendering 'ecstatic utterance.' This is not a translation but an interpretation. Similarly the verb for the 'interpretation of tongues' means the translation of languages. Third, the whole thrust of 1 Corinthians 14 is to discourage the cult of unintelligibility as a childish thing: 'Brethren, do not be children in your thinking . . ., but in thinking be mature' (verse 20).[13]

Furthermore, in this passage Paul's entire rebuke is based on the perversion of tongues into a private gift that engenders pride rather than a public gift that serves the good of the body and unbelievers. One who desires the gift of tongues "should pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful" (1 Cor 14:13–14 ESV). This is not a description of the proper use of this gift but an argument against tongues without interpretation. Paul is not defining this gift as a private prayer language. Rather, as Stott argues, "It is clear that he simply cannot contemplate Christian prayer and praise in which the mind is not actively engaged."[14] But what about the distinction Paul

draws between edifying the church and the tongues-speaker edifying only himself? It is "irony, if not sarcasm," Stott concludes.[15] If in vv. 13 and 14 Paul is pointing up the deficiency of speaking in tongues without translation, then Stott's conclusion seems likely. To say that the one who speaks in tongues without translation is only edifying himself is a critique, not an exhortation.

What about the gift of prophecy? Once again we should inquire first into the nature of prophecy in the apostolic church. Throughout Scripture, prophecy is given to reveal matters of *public* and not just private significance. Even when prophets receive a particular word for what they are to do and where they are to go and what they are to say, it is not for their own personal use but serves a public purpose. Hosea is told to marry a prostitute not as a private person, establishing a model for expecting a "word from the Lord" about whom one should marry. Rather, God commanded him to do so in order to publish to Israel and, indeed, to the world the relationship that Yahweh has to the rebellious nation. In the New Testament as well, prophecy is public proclamation and interpretation concerning Christ.

Many evangelicals have found persuasive Wayne Grudem's argument that while the inerrant prophecy of Scripture came to an end, the type of prophecy we meet in Acts is still operative. It is not on a par with Scripture but is nevertheless a gift to divine insight and even special knowledge imparted for service today.[16] Aside from exegetical differences I have with this view, my greatest concern is that it affirms continuing prophecy only at the expense of watering down the prophetic office.

It was common among the Puritans to interpret prophecy simply as preaching. In the sense that the proclamation of the Word is the Word of God, I concur. However, I do not see any exegetical support for the identification of prophecy with preaching in apostolic teaching and practice. The prophets in Acts were communicating new revelation. The churches were exhorted to "test the spirits" only because there were false prophets (cf. 1 John 4:1). However, genuine prophecy was neither the ordinary preaching of the Word nor, it seems to me at least, a fallible revelation. I share Stott's conclusion:

> For in Scripture the prophet is primarily neither the predictor of the future, nor the political commentator, nor the lively preacher, nor even the bringer of encouragement, but the mouthpiece of God, the organ of fresh revelation. It seems to be in that sense that Paul brackets 'apostles

> and prophets' as the most important of all charismata (Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28); and in that sense (whatever may be said about subsidiary meanings and ministries) we must say they no longer exist in the church.[17]

In short, "There is no longer anyone in the church who may dare to say, 'The word of the Lord came to me, saying. . . .' "[18] Like many episodes in the book of Acts, not even the example of Agabus (Acts 11:28; 21:10–11) is normative.

Third, some of the spiritual gifts are for the extraordinary ministry of the apostolic era and others for the ongoing ministry of the church after the apostles' death. The seventy disciples who returned to Jesus breathless with joy that even the demons were subject to them in Christ's name had been sent on a unique mission (Luke 10). There is no indication that they were sent out again or that there was a special office ordained for an ongoing ministry. This episode reminds us of the seventy elders appointed under Moses in Numbers 11. They prophesied as a testimony to their endowment for leadership by the Spirit (Num 11:16–17). "And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. *But they did not continue doing it*" (v. 25 ESV, emphasis added).[19] As we saw from 1 Corinthians 14, the gift of tongues is a sign—in this case, a sign of temporary judgment to Jews who reject the new covenant. Does this not suggest a limited purpose, directed specifically at the unique moment in the history of redemption?

The Qualitative Distinction between Foundation-Laying and Construction

The apostles were unique eyewitnesses of Christ (Acts 1:21–22; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8–9). Together with the prophets, the apostles are "the foundation" of the church (Eph 2:20; 3:5). There is a clear and qualitative distinction drawn by the apostles themselves between their extraordinary ministry and the ordinary ministry that would follow. One of the obvious dangers of the "super-apostles" was their claim to a higher revelation of truth than that word delivered through the apostles (see 2 Cor 11:5; 12:11). This was tantamount to laying a different foundation. But this is impossible, Paul replies. "For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 3:11). An ordinary minister then "builds on the foundation," either with quality materials or with "straw" (v. 12). Although the Spirit is free to heal and to advance his gospel by

extraordinary means, there is no *office* (such as apostle or prophet) today to which these sign-gifts can be regarded as normative.

Paul could invoke his direct and immediate calling by Christ, apart from any ordination by the church (Gal 1:11–12). The ascended Christ himself laid hands on Paul and ordained him an apostle, as he had the others before his ascension. Yet Paul counsels Timothy to take courage for his ministry not in a direct vocation from Christ but in the gift that he was given when the presbytery laid hands on him (1 Tim 4:14). As these ordinary ministers follow in the wake of the apostles, the unique sign-gifts (especially tongues, healing, and prophecy) diminish. There is a qualitative distinction between the inauguration of the kingdom (foundation laying) and the erection of the building upon it.

Recall the distinction that I have drawn between God's direct fiat-command in creation, "Let there be . . .!" and his summons, "Let the earth bring forth . . .!" There is a clear transition from prophets and apostles declaring, "Thus says the Lord . . ." under the Spirit's inspiration to ordinary ministers proclaiming God's revealed word from the Scriptures through the Spirit's illumination. So even in creation, the fiat-word (creating something out of nothing) is followed by the Spirit's work of organizing the reality spoken into being into a regular pattern through ordinary processes.

Miraculous signs like these extraordinary gifts cluster around supernovas in redemptive history. They are not typical in the life of God's people. For five centuries, the Hebrews suffered under Egyptian oppression without any fresh word from the Lord or miraculous sign of his favor. Asaph lamented, "We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long. How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?" (Ps 74:9–10 ESV). James D. G. Dunn notes that the Second Temple rabbis believed "that Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were the last of the prophets and that thereafter the Spirit had been withdrawn."[20] Yet with the coming of Christ the climactic movement of redemption was attended by a gushing stream of fresh revelation attested by signs and wonders.

At Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit was a turning point in history, designating subsequent history as "the last days" of this present age. Although there are repeated examples throughout Acts of the same pattern of the preaching of the gospel, conviction of sin, faith in Christ, and baptism, the event of Pentecost itself is qualitatively unique. After Pentecost there is an increasing emphasis on the Spirit's triumph through the spreading of the word rather than through new revelation. With the completion of the canon is the completion of

the foundation-laying era of the apostles. Timothy is called to the public reading and preaching of Scripture (1 Tim 4:13). He is called to "*guard* the good deposit that was *entrusted* to [him]" (2 Tim 1:14), not to add to that canon by further revelations. It is significant that even as a living apostle, Paul could already exhort the immature and hero-worshipping Corinthians "not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another" (1 Cor 4:6). No further revelation is needed, since Christ is God's climactic word (Heb 1:1–2). After the apostolic era, then, the Spirit is at work through the ordinary ministry, making the word effectual in the hearts of sinners.

I am not suggesting that the sign-gifts disappeared after the death of the last apostle. Nor do I dismiss reports of miracles and revelations in extraordinary circumstances even today. But it should be noted, first, that such unusual methods should be considered analogous not to Paul's blinding encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road but to the revelation to Ananias to meet with Paul. Similarly, the Lord gave a special revelation to Peter and Cornelius to meet, but the Spirit was only given when Peter proclaimed the gospel to him. Thus, even in the extraordinary ministry of the apostles, faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Rom 10:17), with extraordinary methods limited to those exigencies that bring hearers to the ministry of the word and baptism. While we should rejoice whenever the Spirit brings the gospel to those who have never heard—through whatever means he uses, we have no biblical warrant for expecting these extraordinary revelations, and in any case we cannot recognize any new revelations that add to the content or deposit of the faith.

While I am not prepared to conclude that miraculous signs have definitely ceased, I am convinced of a key hermeneutical presupposition: the disciples' experience is not paradigmatic for the church. For example, we cannot draw from their experience the idea of two distinct gifts of the Spirit: regeneration and baptism with the Holy Spirit. We do not breathe on new converts to receive the Holy Spirit. We do not administer John's baptism, followed later by a Christian baptism, as occurred in Ephesus (Acts 19). Nor do we expect the Spirit to strike members dead who lie about how much money they put into the offering plate, as happened to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). Sinclair Ferguson writes:

> Their experience is *epoch-crossing*, and consequently *atypical* and non-paradigmatic in nature. By necessity their entry into the full measure of the Spirit's ministry took place in two distinct stages, reflecting a pattern of both continuity (the same Spirit) and discontinuity (only at Pentecost

does he come in his capacity and ministry as the Spirit of the exalted Christ).[21]

These considerations lead me to conclude that whatever use the Spirit may still make of them in his marvelous freedom, the sign-gifts of healing, tongues, and prophecy are no longer normative. It is no less true today that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12 ESV). And yet even in this passage Paul directs us to the armor of the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, gospel shoes, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (vv. 13–17). All of these arms are simply different ways of identifying the gospel as the sole defensive and offensive weapon of the church.

After the Apostles

It is not surprising that by the time a clear New Testament canon emerges, these extraordinary signs begin to fade away like the boosters on space rockets. There is no clear transition, no report of a particular date or decade in which the extraordinary sign-gifts ceased to be normal occurrences. The argument from church history is one of the weakest that can be attempted by either side in the controversy. One obvious reason is that ours is hardly the first epoch to have differing views on the continuation of signs and wonders. Tensions emerged early on between a charismatic ministry and the official ministry of the church to which the former was sometimes tenuously linked. For example, if one were to ask ancient believers whether the era of fresh revelations and miracles had ceased, the late second-century Montanists would offer a quite different answer to the question than the mainstream churches.

With the advent of gnostic and Montanist movements the ancient church became increasingly convinced of the rule that Paul himself invoked: "Do not go beyond what is written" (1 Cor 4:6). While there is a diversity of verdicts among the early fathers concerning the sign-gifts (e.g., speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healings), by the mid-second century there was a growing consensus that they were fading.[22] By the time of John Chrysostom, such gifts were seen by many to have come an end.[23] But all agreed that the fruit of the Spirit continue to the end of the age and that love endures forever.

We do not need another Pentecost any more than we need another incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, or ascension. Rather, we need to tilt our personal and collective sails into the wind that still blows from the Spirit's presence among us here and now. He is no less present today than he was in first-century Jerusalem. God has been building his church by his word and Spirit ever since the promise that he gave to Adam and Eve after the fall (Gen 3:15). And he has often attested his word by miracles. It is these miracles, chiefly our Lord's resurrection from the dead through the power of the Spirit, that certify the truth of the gospel.

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1. The introductory section of the following commentaries offer, to my mind, compelling arguments in favor of Paul's authorship: Stephen M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016); Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1–3*, AB 34 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974); Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002); Peter T. O'Brien, *Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

2. Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1987), 19, concurring with W. F. Albright's dating of this Psalm to the 13th–10th centuries BCE.

3. Ibid., 91.

4. Ibid., 137.

5. Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 61.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Quoted in Andrew Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 243.

9. Moses's ascent to the top of Mount Sinai had, by the first century, been exaggerated into a legend of Moses's ascension into heaven. The sources are few and murky (e.g., the pseudepigraphical Assumption of Moses), and we should be wary of overstating the extent to which he might have had this idea in mind. In

any case, for Paul, even if the legend were true, Moses ascended into heaven but Jesus ascended "above the heavens." Knowledge of the legend may be reflected in Jude 9.

10. Thus, as Lincoln argues, it is "hard to avoid the suspicion that opting for the other view is too often motivated by a zeal to avoid clericalism and to support a 'democratic' model of the Church . . ." (*Ephesians*, 253).

11. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 52.

12. Ibid.

13. John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, IVP Classics (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 145–46.

14. Ibid., 147.

15. Ibid., 148–49.

16. Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000).

17. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 131.

18. Ibid., 130.

19. I discovered this suggestion in Raymond B. Dillard, "Intrabiblical Exegesis and the Effusion of the Spirit in Joel," in *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*, ed. Howard Griffith and John R. Muether (Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 2000), 93.

20. James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 135.

21. Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 80, 82 (emphasis added).

22. See Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, Milestones in Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 1:65–72.

23. Ibid., 72n36.



CHAPTER 10

How the Spirit Gives

Along with exploring the distinctness of the Spirit's person and operations in the external works of the Trinity, my goal in this study has been to highlight the ways in which the Holy Spirit is identified in Scripture with not only—or even primarily—that which is extraordinary, spontaneous, and chaotic, but with creating faith, beautiful order, knowledge and wisdom, and love with its fruits even through ordinary creaturely means. Taking up the relationship of the Spirit to the means of grace, this chapter is an important link between the gifts that the Spirit gives to us as individual believers by uniting us to Christ and his role in simultaneously uniting us to his body, the church.

On no other point, in my view, is the Spirit's work more misunderstood than with regard to the manner of his operation in the life of believers. *Anything* can happen when the Spirit shows up according to common perception, and we may especially expect the Spirit to throw the institutional church into disarray with his extraordinary and spontaneous activity. Restricting the Spirit's agency, power, and presence to the "fireworks," however, deprives us of the joy of recognizing his role in our everyday lives. As we have seen, God sometimes works directly and immediately, as in the fiat command, "Let there be light!" but he also is at work within creation to bring about its appropriate response to his declaration, "Let the earth bring forth. . . ." The Spirit is at work within creation in both ways, by commanding life out of death in regeneration but also by empowering us daily to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. And as in all of his works, the Spirit ordinarily uses creaturely means to accomplish both types of operations.

We have seen recurrently how the Spirit's work is associated with ordering, structuring, building, growing, and maturing. Far from being the antithesis to order, discipline, and institutional structure, it is the Spirit who indwells creation and turns a chaos into a cosmos. It is the Spirit alone who makes these weak creaturely vessels his means of reordering human existence. They are his beachhead for the ground campaign—or, to use a more domestic analogy, it is

through them that the Spirit turns a condemned building into a lavishly furnished home. His renovating work is often disruptive but always ultimately constructive. He divides and separates, cutting us away from this dying age, but only to unite us to Christ and his body. The Spirit is at work in these last days not to stir people to ecstasy and spontaneous convulsions but to put things right in a world of violently competing wills and aversion to the good, the true, and the beautiful. He reorders our loves, so that we will set our hearts on the Giver rather than his gifts. He gives wisdom and understanding, illuminating our hearts to receive, proclaim, and obey his word.

The Spirit apportions the spiritual gifts won by Christ according to the Father's map, just as he apportioned the inheritance of Canaan according to each tribe—indeed, as even he divided creation into ordered realms and placed each under its own creature-king, with Adam as his viceroy over all. Rule, subdue, bring order, defend, guard, and keep the sanctuary: these recurring job descriptions given to Adam and Eve and to the priests of Israel are now perfectly fulfilled in Christ, and we share in his royal and priestly anointing by the Spirit who empowered Christ in his vocation. It is not a top-down ordering, like the despotic or bureaucratic powers of our age, but inside out. Curved in on ourselves "in Adam," we are made by the Spirit ecstatic in the proper sense "in Christ," filled with awe and delight and the power to truly live in and as part of his new creation.

Chaos is not a sign of the Spirit's presence and blessing. The Spirit establishes order and unity, building the church up into Christ through preaching and teaching, baptism and the Supper, and he gives a diversity of gifts for the church's common life, discipline, worship, prayer, and witness. It is the Holy Spirit who appoints elders in the church (Acts 20:28). He authorizes specific elements of public worship through inspired apostolic injunctions. "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints," Paul reminded the chaotic and immature Corinthians (1 Cor 14:33 KJV). The Spirit delivers Christ to us not just anywhere and in any way but where and how he has promised. Although he is free to work outside of his covenanted mercies, we are assured of his saving blessings and presence only where he has been promised to us. If we identify the Spirit only with the unexpected and irregular, we will miss most of the times and places where he actually meets us.

The Spirit *versus* the Means of Grace

The Reformers identified the church as "a creature of the word."[1] They did so over against the late medieval church's explicit reversal: the word is the creature of the church. Yet they also deployed this maxim against the Anabaptists. If Rome reduces the Spirit's work to its magisterial agency, the radicals separated the Spirit's work from the ordinary ministry of the visible church. For the Anabaptists, the Platonic dualism between matter and spirit was mapped onto the New Testament contrast between the flesh and the Spirit.[2] Everything external, ordered, ordinary, structured, and official was "man-made" as opposed to the internal, spontaneous, extraordinary, informal, and individual testimony of the Spirit within. The secret, private, and inborn "word" was contrasted with the "outer word that merely beats the air."[3]

As soon as Origen in the early third century, the anthropological dualism of spirit and body cuts all the way down: Spirit and letter, inner and outer, eternal and temporal, kernel and husk.[4] Going beyond Origen, the early Anabaptist leader Thomas Müntzer promised "a higher knowledge than other people" of the truth.[5] Lacking new revelations, he said, ministers "gobble whole the dead words of Scripture and then spit out the letter and their inexperienced faith (which is not worth a louse) to the righteous, poor, poor people."[6] Instead, "The office of the true shepherd is simply that the sheep should all be led to revelations and revived by the living voice of God. . . ."[7] The true, secret, and inborn "word" (in contrast to the "outer word" of Scripture and preaching) "arises from the abyss of the soul" and "springs from the heart."[8] Thomas Finger's conclusion is clear enough from these examples that "Müntzer proclaimed a kingdom of the Spirit that no longer relied on the external Word or church."[9]

Sebastian Franck said he considered the Bible an "eternal allegory." Searching for contradictions in the text, he argued that "the 'outer word' of the historical narratives of the Bible demonstrated its own absurdity," notes Florian Ebeling.[10] "In the Protestant understanding of scripture, in its maxim of sola scriptura, Franck thus saw a 'paper pope.' For him, 'inner word' alone was the basis of faith and the unobjective and thus undogmatic foundation of human affairs," leading to "a radical eclecticism."[11] Scripture is needed by children, he said,

> until, as adults and those advanced in Christ, we can turn our backs on everything external, understanding no one and knowing nothing according to the flesh, but being already carried over into the Spirit, we have the Holy Spirit as the living Book of God, and are instructed of God by the one true teacher of the godly. . . . The solid food of the perfect does not come from Scripture. . . . For Scripture is only a witness or testimony to truth for those who are taught by the Spirit. . . .[12]

With the church fathers, the magisterial Reformers held the Word and Spirit in the closest relation. The Spirit is necessary, not only in inspiration but in arriving at the conviction of its truth, they argued. Yet over against the view of the enthusiasts, Reformed theology never conceived of this inner testimony of the Spirit as another source of revelation alongside Scripture. The Spirit's witness adds nothing to the content of revelation; rather, the Spirit inwardly illumines the heart to understand its meaning and convinces people of its truth. Just as Christ's saving person and work are outside of us (*extra nos*) while the Spirit works within us, the external Word proclaimed is never to be set over against the Spirit's work in our hearts to cause us to cling to Christ by his Word of promise. We require both, since we are not only condemned objectively but are in bondage subjectively to spiritual death, incapable of embracing the truth apart from regeneration.

"However," notes Kuyper, "this testimony does not work by magic."

> It does not cause the confused mind of unbelief suddenly to cry out, "Surely the Scripture is the Word of God!" If this were the case, the way of enthusiasts would be open and our salvation would depend again upon a pretended spiritual insight. No, the testimony of the Holy Spirit works in an entirely different way. He begins to bring us into contact with the Word, either by our own reading or by the communication of others. Then He shows us the picture of the sinner according to the Scripture, and the salvation which mercifully saved him; and lastly, He makes us hear the song of praise upon his lips. And after we have seen this objectively, with the eye of the *understanding*, He then so works upon our *feeling* that we begin to feel ourselves in that sinner, and to feel that the truth of the Scripture directly concerns *us*. Finally, He takes hold of the will, causing the very power seen in the Scripture to work in us. And when thus the whole man, mind, heart, and will, has experienced the

> power of the Word, then He adds to this the comprehensive operation of assurance, whereby the Holy Scripture in divine splendor commences to scintillate before our eyes.[13]

Minus the ecstasy, the radical Protestant spirit continued into modern (liberal) Protestantism, for the most part indirectly, in the privileging of personal experience over doctrine; the authority of an internal word over the external canon; moral earnestness over evangelical proclamation, and setting divine and human agency in opposition.[14]

But the same contrasts have long been evident in non-Pentecostal evangelicalism. For example, Baptist theologian Stanley Grenz encouraged a retrieval of the movement's pietist roots over against the Reformation and post-Reformation emphases. "In recent years," he wrote, "we have begun to shift the focus of our attention away from doctrine with its focus on propositional truth in favor of a renewed interest in what constitutes the uniquely evangelical vision of spirituality."[15] Other familiar contrasts appear in his *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*: "creed-based" versus "piety" (57), "religious ritual" versus "doing what Jesus would do" (48), with priority given to "our daily walk" over "Sunday morning worship attendance" (49), and individual and inward commitment over corporate identity (49–53). "A person does not come to church to receive salvation," but to receive marching orders for daily life.[16] He adds, "We practice baptism and the Lord's Supper, but understand the significance of these rites in a guarded manner." They are "perpetuated not so much for their value as conduits . . . of grace from God to the communicant as because they remind the participant and the community of the grace of God received inwardly" and are part of "an obedient response."[17]

Given the history of enthusiasm, Wade Clark Roof 's findings are hardly surprising when the American sociologist reports that "the distinction between 'spirit' and 'institution' is of major importance" to spiritual seekers today.[18] "Spirit is the inner, experiential aspect of religion; institution is the outer, established form of religion."[19] He adds, "Direct experience is always more trustworthy, if for no other reason than because of its 'inwardness' and 'withinness'—two qualities that have come to be much appreciated in a highly expressive, narcissistic culture."[20] This opposition, often assumed more than defended explicitly, is paradigmatic for much of contemporary spirituality across

traditions. Tragically, this false choice between the Spirit's work and external means divides the church between enthusiasm and formalism.

THE SPIRIT VS. EXTERNAL MEANS

The Spirit	**External Means**
Immediate (working *apart from* means)	Mediate (working in the heart *through* means)
Individual	Corporate
Internal, secret, subjective	External, public, objective
Disorderly, spontaneous/sudden	Orderly, gradual
"Living" (Spirit)	"Dead" (Letter)
Obvious/measurable results	Promised long-term results often imperceptibly realized

It is not difficult, working from this assumed dualism, to drift toward "enthusiasm" on one side and "formalism" on the other. Following the Tübingen school of F. C. Bauer, Adolf von Harnack was merely continuing the tradition of radical Protestantism rather than magisterial Reformers when he attributed the whole tradition of creedal Christianity to the Hellenization of the faith under the auspices of "Catholicism."[21] According to Harnack, there are signs of this in the New Testament itself, but for the most part he believed that this was a postcanonical development. Appeals to the Spirit often have fueled departures from Scripture and the ordained structures of church office, worship, discipleship, and outreach.[22]

However, at the same time that New Testament scholars are closing that gap between the first Christians and the formation of the canon, some evangelical and Pentecostal scholars are locating the "ossifying" tendency in the New Testament traditions themselves. For example, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen says that as early as "the last part of the Christian Bible, the Catholic Epistles," it seems that "the charismatic, dynamic, and surprising elements of the Spirit's ministry

are either absent or marginal."[23] Instead, the emphasis begins to fall on the "inspiration of Scripture and gifting to the ministry ('ordination'), which lean toward structures and institutionalization."[24] This is a difficult case to make, since the charismatic element and the orders and offices arise in complete unity already in the very early Pastoral Epistles and also in the book of Acts composed after the Catholic Epistles.

I think that much of the polarization on this topic today is due, ironically, to a shared assumption of this erroneous conception of how the Spirit works. If some churches marginalize the Spirit in favor of the institution and its forms, others react simply by making the opposite choice. However, there are myriad ways of domesticating the Spirit besides assimilating his sovereign work to formalism. If some render the Spirit an ecclesiastical employee, others presume to make the Spirit a mascot for a movement or a prisoner of their own private experience.

As Roman Catholic theologian Yves Congar notes, pressing a false choice between the church as institution and as a charismatic community of the Spirit has been a perennial challenge from the earliest days.[25] With the creation of the Eucharist at the hands of the priest, who by virtue of the sacrament of ordination had the power to perform the miracle of transubstantiation, and the efficacy of the sacraments guaranteed (barring no obstacles being placed in its path) simply by administering the rites (*ex opere operato*—"by doing it, it is done"), there seemed little for the Holy Spirit to do. And, as Calvin complained, the gradual addition of sacraments in the Middle Ages compromised the significance of the two that Christ had appointed.[26] Even Yves Congar points out that in the early church baptism and confirmation (sealing with the Holy Spirit) were one and the same event.[27] He adds, "There can be no doubt that this sacrament is in an unstable state at present. How can the one who celebrates it claim to be able to 'give the Holy Spirit'?"[28] Furthermore, the miracle was conceived as an infusion of created grace—a spiritual substance that acted medicinally on the soul. The indwelling of the uncreated Spirit was included in this infusion, of course, but seems more like an ingredient than the efficient agent.

Yet Paul's contrast in 2 Corinthians 3 between the "killing letter" and the "life-giving Spirit" has been a staple of radical mystical sects. Interpreted in more ontological terms as correlative to that which is associated with matter versus that which is inward and spiritual, the warfare between flesh and Spirit could only take the form of a battle with the creaturely means of grace as the

imposition of an external bondage. Luther wrote in the Smalcald Articles:

> This is what [Thomas] Müntzer did and what is done today by very many people who want to be judges discerning between the spirit and the letter, and who do not know what they are saying or teaching. Papism is also pure enthusiasm, since the Pope claims to 'keep all laws in the casket of his heart' and since everything that he decides and commands with his Church is spirit and must be regarded as just, even if it goes beyond Scripture or the spoken word and is contrary to them. . . . That is why we have the right and we are obliged to insist that God is only able to enter into a relationship with us men through the external word and the sacraments. Everything that is said of the Spirit independently of this word and the sacraments is the devil![29]

In this context Calvin wrote daringly to Cardinal Sadoleto, "We are assailed by two sects: the Pope and the Anabaptists." Conceding that the comparison sounds counterintuitive at first, the reformer explains that both appeal to ongoing special revelation based on the idea of a continuing apostolic office. In this way, both separate the Word from the Spirit and "bury the Word of God in order to make room for their falsehood."[30] The Reformers charged the radicals with "enthusiasm"—meaning, literally, "God-within-ism." Why do you need a visible church and its external ministry when your inner self is a spark of divinity and God speaks directly to us in the depths of our hearts?

To this separation of the Word from the Spirit Calvin counters, "For the Lord has so knit together the certainty of his Word and his Spirit that our minds are duly imbued with reverence for the word when the Spirit shining upon it enables us there to behold the face of God; and, on the other hand, we embrace the Spirit with no danger of delusion when we recognize him in his image, that is, in his Word."[31] The formula that Calvin employs is "inwardly, by his Spirit; outwardly, by his Word."[32] Pentecostal theologian Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen notes:

> The stress on the relation of the Spirit to the Word (and sacraments) meant that, by and large, the Magisterial Reformers preferred to speak of the fruit of the Spirit over the charismatic gifts. It is easy to understand why: both the Anabaptists and Roman Catholics often elevated the role of healings, prophecies, visions, and other charisms above the Word and

sacraments; at least that was the perception of Luther and Calvin.[33]

The chief motive for the Reformers' reaction was not a proto-Enlightenment aversion to the miraculous but their conviction that any Spirit severed from his Word is other than the third person of the Trinity. They were opposed to any metaphysical dualism which undermines the logic of the incarnation if not the incarnation itself.

In 2 Corinthians 3 the apostle is contrasting *covenants*, not *spheres*. Or, to put it differently, we have Paul's "two ages" rather than Plato's "two worlds." The old covenant belongs to this fading age, depending as it did on the weak arm of the flesh—human obedience to Torah. It has served its role, pointing to realities that it could nevertheless never bring into existence. Only with the arrival of the Spirit is the new creation breaking into this present age through the gospel.[34] Apart from the brooding of the Spirit over the darkness and void of our soul, we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1 KJV).

As Kuyper explains, in Scripture "flesh" refers to "*the whole human nature*" under sin; in fact, "flesh in this sense refers more directly to the soul than to the body."[35] After all, Satan and his demons are bodiless spirits.[36]

> The difference between divine and human life gives Scripture its uniqueness and precludes antagonism between its letter and its spirit, such as a false exegesis of 2 Cor. 3:6 might suggest. If the Word of God were dominated by the falsehood that has crept into our hearts, and in the midst of our misery continues to place word and life in opposition as well as separation, then we would take refuge in the standpoint of our dissenting brethren, with their exaltation of the life above the Word. But we need not do so, for the opposition and separation are not in the Scripture.[37]

Setting the Spirit over against the Word and the sacraments is no more sensible than contrasting the carpenter with his or her hammer. The Holy Spirit "regenerates us by the Word," as working with an instrument.[38] "Therefore instead of being a dead-letter, unspiritual, mechanically opposing the spiritual life, it is the very fountain of living water, which, being opened, springs up to eternal life."[39]

This defense of the Spirit's operations through creaturely means should not lead us to a general theory of the sacramentality of creation. In an effort to affirm the goodness of creation, it is often argued that everything is a medium of God's saving revelation. The difficulty with this view lies not in its appropriate affirmation of created matter as capable of being taken up by God as a means of grace. After all, affirming this point is a major burden of this chapter and, indeed, much of what I have said thus far. Rather, the problem lies in failing to distinguish common grace and saving grace, general and special revelation. The world displays God's invisible attributes and his law, but only the gospel reveals his way of salvation.[40] The world is not intrinsically holy and revelatory of saving grace. Rather, God freely and deliberately sets apart certain elements of his creation in the act of binding us to himself. It is his use—that is, his word and promise—that makes them holy, and the Spirit's agency that makes them effectual.[41] While creation announces God's manifold wisdom and power, the gospel is a surprising announcement that God made after humans had rebelled against God and his natural order. This gospel must be brought by a herald. God himself must tell us where to find him: in the manger, at the cross, and at church.

On the one hand, therefore, we should avoid assimilating the Spirit to the means of grace as if they were the efficient cause of saving blessings. On the other hand, we should not separate what God has joined together. It is worth elucidating these two extreme tendencies in order to know how best to address them.

Ex Opere Operato: Assimilating the Spirit to the Means of Grace

The danger of an *ex opere operato* view of the church's agency is by no means limited to Roman Catholic theology. In reaction against sectarian enthusiasm, churches of the Reformation have sometimes created their own formalism, as if merely by going through the motions of being baptized, attending sermons, being confirmed and made a full member, receiving the Eucharist, and so forth, one was united to Christ by true faith. The church's confession and liturgy may be treated as guarantors of authentic ecclesial existence apart from any need to invoke the Spirit.

Further, in the historical context of rising nation states, Protestant churches

were often established by the secular authority. It is difficult to imagine a greater domestication of the Spirit to the powers of this present age.

Nevertheless, there are other ways to domesticate the Spirit, even in free churches, including Pentecostal and charismatic traditions. Ironically, it has often been the case that even in the name of celebrating the Spirit's work over against the institutional church and its ministry, such groups have simply substituted new methods as means of grace in the place of the public ministry of Word and sacrament. Particularly through the influence of Anglo-American revivalism, there has been a discernable tendency to combine the familiar "enthusiast" critique of the ordinary means of grace with a nearly *ex opere operato* view of alternative methods. The efforts of Charles G. Finney (1792–1875) illustrate this point.

First, he marginalized the means instituted by Christ. The Great Commission just said, "Go," said Finney. "*It did not prescribe any forms*. It did not admit any. . . . And [the disciples'] object was to make known the gospel in the *most effectual way* . . . so as to obtain attention and secure obedience of the greatest number possible. No person can find any *form* of doing this laid down in the Bible."[42] This is a curious statement especially in light of the fact that the means appointed explicitly by Christ in the Great Commission are preaching, baptism, and discipline.

Second, having "liberated" the Spirit from the ordinary ministry, Finney bound the Spirit even more tightly to his own invention: the so-called "new measures." The title of one of his most popular sermons, "Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts," summarizes his theology. A revival, healings, and other extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit can be planned, advertised, and staged. In quite explicit terms Finney placed the Spirit squarely within the control of the individual and especially the clever evangelist who could devise "methods calculated to induce the greatest number of conversions."[43] He added, "A revival is not a miracle or dependent on a miracle in any sense," but "is simply a philosophical result of the right use of means."[44] Where the Heidelberg Catechism reminds us that "the Holy Spirit creates faith in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments,"[45] Finney devised methods of his own that were, to his thinking, more effective. Of course, these new rituals wear off, and ever-new excitements are required to move people to the next level of obedience.

So, ironically, the declaration of independence from ordained means

occasioned something close to an *ex opere operato* conception of the efficacy of new methods authorized merely by the evangelist's creativity. A kind of deism emerged even while extolling the Spirit's freedom from the institutional church and its official ministry. Conversion was transformed into a series of steps that ensured the new birth. One obvious innovation was the "anxious bench," which evolved into the "altar call," where the convicted came forward to be born again. Having fulfilled the new rite, they were assured that they were in a state of grace. Much like the Roman Catholic rite of penance, this ceremony could be repeated in the case of backsliding, or what Thomas Aquinas called "a second plank after a shipwreck."[46]

In much of evangelical piety, as sociologist James D. Hunter observes, the experience of grace is reduced to formulas, steps, and procedures.[47] There are myriad guides with titles such as *How to Be Born Again* or *Four Steps to Receiving the Holy Spirit*, in which little if any mention is made of baptism, preaching, the Supper, and formal church membership while the prescribed steps are offered as effectual means of salvation and growth in a cause-and-effect manner as anything in Roman Catholic practice. Furthermore, invoking business models and marketing principles, church-growth manuals frequently have exhibited a mechanical approach: by following such principles (effective for the church as for any business) success is ensured. Nature abhors a vacuum, and these enthusiastic movements demonstrate that where divinely ordained methods are marginalized, new ones take their place—often attended by a more mechanical (*ex opere operato*) assumption of their effects.

More recently, within neo-Pentecostal circles there has arisen a spiritual technology that does not even seem to require God's involvement: there are spiritual laws just as there are physical ones, and if one follows the prescribed procedure God is bound to deliver the required goods. "Name it, claim it" is yet another version of *ex opere operato*, but with little or no connection to the promises that God has made or the means through which he has promised to deliver them. Miracles turn out to be natural effects of natural causes. Like the deist's Architect or benign Providence, God's role seems to reach no further than to have set up the spiritual laws of the cosmos in a certain way so that if we follow the correct principles and procedures, miracles are inevitable. Even where such extravagant versions of spiritual technology are eschewed, the question may be legitimately raised as to the Spirit's necessary role in a religious approach that sociologist Christian Smith has described as "moralistic,

therapeutic deism."[48]

In all of these ways, there is a common weakness. We can assume at least in practice that if we believe, do, or experience the right things, whether ordinary or extraordinary, whether divinely ordained or not, the Spirit is under our control, like the genie in Aladdin's lamp. The invocation of the Spirit is no longer required, since we know that the Spirit is at work wherever the right officers, ceremony, doctrines, or techniques are employed.

The Spirit *and* the Means of Grace

It is not a question of the Spirit *versus* creaturely means, but of the Spirit's normal operations *through* them—as in the Spirit's hovering over the waters in creation to fill them with life to his association with rods and staffs, tabernacles, oil, animal sacrifices, and sacred meals. In his ministry, the sign of Jesus being the promised Servant of the Lord on whom the Spirit rests is that he preaches the gospel to the poor (Matt 11:5).

Jesus could have immediately healed the blind man in John 9, but instead he spoke his word. "Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud" and told him to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. The man returned with joy, able to see (vv. 6–7 ESV). God not only assumed our flesh but delighted to use *earth and spit* for his miraculous sign. (Did he not make us from the dirt in the first place?) The Spirit raised Jesus's dead body to life and will do the same for all whom he has united to Christ (Rom 8:11). After the resurrection, Jesus came to his disciples and declared, "Peace be with you" and commissioned them as his apostles: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld' " (John 20:20–23 ESV).

In all of these instances the Spirit works through the audible word that Jesus speaks, the visible signs that Jesus performs, and, now, through the preaching and sacraments delivered by his ministers. Radical mystics have typically pointed to John 6 where Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all," but the next sentence reads: "The *words* that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63 ESV).

The Spirit *and* the Word

Congar accurately summarizes that while Luther and Calvin rejected an *ex opere operato* conception of the sacraments, they refused to separate the Spirit from the means of grace. "Both Reformers kept to a middle road, or rather a synthesis, and each in his own way insisted on a close relationship between an external 'instrument' of grace . . . and the activity of the Spirit."[49] The Spirit attaches his ordinary operations to these means not because he cannot work apart from them but because we need to know where God has promised to meet us in grace rather than in judgment.

Alongside his strong emphasis on the union of Word and Spirit, Luther underscored the Spirit's operation. "Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on him, and obtain him for our Lord," we read in his Larger Catechism, "unless it were offered to us by and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the gospel." He adds, "Where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Ghost who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord."[50] Similarly, Calvin warns against setting the Spirit over against the external Word.[51] Yet the effect belongs to the Spirit. This is reflected even in the Old Testament typology, he argues: "The tabernacle was sprinkled with oil, that the Israelites might learn that all the exercises of piety profited nothing without the secret operation of the Spirit."[52] The Spirit works in us inwardly, personally, individually, and secretly but through the external, public, and corporate means of grace.

This is the consistent teaching also of the ancient fathers. For example, Gregory of Nyssa observes that the water in baptism and the bread and wine in Communion, ordinary substances, are only made means of grace by the Spirit, who works where he will "by some unseen power and grace."[53] Not only were we saved by the incarnate God hanging on a wooden cross; "a bramble bush showed to Moses the manifestation of the presence of God: so the remains of Elisha raised a dead man to life; so clay gave sight to him that was blind from the womb."[54] So too in baptism "it is not the water that bestows [grace] (for in that case it were a thing more exalted than all creation), but the command of God and the visitation of the Spirit that comes sacramentally to set us free."[55]

Lutheran and Reformed traditions place special emphasis on the *preached* Word, since "faith comes from hearing . . . the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17

ESV). Through this proclamation Christ himself is present among us by his Spirit, dispensing his gifts. The Spirit's work is distinguished but not separated from the external means he employs. Since we cannot be saved by anything within us, introspection is insufficient. Just as we need Christ, outside of us, to redeem us, we need an external gospel addressed to us by him through a fellow sinner. The Westminster Larger Catechism explains:

> The Spirit of God maketh the reading, *but especially the preaching* of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of *driving them out of themselves*, and drawing them unto Christ, of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.[56]

It is not only the message but the method that *drives us out of ourselves*, which of course an "inner word" cannot do. Through the very creatures that he has made, God the Spirit draws us out of our self-enclosed existence to look up in faith to God and out to our neighbor in love.

If faith comes by the preaching of the gospel, and preaching is an inherently social event, then the effect of the preached word as the primary means of grace is not individualism but real community. Faith does not arise spontaneously in one's soul but in the covenantal gathering of fellow hearers. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer explains:

> If there were an unmediated work of the Spirit, then the idea of the church would be individualistically dissolved from the outset. But in the word the most profound social nexus is established from the beginning. *The word is social in character, not only in its origin but also in its aim*. Tying the Spirit to the word means that the Spirit aims at *a plurality of hearers* and establishes a visible sign by which the actualization is to take place. The word, however, is qualified by being the very word of Christ; it is effectively brought to the heart of the hearers by the Spirit.[57]

Even baptism and the Lord's Supper derive their efficacy from this proclaimed gospel. From beginning to end, the church always remains a "creation of the word." Bonhoeffer observes:

> To summarize, the word is the sociological principle by which the entire church is built up . . . both in numbers and in its faith. Christ is the foundation upon which, and according to which, the building of the church is raised (1 Cor. 3; Eph. 2:20). And thus it grows into a "holy temple of God" (Eph. 2:21), and "with a growth that is from God" (Col. 2:19), "until all of us come to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), and in all this growing "into him who is the head, into Christ." The entire building begins and ends with Christ, and its unifying center is the word.[58]

The preaching creates the community, while the Supper, by evoking personal acceptance through faith, makes that community in some sense visible—or better still, audible.[59] "Sometimes men are called, and so regenerate, in an extraordinary manner, as was Paul," John Owen noted. "But mostly they are so in and by the use of ordinary means, instituted, blessed, and sanctified of God to that end and purpose.[60]

It is certainly true that the Spirit must operate within our hearts to convince us of the truth of his Word.

The Spirit was given to the apostles to bring to mind all that Jesus had said and to reveal "things to come" (John 14:17; 16:12–13 KJV). The Spirit is not a freelance operator, generating fresh stages of revelation in these last days, but is working in the hearts of the unregenerate to bring them to faith and in the hearts of the regenerate to illuminate their understanding *through the Word*. "The work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration doth not consist in enthusiastical raptures, ecstasies, voices, or any thing of the like kind," noted John Owen, "but by and according to his word, both of the law and the gospel."[61]

Rome binds God to earthly means, he argues, while the Anabaptists disallow that God can freely bind himself to them.[62] Scripture teaches that preaching and the sacraments are instruments, while the Spirit remains the agent.[63] To convey the efficacy of the means of grace, Calvin often uses the Latin verb *exhibere*, which means to present, confer, or deliver. The same view is summarized later in the Westminster Standards, referring to the sacraments as "effectual means of salvation."[64] Christ, who descended to us in the incarnation, still descends to us by his Spirit through the Word, lifting us up to himself and the Father.

The Spirit and the Eucharist

Recall that Jesus's discourse on the Spirit (John 14–16) occurred in the context of the institution of the Supper. It is not surprising that the Reformed (minus Zwingli and, to a large extent, Bullinger) turned to pneumatology in their reflections on the meaning of this sacrament. Feeding on Christ is not a mere metaphor, as Jesus makes evident in John 6:55–56, and "Christ's body and blood" are not merely symbolic expressions. "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation [*koinōnia*] in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor 10:16 ESV). The sacrament is not an object lesson, a visible confirmation of an intellectual theory. The sign and seal belong to the world of politics, not religion per se. The Great King has certified to his subjects (indeed, his children) his reign over them as Savior and Lord.

According to Hebrews 6 it is a measure of God's rich provision that even those in the church who are unregenerate, receiving the signs but not the reality, and therefore fall away (v. 9), are nevertheless beneficiaries of the Spirit's ordinary operations in the church. Through preaching they "[taste] the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age" and through the Supper they "[taste] the heavenly gift" (vv. 4–5), even if they do not truly feed on Christ by faith.

In treating the farewell discourse directly (chapter 5), I observed that the context for the sermon was the institution of the Supper. The discourse and the sacrament both emphasize three crucial points: (1) Christ has truly departed from us in the flesh until he returns; (2) he is still present among us; (3) the Holy Spirit is the one who unites us here and now to the glorified Savior and indwells us as a pledge of final redemption. The Eucharist places us at the busy intersection between the powers of this age and the age to come, the "not yet" and the "already," the continuing ministry of Christ in heaven and of the Spirit in leading the ground campaign.

So it is not surprising that it was in the Eucharistic debates where the Reformation revealed quite different paradigms for understanding the Spirit's relation both to Christ and to creaturely means. At the Eucharistic altar, "all laws of nature are suspended," wrote Pope Leo XIII, and "the whole substance of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ," including his physical organs.[65] I have written at some length on the Word and the sacraments elsewhere.[66] In the balance of this chapter, though, I want to focus on the

Eucharist as a paradigm for a broader understanding of the relation of the Spirit to the means of grace, particularly by considering Calvin's contribution.

According to Catholic theologian Brian Gaybba, "with Calvin there is a rediscovery—in the West at any rate—of a biblical idea virtually forgotten since patristic times. It is the idea of the Spirit as God in action."[67] Of the Reformers, Kärkkäinen observes that Calvin's theology was the most thoroughly pervaded by pneumatology.[68] B. B. Warfield claimed that Calvin is "pre-eminently the theologian of the Holy Spirit."[69] J. I. Packer concurs, but only if one adds that this focus on the Spirit's work is "read Christocentrically."[70] Nowhere is the Reformer's pneumatological emphasis more concrete, pervasive, and persuasive than in his treatment of the Supper.

A close student of the church fathers, Calvin was influenced significantly by Augustine, along with Tertullian, but also by Irenaeus, the Cappadocians, and Chrysostom, among others.[71] The second-century bishop Irenaeus had countered the gnostics by emphasizing the redemptive-historical character of revelation, with the salvation of our humanity through the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Christ. In this scheme, the Holy Spirit came to the fore in more distinctly personal terms over against the gnostics' vague idea of "spiritual" reality. The third-century theologian, Origen, had interpreted the gospel within the categories of Middle Platonism-Neoplatonism. This included the metaphysical (rather than eschatological) opposition between flesh and Spirit, with the goal of escaping this world as human (especially bodily) existence.[72] Although it is a generalization, these two figures—Irenaeus and Origen—represent distinct and antithetical trajectories in patristic piety. Like Luther, who claimed to have "put Origen back under the ban" in his debate with Erasmus on free will, Calvin was ill-disposed to the Origenist trajectory and drew considerably on Irenaeus.

In the sixteenth century some Anabaptist leaders returned directly to Origen's principal ideas.[73] Among the magisterial reformers, though, there was still considerable debate. Zwingli maintained a friendship with Erasmus, sharing a fondness for Platonist philosophy and, at least early on, for Origen.[74] W. P. Stephens notes that the Zurich reformer's emphasis fell on "Christ as God rather than Christ as man."[75] These differences between Luther and Zwingli became especially evident at their fateful meeting at Marburg in 1529. Agreeing on

fifteen out of sixteen propositions, their breach turned on the Supper.

Zwingli heartily emphasized Christ's bodily ascension, but like Erasmus he argued that Christ's physical absence from us is of little consequence, since he is omnipresent in his deity.[76] Zwingli wrote, "Christ is our salvation by virtue of that part of his nature by which he came down from heaven, not of that by which he was born of an immaculate virgin, though he had to suffer and die by this part."[77]

It is hardly surprising that Luther heard such statements as a separation of Christ's divine and human natures (the Nestorian heresy), threatening the reality of the incarnation. If it is true that in Christ "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9 ESV), how can his humanity be regarded as extraneous to our salvation? For his part, Zwingli considered Luther to be a Monophysite, confusing Christ's two natures by his argument that he can be present *bodily*, *at every altar* because his divine attributes (such as omnipresence) can be communicated to his human nature.

Other Reformed leaders such as Martin Bucer distanced themselves from Zwingli's teaching and achieved a brief agreement with Luther at the Wittenberg Concord (1536), but it was the younger theologians—especially Peter Martyr Vermigli and John Calvin—who developed what became the settled Reformed teaching. Calvin expressed his debt to Peter Martyr Vermigli as they both, together with others, contributed to the formulation found in the Reformed confessions and catechisms.[78] According to Vermigli, to suggest that a true communion with Christ's body and blood, and therefore of the whole body with each other in their Head, is impossible apart from Christ's bodily presence on earth is to deny the clear apostolic teaching that the Spirit has seated us with Christ in heavenly places.[79]

Calvin also heard Zwingli's teaching as Nestorian. Zwingli's view of the Supper is "wrong and pernicious," he warned.[80] Most basically, Calvin fears that Zwingli's view strikes at the heart of our union with Christ's saving humanity, which is so central to his own thinking.[81] "It would be extreme madness to recognize no communion of believers with the flesh and blood of the Lord. . . . The flesh of Christ is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain that pours into us the life springing forth from the Godhead into itself."[82] "For in his flesh was accomplished man's redemption," he argues elsewhere.[83] When we receive the bread and the wine, says Calvin, "let us no less surely trust that the body

itself is also given to us."[84] The signs are "guarantees of a present reality: the believer's feeding on the body and blood of Christ."[85] Otherwise, faith becomes a "mere imagining" of Christ's presence—an ascent of mind that was characteristic of Origen and which he attributed to Zwingli.[86]

Lewis Sperry Chafer doubtless spoke (and speaks) for many evangelicals today when he wrote that "the Scriptures seem to support the memorial view, and rather than the elements containing or symbolizing the presence of Christ, they are instead a recognition of His absence."[87] Not even Zwingli would have gone quite as far in his expressions, but he did come close to regarding the Eucharist as the site of Christ's absence; precisely in its celebration we look backwards and forwards, but with no *present* participation in his true body and blood. What we do now in the Supper is remember and anticipate, but the purpose for it now—in between Christ's two advents—is to testify to our faith and to bind ourselves to the community of saints. This caused all but the most loyal friends of Zwingli to gasp. Against the Zwinglian comparison of the Eucharist as looking at a picture of a friend, Vermigli replied that "a friend being grasped by thinking and kept in mind does not change the thinker or nourish the mind, nor does he restore his flesh to become capable of resurrection. And what one has in a mirror is the faintest shadow, which should not be compared to that union which we have with Christ." Christ's presence "has the power of the Holy Spirit joined to it, coupling us most closely with him."[88] The Supper not only assures our minds, Calvin asserts, but "secures the immortality of our flesh" which is "even now quickened by his immortal flesh."[89]

Apart from the ascension in the flesh, says Calvin, we are robbed of Christ's likeness to us; we lose the significance of the Spirit's role in uniting us to the ascended Christ, and the reality of Christ's bodily return is called into question. Yet, ironically this questioning of Christ's true humanity is precisely the problem that Calvin saw in the views of Rome and Luther. In an otherwise edifying Eucharistic hymn, Thomas Aquinas extols, "Sight, touch, and taste in thee are each deceived."[90] This certainly was not the case when the risen Christ presented his body to the earlier Thomas's inspection (John 20:27–28). Of course, Aquinas did not hold that at the words of consecration Jesus does not return to every altar in *exactly* the same way that he will return at the end of the age. Yet after all of the qualifications, *who* exactly is present? And if the attributes of Christ's deity can overwhelm his humanity, so that he can be

universally present *bodily*, then how do we interpret a number of passages that clearly indicate Jesus's real departure and his bodily return "in the same way" that the disciples saw him leave (Acts 1:11)? Whatever the transformation involved in his glorification, Jesus clearly teaches in the farewell discourse that he is leaving, and that they will be deprived of his physical presence *on earth*. But it is just at this point that he presents the Spirit as the one who will mediate his presence on earth. Jesus did not tell his disciples in the farewell discourse that he would not really be leaving, since his divinity so penetrates his humanity that he can be omnipresent bodily. Nor did he tell them that he would be returning every time the priest performed the miracle of transubstantiation. At the same time, he did not say that it did not matter that he was leaving since they will finally recognize his omnipresent divinity and be able to hold him in their memory.

Explaining away Christ's ascension in the flesh not only calls into question his humanity that he shares with us but also the significance of the Spirit's operations. Jesus said, "It is to your advantage that I go away . . ." (John 16:7 ESV). However, where for Zwingli this was because it revealed his omnipresent deity, Calvin emphasized Jesus's own explanation: "For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7 ESV). The whole thrust of this farewell discourse is his ascension and the sending of the Spirit. Calvin says, "I willingly confess that Christ is ascended that he may fill all things; but I say that he is spread abroad everywhere by his Spirit, not by the substance of his flesh."[91] Calvin complains of his critics, "For thus they leave nothing to the secret working of the Spirit, which unites Christ himself to us. To them Christ does not seem present unless he comes down to us. As though, if he should lift us to himself, we should not just as much enjoy his presence!"[92] Similarly, Irenaeus said that the gnostics "do, in fact, set the Spirit aside altogether."[93]

Rather than pursue dubious christological solutions, Calvin—like Irenaeus—pointed to the Holy Spirit.[94] Catholic theologian Douglas Farrow suggests that Calvin, like Irenaeus, "found it necessary to reckon more bravely than the other reformers with the absence of Christ as a genuine problem for the church. It is *we* who require eucharistic relocation."[95] Instead of moving from Eucharist to ascension, Calvin moved in the other direction, and this led him to stress "the particularity of Jesus without sacrificing sacramental realism." This "forced him to seek a *pneumatological solution* to the problem of the presence and the

absence" (emphasis added).[96]

In contrast with the Zwinglian approach, Calvin could affirm with Paul as well as Augustine the most intimate bonds between Christ and his church. Further, to be united to Christ is to be in communion with his body. It is not the ascent of the lonely soul, Plotinus's "flight of the alone to the Alone."[97] As the true humanizing of believers, recapitulation is also the true socializing of the anticovenantal "disengaged self."[98]

Like Irenaeus, then, Calvin returns our focus to the economy of redemption: the actual history of Jesus of Nazareth from descent (incarnation and his earthly ministry of redemption), to his ascension and heavenly ministry, to the parousia at the end of the age.

> To maintain a real absence is also to maintain a real continuity between the saviour and the saved. All of this demonstrates that Calvin had a better grasp on the way in which the Where? question is bound up with the Who? question. That indeed was his critical insight into the whole debate. Calvin saw that neither a Eutychian response (Jesus is omnipresent) nor a Nestorian one (absent in one nature but present in the other) will do, since either way Christ's humanity is neutralized and his role as our mediator put in jeopardy. It is the God-man who is absent and the God-man whose presence we nevertheless require. . . . A "species of absence" and a "species of presence" thus qualify our communion with Christ, who remains in heaven until the day of judgment. It is *we* who require eucharistic relocation.[99]

It is sometimes said that the Reformed view affirms a *spiritual* presence of Christ in the Supper. However, this is to miss Calvin's point and to return to the spirit-matter problem that plagued the other views. The presence of Christ cannot be divided into "spiritual" and "physical." It is not the presence that is spiritual in Calvin's thinking; rather, the manner in which we receive the whole Christ is *by the Spirit*. It is the Spirit who seats us together with Christ in heavenly places. Thus, Reformed Christians confess that the Supper not only "reminds you" but "assures you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all his gifts"[100] and that what we receive by faith in the Supper is "the true body and true blood of Christ."[101]

Calvin did not invent a new understanding of the Supper. Nevertheless, I share Julie Canlis's judgment: "The radical—even watershed—role that Calvin gave to the Spirit in the Lord's Supper cannot be overstated. As had not been done since perhaps the patristic writers, Calvin attempted to take seriously the pneumatological dimensions of presence: the Spirit is not the Pentecostal replacement *for* Christ but the way *to* him."[102] Calvin says, "In sum, God comes down to us so that then we might go up to him. That is why the sacraments are compared to the steps of a ladder."[103] Canlis observes, "The problem with medieval sacramentalism, in Calvin's opinion, is that it reversed the direction of the ladder."[104] She adds, "If human life has been brought 'up' into God without change or confusion and our 'partaking' of his very humanity is raising us up into God's triune *koinōnia*, then we see just how essential the Eucharist is as a confirmation of Calvin's doctrine of participation."[105]

What Adam lost was communion with God, from which flowed all the blessings of life, righteousness, and dignity.[106] Grace is not a medicinal substance infused into the soul to elevate it toward the supernatural, as medieval theologians had argued,[107] but the favor and gift of the Father, in the Son, and by the Holy Spirit. As incarnate, the Son "is near us, indeed touches us, since he is our flesh."[108] It is not just in his divinity that Christ is life-giving, Calvin says. As the eschatological firstfruits, his humanity is "pervaded with fullness of life to be transmitted to us" and this is why "it is rightly called 'life-giving.' "[109] And the source of that life is not the *created grace infused*, as Rome teaches, but the *uncreated Spirit indwelling*. Not everyone in the Reformed tradition has found Calvin's case compelling, particularly regarding the energies of Christ's glorified humanity giving life to believers, both in soul and body.[110] However, to a large extent these writers misunderstand the patristic sources from which Calvin, Vermigli, and the Reformed orthodox were drawing. It is not that the virtue or power of Christ's humanity is giving strength to our bodies in a temporal manner. Rather, the Holy Spirit is taking what belongs properly to Jesus and making it ours, endowing us—in body and soul—with eschatological life in anticipation of the resurrection. I am convinced that the more we face the reality of the ascension and our Lord's own explanation of how the Spirit would establish our eschatological communion with him, the greater will be our appreciation for the Word and the sacraments as the means appointed for his

genuine signs and wonders ministry.

The Spirit and Baptism

The sacraments are so identified with the reality that circumcision was called simply "the covenant," just as Jesus designated the cup he raised in the upper room as "my blood of the covenant" (Matt 26:25–28). Paul called the crucifixion "the circumcision of Christ" (Col 2:11 ESV).[111] It was he of whom Isaiah prophesied, "that he was *cut off* out of the land of the living, *stricken* for the transgression of my people. . . . [H]e bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors" (Isa 53:8–12 ESV). United to Christ in his circumcision-death, the baptized too come under God's sword of judgment. "It is a judicial death as the penalty for sin," says Kline. "Yet to be united with Christ in his death is also to be raised with him whom death could not hold in his resurrection unto justification."[112] And as Peter affirms, baptism, foreshadowed by the salvation of Noah and his family in the flood-ordeal, "now saves" not by cleansing the body but "as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God" (1 Pet 3:21–22). "Now conscience has to do with accusing and excusing; it is forensic. Baptism, then, is concerned with man *in the presence of God's judgment throne*."[113] Here, as in the exodus, we are reminded by the prophet of the eschatological nature of both the water and fire ordeals:

> But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. (Isa 43:1–3 ESV)

Together with the preached Word, the baptism of the Spirit is associated in the New Testament with water baptism. The precise nature of this association is a further question, but it is important to take the texts at face value. There are a number of passages where exegetes are divided, usually along ecclesiastical lines. Some are eager to assert that these passages that refer to washing and regeneration do not refer to water baptism. Others are equally emphatic that

water baptism is in view. Examples of such passages are the following:

- Titus 3:5–7 ESV: God "saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing [*loutron*] of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
- Romans 6:3–4 ESV: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."
- 1 Corinthians 12:13 ESV: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."
- Colossians 2:11–12 ESV: "In [Christ] also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."
- Galatians 3:27 ESV: "For as many of you as were baptized in Christ have put on Christ."
- Ephesians 4:4–5 ESV: "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism."
- 1 Peter 3:21–22 ESV: "Baptism, which corresponds to this [the salvation of Noah and his family from the flood through the ark], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him."

It seems to me that the burden of proof rests on those who interpret such verses as having nothing to do with water baptism. After all, both sides generally acknowledge that water baptism is in view in Acts 2:38. Yet when the crowd responded to Peter's Pentecost sermon, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (v. 37), Peter answered, "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*." It is not a particular spiritual gift that Luke intends here, but the person of the Holy Spirit himself. "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (v. 41 ESV). The people received forgiveness of sins and the Spirit through faith, as this faith clung to the word of promise as certified in baptism.

When Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus's teaching on the new birth, "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Jesus upbraids Nicodemus: "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?" (v. 10 ESV). Indeed, Nicodemus should have known God's promise from Ezekiel 36:25–27: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean. . . . And I will give you a new heart. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you." Jesus's words to Nicodemus remind us that the water itself does not save, apart from the Spirit. Yet it would seem odd for Jesus to mention water *and* the Spirit if by "water" he simply meant the Spirit. Why would the one who healed the blind man with dirt and spit have any difficulty in attaching water to his promise?

Furthermore, Paul relates that Christ has "cleansed [the church] by *the washing of water with the word*" (*katharisas tō loutrō tou hudatos en rhēmati*, Eph 5:26 ESV). "One baptism" ranks alongside "one Lord, one faith" as the defining mark of the church (Eph 4:5; cf. 1 Cor 12:13). Just as there are not two baptisms with the Spirit—one for the average believer and the other for supersaints, there is no indication in the New Testament that water baptism is separated from baptism with the Spirit. The deliverance of Noah and his family through water is typological of the greater deliverance: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 3:20–21 ESV). This baptism always involves water and the Word, administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:13; Luke 3:21; John 1:31; 3:5; 4:1; Acts 8:36–37; 10:47).

On the one hand, it is undeniable that baptism is treated in the New Testament as a means of grace. That is, baptism is God's promise-making act and gift. God "saved us," Paul told Titus, "not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5 ESV). The "washing" here is inward to be sure, but only a gratuitous theological objection leads us to qualify these statements as having nothing to do with water baptism.

On the other hand, it is just as clear that not all who are baptized with water receive the Holy Spirit and are regenerated. In my view, the writer to the Hebrews speaks of those who were baptized ("enlightened," an early-church term for baptism). They regularly heard the Word—to the point even of tasting its goodness and "the powers of the coming age"—and received the Supper ("tasted the heavenly gift") and yet they "[fall] away" (6:6). One answer is to say that this warning is merely hypothetical. However, the claim here is that there are actual people who fall away. Does this mean then that they have lost their salvation? This conclusion seems excluded when the writer adds, "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—*things that belong to salvation*" (v. 9 ESV).

Who are these, then, who in some sense taste but do not drink, are baptized with water but not evidently with the Spirit, who share in the common operations of the Holy Spirit in the covenant community but are not indwelled personally by him, and taste the goodness of the Word and the powers of the age to come but are not saved? The writer tells us: they are like "land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it," but bears only thorns and thistles and is "near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned" (vv. 7–8). They are not among those who have actually received the reality signified: "Things that belong to salvation" (Heb 6:4–9 ESV). The final section anchors our confidence in the Abrahamic covenant and the priesthood of Christ in the order of Melchizedek, in distinction from the Sinai covenant that Israel swore and the Aaronic priesthood (vv. 13–20).

Then in chapter 10, the writer warns, "Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?" (vv. 28–29 ESV). Clearly, the person in view is not an outsider but a covenant member. The writer calls upon them to remember their baptism—"after you were enlightened"—and their initial love and service to the brothers and sisters being persecuted (vv. 32–34 ESV). "Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward" (v. 35 ESV). He adds, once again to distinguish his readers from apostates, "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls" (v. 39 ESV).

Those who are deprived of the blessings of baptism, worship, instruction in the family and the church, profession of faith, and Communion are not apostates,

since they are outside the covenant from the start. But those who have received these covenantal blessings and yet turn aside are "like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal" (12:16 ESV).

In Acts 10:44–45, the Spirit is given to the gentiles: a localized Pentecost for those "far off" (cf. 2:39). Peter preached to the gentiles and "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word" (v. 44). They had received "the gift of the Holy Spirit" and then were baptized (vv. 45–48). There are similar intervals in Acts 8 and 19 between the pouring of the Spirit, yielding faith in Christ, and water baptism. Although they are not normative, they at least distinguish between baptism (the sacrament) and the gift of the Spirit (the reality). As Russian Orthodox theologian Sergius Bulgakov comments, "And this occurred *before* and independently of baptism, so that Peter could do no more than testify: 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?' (10:47)."[114] Similarly, Roman Catholic scholar Yves Congar notes in this instance that "the baptismal rite does not appear as the direct means (or rather the instrumental cause) of that gift [of the Spirit]."[115] Just as one could be circumcised outwardly under the old covenant and yet uncircumcised in heart, the same is possible in the new covenant. Yet a distinction does not entail a separation.

We must therefore put together these entirely harmonious passages that treat baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit in the closest possible connection while recognizing that they are distinguished. Those who receive the reality *through* the promise that is signified and sealed in baptism are saved; those who do not embrace the reality are under a curse. This distinction-without-separation characterizes much of mainstream patristic teaching. For example, Basil the Great wrote:

> Thus baptism signifies the putting off of the works of the flesh, as the Apostle says. . . . The Lord who gives us life also gave us the baptismal covenant, which contains an image of both life and death. The image of death is fulfilled in the water, and the Spirit gives us the pledge of life. . . . The water receives our body as a tomb, and so becomes the image of death, while the Spirit pours in life-giving power, renewing in souls which were dead in sin the life they first possessed. This is what it means to be born again of water and Spirit: the water accomplishes our death, while the Spirit raises us to life. . . . If there is any grace in the water, it

> does not come from the nature of the water, but from the Spirit's presence, since baptism is not a removal of dirt from the body, but an appeal to God for a clear conscience [1 Pet 3:21]. . . . We are also able to distinguish between the grace that comes from the Spirit and mere baptism in water.[116]

There is simply no way to wrest baptismal regeneration *ex opere operato* from such passages.

Another important figure in the Christian East, Simeon the New Theologian (949–1022) wrote, "It is by the Holy Spirit that everyone experiences . . . the resurrection that takes place every day of dead souls, a spiritual regeneration and resurrection in a spiritual fashion."[117] Baptism initiates us into the mystery of salvation. However, "If one is not baptized in the Holy Spirit, one cannot become a son of God or a co-heir of Christ."[118] He adds elsewhere that one should "learn that not all those who are baptized receive Christ through baptism, but only those who are strengthened in faith" by which they apprehend the reality: Christ with his benefits. Or again: "Those who received your baptism in early infancy and who have throughout their lives lived unworthily of you will be more severely condemned than those who have not been baptized . . . since it is not only 'by water' that grace comes, according to your words, but rather 'by the Spirit,' in the invocation of the Holy Trinity."[119]

Like the scribes and Pharisees, Simeon says, some prelates of his day wish "to be considered worthy to be entrusted with the task of binding and loosing" when they should hear the words of Christ. The "key of knowledge" that they had taken away was "the grace of the Holy Spirit given by faith," which opens "the door," which is "the Son." The Spirit opens the door of our hearts to embrace Christ.[120] Simeon did not set the Spirit over against the church and the visible means of grace, but underscored that the latter were only effectual in the power of the former.[121]

All of this suggests that members of the visible church in the new covenant are in exactly the same place as old covenant believers in this sense. One may be united outwardly to Christ and his visible body and yet not be a living branch of the vine. "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring" (Rom 9:6–7 ESV). The means of grace retain

their objective validity regardless of human response. The Word of God remains the Word of God, and water baptism is administered truly to the reprobate as well as the elect. However, the Spirit works when and where he will, granting faith to receive the reality presented through the sign and seal. “But if some of the [original] branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot [gentile], were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you” (Rom 11:17–18 ESV). No less than in the Old Testament, there is no salvation apart from faith. Hearing Christ preached, being baptized, and taking Communion are not substitutes for faith but are the means through which the Spirit gives us faith and confirms our faith to the end.

As the Heidelberg Catechism summarizes, “The Holy Spirit creates faith in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.”[122] God truly promises and gives Christ with all of his benefits through these means, but only those who receive the gift in faith share in the reality itself. As signs and seals of the covenant, the sacraments oblige the human partner to faith and obedience. However, baptism and the Supper are first and foremost means of grace because they are the sacraments of the covenant of grace. In instituting circumcision, Yahweh pledges, “And *I will establish my covenant* between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generation for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your offspring after you” (Gen 17:7 ESV). Circumcision will not only symbolize this promise but will ratify each recipient of his entitlement to it: “So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant” (v. 13). It was the “sign” of their justification (v. 11). The intratrinitarian covenant of redemption is realized in the covenant of grace by the union of believers to the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit. Hence, we are commanded by Christ to baptize in the name of all three persons of the Trinity. “For this reason we obtain and, so to speak, clearly discern in the Father the cause [*causa*], in the Son the matter [*materia*], and in the Spirit the effect [*effectio*] of our purgation and our regeneration.”[123]

Similarly, an adult convert is justified the moment he or she trusts in Christ, but this justification is sealed or ratified by baptism. The choice, then, is not between salvation by grace through faith and salvation by sacraments; rather, the latter signify and seal the former. Precisely for that reason they must not be withheld from entitled recipients (Gen 17:14). Furthermore, just as the old

covenant sacraments promised grace and threatened judgment for those who did not receive the reality signified, the New Testament provides the same dire warnings (1 Cor 10:1–22; 11:27–32; Heb 4:1–13; 6:1–12).

This line of argument suggests that baptism itself does not effect regeneration or any other grace in an automatic (*ex opere operato*) fashion. Rather, baptism is a visual confirmation of God's act of communicating his covenant promise. It achieves its intended effect when and where the Spirit chooses. "The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment wherein it is administered," according to the Westminster Confession, "yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred, by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will in His appointed time."[124] In fact, Reformed theology and piety emphasize the perpetual significance and efficacy of baptism for the whole life of believers.[125]

Conclusion

The point here is that we need Christ not to continue his incarnate existence on earth right now but to continue his incarnate existence in heaven—glorified as our Head, subduing enemies by his Word and Spirit, interceding for his church, and preparing a place for us in his everlasting kingdom. Christ *has* united himself to our flesh in the power of the Spirit; *now* it is we who need to be united to his glorified humanity in heavenly places.

> But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim). (Rom 10:6–8 ESV)

The last thing that we should attempt is to "bring Christ down" whether by assimilating him to the church or to its ministry of Word and sacrament. Rather, he is present at the right hand of the Father and present in his Word and sacraments—as the whole Christ: yes, even bodily—precisely because it is his Holy Spirit who unites us to Christ and deepens that union.

The Spirit prepared a natural body for his Son, and because of Pentecost he is preparing Christ's ecclesial body taken "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). Along with the Word and baptism, the *sacramental body* in the Eucharist is the means by which the Spirit is uniting us to the *natural body* (Jesus himself in heaven) and thereby building an *ecclesial body* of Christ on earth.[126]

Assuming these categories, John Owen expresses a typically Reformed approach to the pneumatological constitution of the church as Christ's body: "The dispensation and work of the Holy Ghost in this new creation respect, first, *the Head of the church*, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his human nature, as it was to be, and was, united unto the person of the Son of God. Secondly, it concerns the members of that *mystical body* in all that belongs unto them as such."[127] Although the Spirit formed the natural body of Jesus "by an act of infinite creating power, yet it was formed or made of the substance of the blessed Virgin."[128] Similarly, the Spirit forms a bride for the Son not from the substance of angels but from the flesh and blood of the human race. "And this belongs unto the establishment of our faith, that he who prepared, sanctified, and glorified the human nature, the natural body of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, hath undertaken to prepare, sanctify, and glorify his mystical body, or all the elect given unto him of the Father."[129] Finally, "It is the Holy Spirit who supplies the bodily absence of Christ, and by him doth he accomplish all his promises to the church. Hence, some of the ancients call him, 'Vicarium Christi,' the Vicar of Christ, or him who represents his person, and discharges his promised work: *Operam navat Christo vicariam*."[130]

If we want to know where the Spirit is at work today, we should look not to the high places, the extraordinary, where so-called wonders are not signs that point beyond themselves to Christ in his saving office. Like the Son in his incarnation, the Spirit is to be found actively at work in the low places, where he descends and has promised to supply Christ with all of his benefits. The Spirit still hovers over the lifeless waters to make them teem with life. We find the Spirit only where Christ has promised to be present for us in gift-giving joy rather than in terrifying majesty. It is the Spirit who made the eternal Son "haveable" in his incarnation: the Lord of Glory wrapped in swaddling clothes. And it is the Spirit who makes him "haveable" for us now, through lowly means, although he is ascended bodily at the right hand of the Father.[131]

Consequently, we can know where the Spirit is at work powerfully in the world: wherever this word is proclaimed and taught faithfully in ever-expanding witness, and where people are receiving the signs and seals of this saving word in baptism and the Supper. These are the signs and wonders of new-covenant ministry through which the Spirit gives life and growth to Christ's body.

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1. I explore this at length in *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 37–98.

2. Thomas N. Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 563.

3. See for example, Thomas Müntzer, "The Prague Protest," in *The Radical Reformation: Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Baylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2–7; idem, "Sermon to the Princes," *Radical Reformation*, 20. Cf. Thomas N. Finger, "Sources for Contemporary Spirituality: Anabaptist and Pietist Contributions," *Brethren Life and Thought* 51.1–2 (2006): 37.

4. Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973). See Hans-Jurgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, trans. Trevor Johnson (London: Routledge, 1996), 49, on "spirit and letter."

5. Müntzer, "Sermon to the Princes," 20; see also idem, "The Prague Protest," 9.

6. Müntzer, "Sermon to the Princes," 20; see also idem, "The Prague Protest," 6.

7. Müntzer, "Sermon to the Princes," 20; idem, "The Prague Protest," 6–7.

8. Müntzer, "Sermon to the Princes," 20; idem, "The Prague Protest," 9.

9. Finger, "Sources for Contemporary Spirituality," 37.

10. Florian Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times*, trans. David Lorton, Cornell Paperbacks (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 82. Cf. Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 35.

11. Ebeling, *Secret History of Hermes*, 82.

12. Quoted by Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 36.

13. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 193.

14. F. C. Bauer, for example, argued that the apostle Paul used "the term, 'spirit' . . . to denote the Christian consciousness. This consciousness is an 'essentially spiritual principle, which forbids him [a Christian] to regard anything merely outward sensuous, material as in any way a condition of his salvation. . . . Thus the spirit is the element in which God and man are related to each other as spirit to spirit, and where they are one with each other in the unity of the spirit' " (F. C. Bauer, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine* [London: Williams and Norgate, 1875], quoted in John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 4). Levison adds and quotes the sentiment of Herman Gunkel: "The relationship between divine and human activity is that of mutually exclusive opposition" (5).

15. Stanley Grenz, *RevisioningEvangelicalTheology:AFreshAgenda forthe21stCentury*(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 56. Cf. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission*, ed. Amos Yong (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), 9–37. In all of these cases, a "pneumatic hermeneutics" is put forward as a way of attaining rapprochement with Rome.

16. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*, 49.

17. Ibid., 48.

18. Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 23.

19. Ibid., 30.

20. Ibid., 67.

21. Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1902), 2:48–60, following a long line of "Arian" polemic; see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*, vol. 1 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 194–98.

22. "What the Spirit is saying to us today" over against scriptural and creedal norms is a common refrain in mainline churches and movements. Taking as its theme, "Come Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation," the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra in 1991 seemed unclear about which "spirit" it had in mind. See Lawrence E. Adams, "The WCC at Canberra:

Which Spirit?" *FirstThings* (June 1991), https://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/06/005-the-wcc-at-canberra-which-spirit.

23. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Introduction," in *Holy Spirit and Salvation: The Sources of Christian Theology*, ed. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), xvi.

24. Ibid.

25. Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, Milestones in Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 2:11–15.

26. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 4.19.8.

27. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:105.

28. Ibid., 3:106–7. But then Congar also goes on to argue against infant baptism (106).

29. Martin Luther, "Smalcald Articles," in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 3.8.

30. John Calvin, "Reply by John Calvin to Cardinal Sadoleto's Letter," in *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, ed. Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 1:36.

31. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.9.3.

32. See, for example, *Institutes*, 2.5.5.

33. Kärkkäinen, "Introduction," xx.

34. Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 300.

35. Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 254.

36. Ibid., 255.

37. Ibid., 57.

38. Ibid., 58.

39. Ibid., 59.

40. I take this to be a serviceable summary statement of Paul's argument in Romans 1:18–3:20.

41. As Luigi Gioia observes with respect to Augustine's teaching, "Even in

the Incarnation, the divinity of Christ is not visible, which is why he was crucified—neither the Jews nor the Romans knew what they were doing." With respect to Old Testament theophanies, he writes: "Augustine insists on the miraculous character of these events: 'These are properly called miracles and signs' " (Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's* De Trinitate [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 108–9, reflecting on *De Trinitate* 3.19). Even the appearance of the dove or fire was, like these, a sign of the Spirit—not an incarnation (Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 112).

42. Quoted in Michael Pasquarello III, *Christian Preaching: A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 24.

43. Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revival*, ed. W. G. McLoughlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 12–13, 17.

44. Ibid.

45. Lord's Day 25, Question 65.

46. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols. (Baltimore: Christian Classics, 1981), III.84.6.

47. James D. Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 75.

48. Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, coauthored with Melinda Lundquist Denton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

49. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:138.

50. As found in Article III in *Luther's Large Catechism*, trans. F. Samuel Janzow (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), 73.

51. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.6.

52. Ibid., 2.223, on Exodus 30:23–25.

53. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Baptism of Christ* (*NPNF*^{2} 5:519).

54. Ibid., 5:520.

55. Ibid., 5:519.

56. The Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 155, in the *Book of Confessions* (Louisville: PCUSA, 1991), emphasis added.

57. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, ed. Joachim von Soosten and Clifford J. Green, trans.

Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 158 (emphasis added).

58. Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 247.

59. Ibid.

60. John Owen, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, in vol. 8 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 213.

61. Ibid., 224–25.

62. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.5.

63. Willem Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, trans. William J. Heynen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 53.

64. See Westminster Confession of Faith 27; Shorter Catechism 91–93; Larger Catechism 161–64.

65. Pope Leo XIII, "Mirae Caritatis," in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1995), 524.

66. Michael Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 35–152; *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 751–826.

67. Brian Gaybba, *The Spirit of Love: Theology of the Holy Spirit* (London: Goeffrey Chapman, 1987), 100, quoted by Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 321n43. With Levering, I agree that this is an overstatement. Nevertheless, it points up the extent to which even non-Reformed readers of the Reformer recognize him as a significant figure in the history of pneumatological reflection.

68. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 83n93. In *The Holy Spirit and Salvation: The Sources of Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), Kärkkäinen adds, "One of the lasting theological contributions of the Geneva Reformer is his pneumatological framing of the sacraments" (176).

69. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1956), 484–87. He explains, "In the same sense in which we may say that the doctrine of sin and grace dates from Augustine, the doctrine of satisfaction from Anselm, the doctrine of justification by faith from Luther—we must say that the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is a gift from Calvin to the church."

70. J. I. Packer, “Calvin the Theologian,” in *John Calvin*, ed. G. E. Duffield, Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology (Abingdon, Berkshire: Sutton Courtenay, 1966), 169.

71. See Irena Backus, “Calvin and the Greek Fathers” in *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Later Medieval and Reformation History*, ed. Robert J. Bast and Andrew C. Gow (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Johannes Van Oort, “John Calvin and the Church Fathers,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student and the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999). Augustine ranks first, although Calvin criticized Augustine on occasion for being too Platonist. See Calvin, *Comm. on John*, 1:3.

72. I expand some on Origen’s role in chapter 10. For a fuller treatment, see my “Atonement and Ascension” in *Locating Atonement*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 226–50.

73. Although Origen entertained the idea, some Anabaptist leaders (esp. Hans Denck, Caspar Schwenckfeld, Balthasar Hubmaier, Melchior Hoffman, and Menno Simons) argued that the Son took his flesh from heaven rather than from the Virgin Mary. Against the view, Calvin and Reformed colleagues invoked Gregory of Nazianzus’s dictum against Apollinarianism: “What he did not assume, he did not heal.” In varying degrees, some of these leaders were drawn also to Origen’s ideas of universal salvation (*apokatastasis*), ascetic rigor, and spiritualist understanding of the resurrection and ascension. All of them shared Origen’s dualism.

74. W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 9–17. Stephens relates that Zwingli’s marginal notes on Romans “points to the overwhelming, but independent, use of Origen by Zwingli, although Augustine’s teaching on grace became steadily more dominant” (ibid., 18–19).

75. Ibid., 121. Further, “the Augustinian and Neoplatonist contribution is evident in the whole of Zwingli’s theology, and especially in his understanding of the sacraments” (ibid., 254).

76. For a fair interpretation of Zwingli’s Christology, see Stephens, *Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, 108–28. Unlike Luther, Zwingli enjoyed the friendship and mutual respect of Erasmus. Before joining the Reformation, Zwingli had offered private tutorials on Plato’s works. Recall Farrow’s quote from Erasmus above: “The physical presence of Christ is of no profit for salvation.” Stephens observes

that “Erasmus was to be in many ways the most important influence in his development as a reformer.” Both figures used the title “philosopher and theologian” for each other (ibid., 9). “In March 1522 Zwingli was concerned to prevent a quarrel between Eramsus and Luther and saw them both as committed to the Christian cause.” Especially after their published debate over free will, Luther viewed Erasmus as an opponent of the Reformation, while Zwingli continued to see him as an ally (ibid., 11n23).

77. Ulrich Zwingli, *Commentary on True and False Religion*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence Nevin Heller (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1981), 204.

78. Calvin said that “the whole was crowned by Peter Martyr, who left nothing more to be done” (Joseph C. McLelland, *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli, 1500–1562* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957], 279).

79. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *The Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist, 1549*, trans. and ed. Joseph C. McLelland, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 56; The Peter Martyr Library 7 (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000), 14.

80. John Calvin, “Letter to Andre Zebedee, May 19, 1539” in *Letters of John Calvin*, ed. Jules Bonnet, trans. Marcus Robert Gilchrist, vol. 4 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian, 1858), 402.

81. John Calvin, “Short Treatise on the Holy Supper,” in *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, ed. Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 2:170.

82. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.9.

83. John Calvin, *John 1–10*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959–72), 167.

84. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.10.

85. B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 165.

86. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.5–6.

87. Cited in Keith Matheson, *Given For You* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 262.

88. Vermigli, *Oxford Treatise*, 120.

89. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.32.

90. Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Adoro Te Devote,” in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Norman H. McKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 112.

91. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.16.4; cf. 4.6.10.

92. Ibid., 4.17.31.

93. Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 230–31, quoting Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.17.4.

94. Calvin, *Institutes* 4.17.10, emphasis added.

95. Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 176–77. Unfortunately, in *Ascension Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), written after he joined the Roman Catholic Church, Farrow attempts to make these edifying reflections fit with the dogma of transubstantiation. The resulting argument seems at least to me to be a patchwork quilt of antithetical premises.

96. Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 177–78. Even after his reception into the Roman Catholic Church, Farrow maintains that Calvin stands out as an early modern representative of this Irenaean trajectory, against Origen and Pelagianism (Farrow, *Ascension Theology*, 40–41, citing Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.27 and his commentary on Hebrews).

97. Plotinus, translation in Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition from Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983; repr., 1992), 51.

98. I borrow this phrase from Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). If the consummation of our union with Christ is less than absorption into deity, as Calvin argues especially against Osiander, it is more than mere “fellowship,” as he argues against Erasmus and Zwingli. It is telling that he rejects Erasmus’s translation of *koinōnia* as fellowship and that the church consequently should be viewed as a mere *societas* rather than a *communio*.

99. Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 176–77.

100. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 28, Question 75, in *Psalter Hymnal, Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy* (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church,

1976), 36, and the Belgic Confession, Article 35 (ibid., 88).

101. Belgic Confession, Article 35 (ibid.).

102. Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 239. She helpfully summarizes on p. 113: "For Calvin, the Ascension has three main functions: first, it threw open the realm of pneumatology and, with it, the historical possibility for human participation in God; second, it represented the future of the Christian as *koinōnia*: to be with God, in Christ; third, it functioned as a protective measure to keep God from being manipulated or 'pulled down' to our sphere of idolatry and superstition."

103. Ibid., 160, quoting Calvin from a sermon on 2 Sam 6:1–7.

104. Ibid., 159.

105. Ibid., 160.

106. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.5–6.

107. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II–II.23.2; I–II.110.2.

108. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.12.1.

109. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.9.

110. This is true already with Zwingli's successor, Heinrich Bullinger, who wrote to Calvin, "I do not see how your doctrine differs from the doctrine of the papists, who teach that the sacraments confer grace on all who take them" (cited in Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 3). The great Scottish theologian William Cunningham issued a particularly harsh verdict: "We have no fault to find with the substance of Calvin's statements in regard to the sacraments in general, or with respect to baptism; but we cannot deny that he made an effort to bring out something like a real influence exerted by Christ's human nature upon the souls of believers, in connection with the dispensation of the Lord's Supper—an effort which, of course, was altogether unsuccessful, and resulted only in what was about as unintelligible as Luther's consubstantiation. This is, perhaps, the greatest blot in the history of Calvin's labours as a public instructor" (William Cunningham, *Collected Works of the Reverend William Cunningham*, vol. 1 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1862], 240).

111. Meredith G. Kline reminds us that like Isaac, Jesus was circumcised as an infant, "that partial and symbolic cutting off"—the "moment, prophetically chosen, to name him 'Jesus.' But it was the circumcision of Christ in crucifixion that answered to the burnt-offering of Genesis 22 as a perfecting of circumcision, a 'putting off ' not merely of a token part but 'of the [whole] body of the flesh' (Col. 2:11, ARV), not simply a symbolic oath-cursing but a cutting off of 'the

body of his flesh through death' (Col. 1:22) in accursed darkness and dereliction" (*By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 45).

112. Ibid., 47.

113. Ibid., 66–67 (emphasis added).

114. Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 234.

115. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:46.

116. St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson, Popular Patristics (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 58–59.

117. Quoted by Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:95, from Simeon the New Theologian's *Catechetical Discourses* 6.

118. Quoted by Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:95, from Simeon the New Theologian's *Catechetical Discourses* 33.

119. Quoted by Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:95–96, from Simeon the New Theologian's *Ethical Treatise* 10 and *Hymn* 55.

120. Quoted by Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:97, from Simeon the New Theologian's *Catechetical Discourses* 33.

121. Yet there was also a tendency to disparage the ordained ministry even in Simeon's approach (Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:99). In the line of Origen, Anastasius of Sinai, and Pseudo-Dionyius, Simeon argued that one should seek the ministry of holy monks even if they are not ordained, and there were many who followed this perspective. In fact, in the Christian East believers sought out monks—"spiritual men"—rather than priests for confession and absolution until the mid-thirteenth century (ibid., 100).

122. Lord's Day 25, Question 65 (*Psalter Hymnal*, 32).

123. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15.6.

124. "The Westminster Confession of Faith," in *The Trinity Hymnal* (Philadelphia: Great Commission, 1990), 28.7.

125. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15.3; *Belgic Confession*, Article 25.

126. The so-called *Corpus Triforme* ("threefold Body") is an important theologoumenon in early medieval theology. See Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmonds, Richard Price, and Christopher Stephens, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame

Press, 2007).

127. Owen, *Discourse,* 159.

128. Ibid., 164.

129. Ibid., 189.

130. Ibid., 193.

131. I am borrowing Dietrich Bonhoeffer's term "haveable," which he used particularly in raising concern about Karl Barth's view of revelation. Bonhoeffer expressed concern with the tendency to see God's Word as somehow alongside, behind, or hovering above the human words of Scripture. Instead, he argued, we find both together in the Scriptures, "but in such a way that God himself says where his word is, and he does so *within the human word*" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke*, ed. Eberhard Bethge et al. [Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1986], 14:408, emphasis original). Otherwise, God is not "haveable" (*habbar*) (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, vol. 2 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Works,* trans. H. Martin Rumscheidt, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd Jr. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 90). Bonhoeffer's critique of Barth is my criticism of Zwingli's approach—and, I believe, the implicit critique of Calvin, Vermigli, and the Reformed confessions against the pietist-evangelical heritage that shares Zwinglian assumptions.



CHAPTER 11

The Spirit of Glory

When Jesus says in the farewell discourse that the Spirit "shall glorify me" (John 16:14 KJV), he is saying more than we might assume at first glance. It is more than spotlighting and bringing honor to Christ. The Holy Spirit glorified Christ himself, in his person, decisively and publicly, by raising him from the dead. The Spirit who had been responsible for uniting the eternal Son to our humanity now raised him from death and clothed him in immortal glory as the first specimen of the new creation. The Spirit ensured that the incarnate Son who abased himself for us would recover the glory that he had with the Father before all ages (John 17:22–24).

And yet, it is more than a return to the eternal glory that he shared by virtue of his deity. His humanity is not akin to a spacesuit that he dons for his mission, only to leave it behind as he returns to his eternal status. The whole point of the incarnation was to assume our humanity so that he could fulfill the human vocation representatively for us, bear our judgment, and be raised and glorified as the beginning of the new creation. This time, when he enters the Father's glory in the power of the Spirit, he does so as the incarnate Word. We have seen how the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and thus vindicated him publicly as the firstfruits of the new creation. Thus the glory that he possesses now is even greater than it was from all ages; it is not only the glory appropriate to God but the glorification of his humanity. Interestingly, Jesus is the only human being who could truly say that he had sanctified himself (John 17:19), winning the prize of glory. But he prays that the Father will make his disciples share in his glory (17:17). The Father answers this prayer by sending the Spirit, first as an indwelling deposit guaranteeing final salvation, and, second, as the surveyor and perfector who will clothe us all in glorious splendor, far beyond the beauty of our first parents at creation.

The Doctrine of Glorification

Reaching back all the way to the eternal covenant between the persons of the Godhead for the salvation of the elect, the Spirit's saving agency reaches forward to glorification (Rom 8:11). On that day, our complete conformity to the image of Christ—with radiant bodies dressed in beauty and grace—will not only be God's vindication of us but the consummated vindication of himself and his purposes in history. This status of the image not even Adam and Eve knew before the fall since it was the goal of their vocation. Peter even calls this participation in the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) since we share in the glorifying energies that conform us finally, completely, and forever to God's moral nature.

With Christ as mediator in creation, all human beings share his communicable attributes analogically (as his image). And yet, we have marred this image. The Spirit is restoring this image through a union with the Son that is far more wonderful than the natural one in creation. At Christ's return the Spirit will raise us from the dead into immortal glory, announcing publicly to the cosmic and earthly powers that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In our glorification, we will be "deified"—that is, as Francis Turretin puts it, "as much like God as a creature can ever be."[1]

It may surprise some readers that this theme of deification (or glorification) was also an important theme in the writings of the Reformers. Zwingli dedicated an article to it in his *Defense of the Reformed Faith*, concluding, "That a person is drawn to God by God's Spirit and deified, becomes quite clear from scripture."[2] Luther also taught that the goal of our salvation is to be "completely deified," and he saw this truth as the effect of rather than alternative to forensic imputation.[3] Calvin asked, "What is the goal of our adoption which we attain through him, if it is not, as Peter declares, finally to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)?"[4] Immortality is not the soul's native origin, he adds, but the prize that Christ has won for us.[5] Creation in God's image is "participation in God," but justification and re-creation in Christ by grace is "a joy beyond words."[6] Nevertheless, "we are *one* with the Son of God; not because he conveys his substance to us, but because, by the power of his Spirit, he imparts to us his life and all the blessings which he has received from the Father."[7] He says that the "fanatics" imagine that at death "we shall at length revert to our original [state]," erroneously conceived as absorption into deity.[8] Besides some Anabaptist leaders, he undoubtedly had in mind Andreas Osiander, the erstwhile colleague of Luther whose views alienated him from Lutheran circles. Even after

his deep criticisms of Osiander's more Origenist view of union, Calvin nevertheless maintained that deification is that "than which nothing can be conceived better."[9] Propitiation and victory underscore the danger that Christ's death has overcome for us. Yet to be delivered *from* sin's curse and therefore from the kingdom of Satan is not yet to be *united to* God. The atonement needs the ascension and Pentecost.

If we tend to bring the Holy Spirit in too late to the story in the history of redemption (Pentecost) and the application of redemption (sanctification), our eyes tend to become blurry when it comes to the future glory that awaits us in the Spirit. I suggest that where glorification has been marginalized in more recent Reformed soteriological discussions, it has been due in part to a lack of due appreciation for (a) the saving significance of the ascension as the glorification of Christ's humanity as our representative, (b) the Spirit's agency in completing the work of salvation, and (c) the eschatological aspect, out of an understandable concern to highlight the "once and for all" character of justification.

The Groaning Spirit

Something needs to be said about the Spirit's "groaning," particularly as this longing for the consummation is essential to our lives in the Spirit here and now. "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now" (Rom 8:22 ESV). The point is emphasized in the Greek: The whole creation "groans together" (*systenazei*) and "travails together" (*synōdinei*). The Spirit who "cherished the confused mass," to repeat Calvin's phrase, can hardly give up on creation even after humanity has dedicated its resources to destroying it. I take this to be a sort of personification of human prayer. Creation is praying for the end of its bondage to the curse imposed upon it because of human rebellion. The Greek verbs translated here as "groans together" and "travails together" underscore the collective burden of creation under the weight of the curse. But only four verses later we read, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (v. 26). The Holy Spirit is not yet in a triumphalistic mood. There is too much bondage, too much rebellion and quenching and resistance to his reign for

that. Yet our prayers join in the "groanings" of the Spirit along with all of creation in anticipation of the world's release from bondage, bathed in the glory of God.

What does all of this have to do with glorification? Everything. The future hope of glorification—of the revelation of the children of God (v. 19)—is the hope that keeps creation and the elect moving together in step with the Spirit. Even as I write this, I am unsure exactly what this means. But the Holy Spirit does. This frees me to pray for it, assuming that creation is "praying" with me, for only with the revelation of the children of God is its fate settled forever. The whole creation groans, and I groan, but more than all of this "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (v. 26).

The other important reference to groaning occurs in 2 Corinthians 4. John Levison writes:

> Paul is not rendering a definitive doctrine of resurrection bodies. He is instead ruminating upon the vision of Ezekiel within his own context: believers who now groan in the context of present suffering (2 Cor 4:16–18) can confidently anticipate a time when Ezekiel's vision will become a reality, when new sinews, flesh, and skin will come *upon* dead, naked bones. Of this believers can be certain because God 'has *given* the spirit,' as in Ezekiel 36–37, as a pledge.[10]

It all points to life, but "lavish life." "This vision is about life beyond measure, beyond hope, beyond suffering, beyond the shadow of death."[11]

Also in 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8, "Paul has picked up three facets of Ezekiel's vision—the spirit given into Israel, holiness, and knowledge of God—and adapted them to the situation of the Thessalonians."[12] Having "received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1:6 NRSV), they "turned to God from idols" (v. 9 NRSV) and should therefore repent of sexual immorality.[13] The reference is not just past conversion and future resurrection, but the present and ongoing gift of filling: the Father "gives his Holy Spirit to you" (v. 8).[14] "Being filled with the spirit, therefore, from Paul's perspective, is not a spiritual transformation that takes place on a sphere other than the human and earthly. . . . Filling with the spirit, on the contrary, renders the spirits of this world obsolete (Gal 4:3), restructures human relationships (Gal 4:4–7; Rom 8:12–17; and Philemon), and causes the hegemony of fear to disintegrate (Rom

8:15).”[15]

Whatever all of this inward groaning entails, it is surely nothing less than a passion sparked by the foretaste of a world that is new in a qualitatively different sense than any era that has preceded it. As the harbinger of the age to come and the consummator of the Trinity’s works, the Spirit binds us to the hope of a completely renewed world. “But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’ ” (1 Cor 2:9 ESV). Are we ready for this? Of course not. But the indwelling Holy Spirit prepares us for it. And there is no prayerful “groaning” that does not lead toward it.

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1. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. J. T. Dennison Jr., trans. G. M. Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1997), 3:209.

2. *Huldrych Zwingli Writings, Vol. One: The Defense of the Reformed Faith*, trans. E. J. Furcha, Pittsburgh Theological Monographs (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1984), 57.

3. Martin Luther, from a 1529 sermon quoted in Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter A. Hansen, vol. 1 (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1962), 175–76. See Kurt E. Marquart, “Luther and Theosis,” *CTQ* 64.3 (2000): 182–205.

4. As cited in Joseph Tylenda, “The Controversy of Christ the Mediator: Calvin’s Second Reply to Stancaro,” *CTJ* 8 (1973): 148.

5. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 2.1.1.

6. Ibid., 2.2.1.

7. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospelof John*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin’s Commentaries 18 (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, n.d.; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 184 (on John 17:21; emphasis original).

8. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Second Epistle of Peter*, trans. John Owen, Calvin’s Commentaries 22 (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, n.d.; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 371 (on 2 Pet 1:4); cf. *Institutes*, 1.15.5.

9. Calvin, *Second Epistle of Peter*, 370 (on 2 Pet 1:4).

10. John Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 262.

11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 265.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 266.
15. Ibid.



CHAPTER 12

The Spirit and the Bride

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. . . . He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

REVELATION 22:17, 20 ESV

Where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God and where the Spirit of God is, there are also the Church and all grace.

IRENAEUS[1]

To believe in the Holy Ghost, and the holy catholic church, you know how near they stand together in the Creed. His invisible coming at Pentecost was the visible consecration and dedication of that great temple, the mystical body of Christ, to be reared under the gospel.

THOMAS GOODWIN[2]

There seems little doubt that we have seen greater interest in "Third Article" theology in recent decades.[3] But the question is whether the focus is the Spirit who "spoke by the prophets" to reveal Christ and who creates "one holy, catholic and apostolic church," leading the ground campaign for "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins" until "the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." How can not only weak but even sinful ministers be considered "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1 ESV), much less God's coworker (1 Cor 3:9), "ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through

us" (2 Cor 5:20 ESV)? How can ordinary water or bread and wine in the context of a covenant ceremony count as God's own pledge of salvation? And how can the Spirit's invisible operations be identified with such visible rituals? Yet the same assumptions that provoke these protests could (and often do) question the identification of God's speech with human utterances in Scripture and preaching, as well as the incarnation itself.

The Spirit and the Church

Many evangelicals (myself among them) were reared with the epithet "churchianity," directed scornfully at anything that to us smacked of formalism and ritualism. Often, being born again by the Spirit was set explicitly over against belonging to the church. Meanwhile, some churches (those charged with "churchianity") seemed to accept the divorce, though favoring the church over the Spirit. These are exaggerations, of course. Nevertheless, it would be a distortion, I think, to recover a proper appreciation for the Holy Spirit that failed to entail a robust ecclesiology.[4] The opposition between the Spirit and the church has a long pedigree in more radical and mystical movements of church history. What seems striking in our day is the extent to which this radical impulse has become mainstream. Before engaging this approach, let us examine the opposite tendency to domesticate the Spirit by assimilating him to the church.

Assimilating the Spirit to the Church: Totus Christus *Variations*

Conflation of Christ with the Spirit (and both with the church) reaches an extreme in the conviction of Russian Orthodox theologian Sergei Bulgakov that the church is the incarnation of the Spirit.[5] John Milbank offers his own endorsement of Bulgakov's eccentric thesis.[6] Indeed, a future orthodoxy will have "to speak in a sense of a triple incarnation of the entire Trinity."[7] Beyond lacking any scriptural warrant, this thesis confuses the distinct properties of the persons. The Spirit works *within* nature; he even united the Son to our humanity in the incarnation, as we have seen. But the Spirit is never the subject of incarnation. Even to speak metaphorically of the Spirit's "incarnation" is a

category mistake and eliminates the incommunicable properties that are essential to the distinction of persons.

However, the assimilation of the Spirit to the church is part of a longer history of assimilating Christ to his church. Although the incarnation of the Spirit as the church is a highly eccentric thesis, it has been common in church history to identify the Spirit as the *soul* of the church.[8] Congar writes that the church is Christ's "human and collective visibility: the Christ, it has been said, needs the Church as a *pneuma* needs a *sōma*."[9] Like Origen, de Lubac replaces the covenantal relationship of Head and body with a Platonist anthropology. Notice what is lost: first and foremost, Jesus. His visibility—his humanity—is transferred from himself to the church. However, the Spirit is also lost by being assimilated to the church as its soul. Of course, it is only an analogy, but it is an analogy for an inadequate concept. Jesus becomes the church (and vice versa), with the Spirit as his/its soul. Further along the line (especially with Aquinas), it is not entirely clear whether this soul of the church is created grace or uncreated (the Spirit).[10]

One important development in this trajectory was Augustine's *totus Christus* concept. Union with Christ is simultaneously union with his body. So intimate is the bond that we are justified in saying that Christ as head and the church as his body form "the whole Christ" (*totus Christus*).[11] Augustine repeats the formula in *On the Epistle of John* 1.2, and in a sermon he adds that although Christ would be complete without us, he has not chosen to be complete without his body (*Sermons* 341.1.1); Augustine also drew the idea from Matthew 25:31–46 and Acts 9:4.[12] In both passages Jesus identifies his people with himself: extending charity to fellow believers being persecuted is extending it to him, and confronting Saul with the question, "Why are you persecuting me?" Controversy provoked some of these statements, as Augustine considered the Donatist schismatics to be tearing Christ's body apart. The bishop of Hippo asks whether this heresy calls into question the very incarnation itself that Christ has come in the flesh.[13] As John Burnaby noted, students of the Eastern fathers will not find this concept alien.[14]

In subsequent centuries, though, this biblical—especially Pauline—teaching took on larger proportions. Through the influence of Christian Neoplatonism, mediated especially by Pseudo-Dionysius, the church was conceived as a ladder or pyramid with myriad levels of being descending from the One (i.e., God) to

Mary and the saints and then all the way down to laypeople and even those barely in communion with the church. In 1302 Pope Boniface VIII issued a bull, *Unam Sanctam*, which claimed sovereignty over this pyramid in its terrestrial administration, both spiritual and temporal. As the body is subordinate to the soul, the state was said to be subordinate to the church with the pope as its head, and submission in all things to the Vicar of Christ was considered essential to salvation.

Furthermore, in the high scholastic theology of the West the efficacy of the sacraments was lodged increasingly not in the Spirit but in the priest who was granted in ordination the infusion of a new character that enabled him to transform the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood.[15] With the natural body of Jesus despatialized in Thomas Aquinas's formulation, the miracle of transubstantiation "placed Christ fully in the church's possession," notes Douglas Farrow. "Indeed, it meant that the church now controlled the parousia. At the ringing of a bell the *Christus absens* became the *Christus praesens*. . . . Seated comfortably with the Christ-child on its lap, the church soon became his regent rather than his servant. In short, its Marian ego, already out of control at the beginning of the eucharistic debates, afterwards knew no bounds."[16]

The dogma of transubstantiation shapes Roman Catholic ecclesiology even as it reveals deeper theological and metaphysical assumptions. The bodily absence of Christ since his ascension is not a problem that highlights the need of the Spirit because Jesus has in a functional sense returned in and as the church. Although he rules invisibly through his omnipresent divinity, his earthly, visible form is his body, the church. This version of the *totus Christus* supplies the grandest vision of the church but at the highest cost: it substitutes the church for both the humanity of its Lord as well as the Spirit, whom the Lord gives to unite us to that glorified humanity. It leads inevitably to a domestication of the Spirit (as well as of Christ)—reduced to the immanence of ecclesial being and action. This is far from an exclusively Roman Catholic temptation, but it is important to reflect briefly on at least some of the factors that contributed to the marginalization of the Spirit in favor of the church.

Is there, then, any necessity of invoking the Spirit? This concern has been raised frequently by Orthodox theologians, who point out that while the epiclesis (prayer for the Spirit) is essential to the consecration, it fell into disuse in Western liturgies.[17] Further marginalizing the Spirit, by the time of Aquinas the sacraments were to be understood as infusing created grace into the soul just as

medicine cures the body. Just as what began as a thoroughly scriptural argument for the unity of Christ with his church increasingly elided any distinction between Head and members, the Spirit as well as the kingdom of God also became assimilated to the church. The Council of Trent reinforced the idea of the church as a legal institution with power over all souls and bodies.[18]

Johann Adam Möhler led the way in the late nineteenth-century "Reform Catholicism" ecclesiology to turn the post-Tridentine concept of the church as essentially a legal institution with plenary power toward a more organic idea. Yet Möhler's approach was, if anything, an even greater intensification of the notion that the church is Christ's continuing incarnation. "The Church is ordinated towards the invisible, spiritual and eternal. . . . But the Church is not only invisible. *Because she is the Kingdom of God*, she is not a haphazard collection of individuals, but an ordered system of regularly subordinated parts." Through this hierarchy, "*the divine is objectivised, is incarnated in the community*, and precisely and only in so far as it is a community. . . . So the Church possesses the Spirit of Christ, not as a many of single individuals, nor as a sum of spiritual personalities, but as the compact unity of the faithful, as a community that transcends the individual personalities . . . *the many as one*." Christ's mission is "to reunite to God mankind as a unity, as a whole, *and not this or that individual man*."[19]

Not only *unity*—common fellowship in Christ, but *unicity*—numerical oneness in a hierarchy with a papal head—is Adam's understanding of the church.[20]

In a somewhat chilling illustration of his time and place, Adam passionately asserts, "One God, one faith, one love, one single man: that is the stirring thought which inspires the Church's pageantry and gives it artistic form."[21] Echoing Hegel, he declares, "For only in the whole can the divine realise itself, only in the totality of men and not in the individual."[22] As a consequence, "The structural organs of the Body of Christ, as that is realised in space and time, are pope and bishops."[23] For all of these reasons, says Adam, "The Catholic Church as the Body of Christ, as the realisation in the world of the Kingdom of God, is the Church of Humanity."[24]

The domestication of the Spirit or Christ to the church is also a temptation in Protestant circles. Endorsing modalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher further conflated the Spirit with the community of Jesus.[25] The maximal "God-

consciousness" that Jesus acquired is available to us by participation in the community that he founded.[26] Invoking the analogy of a "national spirit," Schleiermacher identifies the Holy Spirit not as a distinct person of the Trinity but as the "common spirit" of the church.[27] It is good that Jesus departed because the church replaces his actual personal existence, extending his life—his special relation to the divine whole of reality—in and as his community.[28] Instead of being a person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit becomes the personality of the community. I have engaged at length with the now familiar ways in which evangelicals also talk about the church as Christ's ongoing incarnation.[29] But if Jesus, the Spirit, and the church are simply merged in our thinking, there can be no real unity between them. It is that paradoxical *union* of *different persons* that Jesus highlighted in his farewell discourse, as we have seen.

More recently, Anglo-Catholic theologian Graham Ward goes so far as to suggest that the "displacement" of Jesus-in-the-flesh is not a loss but a transubstantiation of his personal existence in and as the church. Despite his disclaimer that his "interpretation of the ascension is not in accord with Origen's 'ascension of the mind rather than of the body,' "[30] Ward's arguments do little to allay the contrary judgment. According to this rather extreme version of the notion of Christ's ubiquity transferred to the church, "We have no access to the body of the gendered Jew. . . . *It is pointless because the Church is now the body of Christ, so to understand the body of Jesus we can only examine what the Church is and what it has to say* concerning the nature of that body as scripture attests it."[31] "As Gregory of Nyssa points out, in his thirteenth sermon on Song of Songs," Ward quotes, " 'he who sees the Church looks directly at Christ.' "[32]

Similarly, Robert Jenson argues that the apostle Paul considers a person's body as simply the person in his or her availability to others. "In Paul's ontology, such personal availability may or may not be constituted as the biological entity moderns first think of as 'a body.' "[33] After offering some intriguing insights into the Corinthians' failure to discern Christ's body in the congregation and in the Eucharistic bread,[34] Jenson takes the further step of suggesting that Christ himself finds his personal body in the church and Eucharist. "The church with her sacraments is truly Christ's availability to us *just because Christ takes her as his availability to himself*. Where does the risen Christ turn to find himself? To

the sacramental gathering of believers. To the question 'Who am I?' he answers, 'I am this community's head. I am the subject whose objectivity is this community. . . . And again: 'I am the subject whose objectivity for this community is the bread and cup around which she gathers.' "[35] The last two examples represent *totus Christus* with a vengeance.[36] Rather than turn to the Spirit's work of uniting the members to the glorified Head, such proposals lead inevitably to the evaporation of Jesus and his replacement by the church.

Once more the importance of recognizing the intersection of the ascension and Pentecost becomes self-evident. Lacking pneumatological mediation, proposals such as these spiritualize Jesus, transforming the human person into a cosmic ecclesial personality. Douglas Farrow reminds us again that if we explain away his real departure in the flesh, all particularity of Jesus is lost. The question, "*Where* is Jesus?" is not speculative. It determines the larger question, "*Who* is Jesus?" If the answer to the first question is "Everywhere," then the answer to the second must be, "Everything." Claiming to be Irenaean, incarnational, and antignostic, such an approach becomes much nearer to Gnosticism. "Its chief characteristics are to be found in its universalism, its synergism, and its panentheism, all of which justifies us in labeling it as Origenist rather than Irenaean."[37]

There have been critics of extreme approaches to the *totus Christus*. Walter Cardinal Kasper laments, "In modern theology one often gets the impression that pneumatology has become a function of ecclesiology; the Spirit has become the guarantor of the Church as an institution and pneumatology has become the ideological superstructure on top of ecclesiology."[38] Heribert Mühlen (1927–2006) judged that the notion of the church as Christ's continuing incarnation was a culprit in the weak pneumatology underlying Catholic ecclesiologies. While differing in some respects, Yves Congar was sympathetic to Mühlen's critique, which he summarized as follows:

> The Church has to be seen not as what [Johann Adam] Möhler called a "continued incarnation," a formula that was later accepted by the Roman School, but rather as the presence and activity in the "Church" of the same personal Spirit that [*sic*] anointed Jesus as the Messiah. The most suitable formula for a dogmatic definition of the mystery of the Church, then, would be "only one Person, that of the Holy Spirit, in several persons, namely Christ and us, his believers."[39]

For Mühlen, the church is not a continuing incarnation but the continuing act of the Father's bestowal of the Spirit. This shift from a one-sidedly christological ecclesiology to a more robust pneumatology carries significant ramifications. This may be seen in the way that Aiden Nichols appeals to Mühlen's thesis regarding the *totus Christus*:

> The unity of this *persona* will not of course be the hypostatic unity whereby the Word and the humanity the Word assumed in Mary's womb are one Person. . . . Rather, the unity of the *una quaedam persona* comes about through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, who is himself one and the same in Christ and ourselves.[40]

Separating the Spirit from the Church

It was largely in reaction against an immanentism and the domestication of transcendence that Karl Barth perceived in both Roman Catholic and liberal Protestant teaching that he contrasted more sharply than even Zwingli the visible and invisible church as well as the reality (i.e., act of revelation) and the sign (Scripture, preaching). "To speak of a continuation or extension of the incarnation in the Church is not only out of place but even blasphemous," he boldly and properly insists.[41] However, distinctions often become dichotomies between God and humanity, the divine Word and human words, baptism with the Spirit and baptism with water. It is difficult to resist the impression that these dichotomies belong to the map of eternity and time, respectively. Once more we see the correlation between the means of grace and the church that the Spirit constitutes through them. Barth complained, "The Reformed Church and Reformed theology (even in Zurich) could not continue to hold" to Zwingli's teaching and took a "backward step" toward Calvin's "sacramentalism."[42]

In order to uphold God's sovereign freedom, Barth insisted that creaturely agency can only testify to grace, not convey it. "The work of the Church is the work of men. It can never be God's work."[43] Zwingli held that the Spirit does not need "a channel or vehicle."[44] Similarly for Barth, Christ is to be sharply distinguished from the church. "He is He, and His work is His work, *standing over against all Christian action*, including the Christian faith and Christian baptism."[45] Consequently, the church loses in Barth's conception its tie to history and visibility except as another worldly institution in which sometimes a

miracle of revelation occurs in it despite itself.[46] Barth's actualist ontology underwrites this emphasis: "The Church is when it takes place."[47] It is remarkable that this fundamental diastasis between everything divine and everything human, which marked his *Römerbrief*, remained so constant even to these late writings. In that early work Barth went so far as to contrast the visible and invisible church in terms of the "Church of Esau" and the "Church of Jacob."[48] So where the conflation of Christology and ecclesiology in some modern theologies virtually eliminate the difference between divine and ecclesial agency, Barth virtually eliminates affinity.

An altogether different rationale for the opposition of the Spirit to the church has gained prominence in recent decades. Whereas for Barth the opposition is between Christ and the institutional church, this newer trajectory is dominated by a pneumatological emphasis. Traditional ecclesiologies are Christocentric, with the dominant image of the church as Christ's body. Concomitant with this focus is an emphasis on the particularity of revelation and redemption, associated with the maxim that there is no salvation outside of the church (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*), endorsed by Lutheran and Reformed as well as Roman Catholic and Orthodox confessions.[49] Critics of this approach suggest that a more Spirit-centered account enables us to construct more open, universalistic, and pluralist theologies.[50] Attempting initially a christological foundation for a more inclusive theology of religions, Clark Pinnock said that he had to find a more pneumatological basis.[51] G. F. W. Hegel became an important resource for Pinnock's reflections at this point.[52] There is a directness and immediacy of the Spirit to human beings "as spirit," he argues, that transcends the particularities of Jesus and the church.[53]

Indeed, the features that the Protestant Reformers identified with "enthusiasm" are now increasingly taken for granted by many theologians across the various traditions. The Spirit is identified with that which is invisible, individual, inward, voluntaristic, immediate, and spontaneous, which gives rise to a universalistic and pluralistic collection of individual wills. This is contrasted with the visible, ecclesial, external, verbal, mediated, and official form and ministry of the church with its unity of faith and practice. This trend is very much in keeping with the secular spirit of the age, which captures such contrasts under the now familiar rubric, "spiritual but not religious."

According to Karl Rahner, "God . . . has already communicated himself in

his Holy Spirit always and everywhere and to every person as the innermost center of his existence."[54] But is this another way of domesticating the Spirit? Whether by confusing him with the inner spirit of the self or the inner spirit of the church, we turn the Spirit into *something* that we control or that is simply ourselves. The Spirit's voice turns out to be merely talking to ourselves. In doing so, we not only sacrifice the particularity of the Trinitarian confession but surrender the very possibility of our being judged and therefore rescued by God.

For many Christians today, even those in more liturgical traditions, the notion that the Spirit is at work visibly wherever the Word is faithfully preached and the sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution is no longer intuitive. For many, it seems, the only way of redeeming the term *church* is to identify it exclusively with the invisible church, that is, the spiritual fellowship of all God's elect in all times and places rather than the visible and concrete institution that in its various manifestations is somehow thought to be endowed with real authority from Christ and genuine power from the Spirit. The Spirit is associated with *mission*, often in some tension (if not outright contrast) with the church's ministry of preaching, sacrament, and discipline.

But this is a glaring misapprehension of the economic operations of the Trinity in general and the incarnation in particular. The Father sent the Son, and the Spirit clothed the Son *in our nature*; the Father and the Son sent the Spirit *into our hearts*, regenerating and uniting us to Christ the living vine. The Spirit's work is consistently associated with that which is public and tangible in history, as we have seen. Furthermore, the Spirit equips the church to be an *official and creaturely embassy* of Christ's reign and sends us out on his mission to bring the liberating word of the King to the ends of the earth. The sending of the church therefore belongs to the same economy as the Father's sending of the Son as well as the sending of the Spirit by the Father and the Son. Consequently, to divide Spirit-filled mission from the institutional church is to misunderstand at a fundamental level who the Spirit is, how he works ordinarily, and what we are called to do and be in the world today.[55] I fear that we are creeping toward a Gnosticism that views the visible church as the prison house of the invisible church.

Pointing out the similarities between Barth and Hans Küng, Avery Cardinal Dulles counters that the empirical church is not simply the work of humans, distinct from the kingdom as the work of God. "At the outset it seems worthwhile to note that the term *ekklesia* as used in the New Testament is an

eschatological term. It means an assembly or convocation and more specifically the convocation of the saints that will be realized to the full at the eschaton."[56] Dulles properly notes that, far from passing away as Barth holds, the church "will then truly come into its own. . . . The eschatological meals that Jesus celebrates with his disciples are a foretaste of the final messianic supper in the Kingdom of heaven. . . . Nothing suggests that the community of the disciples will be dissolved in heaven, when the twelve sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[57] The New Testament everywhere anticipates the consummation of the church's existence, not its dissolution.[58] The distinction between *ecclesia militans* and *triumphans* is still important.[59] Dulles is closer on these points at least to the traditional Protestant (at least Reformed) understanding of the church as more than a secular institution that happens to coincide at flashpoint moments with the work of God. If the consummated reality is the abolition of the church, then how can its current existence be anything other than an *empty* sign?

Lesslie Newbigin is correct when he asserts that Barth's interpretation goes beyond the Reformers (even Luther) when he sets the event of proclamation against the history of a covenant community. "The eschatological has completely pushed out the historical."[60] While it is true that Word and sacrament create and sustain the church, Newbigin rightly insists that "they do not create the Church *de novo*, or *ex nihilo*"; "every setting forth of the word and sacraments of the Gospel is an event in the life of an actually existing Christian church."[61] The semi-realized eschatological event occurs each Lord's Day within the context of a covenant community extended through all times and places. A covenant community takes time; it cannot be merely an event, much less a crater that is left behind by revelation. Both a people and a place, an event and an institution, the visible communion today is connected historically to the apostles by the external marks of Word, sacrament, and discipline. And yet it must be added that the only reason why any particular setting forth of the Word and sacraments can be a continuation in history of God's covenant and kingdom is due to the Spirit's free operation that no church can take for granted.

Less extreme than Barth's account is John Webster's statement of the relation. He is eager to affirm that "the Father wills that *ex nihilo* there should come into being a creaturely counterpart to the fellowship of love which is the inner life of the Holy Trinity."[62] Matthew Levering notes:

> Webster fears, however, that ‘a potent doctrine of the church’s relation to God as both participatory and mediatorial’ will obscure ‘God’s utter difference from creatures even in his acts towards and in them’ (ibid., 163). The solution for Webster is to locate the church concretely under the cross and to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit as pure grace, rather than as ‘some kind of coordination of divine and creaturely elements’ (ibid., 181).[63]

While the opposition is not quite as sharp as it is in Barth, Webster places the church’s activity on the testifying side of the register. The church witnesses to God’s grace in Christ, Webster argues, but plays no role in the “actualization of or sharing in the divine presence and action.”[64] But Levering rightly replies: “The eschatological people upon whom the exalted Christ pours out his Spirit do more than testify in repentance and praise to the promise and command of the gospel.”[65] If the church does not replace Christ, it also cannot be separated from him. To reduce the nature of the church to the agency of its members is to separate the church from both its exalted Head and its indwelling Spirit. Ephraim Radner goes further in arguing that the visible church is so compromised that it lacks the Spirit’s presence.[66] Yet this is tantamount to saying that Christ has failed to keep his promise.

In short, many Protestant ecclesiological assumptions today are closer to the radical than to the magisterial Reformation in spirit and substance. If Rome forgets the distance between Christ and the church that the Spirit must mediate, radical Protestants seek to overcome this distance by an unmediated encounter within the individual. This individualism is reflected in an independent and egalitarian ecclesiological impulse. In Roman Catholic ecclesiology, the tendency is *to confuse things that ought to be distinguished*: Christ and the visible church, and therefore regeneration and water baptism, the transformation of consecrated bread and wine into Christ’s body and blood, and so forth. In fact, in the Eucharist the creaturely sign itself is annihilated, replaced by the reality. The actions of the church simply are the actions of Christ. The Anabaptists exhibit the opposite tendency—*to separate things that ought to be united*.

The Spirit in *the Church*

Responding to these opposite tendencies, it may be good to begin by

observing that of all the genitive designations for the Spirit in Scripture, one does not find "Spirit of the church" among them. The third person of the Godhead is called the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Even when he is given as the indwelling deposit and renewing agent, the Lord and giver of life is never the possession either of pious believers or of the holy church. Nevertheless, I have argued that he has bound himself freely to the people, places, and things that have been designated in his Word. But sanctification is different from transubstantiation. To be holy, sacred, and indwelled by the Spirit is not to be something other than a creature, but to be a creature claimed by God's gracious choice. The creature must remain a creature ontologically; to mediate the reality, the sign cannot become the reality—in order to be set apart for participation in God.

As Lesslie Newbigin observed, the theory of the church "as 'the extension of the Incarnation' springs from a confusion of *sarx* with *sōma*."[67] "Christ's risen body"—that is, his ecclesial distinguished from his natural body—"is not fleshly but spiritual," Newbigin observes. "He did not come to incorporate us in His body according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"—hence, his promise that when he ascends he will send the Spirit.[68] Nor is the Spirit, much less his created gifts, the soul of the church, I would add. How does such a conception avoid the conclusion that the church is after all simply talking to itself, saving itself, and relating to itself? The relation in this conception is not between persons but between faculties in one person.

Congar's maxim—that Christ "needs the Church as a *pneuma* needs a *sōma*"[69]—discloses the metaphysical background of the Roman Catholic conception. Rather than the dynamic *eschatological* distinction that we find in the New Testament between the flesh (the power of this age) and the Spirit (bringing the powers of the age to come), we have a static *ontological* one. Insofar as he exists at all for us now, Jesus is a soul needing physical embodiment as the church. Further, the analogy renders not even the Holy Spirit but Christ as the *pneuma* of the church. Consequently, Jesus loses his humanity—the very humanity that we need to be glorified at the right hand of the Father as our forerunner, and the Holy Spirit is left without any obviously constitutive role.

This is why the eclipse of the epiclesis in the Latin Eucharistic liturgy is so profoundly lamented in Orthodoxy. It deepens the suspicion that the ladder of grace has been so filled in by ecclesiastical mediators that the Spirit's operation

is unnecessary. This was a serious mistake, which Reformed theology acknowledged not only theologically but liturgically by reintroducing it into its Eucharistic service. As Walter Cardinal Kasper explains, the recovery of the epiclesis in Roman Catholic practice became part of the liturgical reforms after Vatican II. "Anyone remotely familiar with the Reformed doctrine of the Eucharist, going back to Calvin," he says, "will know about the ecumenical significance of this teaching."[70] A faithful ecclesiology will not domesticate the Spirit to the church but will recognize the positive difference between Jesus, the Spirit, and the church that makes salvation and genuine union possible.

Far from dispensing with *totus Christus*, I believe that the proper response to these distortions is to recover Augustine's idea. He spoke of the intimate connection being so close that Christ and his church may be spoken of as *una quaedam persona*—"as it were, one person."[71] But the "as it were" in Augustine's version of *totus Christus* (as in the "one flesh" of Paul's marital analogy) becomes "quite literally" in Ratzinger's concept of a "fusion of existences."[72]

Augustine's notion of *totus Christus* is simply another way of expressing the doctrine of union with Christ, and in *De Trinitate* the Spirit is seen as essential in bringing about this union. This is precisely how Calvin interprets these passages, echoing Augustine's exegesis nearly verbatim:

> This is the highest honor of the Church, that, until He is united to us, the Son of God reckons himself in some measure imperfect. What consolation is it for us to learn, that, not until we are along with him, does he possess all his parts, or wish to be regarded as complete! Hence, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, when the apostle discusses largely the metaphor of a human body, he includes under the single name of Christ the whole Church.[73]

Reformed theology has always been happy to appeal to the Augustinian motif, which is clear enough in John and Paul. Yet this *totus Christus* is conceived in terms of its eschatological rather than metaphysical foundations. Of course, there are metaphysical and ontological repercussions: while remaining creatures, those who are caught up by the Spirit into the eschatological life of Christ the firstfruits are transformed in soul and finally, at the last, in body. However, in the New Testament, as in Augustine as well as Luther and Calvin,

the relation of Christ and his church is that of husband and wife: "one flesh" in union, not a "fusion of existences"; of Head and members, vine and branches, firstfruits and harvest, not as *pneuma* and *sōma*. There remains an eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet" that affects Christ as well as us.[74] As Herman Bavinck nicely summarizes:

> As the church does not exist apart from Christ, so Christ does not exist without the church. He is 'the head over all things' (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18), and the church is the body formed from him and from him receives its growth (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19), thus growing to maturity 'to the measure of the full stature of Christ' (Eph. 4:13). . . . Together with him it can be called the one Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). It is to perfect the church that he is exalted to the Father's right hand. . . . *Just as surely as the re-creation took place objectively in Christ, so surely it must also be carried out subjectively by the Holy Spirit in the church*. The church is an organism, not an aggregate; the whole, in its case, precedes the parts.[75]

It is the purpose of the Spirit not to alleviate our cry for our Lord's bodily return even as if he were Christ's replacement, much less by talk of the church (or one of its pastors) as vicar. On the contrary, the Spirit's indwelling presence provokes that longing for the bodily appearance of the very one to whom he has united us through faith. The proper invocation of the Spirit will always keep us in that tension between the "already" and the "not yet," enabling the church to remember the Christ who died and rose again for us, who intercedes now for us, and who will come again to make us share perfectly in his glory. In spite of his ascension, Christ is intimately and inseparably united to his ecclesial body. However, it is not by eccentric moves in the field of Christology that this can be affirmed but by embracing a robust pneumatology.

Because of the Spirit's labors, the invisible church is made visible, though as yet the imperfect bride rather than the glorious spouse. Because of the Spirit the church is not merely a historical institution, the continuation of the effects (*Wirküngsgeschichte*) through a long tradition, nor merely an eschatological event that occurs in the eucharistic assembly, nor merely a future reality that has no bearing on the present reality of the visible body of Christ, but all three at the same time, in a semi-realized kingdom.

Kingdom of the Spirit versus Church

As the modernist Catholic theologian Alfred Loisy complained, "Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom, and what arrived was the Church."[76] Judging by a considerable body of literature, there are "church people" and "kingdom people," the Spirit being identified especially with the latter. However, there is a wide spectrum ranging from conservative to liberal. At least in more evangelical circles, the kingdom emphasis gained traction through Dutch neo-Calvinism, inspired by the vision of Abraham Kuyper for transforming all spheres of life under Christ's lordship.[77] While most representatives have followed Kuyper in affirming both kingdom and church, the former is frequently treated as more encompassing and inspiring.

Scot McKnight has expressed the point that much of contemporary theology has moved in the direction of marginalizing the church in favor of the kingdom.[78] In some ways, this phenomenon parallels the false choice explored in the previous chapter. From this perspective, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and churches of the Reformation alike are characterized as inwardly focused on ecclesiastical machinery, more in line with the apostles (especially Paul), while kingdom-oriented Christians are more interested in Jesus and the kingdom living that he lays out in the Sermon on the Mount.

The kingdom had been assimilated in liberal theologies to the ethical idea of a gradual progress of humanity toward justice, peace, and righteousness. Conceiving Jesus as a prophet rather than the divine Savior and substitute for sinners, Walter Rauschenbusch followed a more Ritschlian line. "Jesus always spoke of the Kingdom of God," he wrote. "Only two of his reported sayings contain the word 'Church,' and both passages are of questionable authenticity. It is safe to say that he never thought of founding the kind of institution which afterward claimed to be acting for him."[79] With the subordination of the kingdom to the church, Rauschenbusch argued, came the eclipse of ethics by an ingrown focus on doctrine, worship, preaching, and sacraments; hence, the corruptions of the medieval church and the failure of Protestantism also to reform the structures of society.[80] The death of Jesus is subordinated in Rauschenbusch's thinking to his life of experiential solidarity with suffering humanity. "If [Jesus] had lived for thirty years longer, he would have formed a great society of those who shared his conception and religious realization of

God, and this would have been that nucleus of a new humanity which would change the relation of God to humanity."[81] "We can either be saved by non-ethical sacramental methods," he wrote, "or by absorbing the moral character of Jesus into our own character. Let every man judge which is the salvation he wants."[82]

Especially in mainline theology today the Spirit is identified with the *kingdom* as something different from the visible *church*. As noted above, this was true of the early Anabaptists and has been true more generally of radical Protestantism in various forms. However, in the modern versions at least, the kingdom tends to be understood as a triumphing force *in the world*. At least in the most recent versions, history, nature, and the body are celebrated. Indeed, *everything* is "sacramental." It is the particularity of *the* incarnation, *this* church, and *these* sacraments that cause offense.

In some versions (especially Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Harnack), the kingdom just is the world. It remains a question whether it is nevertheless "gnostic" in the triumphalistic sense represented by the likes of radical Anabaptist Thomas Müntzer. The new "saints" are persuaded that their higher gnosis transcends all scriptures, churches, and traditions and that through proper moral education and social engineering the lead of matter may be transformed into the gold of Absolute Spirit.

Shocking the liberal establishment as well as the orthodox, Albert Schweitzer famously (or infamously) argued in 1906 that this completely misunderstood Jesus's own understanding of his mission. Jesus was convinced that he was ushering in the messianic kingdom, but his death brought this ideal to an end, and if he was to have any lingering effect his followers realized that the *kingdom* would have to be transformed into a purely spiritual entity—the *church*.[83] There is little to say after Schweitzer if one follows in his line. The kingdom Jesus envisioned does not exist, and the church that he did not envision is in fact the only entity remotely extending his memory.

But Schweitzer's "consistent eschatology" proved to be a speed bump. For the most part, liberal Protestants (and many Catholics) returned to the more Kantian-Ritschlian triumphalism. The earlier impulse of radical Protestantism is evident in the work of Harvey Cox, Jürgen Moltmann, and various theologies of liberation. In spite of the emphasis on the free Spirit who descends where he will, even in Pentecostal and charismatic circles the tendency to treat the Spirit as a possession of the individual believer or a particular movement of revival is

evident.

A chapter in Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit* is titled "Christ the King and the Spirit the Kingdom."[84] First of all, there is the depersonalizing tendency: the Spirit not as the one who brings the kingdom to completion but simply as the kingdom. Would it not strike us as odd to hear the Father or the Son spoken of as "the kingdom"? Second, rendering the Spirit identical to the kingdom makes him just as indistinguishable from the field of his agency as it does to say that the church is the Spirit's incarnation. One serious cost of such immanentizing of the Spirit is that a church, kingdom, individual, world, or movement that simply *is* the Spirit cannot be brought into being, sustained, and led into the consummation *by* the Spirit. It cannot be judged or saved; it cannot hear a word that is external to itself

Yet the opposition of kingdom and church is not limited to radical Protestantism. After the Second Vatican Council, mainstream Roman Catholic theologians have argued in a vein similar to Fr. Richard P. McBrien. In *Do We Need the Church?*, Fr. McBrien wrote, "The church is no longer to be conceived as the center of God's plan of salvation. Not all men are called to membership in the Church, nor is such membership a sign of present salvation or a guarantee of future salvation. Salvation comes through participation in the Kingdom of God rather than through affiliation with the Christian Church." [85] He added, "All men are called to the kingdom, because all men are called to live the gospel. But the living of the gospel is not necessarily allied to membership in the visible, structured Christian community."[86] Thomas Sheehan's *The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity* is yet another example of the opposition between the kingdom and the church in Roman Catholic circles today.[87] As Levering points out, even Gerald O'Collins suggests that the church serves the kingdom.[88] According to Levering, "This disjunctive language, which presents the church as a servant of the kingdom and thus as something that will not be needed when the kingdom fully arrives, construes the church in a merely juridical fashion."[89] Since God offers grace to everyone, revelation must be universal. "O'Collins rejects any distinction between 'super-nature' and 'nature,' " notes Levering "—in this case between a supernatural revelation granted by God and a merely natural knowledge of God resulting from a human search."[90]

There can be little doubt that the interest in a more pluralistic and

universalistic theology is driven to a large extent by the pressures that the church faces in a secular culture that is increasingly hostile to any religious claims that divide ostensibly greater and higher loyalties. Levering refers to the example of Diana Eck, who eschews the image of "the body of Christ" as hierarchical in favor of "household." "The underlying foundation of the world household will finally have to be pluralism," she claims.[91] Further, "this kingdom of divine blessing is much wider than the church. It is the Kingdom of God, not the Christian Church."[92] Levering properly judges,

> Eck's vision of a world-unity based on the recognition of our common humanity neglects the human need for forgiveness, for mercy, which requires the historical action of the living God to overcome our brokenness and the harm that we have done to others. We need the God of mercy, in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, to heal our alienated condition and establish for us a relationship of love and justice by a transformative gift of love.[93]

Further, for Eck death is the end; thus, our only hope lies in this life.[94] Everything sacred, including the Spirit and the kingdom, has been reduced to the immanent frame—in other words, has been secularized.

It is therefore ironic to see some significant post-Conciliar ecclesiologies downplaying the soteriological significance of the church, while churches of the Reformation that continue to hold to their confessions insist upon the point. For Luther and Calvin, as for Cyprian, Augustine, and all of the church fathers, the church is the mother of the faithful and "beyond the pale of the Church no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, can be hoped for."[95]

The Church *as* the Kingdom in the Power of the Spirit

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Rev 22:17 ESV). Together, the Spirit and the church are inviting the world to the wedding feast of the Lamb. And the church is not merely the

messenger but the beloved who is the bride of that feast. The church is therefore not only the agent of the kingdom but the goal of the kingdom itself. It is that part of the world that Christ calls his own body. The kingdom call, "Come!" is inseparable from both the ministry and participation in the visible church.

The same arguments against setting the Spirit and the creaturely means of grace in antithesis go a long way toward deconstructing this false choice as well. If the Spirit worked only immediately in the hearts of individuals, the church would be dissolved at the outset into nothing more than an affinity group with shared private experiences. Yet if the Spirit works through creaturely means that are inherently social, the church is indeed a kingdom of priests (Rev 5:10), one body with many members (1 Cor 12:12–14), branches connected to each other because they share in the same vine (John 15:1–4). They are one in Christ because the Spirit has united them to Christ together through the Word and the sacraments. Because the Spirit indwells each believer personally, the unity of the church cannot be conceived as a "fusion of existences," as in prominent construals of Roman Catholic teaching encountered above. Rather, each member is chosen in Christ, redeemed, justified, regenerated, and eventually glorified. Yet because each member is *in Christ*, the Head of the body, the Spirit indwells the whole church even as he indwelled the typological temple in Jerusalem.

Similarly, if the kingdom were merely a community of Spirit-filled agents bringing liberation within the kingdoms of this age, it would no longer be the gift of the triune God but rather another socio-political movement in the history of this fading age. What makes the *communio sanctorum* more than just another special interest group, ideological camp, or political-action committee? Surely it exhibits common characteristics of human society and organization. Nevertheless, the church is the human creature that the triune God has brought into being and united to the deified humanity of God the Son. It is descending from heaven as a bride prepared for her husband, not rising from its own foundations with its own inherent possibilities like other organizations and associations. The church is adopted by God the Father with the Son as its Head and the Spirit as its regenerating and energizing Lord. For this reason alone it is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

At the same time, if the church were to be defined apart from (much less over against) the kingdom, it would lose its missional identity, becoming a self-enclosed and self-serving institution alongside other clubs and voluntary organizations. In either case, the church is seen less in eschatological terms as the creation of the Spirit, the bride descending from heaven for her bridegroom,

than as a human society that is evolving through the energies of sinners with similar outlooks, moral visions, and rites.

Repeatedly, Jesus and the apostles describe the kingdom as a gift that we are receiving. The world will persecute the church, Jesus tells his disciples. Nevertheless, "Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to *give* you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32 ESV, emphasis added). "*I* will build *my* church," Jesus promised, "and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matt 16:15–18 NRSV, emphasis added). All other empires that we build in history can and will pass away, but "we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Heb 12:28). Christ himself is the gift, along with his Spirit, and because the church-kingdom is brought into being, sustained, and grows to the ends of the earth through the preaching of the gospel and baptism and Eucharist, it is a thoroughly divine work of grace through creaturely means of grace. There is a place for our agency: for actively following Christ's example of humility and generous love as well as righteousness. However, there is something far richer, far deeper than our "willing and running." It is the Holy Spirit who moves us beyond the imitation of Christ into union with Christ. The church does not repeat or extend Christ's incarnation or his redeeming and reconciling work. Rather, it is called in all of its difference from Christ to be the creaturely and sinful entity that it is: witnessing to Christ.

What is the kingdom, as Jesus taught it? And is this *kingdom* substantially different from what the apostles describe as the *church*? Jesus describes the kingdom as a great feast where "many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 8:11). "The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad" (Matt 13:47 ESV). The kingdom is "the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 13:38; 22:16; 26:18) and the authority to forgive sins in the King's name was central to the apostolic identity (Matt 16:19; 18:18). The close connection between the Spirit and forgiveness of sins is evident in what Jesus decrees when he breathes on his disciples in preparation for their kingdom work: "Receive the Holy Spirit," adding immediately, "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven" (John 20:22–23). The kingdom adorns outcasts in the wedding garment (Matt 22:1–14). It is the regime in which the same Spirit who was upon Jesus without measure indwells his people as "living stones" being built into a holy sanctuary (1 Pet 2:5). In the church, the pilgrims gathered from east and

west are baptized with the Spirit—John the Baptist's chief indicator of the kingdom's arrival. They gather regularly to share in a meal that is a foretaste of the wedding banquet in the kingdom, submitting to the discipline and doctrine of the apostles and the prayers (Acts 2:42). The charter of the kingdom, known as the Great Commission, sends the apostles out to proclaim the gospel, to baptize, and to teach in his name (Matt 28:19; cf. Mark 16:15–16). Indeed, our Lord asks Peter to feed and tend his sheep (John 21:15–17), and the chief purpose in sending the Spirit according to Jesus was that his disciples would be made his gospel witnesses to the ends of the earth until he returns (Acts 1:8).

Are these not precisely the emphases of the apostles, including (even especially) Paul? What, according to the Gospels, is the chief purpose of the Spirit's mission, equipping believers for the kingdom's advance? They will be made witnesses throughout the world, proclaiming "repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:45–49). Is this not the message of Paul?

Furthermore, far from opposing a charismatic community led by the Spirit on a kingdom mission to an institutional church weighed down by doctrines, scripture, offices, and rituals, the Gospels record the drama that is then unpacked in the apostolic letters. Far from a freelance source of spontaneous revelation, the Spirit binds his ministry to Christ's mission, as we have seen from the farewell discourse. It is the Spirit who inspires the apostolic canon that is to be foundational for all times and places, and who calls and equips officers and the whole body for mutual love and mission. And when Jesus promises to build his church (Matt 16:18), he knows that it will be by his Word and Spirit that this is accomplished.

When one compares the identification of the kingdom in the Gospels with the description of the church in the Epistles, any cleavage vanishes between a charismatic and dynamic kingdom of the saints and the church as an institution across all times and places. Consistent with his farewell discourse, Jesus's answer to the disciples' last question, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) is to wait for the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost. *This* is the conquest, the fulfillment of the event Jesus promised in answer to their question about the kingdom's restoration.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus is redefining the *qahal* (assembly) of Israel and redrawing its boundaries around himself, as does the apostle Paul (e.g., Eph 2:11–22). Jesus will gather "other sheep" into the fold of the true Israel and will be one Shepherd over one flock (John 10 as the fulfillment of Ezekiel 34). For the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the kingdom is no longer a geopolitical

nation but a worldwide family of Abraham that flourishes and conquers through the Word and Spirit. Is this not the basic structure of Paul's message as he traces the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant now that the old covenant has been rendered obsolete with Christ's advent? And is not his understanding of the cosmic battle—"we do not wrestle against flesh and blood" or with the weapons of this world (Eph 6:12 ESV; cf. 2 Cor 10:4), but instead are armed only with the gospel and the Spirit (e.g., Eph 6:10–18)—precisely that of Jesus's sermon?

Is Paul's exhortation here so different from the report of the astonished seventy-two in Luke 10? "The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven' " (vv. 17–20).

In both instances Christ's followers are beneficiaries of his conquest of the evil powers, but the principal matter for rejoicing is that they are enrolled among the elect. The church will tread upon snakes (the demonic hosts), triumphing over them by "the word of their testimony" concerning Jesus (Rev 12:11).

The nation-state is dismantled in order to *expand* the borders of the kingdom to the ends of the earth. Yahweh will at last be acknowledged as Israel's only King. The Father's benediction rests on its heirs not as the reward for their faithfulness in the land but at the outset, as a gift to the spiritually destitute (Matt 5:1–12). As a "city set on a hill," the church is to be characterized in its sacrificial fellowship by a higher ethic in terms of anger, lust, divorce and lawsuits than society at large (vv. 14–37 ESV).

Possessing the security of a heavenly homeland and every good gift in Christ, they endure persecution, and instead of driving out the nation they pray for their oppressors and respond with foolish generosity (vv. 38–48). Shockingly, Jesus issues the imperative, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt 22:21). Yet in the church, the leaders are not to jockey for power like the gentile rulers but are to imitate the King who "came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28).

Are not all of these imperatives carried over by the apostles, as they enjoin obedience even to the wicked rulers as God's servants (Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:13–17)? They are to exhibit patient and nonviolent reaction to persecutors, mutual submission in love, and the settling of differences even over temporal affairs by

the church.

Jesus breathes on the disciples, and they receive the Holy Spirit. He gives the apostles the keys of the kingdom, which are nothing other than the marks of the church: by preaching the gospel, baptizing, and teaching them to obey his commands they will open and shut the kingdom's gates (Matt 16:17–19; 18:18–20; John 20:22–23). In view of these episodes in the Gospels, what is the apostle Paul's message and ministry other than the triumph of Jesus over Satan, death, hell, and the curse of the law? It is the worldwide family of Abraham that reaches even the courts of Rome itself, the nations streaming to Zion in willing submission to Israel's King.

Therefore, far from setting the church and the kingdom in oppositional terms or even from making the church little more than a base for advancing the kingdom, the New Testament treats the church *as* the kingdom in this present age. As Scot McKnight argues, "The kingdom is a people governed by a king" and this describes the church. "Jesus connects the present church (a people) to the future kingdom (a people). He connects what Peter does now in the church to what God will do then in the kingdom . . . church and kingdom are indissolubly connected. . . . The church, then, is what is present and peopled in the realization of the kingdom now."[96]

An understandable objection to identifying church and kingdom is the assumption that it restricts the kingdom (and the Spirit's saving operations) to the official ministry of the assembled church. Are we really to believe that the kingdom of God means nothing more than the gathering of professing Christians for worship on Sunday? Yet this objection rests on a misunderstanding. Even if the kingdom is visible today in the world in and as the church, the term may be understood in two ways. The church is first and foremost the *people*, the professing believers with their children. This congregation is *gathered* officially by its covenant Lord to receive his good gifts, including his instruction but especially his promise and its visible seals in the sacraments; to pledge their loyalty and recount with thanksgiving his mighty acts; to confess their sins and their common faith; to receive his absolution and to seek his protection; and to embrace each other in the fellowship of a family. Thus bathed and fed, the church is then *scattered* into the world as witnesses to Christ and as salt and light, loving and serving their neighbors through their callings. This too is the work of the church, but it is the work of the church as scattered into the world as God's secret agents who are pilgrims seeking a better homeland.

Christology and ecclesiology remain distinct because Christ forever remains

the *head* rather than *the body*. The head is glorified, thus securing the final glorification of the saints, but the body is not yet glorified. And yet Christ and his church-kingdom are not separated because the Holy Spirit unites the members to the head.

Conclusion: The Spirit Creates an Extroverted Church

Despite its failures to exhibit what the triune God has "worded" it to be, it is "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic" in Christ and will be revealed as such by the Spirit on the last day. In that light, we press on in the Spirit to "bring forth" the fruit of the Spirit and to share the gifts of the Spirit that build up the body in maturity and outreach. Rather than driving us deeper into ourselves, away from other people and external authorities, the Spirit drives us outside of ourselves by a public word and ministry that makes us extroverted—looking up to Christ in faith, looking forward in hope, and looking out to our neighbors in love. In a fallen age bent on divorces and domination, the Spirit is creating a global community that, for all of its failures, is a sign of the coming peace, unity, and joy of the family of God.

As if flying with string in his beak, the Holy Spirit is binding together things that otherwise fall apart. He is making saving connections. First, he binds eternity to time by uniting Christ to our humanity and its history of death and then raising Jesus beyond death as the eschatological last Adam. Second, by uniting us to Christ he binds us to the Father as well as to the members of Christ's body and knits believers from all races and languages together more and more in fellowship. At the same time, he binds local churches together in wider assemblies of council and fellowship. Third, he binds the "already" of Christ's saving history to the "not yet" of the age to come. He is the *arrabōn*, the deposit, given by the Father and the Son as the pledge on our final redemption. There are so many threads that he has brought together to bring unity and order out of division and chaos!

Astonishing in its beauty as well as its biblical rigor, Augustine's mature reflections in his great treatise, *The Trinity*, begin with an affirmation of the goodness of creation. This good world has been depraved—that is, corrupted—by human rebellion. Augustine represents this as a falling away from unity into

division, but the echoes of Plato and Plotinus become increasingly faint as he interprets this fall in biblical and Trinitarian terms. In pride and acquisitiveness, Adam and Eve together with all of their progeny have become restless. Together we have failed to adhere to the Father in the Word by the Spirit and instead have separated ourselves into warring individuals. In redemption the Spirit binds us again to Christ, not only as the Word in creation "in whom all things hold together" (Col 1:17), but as the Head of his body in whom every member is held together (Eph 4:16). No longer scattered into isolated selves by sin, would-be autonomous rulers of our own empire, we are gathered by the Spirit into Christ as a church by grace.[97]

In much of what is called spirituality in the secularized West, the goal is to withdraw from others, from the physical world, to "get in touch with ourselves," and ostensibly to discover the inmost divinity of our own souls. It is just the opposite direction that we find in the biblical drama. As Augustine observed, the essence of sin is being "curved in on ourselves." We may use religion and spirituality to deepen this turn toward a self-enclosed existence. It is seen in the Stoic ideal of the sage whose inner calm and independence create a buffer against the outer disturbances, disappointments, and even pain that others may cause.

Nothing could be further from the spirituality of the psalmist, whose very dependence on God provokes him not only to yield thanksgiving and praise but lament and sometimes even confusion and frustration with God and his purposes. Called out of ourselves, we are made vulnerable, accountable, and placed in a position of deciding whether we will entrust ourselves to God and the fellowship of other sinners. Hippolytus directed in the early third century, "*Festinet autem et ad ecclesiam ubi floret spiritus*—'Let us hasten to the assembly, where the Spirit produces fruit' (*Apos. Trad*. 31 and 35)."[98] We really only become more conscious of ourselves and our identity by being drawn out of our curved-in existence in communion with God and other people. Even the persons of the Trinity are self-conscious precisely in their relatedness to each other: the first person knows himself as *the Father* because he has an eternally-begotten Son, who knows himself as *the Son* in and through his Father in the love of the Spirit, who knows himself as that bond of love precisely in and through the other persons.

Taking its cues from the incarnation, Christian spirituality binds us to others: first to the triune God through faith and then simultaneously to our neighbors

through love. Even when we break away from our daily routines to be alone with the Lord, it is to be called outside of ourselves once again, to receive a fresh taste of that intimacy we have with the triune God and the adopted family to which he has joined us. We gather weekly not as Christ's soul but as his body, enfleshed for each other. We come not as individuals to engage together in private devotions but to be driven outside of ourselves through the proclaimed Word. The bath and the communal meal are not private encounters with our inner spirit but with the Son who, by his Holy Spirit, unites us to himself and to each other.

In losing ourselves in Christ, we not only gain Christ—who brings us to the Father by his Spirit—but we get our neighbors and even ourselves back in the bargain. In quiet listening to the voice of another, we are not silenced but actually receive back our own properly human voice of gratitude. Because of the ascension, the church on earth is militant—that is, in the midst of the supernatural conquest of the world through Christ's Word and Spirit. Yet it is not triumphant and must wait for the bodily return of its head in the future for the renewal of all things. At present, the church is the bride, not yet the spouse, and as it grows it longs for the bridegroom's arrival to escort his betrothed to the wedding feast.

The church is not merely a means of mission; it *is* the mission. All of God's purposes turn on his election of a bride for his Son. It is not merely a launching pad or a catalyst for something else. It is not only an instrument of some greater cause or entity. The church has been on God's heart from all eternity, so much so that the Son assumed the role of mediator and purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The Spirit is uniting us together into Christ as our head not merely through invisible means into an invisible church but through visible means as a visible communion in history. The church is the eschatological gathering of the remnant from Israel and the nations. Even in heaven, far from passing away the church is finally in consummated reality what God has declared it to be:

> And they sang a new song, saying,
> "Worthy are you to take the scroll
> and to open its seals,
> for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
> from every tribe and language and people and nation,
> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
> and they shall reign on the earth. (Rev 5:9–10 ESV)

The Pentecost sermon still resounds: “The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (Acts 2:39 ESV). And as John relates, “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Rev 22:17 ESV).

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1. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.6.1.

2. Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of the Holy Ghost in Our Salvation*, vol. 6 of *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 12 vols. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1863), 9.

3. The Creed is typically divided into three sections, according to each person of the Trinity. Hence, “Third Article” refers to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

4. After Vatican II, as well as the influence of Pope Benedict, the charismatic emphasis on the “community of the Spirit” has played a large role alongside others in Roman Catholic ecclesiologies, just as younger Pentecostal theologians such as Amos Yong display considerable interest in the doctrine of the church and even sympathy for Roman Catholic ecclesiologies in particular (though skipping over the Reformation traditions). Furthermore, formal consultations between mainline bodies at the world level have produced some of the most impressive, integrated, and biblically grounded engagements on this topic. One notable example is *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 1982–1990: Report on the Process and Responses,* Faith and Order Paper No. 149 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990).

5. Sergei Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). In fact, Bulgakov identifies his view as “pious pantheism”—or, more precisely, he adds “panentheism.” Yet it is difficult to discern the difference when he writes that “the Spirit is the world itself in all its being—on the pathways from chaos to cosmos” (199–200).

6. John Milbank, “Alternative Protestantism,” in *Radical Orthodoxy and the Reformed Tradition: Creation, Covenant, and Participation*, ed. James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 38–39.

7. Ibid., 39. His conclusion is drawn by further speculation on Augustine’s psychological analogy and the Spirit’s hypostatization of Love-Gift.

8. Yves Congar mentions some of the sources, from the patristic era forward, in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, Milestones in Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 2:18.

9. Yves Congar, *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion* (London: G. Bles, 1939), 70–71.

10. George Sabra, *Thomas Aquinas' Vision of the Church* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1987), 101.

11. Saint Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1–40*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, trans. Edmund Hill, Works of Saint Augustine III.12 (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2009), 21.8.

12. See Tarsicius J. van Bavel, "The 'Christus Totus' Idea: A Forgotten Aspect of Augustine's Spirituality," in *Studies in Patristic Christology*, ed. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (Portland, OR: Four Courts, 1988), 84–94.

13. van Bavel, "The 'Christus Totus' Idea," 84–88.

14. John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study in the Religion of St. Augustine*, The Hulsean Lectures, 1938 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), 102: Augustine's reflections along these lines draw directly on "the realism which Greek theology applied to the doctrine of Christ's mystical body."

15. Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, ed. Peter Hünermann, 43rd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2012), 959–60, 964.

16. Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 157.

17. On the importance of the epiclesis, see John D. Zizioulas and Luke Ben Tallon, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2011), xi–xii, 8–11, 21–28, 130. Cf. Simon Chan, "The Future of the Liturgy: A Pentecostal Contribution," in *The Great Tradition–A Great Labor: Studies in Ancient-Future Faith*, ed. Philip Harrold and D. H. Williams (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 65; Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:267–72.

18. Robert Bellarmine, *De controversies*, tom. 2, liber 3; *De ecclesia militante*, cap. 2.

19. Karl Adam, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, trans. Justin McCann (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 31–32 (emphasis added).

20. Ibid., 38.

21. Ibid., 41. Like many Catholic and Protestant theologians of his generation, Adam at first welcomed Hitler's ascendancy. According to Krieg's introduction to *The Spirit of Catholicism*, after declaring for Hitler, six months later Adam criticized the regime (xii).

22. Adam, *Spirit of Catholicism*, 53.

23. Ibid., 97.

24. Ibid., 159–65.

25. Immanuel Kant asserted that the doctrine of the Trinity makes no difference to practical morality ("The Conflict of the Faculties," in *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni, trans. by Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 264. So Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. and ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (London: T&T Clark, 1928), 738, 741.

26. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 121.

27. Ibid., §121.2.

28. Ibid., §124.

29. See for example Michael S. Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 5–6.

30. Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, Routledge Radical Orthodoxy (London: Routledge, 2001), 112.

31. Ibid., 112–13 (emphasis added).

32. Ibid., 116.

33. Robert W. Jenson, *The Triune God*, vol. 1 of *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 205.

34. Robert W. Jenson, *The Works of God*, vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 211–13.

35. Jenson, *The Works of God*, 214 (emphasis added).

36. See the superb critique by Ian McFarland, "The Body of Christ: Rethinking a Classic Ecclesial Model," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7.3 (2005): 225–45.

37. Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 220–21.

38. Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 1984), 139.

39. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:22–23.

40. Aidan Nichols, *Figuring Out the Church: Her Marks, and Her Masters* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2013), 29.

41. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957–1975), IV/3.2, 729 (hereafter *CD*).

42. Barth, *CD* IV/4, 130.

43. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns from the sixth edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 353.

44. Ulrich Zwingli, *Commentary on True and False Religion*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence Nevin Heller (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1981), 204–5, 214–15, 239.

45. Barth, *CD* IV/4, 88 (emphasis added).

46. Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 343.

47. Barth, *CD* IV/1, 652.

48. Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 341–43, 353, 366.

49. The maxim is interpreted differently in contemporary Roman Catholic (not to mention mainline Protestant) teaching than it has been historically by all three traditions. Vatican II makes use of the concept of implicit faith to affirm the salvation of those "who through no fault of their own" are estranged from the Roman Catholic Church, including atheists. Interestingly, the Westminster Confession (1646) added the word "ordinarily" to recognize that there may be some who are known only to God and for some reason are not joined publicly to the church.

50. Myriad sources could be referenced from mainline Protestants. Examples from Pentecostal theologians include Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); Samuel Solivan ("Interreligious Dialogue: An Hispanic American Pentecostal Perspective," in *Grounds for Understanding: Ecumenical Responses to Religious Pluralism*, ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 37–45. Generously interpreting other traditions, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) also advances the author's own sympathy for pneumatologically oriented inclusivism, which is more explicitly stated in "Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions: A

Pentecostal-Charismatic Theological Inquiry," *International Review of Mission* 91.361 (2002).

51. Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 49, 186–87. He focuses on this question in chapter 6.

52. See Clark H. Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective* (Dallas: ICI University Press, 1996), 103.

53. Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 73.

54. Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 2004), 139.

55. See Reinhard Hütter, "The Church," in *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church*, ed. James J. Buckley and David S. Yeago (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 38–39. As a condensed version of his *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice* (Eerdmans, 1999), this essay is a lucid and profound argument for this point.

56. Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 97–98.

57. Ibid., 98.

58. Ibid., 98–99.

59. Ibid., 99.

60. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM, 1953), 50.

61. Ibid., 50–51.

62. Quoted by Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 364, from "On Evangelical Ecclesiology" in *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics II* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 153.

63. Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 364n8.

64. John Webster, *Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 55.

65. Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 365.

66. Ephraim Radner, *A Brutal Unity: The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012).

67. Newbigin, *Household of God*, 80.

68. Ibid.

69. Yves Congar, *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion* (London: G. Bles, 1939), 70–71.

70. Walter Cardinal Kasper, "The Renewal of Pneumatology in Contemporary Catholic Life and Theology: Towards a Rapprochement between East and West," in *The Holy Spirit, the Church and Christian Unity: Proceedings of the Consultation at the Monastery of Bose, Italy (14–20 Oct. 2002)*, ed. D. Donelley, A. Denaux, and J. Famerée, BETL (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 9–34.

71. Augustine, *Ennaration on Psalm 30* 2.4, quoted by Nichols, *Figuring Out the Church*, 29.

72. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996), 37.

73. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 218, commenting on Ephesians 1:23. See also Calvin's commentaries, especially on John 15 and 17, although the concept is as pervasive throughout his writings and sermons as it was in Augustine.

74. It is significant that, according to the apostle Paul, the revelation of the church in these last days is part of Christ's boast in his triumph over the powers and principalities. Through the proclamation of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," he says, "the mystery hidden for ages" is revealed, "so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3:8–10 ESV).

75. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:474, 524 (emphasis added).

76. Alfred F. Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, Classics of Biblical Criticism (self-published in French in 1903; Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), 152.

77. Serving as a manifesto of sorts, Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943) was delivered as the Stone Lectures at Princeton University in 1898. For the historical roots, see James Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1984), and for a respected defense see Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985). The movement attracted considerable interest in the United States since the 1980s among more conservative circles (especially through the work of Francis Schaeffer and Charles Colson) as well as more progressive thinkers such as

Richard Mouw, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and Alvin Plantinga.

78. Scot McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014).

79. Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 132.

80. Ibid., 133–34.

81. Ibid., 266.

82. Ibid., 273.

83. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 478. More recently, Dale C. Allison Jr. has reprised Schweitzer's thesis in *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): "Like the historical Zoroaster, the historical Jesus foretold a resurrection of the dead, a universal divine judgment, and a new, idyllic world with evil undone, all coming soon," though it failed to materialize (157).

84. Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 89. Despite the title ("Christ as the King and the Spirit as the Kingdom"), Macchia's effort to integrate the motifs of Spirit baptism and the kingdom in this chapter I find intriguing.

85. Richard P. McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* (London: Collins, 1969), 228.

86. Ibid., 161.

87. Thomas Sheehan, *The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity* (Random House, 1986).

88. Gerald O'Collins, *The Second Vatican Council and Other Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 195.

89. Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 14.

90. Ibid., 15, referring to O'Collins, *Second Vatican Council*, xi.

91. Diana Eck, *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras* (Boston: Beacon, 2003), 228, quoted by Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 303.

92. Eck, *Encountering God*, 230, quoted by Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 303.

93. Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 303.

94. Ibid.

95. Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.4.; cf. the Westminster Confession of Faith 25.2.

96. Scot McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014), 87.

97. This is the running argument throughout the treatise, marvelously summarized by Luigi Giuli, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's* De Trinitate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

98. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:68.

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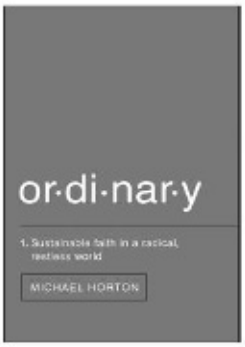

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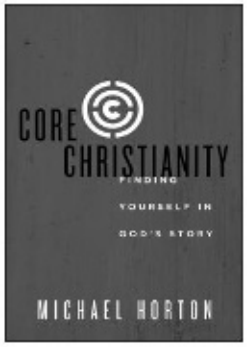

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