

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Dear Reader:

This is the second of our three special issues in the current volume-year. It is devoted in its entirety to the subject, "The Work of the Holy Spirit." This is a subject which occupies a very important place in the body of Reformed truth, a subject with many interesting aspects, but also a subject which probably does not always receive its due.

You will find a variety of aspects of this subject treated in the several articles in this issue, though this treatment is not, and is not intended to be, by any means exhaustive. We hope that you will find much spiritual enjoyment and instruction in this special issue.

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MEDITATION

Thoroughly Purged

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.

—Luke 3:16, 17

What a forerunner was John the Baptist!

As the Lord Jesus Himself said, he was the greatest — that is, of the old dispensation. It was his

distinction that he was given to point directly to the Christ, and that, too, in connection with His mighty work of baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire

and in connection with His bringing in the kingdom of heaven with purging and judgment, so that the wheat is gathered into His garner, while the chaff is burned with fire unquenchable.

Indeed, among them that are born of women, there was not a greater than he!

* * * * *

In the context, John had evidently made such an impression on the multitudes that came to him in the wilderness — common people, Pharisees and Sadducees, publicans, soldiers — that there was an air of expectancy among them. They began to muse in their hearts whether he were the Christ or not. And the verses on which we meditate are John's answer to this musing of the people.

In relation to the Christ, he told them, I am so small and insignificant that I am not worthy to perform the task of the meanest slave: I am not worthy to unfasten the latchet of the shoes of the Coming One. I am unworthy to be called His lowliest slave! By so much is the Christ greater — "stronger" the original has — than I.

And this greater strength of Christ is described in the words that follow.

John baptized with water. Christ will baptize in the Holy Spirit and with fire!

John is but the forerunner. Christ will come fan in hand to purge thoroughly His floor and to finish the harvest and usher in the kingdom of heaven in perfection.

* * * * *

Christ is mighty to baptize with (the original uses "in") the Holy Spirit and with fire.

By so much is He mightier than John, who baptizes with water.

The meaning, of course, is not that John's baptism was a mere water-baptism, a baptism to which no inward spiritual reality corresponded in them that were baptized. This could not be. For John's baptism was the baptism of repentance. And repentance is surely the work of the Holy Spirit; and it was such even in the old dispensation, to which John the Baptist still belonged, though he was on the doorstep of the new.

But, in the first place, the spiritual reality of baptism was not in John's power. All that John could do, after all, was to administer the outward sign of that inward spiritual reality and preach repentance. Christ, however, to Whom John pointed is mightier. He is infinitely stronger. The One to Whom John pointed could and would also work the spiritual reality of baptism.

Besides, in the second place, these words of John point to a promise of the Spirit such as was hitherto

unknown. It is the Spirit of the new dispensation, the Spirit of the exalted Christ of Whom John is speaking. He is the Spirit Who makes the church partakers of all the spiritual benefits of Christ, all the blessings of salvation. It is probably hard for us even to imagine what a tremendous difference there is in this respect between the new dispensation and the old. But in the old dispensation all those blessings of salvation were a matter of *promise*. They were possessed only in promise. They could be enjoyed only by way of promise. They were the object of hope. In the new dispensation all these benefits of salvation are realized. There is atonement and reconciliation, the forgiveness of sins in His blood and the adoption unto children and heirs. There is resurrection and new life, the life of Christ. There is freedom from the law. There is the reality of fellowship with God.

And all these are wrought powerfully and efficaciously and are richly multiplied unto the church by the Spirit, the Spirit of the exalted Christ!

By so much is Christ stronger than John!

* * * * *

He shall baptize you *in* the Holy Spirit!

John speaks of baptism *with* water and *with* fire, but of baptism *in* the Spirit. The meaning is that one who is so baptized is wholly immersed in the Spirit of Christ. He comes completely under the power and domination of that Spirit. The Holy Spirit *spiritualizes* such a man. That is, He separates him from sin and cleanses him, justifies and sanctifies him, and fills him with new life, heavenly life, the life of Christ. Further, He accomplishes this work in the *whole man*: heart and mind and will, and, ultimately, soul and body. In this way the Spirit becomes the life of his life!

Remember, too, that this is not some kind of special baptism, some kind of second blessing, reserved for an elite and holy few of God's children. No, this is Christ's baptism. Whoever is baptized of Christ is baptized in the Holy Spirit. And whoever is baptized in the Holy Spirit is so immersed in the Spirit of Christ that he becomes the recipient of all the blessings of salvation in Christ Jesus.

Nor is baptism "with fire" something additional, some kind of second baptism next to that in the Spirit. But they are one. The baptism of the Spirit, in the Spirit, is a baptism *with* fire. His baptism works as fire. The meaning, therefore, is that he is baptized *in* the Holy Spirit and thus *with* fire.

He is thoroughly purged!

In verse 17 you find the figure of the husbandman threshing and winnowing the wheat, separating the wheat from the chaff in the threshingfloor,

so that the wheat may be gathered ultimately into his garner, while the chaff is burned. But this figure of purging may be applied to the baptism of the individual child of God in the Holy Spirit and with fire. This "purging" begins in the heart and life of the individual elect child of God.

Fire here, of course, is not physical fire but is to be understood figuratively. It has a spiritual meaning. If you will, it is "spiritual fire."

Now what does fire do? It burns away and separates the silver and the dross. In the refiner's fire it purges away all the impurities and leaves the refined and purified silver.

And what does spiritual fire do?

It does in the spiritual sense of the word what physical fire does in the natural sense of the word. That is, it burns away spiritual dirt and dross, and thus it purifies spiritually. It burns away all the corruption of the old nature, all the sin, all the filth, all the death, all the darkness of the lie, all the perverseness of the will, all the impurity of our affections, all the opposition to God, all the foolishness, all the ignorance, all the lust — until ultimately there is nothing left but the redeemed and sanctified and purified and glorified child of God, perfect in heavenly perfection in body and soul.

The purging of "his floor," therefore, which is referred to in verse 17 under the figure of the winnowing-process, begins with the individual sinner and takes place through the "fire" of the Holy Spirit. When the child of God shall finally be gathered into the heavenly garner, he will be thoroughly purged!

And this is a matter of experience, is it not? Indeed, it is Christ's work, and Christ's work alone, through His Spirit. All the emphasis falls on this, to be sure. Christ is stronger, infinitely stronger, than John. But we experience this baptism in the Spirit. We experience it in repentance: that is the work of the mighty Christ through His Spirit. We experience it when we purify ourselves and cleanse ourselves from all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit: it is all the fruit, the effect, of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And when we shall finally appear before Him without spot or wrinkle in the assembly of the elect in life eternal, we shall forever acknowledge that it is all of the mighty Christ, the revelation of the sovereign God of our salvation!

* * * * *

But Christ does not merely baptize individuals in the Spirit; He gathers His church! And this involves a purging process.

The imagery here is familiar. Christ is standing in

His threshing-floor. He has a winnowing shovel, or screen, which is shaken in the wind in order to separate the wheat from the chaff.

"His" floor refers to the church as it appears historically in the world and is Christ's property. In that historically existent church there is wheat and chaff. The chaff represents, from God's viewpoint, the reprobate; and from their own viewpoint they are the wicked who do not repent and who love unrighteousness. The wheat represents the elect of God, chosen from before the foundations of the world; and from their viewpoint, they are the righteous in Christ, those baptized in the Spirit. Notice that they are ripe. It is the threshing-time, the hour of judgment. They have grown up together — one mankind — one historically existent church in the midst of the world. They were one organism, with the chaff serving the growth and development of the wheat. But now it is the time to separate. The wheat is gathered into the garner, into the heavenly glory of the eternal kingdom. The chaff is burned with fire unquenchable, the fire of the wrath of God in hell.

The realization of all this?

First of all and principally, it takes place at Pentecost, at the outpouring of the Spirit. Israel of the old dispensation was Christ's floor. They were one nation, the seed of Abraham. But there was chaff, much chaff, there, as well as wheat. Election and reprobation cut right through the nation of Israel. That Israel was united by external bonds: by their descent from Abraham, by national bonds, by circumcision, by temple and altar, by priesthood and sacrifices, and by all the external bonds of the law of Moses.

But John points to the fact that this would change. The kingdom of heaven was at hand. It would be realized through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the outpouring of the Spirit. That event would make an end to all outward forms and bring about the establishment of the church spiritual, leaving all carnal Israel behind.

Still more, the process goes on throughout the new dispensation. Again the church develops in the line of generations. Again chaff and wheat develop together. And the church, Christ's threshing-floor, He fans and winnows by His Spirit and Word. This is the deepest cause of all separation. Where this winnowing-process no longer takes place, there the church is no more.

But the prophetic word of John looks forward even to the end of the age. There and then the separation will be complete and final. Then there shall be unquenchable fire, eternal punishment, in

hell. And the ripened wheat will be gathered in the heavenly garner.

The mighty Christ, Who baptizes in the Holy

Spirit and with fire, guarantees that thus it will be!
Repent!

For the kingdom of heaven is come nigh you!

When the Spirit Was Not Yet

Rev. John A. Heys

No, I do not for the smallest fraction of a minute wish to maintain that the Holy Spirit once was not in our world, and that He came into it at a particular date in history. He is co-equal with the Father and Son; and He is also co-eternal with them. Do we not read in Genesis 1:2 that He was moving upon the face of the waters, when the Triune God was creating the heavens and the earth? Indeed He was there before time began.

Nor do I have in mind the fact that there is a moment in time when the eternal Spirit comes into the heart of an elect child of God, causing him to be born again, and thus beginning the work of sanctification in him. In that sense we can say that the Spirit was not yet in that child of God. Even as we can say that there was a moment when the Spirit overshadowed Mary, and the wonder of all wonders took place — and that was some four thousand years after time began — so we can say that there was a moment when the Spirit came into an individual elect child of God. But I do not have that in mind.

The fact of the matter is that I was asked to write concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament dispensation. And Holy Writ does teach us that, in a certain sense, we can say that in the Old Testament times the Spirit was not yet. If you will look up John 7:39 you will read, "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet come; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Your King James version, which I quoted, has that word "come" in italics, indicating that the original Greek version does not say "was not yet come" but "was not yet." And we are obliged to explain the text as though that word "come" — or, as in some

other translations, "given," does not belong to the text, and to what John wrote. "The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified" is the idea.

This certainly raises many questions, since, as pointed out above, the Spirit was there in the beginning moving upon the waters. He was there overshadowing Mary before Jesus was conceived and born. We may add that He was there descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove at His baptism. Of Him we read, long before Jesus' glorification, that He led Him into the wilderness to be tempted. We stand in need of an explanation of the fact that the Spirit was not yet throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation. How can that be?

There is abundant evidence that, from the creation of the heavens and the earth, the Spirit was in our world. We may point out first of all that all things exist by His power, and because He is in them. Yea, even the devil exists because the Spirit upholds him; and He gives existence to hell. Because He is in oxygen and hydrogen, these when combined in the right proportions become water. He is in our foods, and that is why they nourish us. He is in fire with its warming, but also in its destructive powers. Do we not read in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth"? And that word breath may be translated Spirit. Do we not in Acts 17:28 read, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being"? And what about Psalm 104:30?

What is more, it is so very evident from many passages of Holy Writ that in the Old Testament dispensation the Spirit qualified and strengthened both believers and unbelievers for the work to which the sovereign God had appointed them. In I

Samuel 10:6 we read, "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." That was spoken of Saul, the first king of Israel. Then in I Samuel 11:6 we read, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly." Before this he was a bashful, shy man who hid behind the stuff and dared not stand before the people over whom he was appointed to be king. In I Samuel 16:14 we read further, "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." He now became a coward without the strengthening power of the Spirit that made him a new man. Now he commits suicide. Indeed during the Old Testament times the Spirit did qualify men for the work God decreed in His counsel that they should perform.

More to the point, as far as the subject assigned to me is concerned, is the work of the Spirit upon and in the saints. He was there since the fall of Adam in the work of sanctification in every elect child of God from that time onward. He caused every one of them to be born again. He united each one to Christ by the bond of faith, calling them internally and irresistibly. He sustained them in their spiritual warfare against the forces of wickedness, comforted them in their sorrows, wrought true repentance in them, and brought them to the mercy seat of God for assurance of the forgiveness of their sin. The Spirit was there alright, and He performed some wonderful works in and for the church.

Turn once to Psalm 51:11. David prays, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." David could not pray that, if he did not have the Spirit. And if John 7:39 means that the Spirit was not yet in existence, or not yet operating in the church in the Old Testament dispensation, David could not have had Him in his heart. But God Himself had David pen down these words for us, so that we could see that the Spirit was there to sanctify, teach, comfort, and sustain the elect of God.

Or, if you will, turn to Isaiah 48:16, where we read, "The Lord God and His Spirit sent me." And in Isaiah 61:1 we read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound." In no way can it be said then that in the Old Testament times the Spirit was not in the church yet. Were that the case there would have been no faith in that period, no love of God, no sorrow over sin, no hope for the things of God's kingdom, no looking for Christ to come. And these definitely were there.

How then must we explain John 7:39? Even if we leave in that word "come" in our King James version, or substitute, as some other translations have it, the word "given," how can it be said that the Spirit was not yet come or given, when the Old Testament Scriptures clearly reveal Him and His work?

Very simply, the Spirit was not there as the Spirit of the glorified Christ, that is, as the Spirit sent out by the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Christ. Note the word of Jesus in John 16:7. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Before Jesus was born He could not preach to the people. Before He died He could not rise from the dead. So before He is glorified He cannot send the Spirit from the vantage point in heaven to which He ascended. He must first die, rise again on account of our justification, ascend up to heaven, and reach the glory which He came to earn and prepare for us. Then He is given the Spirit and can send Him down upon His church. Throughout the Old Testament times the Triune God sent the Spirit to perform all the works which we mentioned above. Now the Son of God, Who came in our flesh at a moment of time and ascended up into heaven on a particular day, having received the Spirit is the One Who now sends the Spirit into the elect children of God. Before He was glorified He could not do this. He, the Spirit, was not yet the Spirit of the glorified Christ.

Consider also the fact that now there is a far richer measure of truth for the Spirit to bring unto the church. Pentecost reveals that so clearly. And that tremendous change that took place in the disciples of Jesus reveals this. The truth that the Spirit wrote in the hearts of the saints in the Old Testament dispensation was rich. Make no mistake about that. All that man needed to know to have faith, not only in God, but in the coming Christ was in the Old Testament Scriptures, which the Spirit moved men to write, illuminated their minds — mind you, Moses knew all about creation week before man was even created, and all by the Spirit's revelation — and infallibly guided them to write it exactly as it is in God's mind. But now the richer measure of those truths is brought to the church and written in the hearts of the children of God.

Now the Spirit, as sent out by the glorified Christ and as the Spirit of Christ, can teach the saints concerning that glory as a realized, attained glory. In the Old Testament times He taught the saints of a coming glory. Now He shows it realized as that bestowed on Him Who died for our sins, and fulfilled to the last detail God's law in our stead. Now He can show what the disciples did not understand,

namely, that cross, as so very necessary for Him to reach that glory as our forerunner and Head. That is why Jesus said to His disciples in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Indeed, He now leads the church into *all* truth, because all the glory promised to the church has been reached by Christ. Not only can He now lead the church into seeing that all the things promised in the Old Testament dispensation have been fulfilled, but now He can teach the church the necessity of that cross of Christ, His humiliation, His atoning for our sins. And Peter could respond on the day of Pentecost and say what he could not have said the day before. He could quote Old Testament prophecies which he knew before that day, because the Spirit was there in the Old Testament dispensation, but which he did not fully understand. A richer measure of the truth of these prophecies the church now had.

Throughout the Old Testament times the main message of the Spirit was, "Christ is coming." Now it becomes, "Christ is come." And although we sing, and may sing, from the Psalms, "Christ shall have dominion Over land and sea, Earth's remotest regions shall His empire be," we now, because the Spirit of the glorified Christ is sent by Christ into our hearts, can sing, "Christ *now* has dominion over land and sea, Earth's remotest regions *now* His empire be." The Old Testament saints could not do that, because Christ was not yet born, had not yet died for our sins, risen on account of our

justification, and ascended to God's right hand; but also because Christ had not yet received the Spirit to send down to the church with that message. The Old Testament saints were shown these truths by means of types and shadows. It was the day of shadows. Now the reality is in our midst; and the Spirit sent out by the glorified Christ shows us Christ in glory as our Head and forerunner. He shows us not a King on David's earthly throne, but enthroned in heaven over all things. He shows us not an earthly Canaan and Jerusalem, but the new Jerusalem and a new creation wherein righteousness shall dwell.

In the Old Testament dispensation the Spirit was sent out by the Triune God to reveal unto the church all that the church could receive and needed for faith in God's promises. All the truth could not be shown to the church yet, that is, all the details of how God would work it out could not be given, because of man's limitations, not God's. Even as a child cannot be taught all about himself and the earth on which he lives, in the early years of his training in school, so the church, which Paul in Galatians 3 and 4 likens to a child, was by the Spirit taught all that was needful, and all it could receive; but after Christ's ascension new details, richer explanation of the truth was given. It was no new doctrine, but a richer measure of the same doctrine. It was, when Christ sent forth the Spirit, a richer explanation of the instruction given in the Old Testament times, but also truth that strengthens our faith in the conviction that Christ is still working for us, and that He will come to bring us to the glory that He now has.

The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ

Prof. H. Hanko

At least in some measure the confusion in the church over the special gifts of the Spirit and the so-called second blessing have risen because of a failure to understand what Scripture means when it speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. This failure is, at bottom, a failure to understand the

distinction which Scripture makes between the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity, on the one hand, and as the Spirit of Christ, on the other hand. This mistake is very clearly evident in Edwin Palmer's book, "The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit." We quote from pp. 20, 21.

In this world there are special functions and works performed by each Person of the Trinity in distinction from the other two. When we think of creation, for example, we think chiefly of the Father, and not of the Son or the Holy Spirit . . . And when we think of sanctification and the working out of salvation in our lives, we do not think chiefly of the Father, nor the Son, but of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who dwells within the Christian. In fact, it is because of the neglect of these distinctions that some people who are in anxiety and distress go to the Father or Christ for comfort, when, in reality, they could go to the Holy Spirit, who is *the Holy Comforter*.

A view such as this leads, if carried logically to its conclusion, to Tritheism, which teaches that there are three Gods. And it certainly is contrary to Scripture to say that we must go to the Holy Spirit in times of anxiety, for the Scriptures repeatedly command us to go to God when we are "in anxiety and distress." The Psalms contain innumerable references to this very truth. But the mistake lies in failing to distinguish between the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. And it is important that we pay close attention to this distinction.

In order to understand it, we must, first of all, say a bit about another distinction which Scripture makes which is related to this one. I refer to the distinction Scripture makes between the second Person of the Trinity and our Lord Jesus Christ. H. Hoeksema speaks at some length concerning this distinction in his "Reformed Dogmatics" in connection with his discussion of "The Pactum Salutis." We quote from p. 312.

Fact is that in the interpretation of these and similar texts (which have been used to support an erroneous idea of the "counsel of peace," H.H.) we may never lose sight of the distinction between the Person of the Son in the divine nature and the Person of the Son in the human nature. In His human nature the Son is subordinate to God as His Father. In the divine nature He is co-equal with the Father. In His human nature He stands in relation to God as one that is sent stands to one that sends him. In His divine nature He is, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Sender, not Sent. His human will is subordinate to the will of the Father. But in His divine will He is One with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In John 6:38, 39 the Savior does not speak according to His divine, but according to His human

nature. He stands there as the Servant of the Lord, Who is not come to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. That this doing of the will of the Father includes the incarnation itself, and that Christ also under the old dispensation was Mediator and appears as such does not alter the case. It simply means that this Mediator's relation, this relation of the Servant of His Lord, of the One that is sent to His Sender, is determined in God's eternal counsel, and that also in this respect all the works of God are known unto Him from eternity. If, however, there is indeed a covenant of peace between the Three Persons of the divine Trinity, this covenant must needs stand behind the relation wherein Christ stands as the One that is sent to His Sender.

Hoeksema has a great deal more to say about this, especially as it relates to the truth of the covenant. But the point here is that we must distinguish between the second Person of the Trinity and Christ. The distinction is *not* a personal distinction. The Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Person of the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity. But although the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is the second Person of the holy Trinity, Christ is this second Person of the Trinity *in our flesh*, in which flesh He united perfectly the divine nature to the human nature in His own divine Person. Within the Trinity, Christ is very God of very God. He is the second Person Who, with the Father and Spirit, is the one true God, one in essence and three in Persons. But the second Person of the Trinity, while remaining God, became man and dwelt among us. He did this as the fulfillment of God's counsel in which God eternally purposed to make redemption for His people through His Son become flesh.

We cannot go into this matter now, for it would carry us too far away from our subject. But permit me this parenthesis at any rate. This distinction is crucial for an understanding of Scripture. All the works of God, including creation, redemption, and sanctification are works which the triune God performs *through* Christ and *by means of* the Spirit of Christ. And only when this crucial distinction is made and clearly understood can we also come to a proper understanding of the covenant of grace and of Christ as the Head of the covenant. In fact, it was this crucial point, with all that it implies, which was, in my judgment, one of the chief contributions which Rev. Hoeksema made to covenant theology and to the Reformed faith as a whole.

However that may be, this same distinction must be applied to the Holy Spirit. And we cannot properly understand the work of the Holy Spirit without

understanding this distinction.

There is an important passage in John 7 which clearly sets this forth. I refer to verses 37-39: "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Now, it is especially to the expression in the above verses, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given," that I refer. If you will consult your Bibles (KJV), you will discover that the word "given" in that text is printed in italics. This means that it was added by the translators, but does not appear in the Greek in which the New Testament was originally written. In other words, according to the Greek, the text reads, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet." Now, it is very clear from this that the apostle John, under the inspiration of the Spirit, means to say, "There was no Holy Spirit as yet. He did not as yet exist." And the reason for this is: "Because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Ghost could not exist until such a time as Jesus was glorified.

That surely strikes us as a strange statement. We might even be tempted to say that such a passage as this denies the eternity of the Spirit. We might want to take issue with the text and remind John that, after all, the Holy Spirit is also true God; that God is eternal; and that, therefore, the Holy Spirit also is eternal. The Holy Spirit always was, always is, and always shall be. How then is it possible to say, "The Holy Spirit was not yet?"

It is, however, possible to say this in the same sense in which it is possible to say that Christ, before His birth of the virgin Mary, "was not yet." There was no Christ prior to His birth, for the Old Testament church lived, not in the reality of His presence, but in the hope of His coming. So it is true of the Holy Spirit.

We must make a distinction between the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. Once again, this is not to be construed as a *personal* distinction, for the Person of the Spirit of Christ is indeed the third Person of the holy Trinity. But the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity becomes the Spirit of Christ at the time of Christ's ascension when the Spirit is given to Christ as a reward for His perfect work. This is why Peter, in his powerful sermon on the day of Pentecost, says, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (vs.

33). At the time of His ascension, God fulfilled His promise in Christ in giving to Christ the Holy Spirit as His own. This Spirit Christ poured out on His church on Pentecost.

All of this does not mean that there was no manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament. Indeed there was. But, it must be remembered, there was also a manifestation in the Old Testament of Christ. Every time the Old Testament Scriptures speak of the "Angel of Jehovah" the Scriptures speak of Him, in distinction from other angelic appearances, as divine (see, e.g., such passages as Gen. 16:7-14, 19:24, 32:24-32). And the reference is to the old dispensational manifestation of Christ. The same is true of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ, while not given to the church as a whole, nevertheless was given to those who were anointed to the special offices of prophet, priest, and king in Israel (see such passages as Isaiah 61:1-3, I Peter 1:11, etc.). In fact, without the old dispensational manifestation of the Spirit of Christ, the prophets would not have been able to speak and write their prophecies of Christ which fill the Old Testament Scriptures. This is clear from what Peter writes in the passage referred to above: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (vss. 10, 11).

Nevertheless, in all His fulness, the Spirit was given to Christ when Christ ascended into heaven. And that Spirit, given to Christ, Christ pours out upon His church on the day of Pentecost so that now every believer receives that Spirit in all His fulness. And that Spirit abides with the church forever — i.e., not only to the end of the world when Christ comes again, but into all eternity in heavenly glory.

Through the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, Christ becomes all that He is in Himself and all that He has received through His glorious and perfect work for the church. We can mention only briefly what that implies.

Through the Spirit of Christ as His own Spirit, the church becomes one with Christ, united to Him in mystical union as His body. This is very real. We are the body of Christ. We are related to Him as the branches are related to the vine (John 15:1-8). We are so much a part of His body that we are the members of the same body of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 5:23, I Cor. 12:12ff.). We are so closely united to Christ that we become with Him one flesh, of which marriage is a picture (Eph. 5:30-32).

We are a part of His glorified human nature, united spiritually to Him to become one with Him. This is possible only because of the Spirit of Christ, given to Him at His ascension and given to us by His grace.

Through the Spirit of Christ we are brought into covenant fellowship with Christ, and through Christ, with God. Christ is the temple of God in Whom God dwells bodily (Col. 2:9); but we, as the members of that body of Christ, dwell in fellowship with God, such perfect fellowship in fact that Peter does not hesitate to say that we are partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). Hence, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). Christ is

the Head of the covenant; through His Spirit we are taken into that covenant so that in Christ and through the Spirit we have everlasting fellowship with the Triune God, the God of our salvation.

Thus, all the blessings of salvation, which Christ earned on the cross and with which He was filled in His glorious exaltation, are given to us through the work of the Spirit in our hearts. We are blessed richly and everlastingly as the Spirit of Christ gives to us all that is in Christ. And it is for this reason, too, that salvation is by grace. It is God's work, the triune God's work, through Christ and by means of Christ's Spirit.

The Signs of the Spirit

Rev. Ron Cammenga

Accompanying the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were three outstanding signs. There was first the sound as of a rushing mighty wind that filled all the house where the 120 believers were gathered at the time that the Spirit was poured out (Acts 2:2). There was secondly the appearance of cloven tongues as of fire that sat upon each of them (Acts 2:3). And, finally, there was the speaking with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).

These signs were signs of the Spirit Who was being poured out. Each of them pointed in a distinct way to the power and work of the Spirit of Pentecost.

The sound as of a rushing mighty wind was a sign of the Spirit. This was a sign of the invisible operation of the Spirit. Just as the wind cannot be seen, but only its effects and influence, so the work of the Spirit is an invisible work. The wind was also a sign of the truth that the operation of the Spirit is an irresistible, sovereign operation. Just as the wind blowing at gale force, a rushing mighty wind, cannot be resisted, so the work of the Spirit is an irresistible work. Jesus Himself compares the Holy Spirit to the wind in John 3:8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,

but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The cloven tongues as of fire were also a sign of the Spirit. They pointed to the purifying and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Fire was used in Bible times, not just for cooking and burning, but also for purposes of purification. The Bible speaks of gold ore being purified in the fire. Just as the fire purified the gold, so the Holy Spirit cleanses and purifies the child of God, washing away his sins and breaking in him the power and dominion of the filth of sin. John the Baptist already had compared the work of the Holy Spirit to fire: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3:11).

The third sign of the Spirit was the speaking by the disciples in other tongues. This was a sign of the result and outcome of the work of the Spirit of Pentecost. The result of the Spirit's work would be the universal gathering of the church, the gathering of believers out of every nation, tongue, and tribe under heaven. Of this the speaking by the disciples in the many different languages was a clear sign.

It was the speaking with other tongues that was chief among these three signs of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. That the speaking with other tongues was chief among the signs of Pentecost is plain from the very nature of the sign itself. For not only was the tongue-speaking a sign that pointed to the Holy Spirit, but it was something worked by the Holy Spirit Himself within the disciples. In that respect the sign of tongue-speaking differed from the other two signs. The sound as of a mighty rushing wind and the cloven tongues as of fire were signs that accompanied and that indicated the coming of the Holy Spirit. But the speaking with other tongues was itself a work which the Holy Spirit performed within the believers. That emphasizes that this sign was the outstanding sign of Pentecost.

That the speaking with other tongues was chief among the signs of Pentecost is also indicated by the fact that in a somewhat altered form this sign continued in the apostolic church. It was something that, in distinction from the other signs, recurred. We read of tongue-speaking, for example, at the time of the conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10), and in the case of the group of believers to whom Paul preached in Ephesus (Acts 19). Tongue-speaking was also one of the "gifts" that was found in the church at Corinth, as we learn from I Corinthians 12-14.

There are different explanations of the nature of the tongue-speaking that occurred on the day of Pentecost. There are some who take the position that this miracle was not in the speaking, but in the hearing. They say that the disciples spoke one, common language, but that the Holy Spirit caused the audience to hear them speak in many different languages. There is the view, similar to this, that teaches that the Holy Spirit caused the 120 believers to speak one, heavenly language, a language never before spoken on this earth; but that the Holy Spirit then caused the audience to hear that one, new, heavenly language in their own individual dialects and languages.

These explanations of the tongue-speaking sign are mistaken. A careful look at Acts 2 shows that the miracle consisted of the Holy Spirit's causing the 120 to speak many different foreign languages, existing languages, all of the languages spoken by the people in the audience gathered about them. When the Spirit was poured out on the 120 believers, they began to speak with other tongues. They spoke these other languages as the Spirit worked in them to utter these languages. And that's what the audience said, too, in Acts 2:11: "... we do here *them speak* in our tongues the wonderful works of God." And that only stands to reason, after all. The Holy Spirit was not poured out upon the audience, but upon the 120.

The gift of tongues was a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit in the new dispensation, the work of saving all of the nations of the world. The speaking in tongues was a sign. That's presupposed by the question which the people asked, "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12). It was a sign of a great aspect of God's salvation that now begins to be realized in the world with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. An important aspect of God's sovereign counsel now begins to be worked out, and is signified in the Pentecost miracle of tongue-speaking. That counsel of God is His eternal will to save all the nations of the world, not just one nation, but all the nations.

This was something new on the day of Pentecost, something not dreamed of before. In the Old Testament, though there were a few exceptions here and there, God saved one nation, the nation of Israel, the Jews. All of the other nations, the Gentiles, He caused to go on in their own way and perish in their ungodliness, ignorance, and idolatry. Oh, the inclusion of the Gentiles was prophesied in the Old Testament. And looking back at the Old Testament in the light of Pentecost we can see that it was clearly prophesied. The apostle Peter quotes some of those Old Testament prophecies in his Pentecost sermon. Nevertheless, so faint was that revealed in the Old Testament, so apparently contrary was what God began to do on Pentecost with what He had done before this, that the apostle Paul could speak in Ephesians 3:5, 6 of a "mystery," a mystery that was not made known unto the sons of men, but is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. What is that mystery hidden from all the ages? That the Gentiles, the heathen, the nations to the ends of the earth, should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. The mystery was that God's salvation was to be a salvation that included all of the nations of the world.

This is of the greatest practical significance for us. We are Gentiles. We are not Jews. Historically, we stand outside of the covenant and kingdom of God. We are heathens. But now we and our children are become fellow-heirs of the people of God. What happened there on the day of Pentecost is of the greatest significance for us! That's why we're members of God's church; that's why we believe on that only name given under heaven whereby we must be saved, the name of Jesus; that's why we are saved.

This was what was signified by the speaking in tongues. If only Jews were to be saved, God would never have caused the 120 to speak in many different foreign languages. But when the Holy Spirit

causes them to speak in many foreign languages, God shows that He causes His great works in Jesus Christ to be preached to all the nations of the world, so that the nations may hear the gospel, and as many as are ordained to eternal life in the nations may by faith embrace Jesus Christ preached in the gospel and be saved.

This is so because of Jesus Christ. "What meaneth this?" asked the multitude when they heard the disciples talking in all these different languages. And what was the disciples' answer? "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth . . ." What meaneth this? What explains this? What accounts for it that now the word of salvation goes out in all languages to all people? There is only one answer: Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen. He is not the Savior of one nation alone; He is the Savior of all peoples of the world. He didn't die for one nation only; He died for all the nations. He doesn't cause His Spirit to work in one race only; but He causes that Spirit to work in all races. God wills to save by His grace a world, the human race, in Jesus Christ. In that human race, made up of His elect out of all the nations, the fullness of Christ's body is manifest, a body made up of many and diverse members, a body made up of members out of all the nations of the world.

In this sign of the Spirit that was worked on Pentecost is clearly implied our calling. That calling is, first of all, as individuals to make a testimony

with our mouths to the wonderful works of God. Here is the test by which you can determine where the Holy Spirit is present and working. Here is the test by which you can determine where the true church of Jesus Christ is. Where do you hear the preaching and teaching and confession of the wonderful works of God? Not the wonderful works of man, what man has done and man can do. But the wonderful works of GOD. There the Spirit of Pentecost is dwelling and operating with saving power.

The calling, in the second place, is the church's calling to go out into all the world, in the language of every nation, tongue, and tribe, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. In that way the elect of God will be brought to faith and to repentance, and gathered into the church of Jesus Christ. In that way the nations of the world will be saved. Such preaching by the church will NOT bring all men in all nations to faith. That preaching itself will work to harden many in the nations of the world. There will always be many who react as those of whom we read in Acts 2, that they mocked the disciples and rejected their testimony. But there will be those, pricked in their hearts by the Spirit, who cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There will be those in whom the Spirit will work faith. There will be those whom He will save.

May God give us grace as churches to be faithful to our Pentecost calling, to declare in all the world, to all the nations, the wonderful works of God.

The Spirit of Truth in the Church

Rev. T. Miersma

The Holy Spirit, in the Word of God, receives certain names which by their very nature serve to reveal to us His Person and work. He is called the Spirit of Christ because He is given to Jesus Christ our Lord at His ascension, to be the Spirit of the Mediator. He is also called the Comforter, as the One Who comes in Christ's name and works the comfort of salvation in the hearts of God's elect. So also He is called in Scripture, the Spirit of Truth.

When our Lord stood in the upper room in the night in which He was betrayed, He spoke with His disciples particularly of the coming of the Comforter which He would ask and receive of the Father and Whom the Father would send in His Name. It is also in that discourse, as it is recorded in the Gospel of John, that Jesus speaks concerning the coming Spirit as the Spirit of Truth. This word the disciples most needed to hear, for Jesus had said

to them that He was going away, He Who was Himself the perfect revelation of the Father, the Word made flesh, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Would then that Word of God, that truth as it is in Jesus Christ be taken from them and they be left comfortless? This could not be. For Jesus was going to the cross, that there the truth of God's saving promise might be established, and mercy and truth meet together in His suffering and death, and our salvation be accomplished. Nor would our Saviour leave His church without the comfort of His presence, but would Himself come in the Spirit to fill His church with all the blessings of salvation accomplished in His cross and with the truth, as it is in Jesus. Therefore in John 14:16-18 our Lord speaks to His disciples of the promise of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive, but Who should be in us, and by Whom He Himself would come to us.

Therein lies the work of the Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of Truth. For by His Spirit, Christ Jesus our Lord gives us to know the truth, that truth as it is in Him, so that we might find in Jesus Christ all our salvation. He anoints us by His Spirit, that we might know and understand spiritual things, know His Word, discern the truth from the lie, and walk in the truth. In the light of that work of the Spirit of Truth in the believing child of God, the Scriptures speak of the office of believer. In I John 2:20, 21,

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

and again in verse 27,

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

It is as the One Who both gives us to know the truth, Himself works the truth in our hearts, and keeps us in the truth, that the Spirit of Christ is given us as His people, and as such also comforts us in the truth.

That work of the Spirit of Truth must not be conceived of in an individualistic way, however. As believers, as partakers of the Spirit of Christ, we are united by that one Spirit in the body of Christ as members of one another, having one Spirit, one Lord, and one faith. When our Lord set before His disciples in the upper room the promise of the Spirit of Truth, He was addressing not a mere group of individual believers, but the apostles, by whom and through whom He would lay the foundation of the New Testament church. It was to the church, as

the body of Christ as it is now manifested in the church institute, that Christ gave the promise of the Spirit of Truth; and it was also upon that church that He poured out His Spirit in fulfillment of that promise.

By that Spirit in the church Christ would give His truth unto His people in objective form in the written Word of God and lay the foundation of His church. The apostles needed to hear this that night in the upper room. Jesus would not now cease to teach them, but, on the contrary, when the Comforter Who would be sent in Christ's Name would come, He would teach them all things and bring to remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said (John 14:26). Moreover, by the power of that Spirit of Truth in them, they would also preach that Word (John 15:26, 27), and the Spirit Himself would testify of Christ by it, reproving the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:7-11). Thus we read in John 16:12-14:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

By that work of the Spirit of Truth we as the church of Christ received the New Testament Scriptures. In like manner also the Spirit of Christ spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament (II Peter 1:20, 21). That Word of God is not the work of man but the work of the Spirit of Truth, Christ's Word to His church, the objective foundation of the truth and our faith. By that work of the Spirit we have received the Word of Truth, the Word of God.

That same Spirit of Truth also abides in the church and works in the church to guide her into all the truth of that Word. Through the working of the Spirit in the church in the communion of saints and under the preaching of the Word, we are led to lay hold of that Word of truth and to appropriate the truth of Jesus Christ. The same Spirit Who gave that Word also works by that Word in the hearts of God's people, convicting us of sin and calling us unto faith and the knowledge of the truth.

The result is that we grow in the knowledge of the truth. This is true moreover, not only for us as individuals, but also for the church of Christ. Under the leading of the Spirit of Truth, the church of Jesus Christ is led to develop the truth of the Word of God, to elicit from the Scriptures in ever richer form the doctrines contained in them. Fundamentally the church always possesses that

truth, for she possesses Christ in Whom that truth lies centrally. But under the leading of the Spirit she grows in that truth, perceives it more clearly, holds it more richly and develops in an understanding of that truth for all her faith and life.

This work of the Spirit of Truth is an organic work in the life of the church, by which, in the generations of God's people, the church is guided into all the riches which she possesses in Jesus Christ. Each generation builds upon the heritage of the truth which they have received from those who have gone before, enriching that heritage and passing it on to those who follow. By this work of the Spirit of Truth the church is given to confess the truth in the creeds and confessions of the church and to build upon it. Such growth and development is not the result of the leading by the Spirit of simply any one individual, but His leading of the church, as she stands as the body of Christ in the midst of the world.

To accomplish this work the Spirit uses the growth and development of believers as they stand together in the bond of faith and as they are called to confess that faith together, to contend for the truth over against the lie, and to live out of that truth in the midst of the world. Nor does the truth always develop in a straight path. For heresies have arisen and will continue to arise in the church, which would corrupt the church's heritage and

ultimately destroy it. As a result, the people of God are driven to the Word to defend that truth. Thus in God's Providence, heresy also must serve the Spirit of Truth in the church by driving the church to explore the truth and its riches more thoroughly and to confess it more clearly. The church institute itself may become corrupt and depart from the truth. It may even do so while claiming to be led by the Spirit, though departing from the Word of God, the Word of truth. But by the Spirit of Truth, God not only keeps His church in history, but also reforms it, and if need be founds it anew by way of reformation and renewal in the truth. For even as the church develops in the truth, so also, alongside it, the lie and the assault of the lie develop. For the false church always develops at the side of the true church of Christ, and indeed from within it. That church therefore which would remain true to God's Word must ever contend for that faith once delivered to the saints by the Spirit of Truth. This too is the work not simply of believers alone, but of Christ, Who by His Spirit keeps His people in the truth and preserves also *His* church and *His* truth by *His* Spirit and Word, and by the exercise of the keys of the kingdom.

In that warfare the church shall stand victorious in truth, for Christ keeps His church by His Spirit and guides her ever into all truth. He it is Who has promised, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The Comforter

Rev. Ronald Hanko

The work of the Holy Spirit as Comforter is not always understood among God's people, with the result that they do not enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit as they should. When the church of Christ is strong and spiritually healthy and is edified by the Word of God, then the people of God walk "in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:31).

The importance of the Holy Spirit's work as Comforter is clear from the four-fold promise of

Christ to His church on the night of His betrayal. In that hour of great need Christ promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit as Comforter. That promise was so important for the disciples, as well as for the future safety and help of His church, that He repeated the promise four times (Jn. 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7). The Heidelberg Catechism reflects this emphasis of Christ when it summarizes the whole purpose of all the Holy Spirit's work with the words, "... that he may

comfort me, and abide with me forever" (Lord's Day XX, 53).

That name, "Comforter," is a translation of the Greek name, "Paraclete," a word which has come into our English language even though it is not commonly used. That name is so rich in meaning that it is very difficult to translate. An idea of this difficulty can be gotten by looking at the different English versions of the Bible. Almost every version has a different translation: "Advocate," "Counselor," "Teacher," "Helper," and all of these different translations are part of the meaning of the name "Paraclete." The translation "Comforter" is probably best in that it covers all the others. A Paraclete or Comforter, then, is someone who stands by us (cf. Phillips Translation), who comes to help us in our need. Advocates, counselors, teachers, and helpers are all different kinds of Paracletes. Christ Himself is called our "Paraclete" in the sense of "Advocate" in I John 2:1.

The Holy Spirit is all of these things to us and many more besides, and is, therefore, our Comforter in the highest sense of the word. When we are weak, weary, and fainting, He helps us (Ps. 143:7, 10). When we are "without one plea" before God and unable to lift our heads, He is our Advocate and Intercessor (Rom. 8:26). He counsels us when we are afraid, or in trouble, or in danger (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29, etc.). When we fail of words to confess the Name of Christ, when we know not what we should ask for in our prayers, and when our worship falls short of God's praise, He teaches us and gives us words to speak and sing (Matt. 10:19, 20, Rom. 8:26, Phil. 3:3). He shows us the way and restores us when we wander (Ps. 51:11-13). He is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord (Is. 11:2). Thus He is our Comforter.

In sum, this means that the comfort which the Holy Spirit gives is not some vague, ill-defined sentiment, nor even some fitly spoken words, but His own presence, gifts, and works. His first and great work of regeneration is the beginning of comfort, His last work of raising and changing our bodies is the crown of our comfort. He comforts us by calling us, by giving us faith, by converting us to God, by sanctifying us, and finally by glorifying us. In other words — the words of the prophet Isaiah — the Lord comforts us through the Spirit by making our wilderness like Eden, and our desert like the garden of the Lord (Is. 51:3).

How significant all this is for us as we seek comfort for our poor, comfortless souls! If the presence, gifts, and mighty works of the Spirit are our comfort, then certainly there is no possibility of comfort when we scorn His gifts, despise His works, and

refuse to make our bodies His temple. If we are to have comfort and assurance we must not seek some special revelation, but through the Spirit seek these graces of the Spirit and pray for conversion from our sins, for faith, and for a new, godly, and sanctified life. They are the comfort of the Holy Spirit in which we must walk.

The first gift the Holy Spirit gives us when He comes to us with comfort and assurance is His work of weaning us away from our old comforts and comforters, whatever they may be. He shows us that human help is vain, and that there is no consolation in the lying philosophies by which men live. He does this by revealing our sins and the depravity of our whole race to us till our spirits are overwhelmed. When he has finished this work in us we cry out, as so many cried to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" Nor is this a work which He does only once, but again and again through our lives.

That gift of sorrow for sin is the beginning of comfort because it is through that that the Spirit shows us our need for all His rich gifts of salvation. And having shown us our need, therefore, He also fulfills that need by giving all His gifts. Just as quickly as the Apostles responded to the cries of the multitude on Pentecost, by speaking of repentance, baptism, and the remission of sin, so quickly does the Holy Spirit respond to these cries by giving us those graces and blessings of which the Apostles spoke, and others besides.

All of those further gifts of the Spirit add up to one thing, the fulness of Christ Himself. The Heidelberg Catechism says that it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit "to make me, by a true faith, partaker of Christ and all his benefits" (XX, 53). For this reason He is called in Scripture "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9) or the "Spirit of the Son" (Gal. 4:6). Not only is He given to Christ and sent by Christ, but it is His work to reveal Christ. And, therefore, Christ is comfort which the Holy Spirit gives us both for body and soul.

Jesus Himself tells us that the Holy Spirit as Comforter will not come with His own special baptism and works, such as the Pentecostals seek, but only with Christ: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, *whatsoever I have said unto you*" (Jn. 14:26). The Holy Spirit tells us of Christ's work on earth, on the cross, in Hell, and in heaven. He teaches us Christ promised, Christ come in the flesh, and Christ coming again. He brings to our remembrance Christ humiliated and Christ exalted, and shows us the wonder of the work that Christ has done both for us and in us and

the glory of Christ, our Prophet, Priest, and King. And even this He does not do with His own words, but with the words of Christ as they are recorded in Holy Scripture. As Jesus says in another place, "He shall testify of me" (Jn. 15:26).

This testimony of the Spirit, however, is not just a verbal testimony, but an application and gift of Christ to us. He does not just tell us about Christ's work as the great Shepherd of His people, but opens our ears that we may hear His voice and teaches us to recognize that voice of the Son of God. He does not just speak about the suffering of Christ, but causes us to look upon Him as the one Whom we have pierced, so that we mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son (Zech. 12:10). He fills our hearts with Christ's own resurrection life. He bathes us in the blood of Christ and feeds us with Christ's own broken body till our filth is washed away and our souls satisfied. He pours the cup of the wine of Christ's blood for us to drink that our eyes may be bright with the joy of salvation and our spirits refreshed by the grace that is in Him. Through Him Christ lives in us and we in Christ.

This is true of all the work He performs. In regeneration it is the blood of Christ which He sprinkles on our hearts to soften and renew them. In conversion He speaks with the voice of Christ to turn the raging waves and dispel the storm clouds of our rebellion. In sanctification He separates us from sin by setting the cross of Christ between our old sinful nature and the new man. He glorifies us in the last day, by allowing us to hear the voice of the Son of God, that hearing we might live. Thus He is our Teacher and Counsellor, our Advocate and Intercessor, our Helper and Comforter.

This manifold work of the Spirit is the reason why the Spirit is called in Scripture the "Promise" (Lk. 24:49, Acts 1:4, 2:33). All of the promises of the Word of God are fulfilled to us by the work of the Holy Spirit, just as Christ fulfilled them for us by His work on the cross. Those promises which we

enjoy through the Spirit are our only comfort.

For all of this work the Spirit is abundantly qualified. He has power to speak with the divine voice of Christ because He also is God of Gods. He is able to show me that all work of Christ is God's work, approved and blessed by the Majesty on High, for He is able to show me the very heart of God Himself, all His secrets and all His purpose, as the One Who searches the deep things of God (I Cor. 2:10). No one is better able to apply to us all the work of Christ, for He is the One through Whom Christ offered Himself (Heb. 9:14), Whose power raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11), and Who was given to Christ at His exaltation (Acts 2:33). As far as my need is concerned, He knows that also and better than I do, for He created me in my mother's womb and searches my soul and spirit (Ps. 139:7, 15, 23).

For this work He is poured out upon the church to abide with her and in her forever. Without the constant care and presence of the Spirit the church has nothing, and especially in our present weakness and sin we cannot live apart from Him for a moment. By dwelling in us and making our bodies His own temple He is able to provide the help we need at all times. His care for us is like

... that of a godly mother, who with sacrificing love studies the characters of her children, watches over their souls while they themselves have no thought of it, nurses them in sickness, prays with them and for them, so that they may learn to pray for themselves, bends a listening ear to their trifling griefs, and who in and through all this spends the energy of her soul with warnings and admonitions, now chiding, then caressing, to draw their souls to God. (Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Funk & Wagnalls, 1900, p. 535).

Through that care, the Spirit's gift of Christ to us, we have the assurance of our salvation, and comfort on all sides (Ps. 71:20, 21).

Salvation and the Covenant Spirit

Rev. Barry Gritters

If we even think very much about the Spirit and our salvation, we usually have a fairly *cold* view of

His work. I say *cold* because we think in terms of the Spirit merely handing to us, or pumping into us

the blessings of salvation from a reservoir in heaven. And though this might be a nice figure to teach us how the Spirit works, it sometimes leads to an abstract and cold perception of the Spirit.

It's also true that our common notion of the Spirit's work is fairly *narrow*. And I say narrow because we think of the Spirit in terms of One Who only sanctifies, or One Who only works IN us. Just look at the confessions and the forms in the back of the *Psalter* and you will notice that our fathers had a much broader and warmer view of the Spirit's involvement in our salvation.

But when we think of the Spirit in terms of the covenant, or the living fellowship with our living God, our perception of the Spirit not only broadens, but warms up. The Spirit of Christ is a *covenant* Spirit, actively involved in all of God's work, not only in us, but for us; not only giving us things, but making us what God decreed for us; and not only saving us, but bringing us into intimate fellowship with God.

We usually divide the work of salvation into two parts: the work of God FOR us (when Christ paid for our sins and earned for us the grace of salvation) and the work of God IN us (when the Spirit gives us these blessings Christ earned for us). The Baptism Form and the Heidelberg Catechism both make this distinction. Surely it is the Spirit of Christ Who works salvation IN us. But it is just as true that the Spirit worked salvation FOR us. Let's see how this is the case.

The New Testament begins by informing us that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:20). This is the beginning of Christ's work FOR us, a work not usually ascribed to the Spirit. But there is more. As a child, Jesus came "by the Spirit into the temple" (Luke 2:27). The Spirit anointed Christ for His work of redemption (Mark 1:10). And after His anointing, it was by the power of the Spirit that Christ was led into the wilderness to begin His battle with the devil, as well as brought back out of the wilderness (Luke 4:1, 14). He preached by the Spirit (Luke 4:18). And, amazingly, as we read in Hebrews 9:14, Christ offered Himself through the same "eternal Spirit." He was raised from the dead by the Spirit and was justified in the Spirit (I Peter 3:18 and I Tim. 3:16).

And though this is all part of the work of Christ FOR us, the Spirit was actively involved in all of it. That is, God's work of salvation FOR us is not only the work of the Son made flesh, but very much the work of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. That begins to give us a much broader view of Who the Spirit is and what He does in our salvation.

Since Christ (by the power of the Spirit) has performed the work of salvation FOR us, the Spirit

given Him at Pentecost now applies those blessings to us, or works them IN us. He regenerates, calls, and converts us, gives us faith, justifies, sanctifies us, gives us the assurance of forgiveness, testifies to our spirit that we are God's sons, preserves and glorifies us. And though these blessings are marvelous beyond compare, we still view them in a cold way when we think of them apart from the covenant — vibrant and living fellowship with Abba, Father.

The goal of the Spirit's work is to bring us into the comfortable home of, and fellowship with, that Father in heaven. Or, to use another figure of Scripture, the Spirit makes us "one flesh" with our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, preparing us for the great wedding feast in glory when our marriage will be consummated in the fullest sense.

The Spirit performs that by giving us the blessings of salvation. This is the proper way to view salvation. Salvation, then, is not first of all receiving the blessings that Christ merited for us, but is being brought out of the darkness of separation from God into the marvelous light of His blessed fellowship.

The Spirit does that first by making us *legally* one with Christ, THE Son of God. The Spirit applies the righteousness of Christ to all God's sons and daughters whom He chose from eternity. Without that righteousness we have no right to fellowship with God, for "righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness" (II Cor. 6:14). But now we have the right to be in God's presence. God tells us, as it were, "You *may* come into My home, and dwell with Me. You *may* be in My home in My presence and taste My goodness." That is justification, what we usually call the "fourth blessing" of salvation.

Second, the Spirit brings us into covenant fellowship with God by giving us the life of Christ. The Spirit is primarily a life-giving Spirit. God breathed life into Adam's body. John tells us that we are born of the Spirit. Romans 8:11 says that we are raised from the dead by the Spirit. When, therefore, we are given the life of Christ, we are not only given the *right* to live in God's home, but God *actually* makes His Home *in us*! It is the fulfillment of God's promise to "dwell in them, and walk in them . . . and be their God" (II Cor. 6:16). And that is regeneration, what we usually call the "first blessing" of salvation.

Included in that new life of regeneration is that the Spirit actually conforms us to the image of the Father, changing us from glory to glory (II Cor. 3:18). As sons and daughters of the Father, we are made, in a creaturely way, to reflect the glories of the Father. So when we are brought into God's house and presence, we not only have the right to be there, but we belong there and feel comfortable

there. This is true because they who do not look (spiritually) like the Father, not only do not belong, but have no place and therefore no desire to be there. But they who look like the Father and the Son, feel very comfortable and in place with Them in Their Home.

What we sometimes call the "third blessing of salvation" is actually the means that God uses to bring us into living "connection" with Christ. Faith ingrafts us into Christ (John 15:5, Romans 11:17-20, Heid. Cat. Q. 20, 80). By means of faith, a gift of God through the Spirit, we are grafted into Christ, drawing from Him His life and gifts and love.

The Spirit brings us into fellowship with the Father, finally, by working in us a desire to be with Him in heaven. The Spirit stirs up in our hearts the cry that our children cry when they desire to be with their father. That cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15), is an expression of our love for Him and our desire to be with Him not only in Spirit, but in person. And by the strength of faith, we reach out, cling to God, and more and more receive His fellowship and love.

Each of the blessings of salvation — given us by the Spirit — are means to bring us into fellowship with God. The Spirit is the means that God uses to reveal Himself as "a Father unto you." And all of this is done with a view to bringing us to the perfect goal of our salvation — *eternal* glory with the Father.

How is it then, you ask, that the Spirit performs this in us? The Spirit does not inject us coldly with these blessings, does not save us when we are unconscious. Rather, as the catechism tells us, the

Spirit works these blessings in us by the preaching of the gospel. That makes sense too. The preaching of the gospel is the proclamation of the Word of God in Christ. And the Spirit is the dynamic of that Word. The Spirit empowered the writers of the Scripture to set down that word, because the Word is Christ and the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. So when we hear the Word preached, it comes to us by the power of the Spirit in the preacher. It meets in our hearts with the Spirit, and becomes effective to the increase of our covenant fellowship with, and knowledge of, our Father in heaven.

"Most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture, *inspired by the author* of this work declares" In this we "rest satisfied with knowing and experiencing, that by this grace of God we are enabled to believe with the heart, and love (our) Saviour." (Canons III, IV, Art. 12, 13).

. . . that is a warm view of what the Spirit does. That is a part of "covenant theology." That is the doctrine of the Spirit which is not cold, but warm, comforting knowledge of God.

When we view the work of the Spirit in our salvation in that way, we won't have any problem either with what the Spirit will do after we are glorified. For during the eternal wedding feast, the Spirit will continuously bring us into the presence of the Father by Jesus Christ. And eternally we will be with Him, eating from the tree of life and drinking from the fountain of living waters. There is no other way that we can say, and sing eternally, "To God be the glory."

Holy Spirit Baptism or the Second Blessing

Prof. Robert D. Decker

Back in the early seventies the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movement swept through the world and churches like wildfire. Though the initial enthusiasm has waned, millions are still committed to the teachings of Pentecostalism.* Pentecostal

teaching may be summed under three heads. With but minor variation, all Pentecostals are in agreement on these three salient points. The first of these may be called "The Baptism in or with the Holy Spirit" or "The Second Blessing." Pentecostals

teach that, subsequent to and distinct from regeneration and conversion, *some* of God's people receive a "second blessing," namely, "a baptism with the Holy Spirit." All Christians are through regeneration and conversion baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, but not all Christians are baptized by Christ in or with the Holy Spirit. Thus, according to their teaching, when we are born again and converted, we receive Christ, but there is *more*. That *more* is the "indwelling" or "in-filling" or "fulness" of the Holy Spirit. In addition to being baptized into Christ, some Christians are baptized with the Holy Spirit Who comes personally into their hearts and lives bringing to them the *charismata*, the extraordinary gifts and powers which they need for personal growth and for a more complete life of service to God in the church and in the world. This is a crisis experience in the life of the Christian, in which Christ baptizes him with the Holy Spirit. Secondly, Pentecostals teach that this "Holy Spirit Baptism" is evidenced by the recipients' speaking in tongues. Thirdly, Pentecostals teach that there are certain conditions which every believer must actively and consciously seek to fulfill in order to receive "Holy Spirit Baptism."

It is to the first and chief point, "the second blessing," that we direct our attention in this article. Does the Bible teach a so-called second blessing? The Bible, God's inspired and infallible Word, and not the believer's experience must be the norm for our faith and life. There are seven instances in which this expression occurs in the Bible. Four of these are found in the Gospel narratives:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. (Matt. 3:11)

See parallels in Mark 1:8 and Luke 3:16.

In these three passages John the Baptist prophesies that Jesus shall bring the reality of which his (John's) water baptism is the type. That reality is the baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John's baptism, while essentially the same in meaning and significance, was still a sign of what Jesus would make real in the lives of *all* believers. The fourth instance of Jesus baptizing with the Spirit is found in John 1:33:

And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

That these passages do not refer to some "second blessing" is clear from Jesus' explanation of them. He speaks of the Spirit which is not yet (John 7:37), promises to return in the Spirit and abide with

them forever, guide them in the truth, comfort them (John 14, 15, 16). Our Lord speaks of the fulfillment of all this in Acts 1:5 at the time of His ascension to glory:

For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

For this reason they are to "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). This was fulfilled ten days later, "when the Day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2). In obedience to the Lord's command, "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father" (1:4), the one hundred and twenty disciples "were all with one accord in one place" (2:1). Suddenly they were filled with the Holy Spirit Who came with the signs of cloven tongues like fire, the sound of a rushing, mighty wind, and they spoke in tongues the wonderful works of God (2:1-4). When the news of this strange event spread, the multitude of devout Jews out of every nation came together and were confounded, "because that every man heard them speak in his own language" (vss. 5ff.). Peter then explained that what had happened was the fulfillment of Joel's Prophecy. The Day of the Lord has come, the Day which marks the end of the Old Testament types and shadows, the Day of reality, the Day when God would call His own out of every nation, the Day which would ultimately culminate in the appearing of the Saviour. Being pricked in their hearts by the Sword of the Spirit they asked, "What shall we do?" Peter responds: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (vss. 37-40). Three thousand gladly received the Word and were added to the church, and subsequently the "Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved" (vss. 41ff.).

The passage teaches that the Day of the Lord has come and has been fulfilled in Christ. The promise, the types, are now fulfilled and the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. The Spirit of Christ now fills the church, the elect in Christ. All, not some, received the Spirit. All the three thousand and all whom the Lord added daily to the church received that Spirit. And, they received the Spirit not as a "second blessing"; but all received the regenerating Spirit of Christ.

The sixth mention of "baptism in the Holy Spirit" occurs in Acts 11:16:

Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

These words of the apostle Peter occur in the context of his explanation to the Jewish Christians in

Jerusalem of the conversion of Cornelius and his house. The record of this we find in Acts 10. Verses 44-48 inform us that while Peter was preaching, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished . . . because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (vss. 44, 45). The evidence was unmistakable: "For they heard them speak with tongues . . ." (vs. 46). At this point Peter baptized them with water in the name of the Lord (vss. 47, 48). Again, the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is not a second blessing, it is *the* blessing! The regenerating, sanctifying Spirit of Jesus Christ fell on them, and after this happened Peter baptized them. Pentecostals cannot appeal to this passage for support of their view that "Holy Spirit Baptism" is a second blessing. Nor can they appeal to this passage in support of their view that only *some* receive this "second blessing." All who heard the Word received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The seventh occurrence of the concept "baptism in the Holy Spirit" we find in I Corinthians 12:13:

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The Pentecostal view of this verse is as follows: It is granted that all are baptized *by* the Spirit into Christ — this is regeneration conversion which all believers share. This is the first part of the text: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. . . ." The second part of the text refers to their view of "Spirit Baptism": ". . . and were all made to drink into one Spirit." This is the "second blessing" which is the baptism by Christ in or with the Holy Spirit. This is one of the clearest instances of Pentecostalism's distorting of the plain teaching of the Word of God. What does the Bible say here? Note:

1) This verse is the ground or reason for what Paul has been saying in the preceding. The Apostle describes the unity of believers in Christ. In verse 12 he states that, just as the physical body is one organism with many members, so also is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ one organism made up of many members. Why is this true? Because by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

2) The text does not say, as the King James indicates, that all believers are baptized *by* one Spirit. The text says all believers are baptized *in* one Spirit. The preposition translated "by" in the King James is the Greek, *en*, and while that preposition does have an instrumental use, its primary meaning is "in the sphere of." In this text, as in the six others cited above, the Holy Spirit uses this same preposition, *en*. When Pentecostals use the passages from the Gospel accounts and Acts to support their view of "Holy Spirit Baptism" as a "second blessing," and then use this passage as if it were referring to one's being baptized by the Spirit into Christ, they are at best being dishonest in their use of Scripture. They are distorting the plain teaching of the Word of God. What Paul says here in plain language is that *all* (not some) of God's people are baptized into the body of Jesus Christ. All the elect are members of the one body of Christ.

3) This is further explained in the last clause of the text: "and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This is obviously parallel to the first clause. In other words, to be baptized in the Spirit into one body is to be made to drink of one Spirit. All the elect then are incorporated into the body of Jesus Christ. This is what the Scriptures mean by the phrase, "to be baptized in the Spirit."

We conclude then that Scripture's use of "Holy Spirit Baptism" is not some "second blessing" to be sought by all believers and which is received by only some believers. It is the entire work of the Spirit of Jesus Christ by which the merits of Christ are applied in the hearts and lives of God's elect. Of this reality, baptism with water in the name of the triune God is the sign and seal. Frederick Dale Bruner is absolutely correct when he writes, "It is worth noting, then, that Pentecostalism builds its doctrine of a necessary second entry of the Holy Spirit on texts that teach his one entry" (*A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Eerdman's, p. 214).

*For a more detailed discussion of this subject see my article "Holy Spirit Baptism, A Refutation of Pentecostal Teaching," in the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, May 1973, vol. VI, 2. Available at a nominal cost from our Seminary.

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The Holy Spirit—and the Restraint of Sin

Rev. G. Van Baren

The work of the Spirit ought to be of real interest and concern to each child of God. Jesus' word to Nicodemus in John 3:5 indicates the principal reason for this interest: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." His work results in our salvation.

But there is additional work of the Spirit which also deserves our attention. What does the Spirit work outside of the realm of salvation? Is the Spirit's work evident upon the reprobate?

The question is of more than passing concern to members of the Protestant Reformed Churches. The question, with the answer given in the "Three Points" of common grace, by the Synod of Kalamazoo in 1924, became part of the reason for the separate existence of the P.R.C. from the Christian Reformed Church.

It was the "Second Point" of common grace which dealt with the question of the restraint of sin in the wicked by the Spirit. Editor Kuyvenhoven, in the *Banner*, Feb. 4, 1985, summarized that point thus:

Without renewing the heart, God's Spirit restrains sin in unregenerate individuals, and by the same activity he makes human society possible (Gen. 6:3, Acts 7:42, II Thess. 2:6-7, etc.).

It might seem unnecessary to treat a subject as this which was discussed in great detail over 60 years ago. Further articles might be like "beating a dead horse." There appear to be so many more interesting and significant subjects which can be studied.

Others still insist that there is not now, and never was, any essential difference between the P.R.C. and the C.R.C. on the question of restraint of sin. It is said that what the P.R.C. termed the "providence" of God, the C.R.C. called "common grace" in the second point.

Yet, the C.R.C. speaks specifically of "grace" (common to all men) — not just a "restraint of sin," but a favorable work, a *gracious restraint* of sin within the wicked. Also, the teaching includes by implication the "third point" which speaks of the civic good of the reprobate. The wicked can, by virtue of this common grace of God, do certain

good which is pleasing in God's eyes. These confuse the work of the Spirit in providence with Divine favor — an error which becomes more obvious when one considers that the same Spirit also rules so over the devil himself.

The question is one of importance because it necessarily affects one's understanding of God and His attitude towards the wicked — but also definitely will affect one's attitude toward the wicked and that which he does. When the wicked is said to be graciously restrained from sin, thus allowing him to do certain good works, then the conclusion follows: the Christian can "redeem" these works for the benefit of the church. Then one can claim also to be able to "redeem" the movie and the dance.

This subject itself has been treated extensively in theological works. For further study, one can read Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology* and Hoeksema in his *Reformed Dogmatics*.

Berkhof states in his *Systematic Theology*, (p. 439), "Special grace is supernatural and spiritual: it removes the guilt and pollution of sin and lifts the sentence of condemnation. Common grace, on the other hand, is natural; and while some of its forms may be closely connected with saving grace, it does not remove sin nor set man free, but merely restrains the outward manifestations of sin and promotes outward morality and decency, good order in society and civic righteousness, the development of science and art, and so on"

H. Hoeksema in *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America*, gives this explanation to the "restraint of sin" in natural man: "There is the all-overruling power of God, who indeed gives men over into unrighteousness, and in His righteous judgment punishes sin with sin; but who also controls the progress of sin and leads it into those channels which are conducive to the realization of His counsel. There is the limitation imposed upon every man by the measure of his gifts, powers, and talents, by time and occasion, by means and circumstances, by character and disposition. All men do not commit all sin; each one sins according to his place in the organism of the race and in history. It is determined and limited by various and often conflicting motives, such as fear and shame, ambition

and vain-glory, natural love and carnal lusts, malice and envy, hatred and vengeance. And it is influenced by the power of the magistrates. But in all these channels and under all these controlling and determining factors, many and various though they be, the current of sin and corruption moves onward without restraint and interruption, until it shall have served God's purpose and the measure of iniquity shall be filled!"

In brief summary, we can state several things concerning the work of the Spirit outside of the realm of salvation. First, the Spirit is that Person of the Trinity Who gives life. Already in Genesis 1:2 we read of the Spirit moving (brooding) upon the waters. He gives life to creation which the Triune God formed. The Spirit is the life-giving Power Who instills not only spiritual life, but also gives natural life.

Also Scripture indicates that the Spirit controls and directs all things — using even the wicked to serve the purpose of our God. He leaves them without excuse in the judgment day, for we read in Genesis 6:3, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man . . ." Although the CRC claimed that this represents the failing attempt of the Spirit to restrain wickedness within the sinner, there is no basis for this in the passage. Rather, the striving of the Spirit with man takes place principally through the preaching of God's Word. The Spirit testifies against the wicked through that preaching. Jude 14, 15, states, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." The preached Word is used by the Spirit to testify against the ungodly — but the flood would bring an end to that in Noah's day when the wicked are destroyed.

Scripture gives other indications of the work of the Spirit upon the wicked. In the case of King Saul, the Spirit governed his rule over Israel. In I Samuel 11:6 we read, "And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly." Saul was given that which was necessary for his task of ruling over Israel — and later God also took all this away from him. But Saul's heart was not affected, and the very abilities given him served further to condemn this king who refused to rule to God's glory.

The Spirit does use various means in order that *outward* sin be restrained. Sin must develop in a certain way through the various ages. God will not have all sin committed all at once. Romans 13

teaches in verse 3, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." Government, including the policeman, serves as a form of deterrent to the wicked.

The Spirit uses also other means to govern outward sin. He does this by sending consequences upon the disobedient. The alcoholic can develop cirrhosis of the liver. The homosexual and the promiscuous persons contract various sexually related sicknesses, some, as AIDS, very serious. Many refrain from certain outward acts of sin to avoid these consequences.

Peer-pressure effectively limits the activities of others. These would be well-thought-of by their neighbors. These would gain the approval of others. Therefore, some lead the kind of lives which can be praised by men.

Self-preservation serves also as a means to deter the wicked. These would preserve their own lives by insisting that all adhere to certain rules. The Spirit uses all of these things to keep the wicked from carrying out many evil designs — thus directing that the very development of sin in this world at the same time will serve His Sovereign purpose.

The Spirit governs all things that God's counsel may be fulfilled. The Spirit is indeed active in the world of sinners. This is not, however, a gracious act upon the sinner, nor does it affect any sort of moral improvement in the sinner. The sinner remains dead in sin, prone to all evil. His heart is corrupt and he refuses to do anything pleasing to God. And through the ages, man continues to develop and grow in sin and evil.

It can not, then, be shown that there is any sort of spiritual benefit or blessing to the sinner because of this "restraint." Nor can the sinner, because of this government of the Spirit, now perform certain good deeds. There is no benefit to the sinner either here or hereafter.

Nor is this "restraint" in any way the fruit of the work of the cross. The wicked derive no spiritual benefit from that cross. But the Spirit does control the wicked and govern them in their activities that Christ's purpose of saving His people might be realized.

Then we can understand the outward "restraint" or government of the wicked — and surely it is not a manifestation of the favor of God upon them.

For the wicked, God directs that all things lead to the greater damnation of the reprobate wicked. Asaph speaks of that in Psalm 73:18: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction." What is "favorable"

in such activity of the Spirit?

In the day of judgment, it becomes clearly evident that the wicked knew that they walked ever in transgression of God's law. Even their outward restraint, for fear of certain consequences on this earth, is itself a testimony against them. The wicked indicate that they abstain from certain sins not because of any improvement of their hearts (for their evil intents and desires remain), but for certain selfish advantage.

But the purpose of the Spirit in ruling over the

wicked thus, is that God's counsel might be fulfilled: His people must be gathered and defended in this world of evil. The work of the Spirit which is to the condemnation of the wicked, serves at the same time unto the salvation of the church.

Thank God that the work of the Spirit is not limited to the church — but that His rule and direction extends also over the wicked. God continues to rule in all things and over all creatures. Then the church confesses that everything works together for their good.

Book Review

THE REFORMED FAITH, by Loraine Boettner; The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1984; 28 pp., \$.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Loraine Boettner is well-known to many in Reformed and Presbyterian circles for his clear and incisive writing. He has authored such books as "The Millennium," "Immortality," "Studies in Theology," "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination," to mention but a few. The strength of his writing is always his clarity of expression, and this book is no exception.

The book is a brief statement of the Reformed faith and includes chapters on: "The Sovereignty of God," "Man's Totally Helpless Condition," "Christ's Atonement," "God's Foreknowledge," "The Universalistic Passages," and "Two Systems Contrasted." In the latter chapter the author compares the Calvinistic and the Arminian systems of theology by briefly explaining the five points of the

Remonstrance with the five points of Calvinism.

For a brief statement of the Reformed faith, the book is valuable, but there are several weaknesses in it. For example, the author speaks of God's permissive will in relation to sin, of angels, who become elect by remaining to stand in their original state, of the fact that devils are endlessly punished because they endlessly sin, and of common grace. We were aware of the fact that the author holds to some of these doctrines, which weaken the defense of the Reformed faith, but the reader should recognize that here is no completely consistent defense of the Calvinistic position.

Nevertheless, we recommend the book to our readers. Perhaps it can serve as a model for a work prepared by one of our own ministers and which would serve as a brief statement of our position. Such a booklet would be an invaluable aid on the mission field.

News From Our Churches

February 28, 1985

Rev. Jon Smith, his wife, Kristie, and their three children have settled into Trinity Church in Houston, Texas. Pastor Ron Cammenga conducted the Installation part of the morning worship service, on February 3. Edgerton Church in Minnesota has extended a call to Rev. David Engelsma from a trio including also Rev. DeVries and Prof. Hanko. Hull Church in Iowa has extended a call to Rev. Gise Van Baren from a trio which included also Prof. Hanko and Rev. R. Hanko.

On March 5 there was an Office Bearers' Con-

ference held in Randolph Church in Wisconsin in conjunction with the March meeting of Classis West. The topic was the "Theonomy," which refers to the view that the Old Testament civil laws are binding upon us today. This position is gaining more acceptance in Reformed and Presbyterian circles.

The Theological School Committee is reminding our churches of the critical shortage of Seminary students training for the ministry. "Without the

regular ministry of the Word our Churches cannot be expected to flourish. Shepherdless Churches are Churches abnormally situated. God has so constituted our spiritual life for the Church militant, that constant care and nourishment are necessary. Consequently Ministers of the Gospel must ever be available." *The Church Order Commentary*, Van Dellen and Monsma, page 85.

Hope School in Walker, Michigan sent Rev. Bruinsma some money for the children of Jamaica. Rev. Bruinsma will purchase Bibles on the island and distribute them. This method seems to be the best way to get Bibles for the Jamaican children because of the high cost and uncertainty of sending books through the mail. Rev. Bruinsma writes in a letter that both the missionary work and the schooling of their children is going quite well.

The Reformed Witness Committee of Hope Church, Walker, has sent regular mailings of sermon tapes, *Standard Bearer*, pamphlets and old "Sunday School" papers to many organizations and individuals in Ghana and Tanzania, West Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Singapore, and to many individuals in our own country. The committee is also responsible for coordinating four programs a year at the Christian Rest Home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They have also sponsored weekly written meditations by our ministers in the G.R. Press and the publishing and printing of new pamphlets. They even conducted a door-to-door campaign to determine the interest in our denomination.

The area ministers in Grand Rapids, Michigan are planning on conducting a "Marriage Seminar"

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Hudsonville Mens Society mourns the death of a member, MR. JOHN B. LUBBERS, who has gone to glory January 21, 1985.

We extend our sincere Christian sympathy to his family and pray the Lord will sustain them in their sorrow.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1, 2)

Gerald Bouwkamp, Pres.
George Hoekstra, Vice Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Covenant Christian School of Lynden, Washington, is in need of an additional teacher for the 1985-86 school year for either grades 3-5 or Junior High. Please send your application to Covenant Christian School, c/o Mr. Albert de Boer, 9088 Northwood Road, Lynden, Washington 98264.

beginning March 14 and continuing for six weeks each Thursday evening at 7:30 P.M. This seminar will be for young couples who have been married for less than two years and those who plan to be married in the next year. The seminar will focus on all areas of married life.

Loveland Church in Colorado held a special congregational meeting February 28 to consider a proposal from the consistory re the building of a new church. Maybe I will find out what was decided by the next installment of the Church News.

Southeast Church in Michigan has decided to add a fifth elder to the Council. This was done because of the increase in church membership. Nominations for this office will be presented to the congregation in the next few weeks.

The Reformed Witness Hour plans on relocating in the new church building of First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. First Church is providing an unfinished space in their basement for this purpose. However, the RWH must finish and equip the room. They look forward to occupying their new home in the near future.

The Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Special Education in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area is accepting applications from teachers who are certified or experienced in learning disabilities. Please direct inquiries or applications to Peter VanDerSchaaf, 6935 Sherwood Dr., Jenison, MI 49428; telephone 1-616-669-0703. DH

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 8, 1985, our parents, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM LENTING celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

We, the children and grandchildren thank our Heavenly Father who gave them to us and we pray that God will continue to be near them and bless them in the years to come.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts." (Psalm 145:3, 4)

Marvin and Carolyn Davis
Henry and Marcella Lenting
Bill and Janet Lenting, Jr.

Adrian Lenting
and 8 grandchildren
South Holland, Illinois

LEAGUE MEETING NOTICE

The Spring Meeting of the League of Eastern Men's and Ladies' Societies will be held, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, April 9, 1985 at 8:00 p.m. at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church.

Rev. Meindert Joostens will speak on "World Hunger and our Responsibility as Churches or Individuals." Members and others interested in the topic are urged to attend.

Elsie Kuiper, Secretary