

# ***THE HOLY SPIRIT***

by

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One of the greatest failures in Christian thought and practice has to do with the Holy Spirit. Far too often Christians have assumed that the Spirit and his operation are easier to understand than, say, the person and work of Christ. In almost every age, too little attention has been paid to pneumatology (the doctrine of the Holy Spirit), and this has resulted in a distortion of Christian doctrine and an impoverishment of Christian life and work.

Now, it is true that the economy of God's saving work of reconciliation and revelation does not lead to a concentration of interest on the Holy Spirit. In the objective fulfillment of the divine purpose, the leading role is played by the divine Son. Thus Jesus Christ is the primary content of the Gospel, object of faith, and theme of the Spirit's witness. In evangelism, theology, worship, devotion, and work, he rightly has the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18). The Spirit is self-effacing: "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:15).

Yet this does not mean that the Spirit can be taken for granted, or that he can be neglected with impunity. In fact, failure to see the proper relation between the Spirit and Christ is responsible for many of the worst shortcomings in this field. For one, the Spirit may be given a false prominence, as in the Montanist-enthusiast view that direct filling or inspiring by the Spirit is a higher stage of spiritual life, or in the rationalistic view (cf. Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*, §72ff.) that the age of the Son will yield to the supreme age of the Spirit. Again, separation of the Spirit and the incarnation can give rise to a false dichotomy between spirit and body, so that salvation becomes a purely "spiritual" matter and the wholeness of God's saving work is lost. This is the peculiar error of Gnosticism, with a parallel in the liberal denial of the resurrection of the body. Thirdly, the Spirit may be set in a wrong anti-thesis to the letter (cf. Harnack's distinction between husk and kernel, *What Is Christianity?*, New York, 1903, p. 160), with grave consequences for the proper understanding and interpretation of Holy Scripture. Finally, belief in Christ and a correct regard for Scripture can be lifeless and ineffective if divorced from the sovereign and dynamic activity of the Spirit. This results in the sorry phenomenon of ossified orthodoxy.

An ancient principle holds that all God's outward acts are undivided acts of the whole Trinity (*opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*) (cf. Bucan, *Institutiones Theologicae*, III, 14; cited in H. Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, [first German ed. 1861], trans. by G. T. Thomson, London, 1950, p. 116). If this is true, then depreciation of the Spirit's role

implies defective understanding, and distortion at one point leads to distortion at all points. In the doctrine of the Spirit, as in that of Father and Son, everything is at stake. This principle does not mean, of course, that there is not a special office of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The particular work of the Spirit, generally speaking, lies in the intimate area of subjective application. But this is a sensitive sphere, for, as modern existentialism shows, subjective application can easily be construed as subjectivization, which begins by swallowing up the objectivity of the Spirit and finally ends up, possibly in the name of the Spirit, with an anthropocentricity (self-centeredness) that is the mark of sinful man and the negation of all true knowledge of God (cf. Barth's trenchant criticism of Bultmann in his essay, *Rudolf Bultmann*).

The proper antidote to this, as to other errors on the right or the left, is to see the Holy Spirit in firm relation to God and his works according to the revelation of the Bible. Only in this light is it possible both to appreciate the reality of his person and to gain a true and balanced understanding of his ministry.

### **The Holy Spirit and the Trinity**

When we speak of the Holy Spirit, we refer, not to a vague essence, a world soul, a nebulous power, or a divine emanation, but specifically and distinctly to the third person of the triune Godhead.

It is true that the word "spirit" has a more general connotation in both secular and biblical usage. Thus the Hebrew *ruah* can be used for "wind," and it also denotes the spirit of man. The Greek *pneuma* is also a term for "wind," though rarely used in this sense in the New Testament (cf. John 3:8). As the breath of life in man, it can easily assume the sense of the human spirit. Indeed, one reads also of evil spirits.

It is also true that in the Bible the simple "Spirit" can be used instead of "Spirit of the Lord" or "Holy Spirit." Thus in Galatians 5 Paul can speak of walking in the Spirit, of the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, of leading by the Spirit, and of the fruit of the Spirit. Here the content and context leave no doubt that the reference is to the Holy Spirit. In other passages, however, there can be a certain ambivalence. For instance, in Romans 8 one cannot always be sure whether Paul is speaking of our spirit or of the Holy Spirit.

But this does not mean that the two are ultimately one and the same. The very fact of ambiguity implies a fundamental distinction. This distinction is brought out in the many passages, both Old Testament and New, in which the Spirit is "my Spirit," "the Spirit of the Lord," "the Spirit of Christ," or, more commonly in the New Testament, "the Holy Spirit." The latter term seems to be based on Isaiah 63:10 f. and Psalm 51:11 (cf. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament [TWNT]*, ed. by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, I, 104 ff.; in English, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament [TDNT]*, trans. by G. Bromiley, Eerdmans, I, 103 ff.).

The phrase "Holy Spirit" is particularly well suited to bring out the deity of the Spirit, for already in the Old Testament the word "holy" "is referred to the person of God. Indeed, it contains the innermost description of God's nature" (*TWNT*, I 101; *TDNT*, I, 100). God himself is the Holy Father in John 17:11, and Jesus is the Holy One of God (cf. John 6:69; Mark 1:24). In view of the distinctiveness imparted by this predicate, spirit in the absolute "is, in context, fully adequate to express the matter, especially on Hebrew soil" (*TWNT*, I, 105; *TDNT*, I, 104).

The deity of the Spirit is also expressed by the manner of his coming at Pentecost. As Jesus puts it, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter" (John 14:16). The Father sends this Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus to teach the disciples all things (v. 26). The Paraclete is sent by Jesus from the Father, and proceeds from the Father (15:26). His dwelling with and in the disciples is parallel to the fact that the Father and Jesus make their abode in them (14:23). In this whole complex, the Father, Son, and Spirit are presented in a unique relation that leaves us in no doubt that to have dealings with the Spirit, no less than with the Father and the Son, is to have dealings with God.

What is implied in these statements is brought out explicitly in the trinitarian formulas of the New Testament. In Matthew 28:19, the disciples are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Second Corinthians 13:13, Paul prays that "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost" will be with his readers. A little more loosely, Paul in First Thessalonians 1:1 ff. speaks of "hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father," and of the coming of the Gospel in the Holy Spirit (cf. Col. 1:1 ff.). Similarly, Peter in First Peter 1:2 refers to election by "God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Jude, too, has a trinitarian formulation when (vss. 20 ff.) he speaks of "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep[ing] yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." In First John 3, verses 21-24 link confidence toward God, belief in his Son, and the witness of the Spirit. In view of the development of this thought in First John 4 and 5, the inauthentic saying in 5:7 is not at variance with, nor a fanciful advance upon, the immediate context.

The three points that emerge from this survey of the New Testament data are: (1) The Holy Spirit is everywhere regarded as God; (2) he is God in distinction from the Father and the Son; (3) his deity does not infringe upon the divine unity. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead. This finds expression in the three articles of the creed: I believe in God the Father . . . and in Jesus Christ . . . and in the Holy Ghost. It is also illustrated in the early practice of three-fold immersion at baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (*Didache*, 7:1; *Apostolic Tradition*, 21, 22).

The early Church did not find it easy to maintain balance among the three theses. Rather surprisingly, in view of the widespread polytheism of the pagan world, perhaps the least danger was tritheism. There are, it is true, loose phrases in some of the earliest writers. We also read that Dionysius of Alexandria was thought by his namesake of Rome to

preach three gods, "dividing the sacred Monad into three substances foreign to each other" (cf. J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, pp. 268 ff.). But even if this were true--and Dionysius strenuously denied it--it was only an implication ("a pelting from afar with those two poor ill-fitting phrases of mine"), not a deliberate doctrine.

Denial of theses 1 and 2 has always been a more serious problem, corresponding as it does to the even more pressing Christological denial. Thus the failure to recognize the true deity of the Spirit is found in the various forms of subordinationism from Gnosticism to the so-called Tropic and Macedonianism (*ibid.*, p. 216, for a good summary see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London, 1958, pp. 128 ff., where Kelly rightly points out that the implication is a hierarchical polytheism). In the Gnostic schemes the Spirit seems to be an emanation, so that true deity is ruled out at once. In rather a different way, Origen reaches a similar conclusion in his speculations on the Trinity, for while he recognizes the unity of the three persons he does not accept their equal deity. "God the Father is superior to every being, the Son, being less than the Father, is superior to rational creatures alone, the Holy Spirit is still less" (*ibid.*). Arianism had a similar implication that was worked out by Aetius and Eunomius and came to fruition in Eustathius of Sebaste, the true leader of the so-called Macedonians, who did "not choose to call the Spirit God, nor presume to call him a creature" (see Kelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 255 ff. on this whole question). Obviously, if Jesus is not of one substance with the Father, no more is the Holy Spirit. As Basil of Caesarea points out in his work *On the Holy Spirit*, an attempt was made to show that the distinctions are biblical, especially through the use of different prepositions. But this sophistry was effectively dispelled in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and Basil himself, who all contended for the true and necessary deity of the Spirit. Denial of the deity, which finds a new form in the modern evaporation of the Spirit into an impersonal force or influence, is a rejection of the biblical teaching that entails misunderstanding of the Spirit's person and misconception of his work.

Nevertheless, the modalistic overemphasis on unity at the expense of true trinity is an equal danger. How confusing this teaching can be is evident in the supposed view of Callistus of Rome, that the Father and Son are one and the same and that all things are full of the divine Spirit, who, incarnate in the Son, is not different from the Father (Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 164). Here is a mixture of the express patripassianism of Noetus (and Praxeas) and the more general Sabellian thesis that there is only one person of God manifested in the different modes of Father, Son, and Spirit. The point here is a rejection of the essential distinction of persons, which is no less integral a part of the biblical testimony than the deity of Son and Spirit, and which thus corresponds alone to the being of God as he has revealed himself to be. It is true that, according to John 4:24, God is Spirit. This does not mean, however, that God is the Spirit without any distinction of persons. It does not mean that God is simply the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit God. What it does mean is that the whole being of the triune Godhead is Spirit as distinct from created matter. The whole Godhead, and each person, is Spirit in this sense. But modalistic equation, or obliteration of the persons, is not implied.

The inter-relation of the Holy Spirit to the Trinity finds restatement along with the

definition of the deity of Christ. Against all forms of subordinationism it is asserted that Son and Spirit are of one substance with the Father (Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem). Nevertheless, this is no vindication of modalism, for, as Basil pointed out, the divine unity cannot be subjected to mathematical ideas of unity. The fourth century learned to speak of three hypostases or persons within the deity, not in the tritheistic sense of three centers of consciousness, but also not in the weaker sense of three purely economic manifestations. From Nicaea and Constantinople on, the creeds sought to do justice to the essential biblical data along these lines, and a Reformation confession like the Anglican gives an excellent summary of the true teaching: "And in unity of this Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" (Art. I; for longer expositions see the Belgic, Arts. VIII-IX, and Second Helvetic, Art. III). The Holy Spirit, the third person in the triune Godhead, is himself God.

What difference does this confession make? There are six main answers: (1) Any other account is a distortion of the normative biblical teaching. (2) On this confession alone we know God as he truly is, as he has shown himself to be. (3) Only in terms of this definition is the Spirit's work known as a distinctive and yet also a divine work. (4) This understanding preserves us from transforming God's action into cosmic or creaturely action, which involves the dissolution of theology in psychology and cosmology. (5) Appreciation of the inner wealth of the Godhead is safeguarded, in contrast to the sterility that results when God is seen only as a solitary monad. (6) The way is thus open for the true knowledge of the Spirit in his work.

### **The Holy Spirit and Creation**

As noted already, all the outward operations of God are indivisible works of the whole Trinity. In Scripture, God the Father is presented primarily as the Creator of heaven and earth. This is why dogmatics usually present the Father as the fount of all things. It is also said, however, that by Jesus Christ, the Logos, all things were made (John 1:3), and there is a similar line of scriptural teaching that speaks of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, as the Creator. As the *Leiden Synopsis* puts it: "The Father of himself created the world through the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Son of the Father through the Holy Spirit; and the latter of the Father and the Son" (X, 9 [in Heppe, *op. cit.*, p. 191]).

The first passage relating the Spirit to creation is Genesis 1:2, where it is said that the Spirit of God moved over the waters. This enigmatic verse has been variously interpreted. In view of 1:1 (unless this is treated as a general heading), it can hardly refer to original but formless matter that was given shape by the Spirit. Nor is there much to commend the odd suggestion of Karl Barth in his exposition in *Church Dogmatics* (III, 1, pp. 102 ff.) that the verse represents quasi-mythologically the dismissal of what God rejects to make way for creation by divine *fiat*. Perhaps the elements of truth behind these views are (1) that creation implies selection, and (2) that creation is also the impressing of order and purpose, not just the calling into being of formless matter. This leads us to the positive significance of the verse. The whole work, which has the wonderful universe as its end, stands under the sign not only of the will of the Father and the word of the Son but also

of the moving of the Spirit. Creation is the work of the Spirit.

What is true of the cosmos in general is specifically true of man. For we read also in Genesis 2:7: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Now there is, of course, no express mention here of the Holy Spirit. But the reference to breathing and breath is a convincing indication of the Holy Spirit, in view of the fact that this is God's inbreathing. With this verse might be linked the well-known saying in Psalm 104:29, 30: "Thou takest away their breath, they die. . . . Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created." Also relevant is the fact that man's own "spirit" comes from God and finally returns to the God who gave it (Eccles. 12:7; Luke 23:46; cf. John 19:30). To be sure, Genesis 1:20 refers generally to moving creatures that have life, and there can be no doubt that the Spirit is active in all things as Creator. Nevertheless, the inbreathing of the breath of life would seem, along with the divine image and likeness of Genesis 1:26, 27, to constitute the distinctiveness of man within creation. This is why, to Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20, with its reference to physical death, there is rightly added the qualification of 3:21, the distinction between the spirit of man and the spirit of beasts. The Holy Spirit is at work in man in a distinctive way.

The first specific truth that emerges from the creative activity of the Holy Spirit is that of the sovereignty of God as the author of life. What Jesus said of the Spirit's work in regeneration, "the wind bloweth where it listeth . . . ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8), is no less true of ordinary generation. Creation could not and cannot emerge of itself. It had and has no ultimate control over the non-existent. It is certainly not self-existent. With every creature within it, it owes its being and its continuation in being, not only to the purpose of the Father and the authoritative *fiat* of the Son, but also to the transcendent breathing of the Spirit.

The participation of the Spirit in creation, however, is also an expression of the immanence of God in his works. As noted, animals as well as men are moving creatures that have life. They, too, have breath, "spirit." The physical life and breath are a pointer to the life and breath of God, without which they could not be. The intimacy is a reminder of the intimacy of the divine indwelling. Nevertheless, there is a clear safeguard against the identification of creature and Creator. Life can be withdrawn, and breath finally expelled. Creatures do not hold them in definitive possession. Similarly, God is in his works, but he is not identical with his works. Distinction remains between God himself as life and breath, and the creature to which life and breath are imparted.

This is no less true of man. Inasmuch as God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, one might say that God made him a participant in the spirit. One cannot say, however, that man became an emanation or a part of the Spirit. Indeed, there is good reason to say, with Barth in *Church Dogmatics* (III, 2, pp. 344 ff.; cf. "Spirit" in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*), that while man *is* body and soul, he *has* spirit. The only difficulty is that this way of putting it perhaps runs the very risk it seeks to avoid, namely, suggesting that there is a bit of God that comes into man and then returns to him. The Spirit who gives life and breath is the transcendent Spirit who is also immanent, the immanent Spirit who is also transcendent. God dwells in his works but is also distinct from them. Just because

they could not be without God, they are not God, and yet they stand in the most intimate relation to him.

The more specific relation of the Spirit to man, by virtue of which one may not incorrectly speak of man's spirit, is a reminder that all that is good and noble in man and his works, all that is in accordance with his creaturely nature and purpose, is owed to the Holy Spirit. This is the truth that finds expression in the doctrine of what is sometimes called common grace. Notwithstanding man's fall and sin, creation and the new creation are not so distinct that the former is wholly the realm of the devil and the latter alone the sphere of the Spirit. To say this is not to engage in natural theology, for without the special work of the Word and Spirit, man is now excluded from the knowledge and salvation of God. It is to engage rather in a theology of creation. Even sinful man is still the creature of God. He is still the creature into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life. Even sinful man can still do many things proper to his humanity. He can think high thoughts, write fine poems and music, make discoveries, establish law and order, cultivate the mind, stay the ravages of disease. To be sure, he will not do these things without the blight and curse of sin. But the fact that he can do them at all he owes to the Creator Spirit who has made him man.

At this point there are, of course, two special dangers. The first is Gnosticism, which identifies the Spirit's operation, not with the whole life of man, but solely with the intellectual or "spiritual" side. Now, it is true that man's special relation to God is linked with his being or having "spirit" in a way that other creatures are or have not. Nevertheless, to say this is not to disenfranchise other living creatures or even the inorganic world. By the Spirit, God is immanent in all his works, each after its kind. Man himself is both body and soul, and God's common grace is to man in his totality, not just to a special part of man that is exclusively or specifically from God. Indeed, the tendency of Reformed theology is to find the greatest distance from God, the most severe effect of the fall, "in spiritual and inward things" (*Leiden Synopsis*, XVII, 24 [Heppe, *op. cit.*, p. 365]).

The second danger is different, yet related. It is that of a natural theology, that, minimizing the fall, draws a straight line from the spiritual aspiration and achievement of natural man to the new life and knowledge in the Spirit that is the work of special grace. It is true that the breath of God is not immediately and definitively withdrawn from the sinner. It is true that the sinner, too, can think, speak, and do many things that bear the mark of the Spirit, that are even a distorted reflection of what may be known of God by his self-revelation in nature and conscience. But to know God in truth, to enjoy salvation, to be heir of eternity, to do that which abides, the sinner must receive new life and breath from above in a new creative work of the Spirit, (cf. the dictum of Keckermann [*Systema*, 263; Heppe, p. 364]: "Man cannot either know or love God savingly without the special grace of the Holy Spirit"). God has not abandoned fallen creation in the sense that there is nothing within it that is of the Spirit. But God's definitive purpose for creation, the perfection of his transcendent immanence, is not achieved without the new creation, the new breathing of the Creator Spirit.

## The Holy Spirit and Christ

The new man in whom the Holy Spirit puts forth his power afresh is the second man, the quickening spirit, the Lord from heaven (I Cor. 15:47 f.). Unlike Adam, the first-begotten of the new creation is himself Spirit (cf. II Cor. 3:17). He is in fact the second person of the Godhead, the Son of God, himself God.

The fact that the new work of the Spirit is accomplished first in Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is himself God, is a reminder that prior to the relation of Son and Spirit on earth there is an eternal relation within the triune deity. Of this relation we hardly have the data to speak, and speculation avails little. The most that can be said is that it involves both richness of fellowship and intimacy of unity. Beyond that, the Church has been emboldened to say that, as the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, so there is an eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father (John 15:26). The western churches have added that this procession is also from the Son (*filioque*). There are weighty considerations in favor of this. John tells us that the Spirit was sent by the Father in the name of the Son (14:26), and also that he was sent by the Son (16:7). The threefold order in the Trinity suggests that there should not be a direct jump to the Spirit that bypasses the Son. The triunity implies that in inward being as well as outward work, no person of the Trinity is without the other two. A necessary safeguard against such overemphases as Christomonism, Montanism, frozen orthodoxy, or uncontrolled inwardness is also afforded by the grounding of the strong soteriological link between Son and Spirit in an ultimate trinitarian relation. On the other hand, there is no need to be over-dogmatic here, for as the *Leiden Synopsis* puts it, "some said, not unsuitably, that the Father breathes the Holy Spirit through the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son" (IX, 19 [Heppe, p. 131]). The main point is the link itself, not the precise mode of stating it.

The final trinitarian relation sheds a light, perhaps, on the Son's conception by the Spirit at the incarnation. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is the father of the incarnate Word, for the Spirit is the efficient, not the material, cause of the conception. But why does not the earthly birth of Jesus correspond to his eternal begetting? If the holy thing born of Mary is the Son of God, why does not God the Father come upon her? One simple reason is, of course, that the Son does not become such (again) at the incarnation. But there is also, perhaps, a reminder that even within the triune relationship there is no dispensability of persons. As Father and Spirit are not without the Son, so Father and Son are not without the Spirit.

There are, of course, other considerations. It is by the Spirit that the Godhead operates in the world. More specifically, the role of the Spirit is that of life-giver. It is thus supremely congruent that in the work of new creation God should act by the Holy Spirit. Nor is this just the ordinary work of the Spirit, as in all generation. Conception by the Spirit marks a break in the normal process of procreation. If Christ's human nature originates from the seed of Abraham and David, the man who is now born, though truly man, is the one who bears the image of the heavenly. His conception by the Spirit

signifies that the new race will be filled with and directed by the Spirit. It is a sign that he is come from above, from God, in order that those who are from below might be raised up to God in him. Although the virgin birth may not be a very prominent part of the apostolic preaching, in the light of the conception of the Spirit it is indispensable to Christ's person and saving work.

As Jesus Christ was conceived of the Spirit, so his whole life, work, and ministry was in the power of the Spirit. (For a fuller treatment see "The Spirit of Christ," *Essays in Christology for Karl Barth*, ed. T. H. L. Parker, pp. 135 ff.) The Spirit alighted on him at his baptism. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He taught by the Spirit, and spoke the words of God, for God gave not the Spirit by measure to him. He claimed the Spirit's authority for his ministry. He healed in the Spirit. Finally, he offered himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God. Rather oddly, it is not explicitly stated that he was raised by the Spirit, but in the resurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. Prior to his crucifixion he promised that the Spirit would come to be the Paraclete, and after his resurrection he breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). He also told the disciples to wait for the baptism and power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). Begun in the Spirit, his ministry was accomplished in the Spirit, and then in its new form continued in the Spirit.

If Christ himself sends the Spirit, and the Spirit comes in connection with his work, this means that the inter-relation between Word and Spirit does not end with the ascension. The incarnation of the Son took place to effect the objective work of revelation and reconciliation. But as the Spirit is active in and with this work, so Christ is active in and with the subjective work of the Spirit. Christ is, of course, at the right hand of the Father between the ascension and return. But he is also present now, and the Spirit is the intervening mode of his presence. Light is hereby shed on the vexed question of Christ's presence in word and sacrament. As the French Confession puts it in relation to the Lord's Supper (Art. XXXVI): "Although he be in heaven . . . by the secret and incomprehensible power of his Spirit he feeds and strengthens us with the substance of his body and of his blood."

The relation between Son and Spirit is also a reminder of the Spirit's role in revelation and reconciliation. The first aspect of this is that the incarnate life of Jesus is life in and by the Spirit. It is this in the old sense that all life is from the Spirit. The Son's solidarity with the race is thus assured by the conception of the Spirit no less than by the virgin birth, for in a general way all men are conceived of the Spirit. Nevertheless, the Son's life is in and by the Spirit in a new sense. Jesus is not just one man among others. He is the new man, the Lord from heaven, the first of a new race, which, in distinction from the fallen posterity of Adam, may enjoy the fullness of the Spirit. Conception by the Spirit does, of course, mean more than this. It implies the true and proper deity of Christ, which is no less essential to salvation than his humanity. In terms of humanity, however, it also signifies new humanity, though without severance from the old.

This humanity of Jesus is humanity for us. By identifying himself with fallen man (Rom. 8:3), and also with the new spiritual body of resurrection, Jesus accomplishes in his

person the death of the old man and the coming of the new. He does this in the incarnation, with its coming together of Son of God and seed of David. He does it supremely, however, in his death and resurrection, where the old man is brought to his end and the new man established as the true man. In Jesus, the man who takes the place of other men, the work of the Spirit is also in a sense representative and substitutionary. Jesus effects in the Spirit for us that which, by virtue of this work, may be brought to fulfillment by the Spirit in us.

This work is not vicarious in the sense that it rules out the fulfillment by the Spirit in us. Already in Christ the old is indeed abolished and the new present. But we, who are of the old, are to have a place in the new. That we may do so is also the work of the Holy Spirit, whose present ministry is to cause us, too, to be born from above, to die to the old man, to be raised again in newness of life, not in addition to or in imitation of Jesus but in, with, and under his vicarious birth, death, and resurrection.

In sum, Christology is no less ineffectual than inconceivable without pneumatology, whether at the level of the "for us" or that of the "in us." Both are equally unthinkable, of course, without "Patrology," if we may so use the word. One cannot abstract Son from Spirit, or Spirit from Son, or both from Father. The work of revelation and reconciliation is the work of the triune Godhead therein reconciling and revealed.

### **The Holy Spirit and Scripture**

The relation of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ carries with it a relation to Holy Scripture, the divinely inspired record and interpretation of God in his saving word and work. This is stated in part in the third article of the Nicene Creed: "Who spake by the prophets."

The saving word and work of God covered many centuries and the most varied events. Men and women from the patriarchs to the apostles lived, spoke, and acted in fulfillment of the divine purpose. For the word and work of God to be known, believed, and understood in objective reality, it was necessary that there should be an authentic and authoritative account and exposition, and that this, being itself part of the word and work, bear the same divine endorsement. Holy Scripture is this record; its inspiration implies the endorsement.

It must be emphasized that Holy Scripture is itself part of the word and work, the revelation and reconciliation. This is why the word "witness" can be misleading when applied too exclusively or narrowly to the Bible. To be sure, Scripture is witness. Yet it is so in an internal, not an external, sense. The record is part of the work, the interpretation part of the word. Thus the prophets, moved by the Spirit, play an active role in events by the word embodied in their writings. Paul's writing of the epistles in exposition of the saving work of Christ is itself part of the divine work and word. Scripture does not stand apart as an additional, external factor that has only an instrumental role. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is evoked, guided, and empowered by the Spirit no less than the word or person of an Elijah, Isaiah, or John the Baptist. Thus, while the

Scriptures are, in Calvin's phrase, "public records," God himself "commanded his servants . . . to commit his revealed Word to writing" (Belgic Confession, Art. III).

The Bible does not greatly emphasize its own inspiration, but what is said is plain and definite. The Spirit's activity is particularly displayed at three levels. First, there is the word or act later recorded; for example, the spoken statements of the prophets with their "Thus saith the LORD." Then there is the recording or interpreting of the word or act, or a direct utterance in written form. This, too, is attributed to the breathing of the Spirit (II Tim. 3:16). Finally, there is the moving of the Spirit in the hearer or reader to give certainty of the truth of Scripture, illumination in saving understanding, and the principle of true interpretation: "The Holy Spirit is the only interpreter of Scripture." In the broad sense in which it covers all operations of the Spirit, inspiration may justly be used at all these levels so long as there is no one-sided concentration, but theologically it has been customary to apply the word more narrowly to the second level in terms of Second Timothy 3:16.

Scripture itself is silent about the nature of the Spirit's operation, so that what can be said is mostly negative. It is not possession or frenzy. The personalities of the authors are not overthrown. Inspiration is not divine dictation in the sense of a mechanical transmission of thoughts and words in which the writer's role is purely passive. On the other hand, this is not just the kind of inspiration that, on the basis of common grace, any author or scholar might enjoy. Analogically, the relation of Holy Spirit and human author is perhaps best understood in terms of Holy Spirit and incarnated Son, or of the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ. The Holy Spirit, from whom life comes, is the master of personal relations; we may confidently affirm that, as his work, the inspiring of Scripture is effected without either violence to the writers or prejudice to the finished work.

The fact that Holy Scripture is an inspired record implies the factual truth of the statements. God has spoken and acted, and his objective speech and action find authentication in Holy Scripture. But if this is true authentication, it must itself be authentic. If an absence of record would cast a haze over the finished words and deeds, so, too, would an untrustworthy record. A first implication of inspiration is genuine authentication (cf. Luke 1:1 ff.). Without this (i.e., on the assumption that the factual biblical material is in part erroneous or even mythological), it is idle to speak of "inspiration" and "existential encounter" in the reader.

The fact that Holy Scripture is interpretation and speech implies the truth of the doctrine. There are many opinions about God and many interpretations of events, such as the birth and death of Jesus. If Scripture were not an inspired work, then it would be no more than an account of the interesting and perhaps admirable opinions and interpretations of great religious teachers. But the God who acts gives also his own speech and interpretation, and what he says about himself and his work is authoritatively embodied in Holy Scripture. Inspiration implies not merely the authenticity of the facts but also the truth of the doctrine (cf. the twofold *authenticia* of Turrentinus, *Institutio*, II, 4, 2: the *authenticia historiae* and *authenticia normae*).

Because the Bible is inspired speech as well as record, we may correctly refer to biblical propositions. These are not, of course, abstract propositions in the sense of theoretical statements constituting quasi-Euclidian demonstration. They have a point of reference in God. But they are still statements (propositions) about God, who he is, what he has done, the meaning and purpose of his work. As God is truth, so what is said under the Spirit about him is also truth. The truth of the propositions is backed by the God who is both their object, for the truths are about him, and their subject, for in the person of the Holy Spirit he is their author.

The inspiration of Holy Scripture is the ground of its infallibility and authority (cf. Westminster Confession, I, v). The former has two aspects: certainty in terms of truth and certainty in terms of efficacy. The Holy Spirit, both Spirit of truth and Spirit of power, invests Scripture with this twofold certainty. Authority is also twofold. It is normativeness for right belief about God and normativeness for the right response in human conduct. The Holy Spirit, himself God, knows the deep things of God with a fullness and immediacy that alone can give a valid and definitive norm both for knowledge of God and also for knowledge of his will for us. For this reason, on the basis of its inspiration, Scripture is rightly called the supreme rule of faith and practice.

Two final points must be made. First, the letter should not be divorced from the Spirit. This is the particular danger that threatens dogmatic orthodoxy or moral legalism. Rightly affirming an objective inspiration, literalism readily forgets (1) that Scripture's authority is truly that of the Spirit, (2) that the Spirit is the living Lord, (3) that Scripture is not normative truth and command by some quasi-magical quality imparted to it, and (4) that it cannot be equated directly with an ecclesiastical or academic system of belief or conduct. Scripture itself rightly has a warning against the disjunction that makes the letter a letter that kills. Evangelical theology makes the same point by pressing the inner testimony of the Spirit (cf. Belgic Confession, Art. V: "Especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts") and by making the final reservation that, for all the clarity of the letter, "without the Holy Spirit's aid a man cannot either rightly perceive Holy Scripture or be subject to it" (Riissen, *Compendium Theologiae*, I, 10 [Heppe, p. 41]; cf. Heidegger, *Corpus Theologiae*, XXI, 21 [Heppe, p. 517]).

On the other hand, we are also not to separate the Spirit from the letter. This is the error of so much modern theology. In the name of the Spirit, Scripture has been revised or discarded as hampering and outmoded letter. The result has been a confusion of the Holy Spirit and the individual spirit, or the spirit of the age. Each man thinks and acts as the "spirit" moves. This spirit is, however, purely subjective. It is without objective reference. Now the Holy Spirit is indeed dynamic and sovereign, but he is not variable and capricious. He stands by the written word he himself has given. He may be recognized as the Holy Spirit, not merely by his freedom, but also by his committal to the letter. This does not mean that he is the letter's slave. It means that he takes the letter he has inspired and gives it life and power in illumination and application. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Holy Scripture.

## The Holy Spirit and the Church

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is in and through the Church. This is true by reason of the work in the members. But it is true collectively as well as individually. When Jesus promised endowment with power, it was a promise to a group. When power came on the infant Church, it was as they were all together in one place. If power lighted on each in particular, the descent was upon the whole body.

The Epistles as well as the Gospels and Acts connect this inter-relation of the Spirit and the Church with the promises and gifts of the ascended Lord (cf. John 14-16; Eph. 4:8 ff.; Acts 2:33). Because Jesus Christ himself is so closely bound to his people, so is the Spirit of Christ. Corporate life in the body of Christ, to which believers are called, is life in the common Spirit. The Spirit means Christ himself present in life-giving power and sovereignty. With one Father and one Christ, it is natural that there is reference also to one Spirit (Eph. 4:4 ff.).

Since Christ is the head of the body, one may justly say that this headship is discharged through the Spirit. In this connection the links between the Spirit and Christ and the Spirit and Scripture are of supreme importance. No error can be more disastrous than to try to ascribe to the Spirit a false autonomy, for this will give scope only to the individual spirit or the spirit of the group, whether in the form of *esprit de corps* or of clerical or intellectual domination. Neither pope, nor presbytery nor individual conscience is the vicar of Christ. This office is fulfilled by the Spirit ruling in living power by the Word.

As members of the Church are one in Christ, the Spirit is the bond of this fellowship. Love is shed abroad in the hearts of God's people by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5). They love one another in the Spirit (Col. 1:8). The graces of Christian life are the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The many members have different gifts, but all are gifts of one and the same Spirit (I Cor. 12:4 ff.). The fellowship for which Paul prays, along with the grace of Christ and the love of God, is the fellowship of the Spirit (II Cor. 13:14). The Church is a dwelling place for God, and God dwells there through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

The common life in the Church is a life in growth and edification. The great passages in Corinthians and Ephesians in which the Church is described as Christ's body make it clear that, while there is obviously individual edification, the great concern of the epistles is with the edification of the community. The Church is to be edified, or to receive edification (I Cor. 14:4,5). The body is to be integrated and to grow to the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:16). The gifts of the ascended Lord are given for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). This work of edification, which consists both in extension and also in progress in Christian life, is accomplished (1) through men separated and called by the Spirit, and (2) through spiritual gifts.

Ministers are, of course, called and sent forth by Christ. But this calling is in and through the Holy Spirit. Even the disciples are not finally sent out until Jesus breathes on them and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit." They are to stay in Jerusalem until the outpouring of Pentecost. Paul, too, is commissioned by Christ (Acts 26:16), but his specific

work is by the ordination (Acts 13:2,4) and under the direction (Acts 16:6,7) of the Holy Spirit. Hence Bucan rightly concludes that inward calling "takes place through the Holy Spirit" (*Institutiones Theologicae*, XLII, 35 [Heppe, p. 674]). The gift of individual ministries is ultimately comprehended in the supreme gift of the ministry of the Spirit by which believers are added and the community is strengthened.

The endowments that are given for the edifying of the Church are directly linked with the Spirit both in Acts 2 and First Corinthians 12-14, where there is an enumeration and discussion. Paul states plainly here that all gifts are from one and the same Spirit, and he describes the gifts as spiritual in this sense. The reference is not so much to native talents, though these may also be dedicated to God and used by the Spirit to edification. What Paul has in view are special gifts of miracles, particularly healing, and utterance, particularly tongues, interpretation, and prophecy.

It is often asked whether these gifts were conferred only on the apostolic Church or whether they may be expected in any age. Three points may be made in this regard: (1) There are certainly expressed promises to the apostles that cannot necessarily be claimed by all Christians. (2) There is no way to bring the immediate gifts of the Spirit under ecclesiastical control--by ordination, for example. (3) Scripture does not explicitly restrict these gifts to the apostles or their day, and hence we have no ground on which to limit the sovereign disposing of the Spirit. A difficult problem of interpretation is involved here, namely, the use of New Testament precedents. It is a safe conclusion, however, that though we may not command or claim the *charismata*, or any specific *charisma*, the Spirit's donation may still be looked for as and when he himself decides.

A second question is whether charismatic endowment is a second Christian blessing (often, and probably erroneously, associated with sanctification) without which one is not a complete Christian. Ought everyone to undergo an outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to initial repentance and faith? Several points may be noted: (1) There is a singularity to Pentecost as the first coming of the Spirit upon the Church. (2) Charismatic endowment may, as in the cases of Cornelius and Paul, accompany conversion. (3) There may be repeated filling with the Spirit (Acts 4:31), which does not have to be equated with charismatic endowment. (4) The total witness of the New Testament hardly supports a twofold-blessing schema, such as that represented by sacramentalists in baptism-confirmation, monastics in baptismal-monastic consecration, and certain evangelicals in conversion-sanctification or conversion-charismatic endowment (especially, in some cases, tongues). No one will resist prayer for the Spirit, or dismiss the possibility of his sovereign filling or endowment. But to impose a fixed pattern of operation at this point is surely to carry zeal to the excess where it brings only confusion, disruption, and disappointment.

The most valuable endowment is not necessarily the most spectacular. From Corinthian times, speaking with tongues has had a strange fascination for some, but Paul in his discussion of the hierarchy of gifts does not rate it very highly. Love is the greatest *charisma* of all. Without it, other gifts are futile, and love without other gifts can still be all-conquering. This gives us the clue to the criterion for assessing gifts. This criterion is

edification. By this standard the most important of other gifts is prophecy--here surely, in the main, the forth-telling of God's Word. The reason is that God's work is done in and by the Word. The whole man is claimed for God, but understanding is of supreme importance. Neither visual perception nor emotional impress nor mere activity is adequate alone. If God's people are to grow, whether inwardly or outwardly, the ministry of the Word must be central. But this has to be the Spirit-filled Word, delivered by Spirit-filled men. In other words, the gift of prophecy is demanded.

Mention of the Word reminds us that there is another criterion--namely, Holy Scripture. No message, admonition, or revelation is genuinely of the Spirit unless it conforms to the primary record. Examples of supposedly spiritual utterances that are exposed by this rule may be found in the *Didache* (11, 7 ff.) and also in the sayings attributed to the Montanists (Epiphanius, *Haer*, 48 f.). In the *Didache*, the rule of edification is also broken. But even where it might appear to us that a message or action will edify the congregation, no spiritual gift is exercised, nor will there be authentic edification, if what is said or done is not according to Scripture. In this way spiritual gifts are safeguarded against arbitrary subjectivism or ecclesiasticism.

As noted, the upbuilding of the Church implies expansion as well as inner development. Both ministers and *charismata* serve to summon new believers as well as to strengthen the old. This means, however, that the Holy Spirit is active in, with, and by the Church in its fulfillment of the Great Commission. Indeed, the calling of men to faith in Jesus Christ, and their refashioning in the obedience of faith, is the supreme office and work of the Holy Spirit. Calling is the act of the Holy Spirit.

Thus in the parting discourses in John, the promises of the Spirit relate to the work of the Church as well as its life. Again, Pentecost is set wholly in the framework of evangelism, and leads at once to the first sermon and the first conversions. The story is the same in the rest of Acts and the Epistles. The first missionary journey (cf. also Philip) is ordained by the Spirit. Genuine success in Christ's work is impossible without the Spirit, by whom alone the deep things of God may be known. As John puts it in the third chapter of his Gospel, entry into the Kingdom is by the new birth from above, by the Spirit. The only effectual calling to the Church is calling in the Spirit.

This means that the community must be a community of the Spirit. It is this as it gives itself to the work of the Spirit in the power of the Spirit, not searching for relevance or adaptation but relying on the Word and Spirit. Prayer in the Spirit is also demanded. As Paul says in Romans 8:26, only the Spirit can enable us to pray as we ought, and the Spirit is himself the Spirit of intercession. Working, preaching, and praying in the Spirit, the Church can say with confidence: "We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost" (Acts 5:32).

There are three important implications: (1) To enjoy the Spirit's presence and power, the Church must give itself to the task commanded. (2) It must not doubt the Spirit's adequacy. (3) It must not try--intellectually, ecclesiastically, financially, or in any other way--to substitute itself and its resources for the Spirit. Zechariah 4:6b--"Not by might,

nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts"--might well serve as the Church's motto. This verse expresses its apparent weakness but also its real confidence, after the pattern of its Lord who lived, died, and rose again in the Spirit.

### **The Holy Spirit and the Christian**

What has been said thus far makes it apparent that the Holy Spirit stands related to the Christian in every aspect of life. The Holy Spirit is God; hence relation to God is relation to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Creator; hence natural life, the presupposition of salvation, is from the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; hence the work of salvation effected in Christ is the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Scripture; hence the word of truth and redemption derives from and is applied by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Church; hence membership in the body of God's people, without which there is no Christian, implies an ineluctable [inevitable] relation to the Spirit. The Christian is the man for whom and in whom the work of the Spirit is accomplished.

The Spirit's work in the Christian is so vast and comprehensive that there can be no hope of covering every aspect. Perhaps it may best be summarized in terms of the new life-giving, the giving of eternal life in Jesus Christ. This yields three main divisions--the commencement, course, and consummation--in terms of the three aspects of the Spirit's operation: the evangelistic, ethical, and eschatological. To put it in another way, the Spirit is the Spirit of regeneration, renewal, and resurrection.

As natural life commences with a creative act, so too does the Christian life. This is the new birth of John 3. Beginning the Christian life can, of course, be described in other ways, such as conversion, new perception, response to the ministry of the Word, committal to discipleship. Taken alone, these might be understood as human possibilities for which there are parallels in other areas of life. But the Christian is convinced that beginning the Christian life has no parallels. It is unique and miraculous. This is implied in the fact that it is also and supremely the new birth, the new giving of life by the Spirit.

This truth has many ramifications in Scripture. There is a real sense in which the new birth is a fulfillment of the first birth. But it is a fulfillment in close relation to Jesus Christ in his virgin birth (see especially John 1:12,13). The meaning of baptism is also apparent here, for while sacramentalist error should be avoided, the linking of water and Spirit cannot be ignored. Again, the centrality of the Word calls for attention. Those born of the Spirit are begotten of the Word, which is the Word of life (Jas. 1:18). This does not mean competition, for Spirit and Word are complementary. Regeneration takes place as the Word is faithfully presented in the power of the Spirit. In this sense, regeneration and effectual calling are, in practice, one and the same, at least in the initial aspect of calling: "The first effect of calling is regeneration" (Burmans, *Synopsis Theologiae*, VI, iii, 1 [Heppé, p. 518]).

The fact that Christian life begins with this sovereign act of the Spirit also has important

implications: (1) It destroys comparative religion at the root. (2) It rules out the Pelagian heresy that believes self-salvation is possible. "This first beginning does not depend on the natural strength of the will, but is the beginning of grace alone" (Keckermann, *Systema Sacrosanctae Theologiae*, 263, 264 [Heppe, p. 521]). It also rules out the degenerate Arminianism that grants man the power of autonomous response to the Gospel. Although man is born, he does not bear himself. Even ministers of the Word can discharge only the function of midwife in this new birth. And they cannot discharge even this function if they do not present the given message.

Regeneration thus carries with it a certain abasement, but it also gives a strong assurance. It cannot be explained away or relativized. The deepest experiences, divorced from the Spirit, can be broken down, codified, compared, possibly evaporated. Failure to see this is the great error of the apparently promising apologetic of Schleiermacher, with his offer of a pragmatic inward citadel to cultured despisers. Now Christianity is undoubtedly empirical. But it cannot find authenticity at this anthropological level. Only when the Christian sees that he is grounded in God's work by Word and Spirit can he be sure that he is a Christian, that Christianity is authentic, and that it is exclusive and unique. For only then does he truly believe in the Holy Spirit, who in anthropological religion is taken for granted or reduced to the level of an explicable force. Right at the outset, this regenerating operation of the Spirit is a *sine qua non* that dethrones arrogance and establishes assurance.

The Spirit is also the Spirit of renewal. This is the process whereby the life of the regenerate is made new in conformity with Jesus Christ. It is the lifelong renovation that is the growing up of the Christian, the outworking in thought, word, and practice of the life received from the Spirit. It is the sanctification that is the product and consequence and also the goal and end of justification. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that in every aspect, this work, too, is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8 is perhaps the classic passage here. It draws an antithesis between walking after the flesh and walking after the Spirit. The note of joy and triumph that rings through this whole section derives from the fact that the Spirit is life and power. The Christian has not just been given a fresh start and then left to work it out with a little assistance. He is given a new life, and his task is to live this life in the strength of the Spirit and in orientation to Jesus Christ crucified and risen. Since this is genuine renewal, there has to be a negative side, the putting off of the works of the man who was put to death in Christ, the denial of self, the mortification of sinful members and affections. But the accent is not on the dying with Christ. If the death is indispensable, the end is life. The Lord who died is now risen from the dead. Similarly, the Christian who died in and with Christ is risen in him. Hence mortification is with a view to renewal. The old man is put off in order that the new man in Christ may live and grow--vibrant and positive, filled and impelled by the Spirit.

The antithesis between old and new means that there is conflict in the work of renewal. The carnal man, though crucified with Christ, is, in Luther's graphic phrase, unwilling to die. His death throes are dangerous and even violent. Galatians 5 expresses this as a

mortal struggle between flesh and Spirit. Romans 8 should not mislead us here. Its assurance is justified, for the Spirit will not be defeated. But the conflict is real enough, and we are poor allies (or subjects) in the conflict. The fullness of victory is not yet. What we see is only the provisional fruit of the Spirit in his work of moral transformation. But this fruit is an installment, a down payment, a guarantee. We are sealed by the Spirit to the day of redemption. The Spirit's presence and work authenticate our regeneration, effect our progress in sanctification, and pledge the infallibility of final consummation.

Because God works in us by the Spirit, there are warnings in Scripture not to contend against the Spirit but to open the heart and life to him. Ephesians 5:18 has the exhortation, "Be filled with the Spirit." Negatively, care must be taken not to grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and, even more seriously, not to quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19). Above all, one must not lie to the Spirit, pretending to obey his promptings but in fact circumventing them (Acts 5:1 ff.). Since the reference, in the Epistles at least, is to true Christians, one can hardly assume that a complete crushing of the Spirit out of the life is at issue. But failure to work with the Spirit in renewal is serious all the same. It involves controversy with God, stultification of Christian life and service, and a harmful repression of the good, which is surely even more dangerous than the commonly censured repression of the bad!

Since renewal is a refashioning on the basis of Christ's vicarious death and resurrection, it is naturally a transforming into the likeness of Christ. This carries with it a fulfillment of the purpose of creation (the image of God), and the way is opened for a fruitful theology of creation within that of reconciliation, though the fall and sin of man rule out a straight line from the one to the other. The orientation to Christ, however, provides us also with the foundation, theme, and goal of Christian ethics. Indeed, it points us to the eschatological fulfillment as well, for we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3:18; cf. v. 17).

This leads us to the third point: the Spirit is the Spirit of resurrection. Rather surprisingly, this thought is not greatly developed in Holy Scripture. God (the Father) raised up Jesus, and Jesus himself is the quickening Spirit through whom we are to bear the image of the heavenly. Nevertheless, there are indications that the Spirit has also his function in the final life-giving. Thus even in First Corinthians 15, Christ defined resurrection in terms of Spirit, and the new bodies are to be spiritual. Again, in Romans 8:11 God quickens our mortal bodies by his Spirit. The testimony of Ezekiel 37, in its broader connotation, is to the same effect.

Two important truths are implied in the fact that resurrection is the Spirit's work. The first is that the consummation of God's work, like its commencement, is a miracle of divine grace and power. The second is that at the end, as at the beginning, we have to do with the whole Trinity. Although the divine persons have distinctive functions and offices, the totality and unity of God's work comes out with particular clarity here. As God the Father creates us by the Word and through the Spirit, so God the Father raises us again by the Word and through the Spirit. As the *Leiden Synopsis* puts it, "the resurrection of

the dead [which cannot be accomplished by the virtue of any natural cause, LI, 22] is the action of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (LI, 16). The triune God is the one God from whom all men come, to whom all go, and in whom all believers find fulfillment.

### Conclusion

The work of God by the Holy Spirit is his subjective, personal and intimate work in man. We may conclude briefly with three important warnings and three equally important assurances.

On the negative side, it is vital (1) not to forget the objectivity of the Spirit because of the subjectivity of his work; (2) not to think it possible to lie to the Spirit successfully; (3) not to give the lie to the Spirit by finally resisting or rejecting his testimony.

The third of these dangers is the most serious, for many theologians believe that this is the blaspheming of the Spirit for which there is no forgiveness: "This sin . . . is committed against the proper office of the Holy Spirit, which is to illumine our mind, engender faith, and sanctify us wholly to God" (Walaeus, *Loci Communes*, p. 285; cf. Heidegger, X, 73; Cocceius, *Aphorism*, VI, 11, 21 [Heppe, pp. 352 ff.]). There can be no forgiveness for this, because definitive rejection of the Spirit's work is self-exclusion from the divine salvation.

Three other things need to be said, however, on the positive side: (1) If it is God who brings his work to fulfillment, there is no need to depend on self in its weakness and uncertainty. (2) We can also be sure that the work is done at the most inward and intimate level, with the guarantee of thoroughness and totality. (3) Finally, while the work of God is objective and comprehensive, it is also intensely personal: the Creator God is Abba, Father, and the Saviour of the world is the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

If it is the office of the Spirit to be the subjective executor of the divine salvation, it is obviously not enough merely to talk or write or read about the Spirit. His testimony is to be heeded, and the mind and heart and will should be opened to his gracious illuminating, regenerating, and sanctifying work. Therefore it is fitting for our study to close with the ancient prayer:

*Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire.*

*Veni, Creator Spiritus.*