

The True Baptism In The Holy Spirit

1. Introduction To The Subject

To use the term 'true' in our title may seem to infer that others who use the term 'baptism in the Spirit' may be wrong in their rationalisation of that theme of Scripture. This is not intended. It is intended simply to draw attention to the fact that a debate generally revolves around this topic, and it is a debate which is an either-or¹¹ That is, each proponent claims to be correct in saying (on the one hand) that each believer is baptised in the Spirit at the point of conversion or (on the other hand) at a latter time, with a definitive and recognisable experience. It is a fact of history that these proponents do not seem to imagine there may be another way of looking at the subject. In fact it is this other way which we propose to pursue in our study.

Unless we trace the roots of the current debate from its origins in church history we may find ourselves speedily embroiled in its 'either-or' complex. It is a fact of church history that the debate at the time of the Reformation, roughly speaking, was between 'works-righteousness' and 'faith-righteousness' i.e. justification. The great doctrine of justification was expounded, and when espoused was the way of Christian liberty. However, a form of antinomianism also arose as a result of emphasis on this doctrine of justification. As a reaction to this the practice and theology of Pietism arose. This demanded the living proofs of true regeneration by holiness and piety of life. Thus emphasis came to be placed upon the new birth and experimental holiness. The Wesleyan revival of the 18th century had its roots in this pietistic tradition, and so the emphasis on holiness increased and what Wesley called 'the perfection of love'. Out of this emphasis the holiness churches of the latter part of the 19th century were born. They spoke of a second definitive experience which they called 'entire sanctification

At the close of the 19th century and the opening of the 20th, the Pentecostal movement arose. Quite demonstrable experiences took place, these often being accompanied by glossolalia. This definitive experience was called 'the baptism in the Holy Spirit' and it related to power to witness. Holiness churches had to come to terms with the new phenomenon. Some kept to holiness as their primary emphasis and insisted that the baptism in (or, of) the Spirit was for holiness. Some opted for three experiences (regeneration, holiness and power), whilst some truncated them to two. Those in the tradition of Reformation theology denied any but one experience or happening, namely that of regeneration. Many in the Reformed tradition also looked to outpourings of the Spirit upon the church, this being rather in the line of revival than a personal 'charismatic' experience for any single member of the church.

It may well be possible that these views can be reconciled, especially with a little patience and working at the text of Scripture. Nevertheless it may well

be possible that by tackling the subject in this 'either-or' way the basic point and purpose of this Spirit-baptising may have been obscured, namely that the baptising is there to make God's people one, and drawing them together in love to send them out as the people of God that they might witness to Christ and proclaim his Kingdom.

Whilst the 'either-or' debate is carried on with some vehemence there may be cause to think that both sides of the debate show a trifle of uneasiness, not because the theological arguments of both sides are strong, but because there are flaws in the way those two sides go about establishing their theological ration-ales. To cast off one or both of these views is not an easy matter, but we will have to do just this if we would see 'truly' what this Spirit-baptising is all about.

2. The Term 'Baptism In The Holy Spirit'

It may seem trivial to point out that no such term exists, explicitly, in the Scripture. The term is nounal, whereas references to this matter are generally verbal. That is 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire'; 'Not many days hence you will be baptised in the Holy Spirit'. Descriptions of the event are descriptions of an action. Hence it would be more correct to ask, 'Have you been baptised in the Holy Spirit?', rather than, 'Have you received (or had) the baptism -in the Holy Spirit?' It is not a thing but an event or a happening. This fact makes it more attractive than thinking of it as a 'thing' one 'possesses'. One certainly 'receives' the Holy Spirit or 'has' him, but one does not 'receive a baptism for one is baptised. One does not 'have' the baptism; one 'has' the Spirit.

Where, then, in Scripture do we have reference to this matter? In the synoptic Gospels John the Baptist promises that Jesus will 'baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Matt. 3:11-12, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16). In John's Gospel (1:33) it is 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit'. In Acts 1:4-5 the statement is, 'And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'You heard from me, for John baptised with water, but before many days you shall be baptised with (or, in) the Holy Spirit.' In Acts 11:16 Peter describes the event of the Spirit falling (11:15) on the Gentiles at Caesarea, and says, 'And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit'.'

These, then, constitute the only explicit references to the matter. Doubtless there are a number of explicit happenings of this baptising in the Spirit. There is also a statement in I Cor. 12:13 which says, 'For by (or, in) one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.' Apart from such statements references are indirect.

(i) The Context of the Term

There are some immediate elements in context which will throw light on the meaning of the term. John's statement, 'I baptise you with water, but....' must mean that the action of being baptised in (or, by) the Spirit is more significant and of a greater order than baptism (only) with water. Since water baptism (John's) was linked with (a) Repentance, and (b) The forgiveness of sins, then 'Spirit-baptism' must be highly significant if it is greater than this. It may,

of course, include these elements.

The reference in Acts 1:4-5 speaks of them waiting for 'the promise of the Father' and adds 'which you heard from me'. This probably refers to Luke 24:49, 'I send the promise of my Father....wait until you are clothed with power from on high'. The Holy Spirit in Gal. 3:14 is either 'the promised p' or 'the Spirit of promise', but in Acts 1:5 he is the promised Spirit. They are to 'wait' for the Spirit. Something will come to them, or happen to them. In Acts 1:8 this baptism is related to, 'when the Spirit has come upon you'. In Acts 11:16-17 the Spirit is said to come gift-wise - 'gave the... .gift to them'. In 10:44 it is written, 'the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.' We adduce the fact that this act of baptising relates to receiving a gift, having the Spirit come upon (the recipients), having a promise fulfilled and receiving power. Each of these is significant.

(ii) The Meaning of the Term to the Hearers

What would John's use of 'baptise' mean to his hearers? We know enough of the contemporary history to know that certain Jewish communities used baptisms and lustrations. The idea of being immersed in something would be simple enough to understand. However, in what way does the use of 'baptised in the Spirit' relate to the O.T., the Hebrew Scriptures?

The leading Jews objected to John's prophetic stance, and his call to all Israel to come to repentance, and then signify that in baptism. It was tantamount to telling the chosen People that they were as Gentiles. They needed repentance. The prophets, of course, had made similar calls. However, John made his in relation to Messiah. He then said Messiah would do three things:- (a) Baptise in the Spirit. (b) Bring universal forgiveness of sins (cf. Luke 3:3, John 1:29). (c) Bring in the Kingdom (Matt. 3:2). This then established the baptism (baptising) as Messianic. What prophecies in the O.T. speak of an act of baptising in the Spirit? The answer is, 'None, explicitly, i.e. none literally.'

The hearers must have had an idea of what it meant, and must have understood it to be in conformity with the O.T. Scriptures. What then was this matter of the Spirit? John gives one clue. God had said to him, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptises with the Spirit.' Obviously the coming of the Spirit on this one is permanent. Also this one dispenses the Spirit. In the O.T. the servant of Isaiah 42:1-2 has the Spirit upon him. He preaches judgement to the nations. In Isaiah 11:1f, the Davidic leader will have the Spirit upon him and by the Spirit will rule the earth.

Another clue is given in Acts 1:1-8 which we shall later study. Suffice to say here that the disciples connected two things:- (a) The action of Spirit- baptising, and (b) The (action of the) Kingdom of God. In the O.T. every promise of the outpouring of the Spirit is accompanied, contextually, with the promise of the restoration of the Kingdom (to Israel). It seems reasonable to assume that the 'baptising' of the Spirit is the outpouring of the Spirit, and there are many such promises. In the Acts the Spirit is outpoured.

It is reasonable to conclude that the hearers expected some special out pouring of the Spirit upon Israel, having Messianic (Kingdom) connotation. In fact this was what happened at Pentecost and was suitably described by Peter per the medium of Joel 2:28ff.

It is also worth noting here that Jesus, in the period of his ministry, spoke little of Israel or persons actually receiving (a) The forgiveness of

sins, (h) The gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 11:13), and (c) The Kingdom, i.e. receiving it (cf. Luke 12:32). That is, these three elements forecast by John were virtually absent from his ministry as actions, although he teaches concerning the Kingdom and occasionally brings persons to forgiveness. It is on the last night, at the supper and following, that Jesus refers definitely to men receiving these three elements. Cf. Matt. 26:28, John chs. 14-16, Luke 22:28-30. It is helpful to note that somehow John the Baptist had related these three elements to, and linked them with, Messiah.

Finally we should see the problem which arises as to whether we should speak of 'baptising with the Spirit' or 'baptising in the Spirit'. The general use of the Greek preposition 'en' would seem to indicate a locative 'in'. Mark uses the dative form of 'Holy Spirit' which does not require the actual preposition. The word ?? is capable of also being translated 'with', and the dative form of 'Holy Spirit' in Mark 1:8 is also capable of this translation. A simple way of dealing with the matter is to see that one is baptised with water as one is baptised in water. What is sure is that one is not baptised by the Spirit. Christ is the baptiser. There is no instrumental dative linked with the Holy Spirit in the Gospel and Acts references. The reference in I Cor. 12:13 is sometimes translated as though the en (Gk.) meant 'by' and so is an instrumental dative (i.e. by means or agency of). Nevertheless the grammar indicates 'in' rather than 'by', but then the action of baptism is by the Spirit, that is the effectual working of the Spirit into whom men are baptised is what is primarily indicated in this Scripture. We mean that the element (the Holy Spirit) into which men are baptised is itself (himself) dynamic and effective.

3. Jesus' Teaching Concerning Baptising In The Spirit

Acts 1:1-11 is really the central teaching concerning the matter we are studying. For this reason it has to be looked at closely. The passage, summarised, has these elements:

- (i) All that Jesus has done is the beginning of what he is about and will yet do.
- (ii) He gives commandment ('The Great Commission'?) through the Holy Spirit, i.e. he still relates (as yet unascended) to the Spirit.
- (iii) He promises the disciples that they will be baptised in the Spirit, shortly.
- (iv) He has been speaking of one thing - the Kingdom. The disciples relate the teaching of the Kingdom, and the being baptised in the Spirit. To them it means that the Kingdom is about to be restored to Israel.
- (v) Jesus does not deny this: neither does he explicitly affirm it. They are not to know the times and seasons. Also they see the Kingdom as restored only to Israel. Jesus mentions Judea, Samaria, and the Gentile lands. He links them, too, with the Kingdom. They (i.e. the disciples) will need power to witness to all of these peoples.
- (vi) The ascension of Jesus is temporary. Linked with their witness 'to the end of the earth' is the ultimate return of their Lord.

If we remember that the promise of pouring out of the Spirit and Israel being restored (as God's Kingdom) are related, then we can see the disciples

thought correctly. What they had missed was that the Kingdom was to be universal, that is to say the proclamation of the Kingdom, i.e. the 'witness to Jesus' was to be universal. The 'now' of their question was to be the 'then' when they compassed the earth.

We adduce one important fact:- The being baptised in the Spirit was with a view to the Kingdom; (a) Its universal proclamation, and so (b) Its universal consummation. It was with a view to Jew, Samaritan and Gentile. Power was needed for this world-wide witnessing ministry.

Does this idea tally with the true thrust of the N.T.?

Before we answer this question let us remember that John the Baptist had linked forgiveness of sins, baptising in the Spirit, and the Kingdom with Jesus. He was paramount in these. The three went together.

We see Jesus' encouragement concerning the Spirit (Luke 11:13). The disciples will receive if they ask. He encourages them concerning the Kingdom. It is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom to them. As for forgiveness of sins, the Last Supper statement of Matt. 26:28 ensures forgiveness for them. It would be difficult to separate these three elements.

4. The Holy Spirit and The Kingdom

(i) Spirit-Anointing for Kingdom Action

We may enter by the saying of Matt. 12:28., '.. if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons: then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' Jesus is saying that through the power of the Spirit he is the Kingdom in action when he exorcises. This accords with Acts 10:38 ' God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power... he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him.'

This surely means that at his baptism Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power. If the terms anointed and baptised are synonymous, Jesus, being baptised in the Spirit, was anointed as Messiah. 'The Messiah, the Son of the living God' are virtually terms equal in value. We may say that Jesus' Sonship was Messianic in operation. Of course 'Messiah' means 'the anointed One', i.e. anointed as King, and for the task God has appointed him. Cf. Psalm 2:2, 6-8, Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 11:1-3. So then by being anointed he became the Messiah (or King) of the Kingdom. This accords perfectly with Psalm 2:6-7 and Isaiah 42:1-2. The Father uses these at his baptism, and repeats them at his Transfiguration (cf. Matt. 3:17 and Matt. 17:5).

That the anointing was for the ministry of the Kingdom is clear from comparing Matt. 12:28 with Acts 10:38. What they have in common is exorcism and in Matt. 12:28 this is the Kingdom coming upon the exorcised, whilst in Acts 10:38 it is 'healing all those who were oppressed of the devil'. Of course other elements of Jesus' ministry were equally the Kingdom coming upon people. In Luke 10:8-11 the disciples have the ministry of preaching the Kingdom delegated to them, and Jesus commands, '...heal the sick.. and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you'. ' Also, even when they are rejected they are to reject the rejecters and say, '...the Kingdom of God has come near

We must conclude then that all that Jesus did he did by the Spirit, and all that Jesus did was related to the Kingdom.

(ii) The Kingdom Ministry of Jesus

Jesus committed himself at his baptism to 'fulfil all righteousness'. This was not merely to be righteous morally in his life, but to carry out 'the righteousness of God'. The righteousness of God in Romans includes His justifying of sinful men - by faith - through the Cross. It includes His work of sanctification in men, and it covers His plan for both Jew and Gentile, that is His universal plan for His creation in redemption and glorification. In the simplest terms, Jesus wanted to do the will of the Father.

He was anointed for this task, and where he went, so to speak, the Kingdom went. Darkness receded before light. His powers were not, innately, of himself. They were of the Spirit. He taught, healed, exorcised and liberated in the power of the Spirit. Thus his ministry was a Spirit-ministry. Nevertheless his dynamic defeat of evil had to be consummated. Jesus could not endlessly go about the world in the type of ministry he exercised in Palestine. Thus he had a consummating work to do - the work of the Cross. This would defeat evil, deliver man, and so 'seal' the Kingdom. The work of the Cross also was undergirded by the Spirit (Heb. 9:14), as was the Resurrection (Rom. 1:4, 8:9-11). Also 'that same power which raised Jesus from the dead.. .set him at His own right hand...' (Ephes. 1:19-20). The Ascension was also by the Spirit.

In Jesus the triumph of the Kingdom was consummated. Satan, his hosts, the world, the flesh, sin, the law, and even conscience as a tyrant were defeated in this Kingdom victory, this salvific triumph.

(iii) The Kingdom Ministry of the Apostles

It is very clear from Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 1:3-8 that the disciples are not to undertake proclamation and witness until they are endued with power, i.e. until the Spirit comes upon them. This act is called the baptising with (or, in) the Spirit. We need then to recognise that as Jesus needed the anointing for his messianic or kingdom action, so the disciples need the same gift of the Spirit for power and proclamation. They, too, have to proclaim the Kingdom, but there is a difference. Jesus is not now going to defeat Satan and the powers of darkness as he promised in Luke 11:21-22 and John 12:31 (cf. 16:11). He has done this. He is not going to work for forgiveness (John 1:29). He has done this - Matt. 26:28, Luke 24:45-46. The triumph of the Kingdom, and its salvific powers are what the disciples will proclaim.

(a) The Message of Acts is That of the Kingdom.

The primary proclamation of the Acts - and this supported by the Epistles - is, 'Jesus is Lord'. The offer of forgiveness only follows this. This Lordship is proclaimed in various terms. It is always linked with his resurrection. Because he has been raised, i.e. defeated death, then he is Lord. He is 'the Holy and Righteous One', 'the prince (Author) of life'. He is now 'Leader and Saviour'. It is summed up in Acts 2:36, 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified'. Hence in Acts 10:36 'He is Lord of all'. In Romans 10:9 belief in his Lordship brings salvation. His Lordship is proven by his resurrection. Of course the Cross is no mere accident. It was ordained by God (Acts 2:23). Also Jesus is the one who pours out the Spirit. That also powerfully confirms his Lordship.

The Kingdom, then, is explained or proclaimed in practical terms of his

Lordship over death and sin. Hence the proclamation is that of the Kingdom. We have seen in Acts 1:3-8 that the outpouring of the Spirit was linked, in the apostles' minds with the Kingdom, and that Jesus extended their view of Israel having the Kingdom restored to the Samaritans and the Gentiles. Also the Kingdom was not to be immediately consummated. It is also pertinent to note that Israel's restoration is promised in Joel 2 and that this is linked with the outpouring of the Spirit. Peter uses this Scripture to explain the happenings of Pentecost. In salvation, however, he includes 'arid them that are far off (the Gentiles)'.

In Acts 8:5 we are told that Philip went down to Samaria and 'proclaimed to them the Christ'. This under any reading is Messiah of the Kingdom. Philip then baptised those who believed. In 8:12 we read, 'But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptised....' Thus 'the Christ' and 'the Kingdom and the Name' are the one message.

An even clearer treatment is given by Paul in Acts 20:18-27. Here 'repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus' are equivalent to 'the gospel of the grace of God', 'preaching the Kingdom of God' and 'declaring to you the whole counsel of God'. It is the Gospel; it is the Gospel of the Kingdom; it is the whole counsel of God.

In Acts 19:8 we read of Paul that he '...entered the synagogue (at Ephesus) and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the Kingdom of God'. Finally, in Acts 28 there are two important references. In v.23 we read that the Jews came to Paul in large numbers, 'And he expounded the matter to them from morning until evening, testifying to the Kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and the prophets.' Again in vs.28-30 he indicates that as the Jews reject 'Jesus and the Kingdom' the message will be proclaimed to the Gentiles. Verses 30-31 say, 'And he lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus quite openly and unhindered.'

Two things are clear:- (a) The whole message of the Gospel is really the proclamation of the Kingdom. (b) 'Jesus is Lord' is the fact and truth of the Kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13). It is also helpful to note Acts 14:21-22. Having preached the Gospel Paul tells the new disciples that 'through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God.' The entering of the Kingdom in a final way will be in the eschaton.

(b) The Mode of Preaching the Kingdom.

We have seen that Jesus' mode of preaching the Kingdom was to preach, heal, exorcise, and that this was the Kingdom 'coming upon' his hearers. Also he did this under the anointing of the Spirit. In the Acts the apostles are certainly anointed, i.e. 'clothed with power'. As Jesus taught with authority so do they, and as the Kingdom came with power through signs and wonders, so with them.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the apostles and others (cf. Stephen, Acts 6:8; Philip, Acts 8:6-7) simply used powers they possessed to impress others. Mark 16:17 speaks of signs accompanying 'those who believe', not 'who teach', and Mark 16:20 says that 'the Lord worked with them (the messengers) and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it'.

The action of Philip in 8:6-7 is reminiscent of Jesus' action in Palestine as the Kingdom came upon people. There, as in Acts 8, the powers of evil were defeated. Men were liberated by the power of the Kingdom. Yet it is the Lord who still handles this matter. In Acts 14:3 it is said of Paul and Barnabas, 'So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the

word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.’ Again in 19:11, ‘And the Lord did extraordinary miracles by the hand of Paul’ (cf. Gal. 3:5). We assume then that the Lord (Messiah of the Kingdom) is the one who initiates this ‘Kingdom-action’.

We conclude then that the disciples were baptised in the Spirit with a view to this proclamation of the Kingdom and the proclamation had in mind and intention the consummation of the Kingdom, i.e. amongst the Jews, Samaritans and the Gentiles. The Kingdom, although manifested in time, has eternal connotation. The N.T. speaks of ‘inheriting the Kingdom’, and this in the context of the eschaton.

(c) The Kingdom in the Epistles.

The subject under this heading is too wide to be properly treated here. Briefly we may summarise:

1. Entrance into the Kingdom is already effected (Col. 1:13). We have already received the Kingdom (Heb. 12:28).
2. One now has an inheritance (Ephes. 5:5) but will eventually inherit (I Cor. 6:9, I Cor. 15:50, Gal. 5:21). In any case we have been chosen to be heirs (James 2:5).
3. The Kingdom is not weakness and mere talk, but power (I Cor. 4:20). At the same time it is ‘righteousness, peace and joy’.
4. The Kingdom is ‘in the Holy Spirit’ (Rom. 14:17).
5. The Kingdom entails suffering (II Thess. 1:4-5). Believers suffer for the Kingdom. This makes them worthy of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom is both now (Col. 1:13, Rom. 14:17, I Cor. 4:20) and then, i.e. in the future. At the same time the struggle in relation to the Kingdom and its ultimate victory (in contradistinction to its victory achieved at the Cross and Resurrection) is still proceeding. I Cor. 15:24-28 says ultimately Christ will subdue rebellious powers and give the (completed) Kingdom to the Father. This accords with Phil. 2:9-11 and Revelation 11:15.

It can very easily be shown that every aspect which relates to the Kingdom derives from the Spirit. Regeneration which places one in the Kingdom, is by the Spirit (I Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:5). Justification comes through the ministry of the Spirit (Romans 8:2, I Cor. 6:11). Righteousness, peace, joy as also power come by the Spirit (Rom. 14:17, I Cor. 4:20). All elements within the Kingdom such as prayer, love, fellowship, unity, ministry, are by the Spirit. The gifts which provide something of ‘the action of the Kingdom’ also come through the Spirit.

We may conclude by saying that whichever way we examine the matter the Kingdom and the Holy Spirit are inseparable.

5. The Immediate Meaning and Effect of The Baptising In The Spirit

(i) Introduction

It is well-known that in the O.T. although the Spirit was always generally with Israel (Haggai 2:5), yet his work was manifested primarily with and through special persons. Some leaders, artisans, prophets and others would know a

special anointing or 'coming upon' them of the Spirit. In some cases (e.g. Samson) the Spirit departed from them. The promises then of passages such as Ezekiel 36:24-28, 37:1-14, Isaiah 32:15 and context, 35:6 and context, 44:3ff, Joel 2:28ff are direct enough, and had people in anticipation, by John's day, of an outpouring of the Spirit which would be upon 'all flesh', and not just on chosen persons. Whilst many readers of Joel may have thought the outpouring would be limited to Jews, yet this was not the essence of the prophecy.

John's hearers saw nothing incongruous with his linking the three elements of Kingdom, forgiveness and the giving of the Spirit. These were congruous with O.T. prophecies. Jesus, too, increased expectation by doing the same as John, saying, 'The time appointed is fulfilled. The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel.' He also said, 'The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached...' John himself was a man filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. He had come 'in the Spirit and power of Elijah'.

We need then to look more closely at Jesus' explanation of the baptising in the Spirit. This means we must understand that John saw the coming of the Kingdom and the baptising in the Spirit as being, virtually, the one, and that linked with them was the forgiveness of sins.

(ii) The Commission and the Spirit

The key thought in Acts 1:8 is 'power to witness to me', i.e. to witness to Christ. We have to determine the meaning of witness, and see why power is required, and the nature and expression of that power. It is obvious that we will find much of the explanation in the passages which concern this 'commission'.

In Matt. 28:18-20 the disciples have to make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and have to teach them all the things that Christ has commanded. In Mark 16:15ff it is to preach the Gospel to every creature and baptising those who believe, thus saving them. In this context there will be signs and wonders following those who believe their word, i.e. a continuity of their own ministries. In Luke 24:44ff there is the statement that 'repentance and remission of sins will be preached in his (Christ's) name among all nations, and you are witnesses of these things'. This must mean that their work is to call for repentance and to offer forgiveness. The preaching is to be 'in my name', and note, 'You are witnesses of these things', i.e. that he has suffered and entered into his glory, which is then the basis for preaching repentance and remission of sins. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the proclamation is to be world-wide. In Matthew they go in the authority of Christ. In Mark the Lord goes with them. In Luke they must wait for the Holy Spirit.

in John's Gospel (see 20:19-23) the matter is somewhat different. It is still the preaching of forgiveness, and the sending is into the world, but the Spirit is given at that point, i.e. prior to Pentecost. 'Receive (take) the Holy Spirit.' He is given to enable them to preach and declare forgiveness.

In Acts 1:3-8 Jesus teaches the things concerning the Kingdom. He then promises the disciples that they will be baptised in the Spirit after some days. He says that when they have the Holy Spirit come upon them and so have power, then they will witness to him in Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. If we link the Acts passage with the Gospels, then we can discover what 'witness' really means.

(iii) The Meaning of ‘Witness’

In Luke 24:48 and John 15:27 Jesus says they are and will be witnesses to him. The Jews have failed to understand him for the most part. In John 15:26 (cf. 16:7-15) the Holy Spirit will witness to Jesus. So will the disciples, presumably through the aid of the Holy Spirit. He will witness through them.

Whilst Acts 1:8 speaks of ‘my witnesses’, i.e. ‘witness to me’, they must do the actual work and action of witnessing. What, then, is witnessing? Luke 24:48 says they are witnesses, i.e. they have seen the things which Jesus ‘began both to do and to teach’. A witness is simply one who tells what he has seen. If we collate the passages in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts then something like this emerges:-

‘Witnessing to Christ means having seen the events of Christ and telling them. It means proclaiming his life, death and resurrection, and then the fruits of that in his Lordship. This means calling for repentance, and offering forgiveness in the name of Christ, since it can only be found in that name. It means, then, baptising them (nations, persons) into the Name, and teaching them the things Christ had commanded to be taught.’

None of this witnessing can be done properly apart from the Holy Spirit. Presumably since even Christ could not break through opposition and misunderstanding (John 15:18-26) it needed his departure and the coming of the Spirit (John 16:7ff) to fully witness and convict the hearers. Surely, contained in this witness is the revelation of Jesus as Lord, Saviour, Ruler and Prince of Life. Surely their witness is not merely telling, and even telling powerfully, but evidencing Christ. They are not only witnessing to what Christ was and did, but to who he is and what he does in the ‘now-time’.

To understand this witnessing we should comprehend the thrust of the action of the apostles and the church, even when it is not explicitly called ‘witnessing’. We have explicit references. In Acts 1:22 the apostles reveal, in essence, that they are witnesses to his resurrection. This thought is repeated in 2:32, and again in 3:15, and 5:32. In 5:32 they witness not only to his resurrection but also that God has exalted Christ to His right hand, and made him Ruler and Saviour so that he gives repentance and remission of sins to Israel (cf. 11:18). In 10:39ff Peter says the apostles are witnesses to the life and acts of Jesus. He says Christ appeared after his resurrection only to chosen witnesses. Paul also says something similar in 13:31. Paul reveals that Jesus has also commissioned him to be a witness to himself. In 22:15 he is to witness to what he has seen and heard (cf. Acts 4:20), and this is repeated in 26:16.

We conclude from these references that to witness to Christ is to tell what he was and did, and what that now signifies for the hearers. This is the purpose of being baptised in the Spirit. There is, however, something more, even, than this. In Acts 4:33, ‘And with great power the apostles gave their testimony (witness) to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus’. This witnessing was in the context of a whole way of living by the people of God. ‘Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.’ Whilst this must greatly have encouraged the apostles and warmed them up to witness, surely part of the witness was this very condition of the church. This certainly accords with the thought in John 17:20ff that the oneness (unity and love) of the church would make the world know that the Father had sent the Son. What is significant in this passage is that all had been freshly filled with the Spirit, so that doubtless all witnessed in one way or another.

In I Thess. 1 and 2 Paul speaks of the manner of life he had had when he and his helpers were at Thessalonica. They not only proclaimed the Word but lived in accordance with it. This too, was witness. Their proclamation was “not in word only but in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction” (I Thess. 1:5).

There are many elements of witness, especially such as the life and power of Stephen, and then his steadfastness in death.

(iv) Witness in the Revelation

In Revelation 19:10 the angel tells John that he is to worship God, and not him. ‘I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus.’ Then is added, ‘For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit (spirit?) of prophecy.’¹

What then is ‘the witness of Jesus’? This is a term used in Rev. 1:2 and 9. John says in verses 1 and 2 says the angels bore witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. In 1:9 he says he is in exile on account of ‘the word of God and the testimony of Jesus’, whilst in 6:9 the martyrs have been slain ‘for the word of God and the witness they had borne. ‘ In 12:17 the saints are those ‘keeping the commandments of God and having (holding) the testimony of Jesus.’

The ‘testimony of Jesus’ can either be seen as an objective genitive, i.e. the testimony Jesus gives, or a subjective genitive, i.e. the testimony given to Jesus. If Jesus testifies to God and His word, then doubtless this fits the idea that ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy’, i.e. ‘Jesus testifies to the truth of prophecy by fulfilling it, authenticating it, etc.’ Again it could mean, ‘the testimony given to Jesus’ in which case it would fit with Acts 1:8. However, it must surely mean something of both. In 12:11 the saints overcome the accusing dragon ‘by the word of their testimony’. That must mean they testify to Christ. Yet doing this they also testify to their own faithfulness. In 6:9 the martyrs have (or, hold) a testimony. John is in exile because he holds the testimony of Jesus, yet it could mean because of what Jesus testifies to, i.e. the action of God, the Gospel of grace.

What then is ‘the testimony of Jesus’ which is ‘the spirit of prophecy’? It must mean first that very life and action of Jesus which itself bears witness to the truth of God’s word, mainly by the fulfilment of the plan (and so the prophecies) of God. Yet it must also mean the very action of Jesus. When then the apostles and their brethren ‘witness to Jesus’ it must mean more than that they simply testify he rose. It must mean that the life of Jesus is currently being manifested and this by means of the true people of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit has come and brought with him the fullness and life of Jesus so that the outworking of that life in history is the true witness or testimony given. They do not simply hold to a body of truth, but the truth itself is being worked out in the world through the people of God who are one with their head. If this is so then to bear testimony to Jesus is to be - as the people of God - Jesus himself in (present) action! This being true then we can understand what it is essentially to be ‘baptised in the Spirit’. How else could true testimony be given by proclamation, dynamic actions, and the whole way of life of believers? Certainly not apart from the enabling, anointing and continuing presence of the Spirit.

¹ The Greek words ‘witness’ and ‘testimony’ are the same (marturia or martus or marturion). The verb ‘to witness’ is martureo.

We conclude then that being baptised in the Spirit is to hold the testimony of Jesus, give witness to Jesus, and to be the witness of Jesus. We need then to spell out fully what is this witness.

6. The Witness Of, Or To, Jesus

(i) Introduction

Why in the Revelation is 'the testimony of Jesus' (either objective or subjective genitives) so hated by Satan and worldly man? Because the testimony of Jesus is the ongoing action, not only of Jesus but of God, it is no mere dry statement of fact concerning a literal resurrection. It is the resurrected Jesus who is (currently) Lord of history, i.e. he is Lord because he is risen. He works out that Lordship in authority and action. Likewise this is what his people participate in. Hence, as we have seen from the 'commission' passages, and the action of Acts - the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world means the destruction of evil - vis-a-vis (I Cor. 15:24-29, and Revelation 11:15).

To be in such witness is to be hated by evil, and the object of its continual attacks or attempted seduction.

(ii) The Elements of the Witness

(a) Power to Proclaim.

The power of the witness, and the power to witness are contingent upon the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2 the company gives witness to Jesus (v. 32) when they speak of 'the wonderful works of God'. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, has power to convict at least three thousand people. I Peter 1:12, I Cor. 2:5, and I Thess. 1:5 show that by the power of the Spirit the Word is preached and is effective. Peter proclaims to the Sanhedrin - nt a little thing. Paul proclaims to city after city even when persecuted. He proclaims to Felix, Festus and Agrippa (cf. Matt. 10:20). Stephen uses this power to confound his adversaries, even the Sanhedrin, so much so that they kill him. He claims, 'You do always resist the Holy Spirit', for this is what they do in the face of the proclamation of the Lordship of Christ.

The proclaimers in Acts testify to the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus, his Ascension, the fact that he was anointed by God and ministered in the power of the Spirit. They speak of the Cross being ordained, Jesus being raised by God, and his installation as Ruler, Prince of life and Saviour at the right hand of God is shown to be in accordance with the prophecies. They testify that Jesus sends the Spirit. They offer baptism in the name of Jesus, and the forgiveness of sins through him. They testify that he has been received into the heavens until all that the prophets have foretold will come to pass, i.e. 'the restitution of all things'.

To testify to these things certainly requires being baptised in the Spirit and receiving his power.

(b) The Power of Action.

Nobody doubted the power of Jesus not only to proclaim the Kingdom, but to show it in action, in fact to be it by action. Hence the truth of Matt. 12:28 and Acts 10:38. Hence also the rolling back of evil forces, and the relentless onward movement of the Kingdom. Likewise the apostles and their fellows do great signs and wonders. 'Greater works than these will you do' is a fact. They face the Sanhedrin, they face kings and governors, and Matt. 10:20 comes into play. The Spirit of their Father speaks from within, impromptu. When told to leave the prison early in the morning and go to the temple courtyard (where they had previously been arrested) and 'tell all the words of this life' they do so without hesitation and with power.

The list of sufferings and persecution which Paul gives in his letters is proof of action-with-power. Again these actions, whilst being those of the apostles and others, are really the actions empowered by the Spirit, and in the ultimate they are the actions of Jesus. This is the true witness to (of) Jesus.

(c) The Dynamic Proclamation.

Paul sees the Gospel in itself as the power of God. Nevertheless that Gospel often comes through to the people in the evidences of power, i.e. miracles, signs, wonders, healings and exorcisms, as well as raisings from the dead. Hebrews 6:5 - amongst other passages - is proof of this fact. Doubtless I Cor. 4:20, 1 Thess. 1:5, and I Peter 1:12 do not simply mean that the message was emotionally powerful or articulated dynamically so much as its content and the witness to it are effectual, polarising on the one hand to belief and acceptance and on the other hand to disbelief and rejection (cf. Acts 2:41, 5:33).

Along with this is the greatest element of the witness, the truth and offer of the Gospel. To show Jesus as Lord is to accomplish a great feat (cf. I Cor. 2:1-3). To effect repentance and faith through 'the word of Christ' (Rom. 10:17) is to bring people to repentance, and the receiving of the total forgiveness of sins. Without the Spirit this would be impossible. In Acts 2:38 people have come to conviction and need to know 'what to do'. They repent and have the remarkable forgiveness of sins, being baptised in the name of Christ. They receive the gift of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Could, then, more be said of God's action through the Gospel, proclaimed by His people in the power of the Spirit?

The effects of regeneration and sanctification through this Gospel are discussed in the epistles at great length (e.g. I Cor. 6:9-11, I Peter 2:9-10). In all this we are reminded that the Kingdom of God is not talk but power (I Cor. 4: 20). When there is true talk (by the Spirit) then there is true power.

7. The Witness and The Goal of The Baptising

(i) Introduction: The Effective Spirit

In the Gospels and Acts Jesus is the one who baptises with the Spirit. First of all, then, there is the action of Jesus to effect what he desires in us. Secondly, there is the action of the Spirit himself. Even water is not passive when one is baptised in or with it. It cleanses, cools, and so on. The Holy Spirit, however, is the Spirit of power and he effects many things. To be immersed into him cannot be an ineffectual happening. Jesus said that the Spirit would testify to him (i.e. give witness), and also that he would glorify Christ

and reveal him to his followers. At the same time the things of the Father are the things of the Son, therefore his coming would effect a revelation of these things.

(ii) The Church, the People of God

Jesus had said, 'I will build my church'. It had not already been built, at least not in the sense that he indicated. He says little in regard to the church in the Gospels but he uses a number of figures concerning his people such as the flock, the vine, but they are few. His prayer of John 17 makes very clear how he thinks about the church. He prays for the oneness of his people. At one stage he had said, 'you are all brethren' (Matt. 23:8). Later he had called them 'my brethren' (John 20:17, Matt. 28:10). In John 8:34-36 he had spoken of the house (or, household) of God his Father. He had also spoken of his Father's house in heaven.

When the proclamation was commanded in Acts 1:8, Jesus spoke of three sets of people. They were Jew, Samaritan and Gentile. If these are looked at locatively rather than as peoples then the point of Acts 1:8 is missed, namely that these three peoples be brought into the Kingdom by the witness to Jesus.

This is precisely what the whole book of Acts is about. In one sense it is about nothing else! Nevertheless we could easily miss this message if we were not alerted to it.

(a) Baptising and the People of God.

1. The Jews: 'Jerusalem and all Judea'.

On the day of Pentecost, virtually speaking, only Jews were present. They were Jews from many different geographical settings. They were to some degree the products of their various cultures. At heart they were all Jews and members of the congregation, the Jewish '**qahal**'. They heard the message of the 120 who had been baptised dramatically with the Holy Spirit and tongues of fire. With this affusion of the Spirit the apostles had been led 'into all the truth' for the doctrine is already formulated (Acts 2:42) so that it can be called 'the apostles' doctrine'.

At Pentecost 3,000 people are baptised. Peter tells them the promise is to them, the Jews, and to their children, and to those who are afar off, i.e. the Gentiles. He also tells them to separate themselves from 'this perverse generation', i.e. the Christ-rejecting people amongst the Jews. It means, although he does not spell it out, that there is now a new people of God. These are those who have believed (cf. Acts 11:17), who have repented, and have received the forgiveness of sins. These are those who receive the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38). This new congregation then, is Jewish.

2. The Samaritans: 'Samaria'.

We do not know the exact period of time which elapsed between the day of Pentecost, and the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria by the Jewish Philip, the evangelist. He preached the Christ; he preached the Kingdom. Those who believed were baptised in accordance with the commission, but they knew of no affusion of the Spirit until the apostles came. We may leave the problem here of

'belief but no baptising', and return to it later. However, with the outpouring of the Spirit upon them the Samaritans had to be recognised as belonging to the

new true people of God.

3.The Gentiles: ‘The End of the Earth’.

The third section of Acts 1:8 begins to come to fulfilment with Peter’s going down to Caesarea to speak to the Gentiles of the household of Cornelius. Acts 10 makes it very clear that -

- (a) The Lord (the Father?) gives Peter a vision of what was previously unclean now being clean, i.e. the Gentiles (cf. Acts 15:8-9).
- (b) An angel of the Lord sends men from Cornelius ‘5 to Peter to bring him, and the Spirit alerts Peter to this fact.
- (c) Peter is led to preach to the Gentiles. As a result they believed the message, and the Spirit ‘fell’ on all who were present.

This means that the Spirit has come to the believing Jews and the new true people of God is formed. The old Hebrew qahal passes over into the new ekklesia. Still it is only Jewish. Then the Samaritans believe and are baptised. However, not until the apostles go and pray does the Spirit come upon them. In fact they ‘receive’ him. The people of God is now of Jewish and Samaritan origins. With the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles they must now be included. Had he not fallen on them there would be no question of their being included.

In other words, the Book of Acts is telling us that the witnessing to Christ in these three ethnic areas is the purpose of the enduement of the Spirit upon the apostles. More correctly, the enduement is to so witness that they will believe and be incorporated into the people of God.

(b) The Problem of an Inclusive Community.

The first factor is that there is no coming of the Spirit upon these groups until they believe. The coming of the Spirit is contingent upon that. Also the event of receiving the forgiveness of sins is contingent upon believing, i.e. heeding the Gospel proclamation (I Cor. 1:21). Yet salvation as such is not an end in itself. It is also with a view to the community. The members of the community are members of the Kingdom of God but whereas their final inclusion in the Kingdom is on a proleptic basis, they are immediately included in the people of God.

The Book of Acts shows the problems that arose with the inclusion of the Gentiles. Galatians, too, must be read in this light. Many of Paul’s letters stress the fact that God makes no distinction, for to be baptised into Christ is to put on Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or freeman, male or female. Likewise we are baptised in (or, by) one Spirit into one body, and made to drink of one Spirit. Hence being baptised in the Spirit also relates to the unity, love and fellowship which should be found in the church. One of the distinctive marks of the early church was the unity, and the caring for others. When, however, it came to Christian Jew and Christian Gentile, there were real problems to be solved. The prayer of John 17 had to be answered under the guidance, inspiration and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

(c) The Spirit and the People of God.

There is nothing the people of God do which is not initiated and aided by the Spirit. This includes proclamation, signs, wonders, works and miracles, the

fact and use of gifts, the ministries, the experience of worship, prayer and praise, as also love, unity, fellowship, and producing the fruits of the Spirit. The church is also led by the Spirit to fulfil the plan of Christ. Not to be baptised in the Spirit is to fail to enter into these areas authentically.

It is how people come into the community which determines their actions and experiences. The community is really the household of God. God is Father of His people and His family. They are a dwelling place for Him, a habitation built in and by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:18ff). However, the reconciliation that God provides through Christ is effected by the forgiveness of sins and justification. Yet even this redemption is only with a view to sonship of the Father. Hence Gal. 4: 4-6 shows that God sent His Son to redeem men (from the law) that they might receive the sonship. This means that they come to the Father through the Son (John 14:6, Ephes. 2:14-18, etc.). This coming makes them at once sons of God and brethren of the others.

Now it is the Spirit who cries 'Father!' within them, and they also learn to cry 'Father!' (Gal. 4:6, Romans 8:14-17). Hence whilst redemption is of great meaning and consequence, yet sonship is the peak of experience. It also is the true key to being part of the people of God. Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles are sons and daughters of the living God.

The question is, 'How can one witness to Christ if one is not a son of the Father, and a brother to the people of God?' Hence in Romans 8:9-11 the test of being a believer is not whether one has believed on Christ but whether one has the Spirit of Christ. 'If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' The church must have looked to see the Spirit within a person, and not merely to hear him say he had believed.² It is axiomatic that all Christians had received the Spirit (Gal. 3:1-3).

For the rest, the love, the gifts, the fruit, the ministries, the prayer and worship, as also the proclamation were the marks and experiences of the true church. Whilst we briefly state them this way they were highly significant and functional.

(d) Christ in His People by the Spirit.

In the various 'commission' passages Christ promises he will be with his people. He promises this personally to Paul. They look not so much to his return as to his appearing (parousia). Ephesians 3:14-19 shows that by the Spirit Christ is present to the heart, especially to faith. This means that Christ's people can dwell in them, and he in them (cf. John 14:15-23, Romans 8:9-11, Col. 1:27, II Cor. 13:5). We expect then that the character of Christ will be in his people as he is in them. Yet this matter of Christ dwelling in the heart is not merely devotional. It is practical. The fruit of the Spirit are really 'Christ in action

When, then, persons are in this knowledge and understanding, they live towards one another in this Christly way. They are truly members of his body in the world. In fact Christ has given his fulness to his body (Ephes. 1:22-23). Hence the corporate witness of the church to Christ. Indeed it is John who majors so much on mutual love in his first epistle and who demands full love for the brethren, who says twice, 'We know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us' (3:24, 4:13).

² Of course true belief would have brought both forgiveness (salvation) and the gift of the Spirit.

We are tempted to fill this out, and speak of the holiness of the community (I Peter 2:9-10, cf. Exodus 19:5-6), but it is enough that the household of God holds to the Father because of the Spirit (Ephes. 2:18-22, Gal. 4:6, etc.). Then the members hold to one another because of the Father (I Thess. 4:9, I John 4:20).

(e) Conclusion: The Ultimate People of God.

Genesis 49:10 speaks of the peoples becoming subject to Christ. Romans 1:5, 15:18, and 16:24-26 speaks of the Gospel bringing the obedience of the faith of the nations through proclamation. Hence 'the children of God scattered abroad' are being 'brought together in one (family)' (John 11:51-52). The sheep which are not of the Jewish fold are also being brought, so that there will be 'one Shepherd and one flock' (John 10:16).

The final pictures as seen in Revelation 7, 21:1-5, 22-27. 22:1-5 are the people of God brought under him, Christ, and also the Father. These are from 'Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part/s of the earth'. This in conformity with the victory of Psalm 2 and Messiah the Son.

This is what being baptised in the Spirit is all about.

8. The Fact and Mode of Being Baptised In The Spirit

(i) Introduction: ? With the Holy Spirit and Fire?

John the Baptist said, 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.' What did he mean by that? In Matthew 3:10-12 John makes three mentions of fire. In verse 10 it is impossible to deny that fire is judgement. Likewise in verse twelve the fire is burning judgement. In verse 11 the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire far surpasses John's baptism of water. His baptism gets them to express their repentance. It concerns forgiveness but cannot give forgiveness.³ It is with a view to forgiveness (Mark 1:4). The baptism in the Spirit and fire, then, will do what the Spirit of burning does in Isaiah 4:4 where he is 'a Spirit of burning and a Spirit of judgement'. In this context God washes away the filth... cleanses the bloodstains by this Spirit. In I Cor. 6:11 the Spirit washes. In Titus 3:5 there is 'the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit'. In Isaiah 30:27-28 God speaks the word of judgement and breathes out destruction. His breath is His Spirit. This principle of judgement is also seen in Isaiah 11:4, 15 and 29:9-10.

In Matthew 3:10-12 there seems to be only one possible conclusion. For the one who has repented and been baptised with water, there is a looking forward to an event when the people of God ('baptise you') will have a visitation of the Spirit, who will come as fire. The result of this will be a baptism of cleansing and renewal for the true 'grain', and equally a judgemental burning for the impenitent, i.e. the chaff. Even Israel will not stand as a nation if it does not repent, for the axe 'is even now at the root

At Pentecost the Spirit did come with flames as of fire. There was a cleansing and a renewal for those looking to Messiah and his gift of the Spirit (Acts 1:4-8, Luke 24:48-49, Acts 2:1ff). There was also a judgement to those who would not. They were now 'a perverse generation'. Their sins were retained (John 20:23 - cf. Acts 5:33, 13:40ff, 28:24-28).

³ Except proleptically

Doubtless, for the people of faith the symbolism of fire also meant the power and energy that comes with cleansing of the impurity and the renewal of the heart. Primarily, however, the Holy Spirit was to bring total cleansing - the cleansing of the Cross (Heb. 9:14, I Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:5, cf. Acts 3:19, 22:16, etc.).

Finally, although we have concentrated on what is meant by 'fire', yet the primary act is 'baptise you with the Holy Spirit'. The fire is surely that of the Holy Spirit himself, and not another element apart from him. What then of the element into which they are baptised - the Spirit? In Joel 2:28ff, Isaiah 32:15 and Ezekiel 39:29 the term used is 'poured' or 'pour out upon'. In other words, there would be an affusion - 'floods on the dry ground' which would envelop Israel.

Why then does Jesus not speak often of this wonderful coming event? The closest he gets to it in the Synoptic Gospels is 'Shall not my heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' In John's Gospel he does refer to 'rivers of living water' flowing out from the inner man (7:38). It is, however, his full discourse in John, chapters 14-16, which fills out the expectation of the disciples. He speaks of sending the Spirit to them, rather than speaking of a mode of baptising. In John 20:18-23 he actually breathes the Spirit upon them, as in Genesis 2:7 when God breathed into man and he became a living being.

(ii) The Modes of the Baptising

One of our problems in dealing with this subject is our failure to realise that if there is a baptism in the Holy Spirit, i.e. just as we are baptised with (in) water, so we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, i.e. we are plunged into him (I Cor. 12:13). Water is effective to a degree in that it cleanses, but otherwise it is considered passive. Not so the Holy Spirit: he is the power of God. He is not static or passive but dynamic and effective. Hence in the O.T. when he is poured out on people there is a clear and recognisable result. One clear case is of the judges, especially Samson. Another happening is the case of the 70 elders in Numbers 11, where the Lord '...took some of the Spirit that was upon him (Moses) and put it upon the seventy elders, and when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied' (v. 25). Later (v. 29) Moses says, 'Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!' This approximates in some degree to Pentecost, i.e. the Spirit came, the people prophesied. Our point is that the Spirit is dynamic and not static. We are not baptised into a passive agent.

(a) Pentecost.

Acts 1:5 says the apostles will be baptised in the Spirit. 1:8 says, 'You will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you'. In Acts 2:2 the sound fills the room where the 120 are waiting. The tongues of fire rest upon each one of them. This is the term in Numbers 11:25. In Acts 2:4 they are all filled with the Spirit. He is not only around them and on them but in them. The effects of 'around', 'on' and 'in' are speaking in tongues of known languages, and prophesying or telling 'the wonderful works of God'. In 2:33 Peter explains, 'Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.' This agrees with 2:17 and 18 where the term I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh' is used. This is of course a quote from Joel 2:28-32.

(b) Samaria (Acts 8).

In Acts 8:14-17 the terms used are 'receive the Spirit', 'received the Spirit', 'fallen.. .on them'.

(c) Caesarea (Acts 10 and 11).

In Acts 10:44 the Holy Spirit fell on all who were present. Peter was amazed because 'the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles'. Also Peter saw, 'These people.. .have received the Holy Spirit'. In 11:16 Peter says that this is being baptised with the Holy Spirit. He says, 'God gave to them the same gift'.

(d) Ephesus (Acts 19).

In Acts 19:6 Paul lays his hands on the Ephesian believers who in fact were disciples of John the Baptist, and had had only his baptism. Receiving baptism into the name of Christ, Paul lays his hands on them and 'the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.'

(e) Paul's Baptism.

After Saul of Tarsus met Christ on the road to Damascus and remained three days in blindness, Ananias came to him. He said two things. Firstly, 'Why are you waiting? Rise, and be baptised, washing away your sins'. Secondly, 'The Lord.. has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'

(f) Some Conclusions as to Mode.

The terms for being baptised in (or, with) the Holy Spirit are 'come upon', 'were filled', 'rest upon', 'poured out', 'fallen on', 'received', 'I came upon'. One set of terms describes the action of the Baptiser; the other set the reception of a gift, i.e. the Holy Spirit. Another set shows the result of the baptising action, namely the recipient being filled (with the Spirit).

(g) Some Further Statements from the Epistles.

Romans 5:5 'the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'. Romans 8:15, '...we have received the Spirit of sonship'. I Cor. 2:12, '...we have received... the Spirit which is from God'. II Cor. 1:22, '...He has given us His Spirit...' II Cor. 11:4, '...if you receive another spirit from the one you received'. Gal. 3:2, 'Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law?' Gal. 3:14, 'That we might receive the Spirit of promise'. Gal. 3:5, 'he who goes on supplying the Spirit'. Gal. 4:6, 'God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts Ephes. 1:13 (cf. 4:30), 'You were sealed with the Holy Spirit'. I Thess. 4:8, 'God.. .who gives His Holy Spirit to you...' I John 3:24, '...the Spirit which He has given us'. I John 4:13, '...He has given us of His own Spirit'.

The conclusion is evident when the verses are put together. The Holy Spirit is God's gift. He has given him to us. He has sent him. Believing man receives him. We have seen above that when one is baptised in the Spirit he receives the Spirit; he is filled with the Spirit. Gal. 4:4-6 suggests that salvation then brings the gift of the Spirit of sonship: indeed God sends him into the heart. At the same time he seals the believer for the day of redemption - (Ephes. 1:13) 'having believed, you were sealed'.

(iii) Elements Pertaining to Spirit-Baptising

(a) Faith a Prerequisite.

A problem confronts us. Is what was needed for the 120 waiting for the Spirit needed by all? They appear to be true believers. They believe in Christ. They believe in the coming of the Spirit. John 13:10-11 seems to suggest regeneration had taken place in all but Judas. However that may be, they had believed before receiving the gift. Acts 11:17, '...God gave them (the Gentiles) the same gift as he gave to us when we believed'. When then, did they believe? The aorist participle here ('having believed') is the same in Ephesians 1:13 - 'having believed you were sealed', and also in Acts 19:2, 'Having believed did you receive...?' These are called 'coincident aorist participles', i.e. the events took place simultaneously.

The 120 had believed long before Pentecost, but then does Peter in Acts 11: 17 indicate that the very coming of the Spirit enlivened faith and took away the last doubts? Certainly the truth was crystallised for them with the coming of the Holy Spirit. We can scarcely say that what happened to them was normative for the ones who followed. In Acts 2:38 Peter says, 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' Faith, as such, is not explicitly mentioned but is clearly implied. In Acts 11:17 the faith of the Gentiles is clearly implied, and in any case it is stated in Acts 10:43-45, for he had said, 'To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes on him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.' They, of course, believed and received (a) Repentance (11:18), (b) Forgiveness (10:43), and (c) The Holy Spirit (10: 45).

At Pentecost the 120 believe. Those 3,000 baptised believe and receive the Spirit. The Gentiles at Caesarea believe and receive. Believing and receiving is normative for being baptised in the Spirit. The believing is in Christ. In Acts 19:1-6 the disciples of John have not yet believed on Jesus. Paul points out that John had told his disciples to do this. So here they do, are baptised and receive the gift of the Spirit. In Acts 8 the Samaritans believe, but do not simultaneously receive the Spirit (Acts 8:12, 15-17). For some reason this situation needed apostolic presence. That not receiving the Spirit on believing was not normative is clear. Had it been normative the apostles would not have been needed. At any time they might yet have received the Spirit. It is clear from the text that it needed apostolic presence. It is worth noting that there was apostolic presence at Jerusalem (Acts 2), at Caesarea (Acts 10-11), and even at Ephesus (Acts 19). It seems that especially apostolic presence was needed for the three principal outpourings (a) Jerusalem - the Jews, (b) Samaria - the Samaritans, and (c) Caesarea - the Gentiles. We do not henceforward hear of any initial principal outpourings. The case of John's disciples - who would have been Jews - is simply a 'catch-up' on the Jewish Pentecost.

In Ephesians 1:13 the Ephesians had believed and been sealed. If the seal is the Spirit himself coming, then that could refer to Acts 19:1-6. If the Spirit himself seals, then he did that immediately, and it amounts to the same thing. He had come (cf. 4:30). In Gal. 3:1-6 Paul makes the point that they received the Spirit by faith³ i.e. by believing. Also the kind of faith was justifying faith - 'Thus Abraham believed and it was accounted unto him as righteousness'. This is underlined in 3:13-14 where the subject is Christ becoming curse for us, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' In Galatians 4: 4-6 Paul speaks first of redemption (from the law, i.e. forgiveness) and then of the Spirit being sent into the heart. Redemption is always received by faith;

hence the coincident action. When they believe the Spirit is sent into their hearts. In Romans 5:5-10 it is evident that the love of God is flooded into our hearts at the time of believing for Paul sets out the causes of love in the heart, i.e. Christ dying for us. He says God has poured His love into our heart by the Holy Spirit given (aorist participle) to us. Again this relates to faith. The other Scriptures quoted under '8 (ii) (g)' above obviously relate to faith.

We can draw then, this conclusion, that faith is a prerequisite to being baptised in the Spirit. Ananias seems to wonder why Paul has not already acted in faith for baptism. 'Why do you wait? Arise and be baptised, washing away your sins.' In the same breath he told him he would be filled with the Spirit, a parallel synonym for being baptised in the Spirit.

(b) Repentance.

The normative pattern for being baptised in the Spirit, i.e. receiving the Spirit, is Acts 2:38: 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive (the gift of) the Holy Spirit.' This is what the 3,000 did. In Acts 3:19 Peter says, 'Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.' 'Times of refreshing' can be understood as 'times of respite', i.e. from judgement, i.e. 'times of grace', and even 'times of the Spirit'. (The latter may seem a little forced.) For those believing, and - we doubt not - receiving the Spirit, repentance was necessary. At Caesarea they repent, although Peter does not explicitly demand it. Acts 11:18 shows they repented: 'He has also granted (the gift of) repentance unto life to the Gentiles.'

It is fairly clear that there is no true faith without repentance. Acts 20: 21 shows that Paul preached 'repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus', and this is consonant with Acts 26:20, 'that they (the Gentiles) should repent and turn to God....'

(c) Conclusion.

We conclude, then, that faith and repentance are the two indispensable prerequisites to receiving the Spirit. According to Romans 8:9-11 the proof of having believed is that one has received the Spirit. It is clear that one has the Spirit, and if one has not the Spirit then it is clear one has not believed. It is not stated that because one has believed one has the Spirit, but because one has the Spirit it is clear that one has believed, i.e. that one belongs to Christ. Doubtless true believing will bring the gift of the Spirit, but in practice it is having the Spirit which proves one has believed.

9. The New Era of The Spirit

(i) The Messianic Mission is Universal

Without doubt the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost signified a new era. In one sense it is the era of the Spirit, and in another sense the era of the Messiah. John promised Messiah would baptise in the Spirit. Messiah promised them, following the resurrection, that this would happen (Acts 1:5, cf. Luke 24:47-49). Already the prophets had promised this outpouring of the Spirit, and now was the moment. In John chapters 14 to 16 it is the Father who sends the Spirit. Christ prays for the Father to do this. He then says he will send the Spirit from the Father. In Acts 2:33 it is Messiah who, being exalted at the right hand of God, sends forth the Spirit.

As we have seen, Acts 1:8 described the ethnic and geographic progression from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. This all fits exactly with Psalm 2 where the Lord's 'anointed' is made king in Zion, being the Son of the Lord, and he is to have 'the nations for his inheritance and the uttermost part of the earth for his possession.' This is exactly what Jesus indicates in Acts 1:8. We conclude, therefore, that the ministry of the Spirit is universal, that it is to win the nations, and that this winning is by the witness to Messiah. Witness through his people can only be done in the power of the Spirit. For this purpose Jesus baptises them in the Spirit. For this purpose the Spirit comes and works in and through Messiah's people.

(ii) Messiah and His 'Messiah-ites'

Jesus was anointed 'with the Holy Spirit and with power'. No less must his people be anointed. If he needed the Spirit so do they. In any case he told them not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father. The reason for this is twofold, (a) They would not have power to communicate without the Spirit, and (b) They would have no revelation and true understanding of the truth apart from the Spirit (John 16:12-15). It follows then that there is no conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement without the Spirit (John 16: 7-11).

Galatians 3:26-29 makes it clear that to be baptised into Christ is to put on Christ. This is the incarnated, serving, crucified, risen and ascended Christ. All of him is put on. Thus his people are incorporate in him, they are 'Messiahites'. They have no programme but his, no goal but his, and no life but his. Hence their actions are his as he told them in John 14:12-14.

Another way of saying this is that Messiah is the Son. His people are sons. What the Son does the sons do under him. They do this through the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit they are under the Lordship of Christ, and they know the will of the Father. Without being baptised into Christ, and without being baptised in the Spirit they are not anointed and cannot be 'Messiahites' ('Christ-ians'), i.e. 'anointed ones in the Anointed One.'

(iii) Messiah Gives to His People

He gave the commission to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom. He then gave the Spirit to effect this. With the giving of the Spirit - and so power - he gave (a) His fulness (Ephes. 1:19-23), and (b) Gifts. It may well be that fulness and gifts are virtually the same thing. In the fulness of the power of the Spirit the gifts are used for (a) Building up the church, internally (Ephes. 4: 11-16), and (b) Assisting it for proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, i.e. its external operation. In Ephes. 4:7-11 it is clear that the gifts are Christ's gifts, i.e. innate to him, and given from him. In I Cor. 12 it is clear that these gifts are distributed by the Spirit.

(iv) The People of God are the Prophetic Witnesses to Messiah

Acts 1:8 speaks of them receiving power and (so) witnessing to Christ. Revelation 19:10 says, 'The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy'. Whether the preposition 'of' here is an objective or a subjective genitive does not greatly matter. Prophecy is concerned primarily with Jesus and testifies to him (i.e. witnesses to him) as to what he will do, has done, and yet will do.

Joel 2:28ff is the key to what happened at Pentecost in the new era that opened with the coming of the Spirit. Peter said, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel'.

What 'this' is the 'that' spoken by Joel? It can only be what was spoken by Joel, namely, (a) The outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:17. Joel 2:28-29), (b) The coming of the Spirit will bring prophecy. This prophecy will be assisted by dreams and visions (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17, cf. Numbers 12:6). (c) All this will lead up to the day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-32, Acts 2:19-21). We conclude then that the sound of wind, the fact of flames, and the articulation of foreign tongues were the accompaniments of the outpouring of the Spirit. What was significant about Pentecost was its Acts 1:8 significance - prophecy which was witness. This began of course with the telling of the wonderful works of God, and then with Peter's sermon. It was to continue after this principle to the uttermost part of the earth in space, and the Day of the Lord in time.

(v) The People of the New Era

Apart from the account of Paul's conversion and his being filled with the Spirit the four outpourings spoken of in Acts are affusions upon the community. No man can be a Messiahite without the anointing. Romans 8:9-11, when it speaks of Christ and the Spirit in the one breath, is not emphasising personal subjective experience of a believer as such, but the only sign of being truly Messiah's person - 'if any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his'. The new people must have power, gifts, wisdom, and obey the will of God. How does God get them to that place?

Peter made it clear on the day of Pentecost. The applicants to God's grace must repent, be baptised for the forgiveness of sins in the name of Messiah, and then receive the gift of the Spirit. They are now ready to be part of the community and continue in 'the fellowship, the apostolic doctrine, the breaking of bread and the prayers'.

We must see very clearly here that these things of which we have just spoken are normative for incorporation into Messiah and his community. That is, at the point of repenting, being baptised, receiving forgiveness one also receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. We have seen previously that the terms 'poured upon', 'came upon', 'fell on', 'received the gift', 'filled with the Spirit', were all and each synonymous for being baptised by Christ in (or, with) the Spirit.

We thus reach this conclusion, at least for the accounts of Acts 2:38ff, Acts 10-11, and Acts 19:1-6, that the regenerating, converting, justifying, forgiving work of the Spirit takes place when repentance, baptism into Christ, for forgiveness are experienced.⁴ At this point of the initiation-complex the gift of the Spirit is received, i.e. the person is born again and baptised for power. The only Scripture that would seem to controvert this principle is Acts 8 where the Spirit did not fall on them at the point of belief and baptism. The explanation for this must not make this happening normative. Because it was not normative the apostles came down to see why and, if possible, put it to rights. If we ask why it was not normative it is because Jerusalem, Caesarea and Samaria are three initial principal outpourings never to be repeated, since they commence the Spirit donation to (a) Jews, (b) Samaritans and (c) Gentiles. Only those

⁴ In Acts 2:38f baptism follows faith and repentance and the Spirit is received. In Acts 10:44 faith and repentance brings the gift of the Spirit and baptism follows. In Acts 19:1-6 there is faith in Christ, baptism, and the gift of the Spirit follows.

who had apostolic authority could use ‘the keys of the Kingdom’⁵ (Matt. 16:19 where the ‘You’ is plural, i.e. the apostles). Once the Spirit had been given to each ethnic group he was there for all and for all generations until the day of the Lord.

(vi) The New Witnessing People

Without regeneration no person (a) Could enter the Kingdom (John 3:3ff, Col. 1:13) and (b) Be cleansed, new and a child of God. Hence the work of the Spirit was to make men and women new. Without this witness it would be impossible. The possession of the new life was in itself the witness.

Without enduement of power to proclaim the Messianic plan could not be fulfilled. Gifts would need also to be distributed to the anointed ones, by the Spirit. Then Christ’s ‘fullness and his ‘gifts’ could be in operation in his body the church. It was with these people and for this work he would be with them ‘until the consummation of the age (of proclamation, and Kingdom accomplishment).’

(vii) Conclusion: The Messianic Era

The era of the Spirit is the era of Messiah, is the era of God’s household, the true people of God. It is the era when God is bringing about, in accordance with Genesis 49:10, ‘the obedience of faith of the nations’ (Rom. 1:5, 15:18f, and 16:25-26). Only regenerate, power-endued, Spirit-baptised people can be true working members of this community.

10. Conclusions On Spirit-Baptism

(i) Introduction: That Which is Normative

What is normative⁶ for being baptised in the Spirit? What is indicated as being normative? What, then, are the results of this normative action? These are questions often asked and debated, but perhaps the question that underlies them is, ‘Is the baptism in the Spirit that act of God which regenerates initially, or is it another act either following regeneration, or sometimes simultaneously happening with it?’ It might also be asked, ‘Is the baptism in the Spirit an enduement with power, and not the act of regeneration, or is it both, and should they normatively happen simultaneously?’

⁵ ‘The keys of the Kingdom’ must refer to opening the Kingdom to those permitted to enter. To the Jew the admission of Samaritan and Gentile was not easy to conceive. For John the Baptist’s listeners preparation for entrance was the baptism of repentance. Jesus agreed that this water baptism (‘born of the water’) was needed but spoke of being ‘born of the Spirit’ as necessary to Kingdom admission. The apostles ‘admitted’ Jews, Samaritan, and Gentiles at the outpourings of the Spirit.

⁶ We recognise that the term ‘normative’ may appear to be restrictive upon the Spirit who ‘blows where he wills’ (John 3:8). In Acts he appears to work differently in different cases. Nevertheless each seeming difference does have an explanation. Generally speaking, in O.T. and N.T. the Spirit moves according to certain recognisable principles

We need to keep certain things in mind. We have to say that what happened to the 120 at the day of Pentecost was not, in one sense, normative. These people had companied with Christ and believed in him. Pentecost was the opening of a new era and was accompanied with signs to signify this. Such signs should not be regarded as necessarily normative. The true disciples had been, so far as we know, baptised into John's baptism, and some of them at least into Jesus' baptism (cf. John 3:22-23, 4:1-2), and it is even possible that some had received both baptisms, although that is not likely. We do not hear of the 120 receiving Christian baptism which is the new rite announced at Pentecost (Acts 2:38).

What was normative for those who believed the word of the apostles (cf. John 17:20f) was (a) Repentance and faith (the latter implied), (b) Baptism in the name of Christ which brought forgiveness of sins, (c) The gift of the Holy Spirit. This, we take it, is normative for all in this era. At Samaria there was repentance and faith followed by baptism, and later the apostolically conferred gift of the Spirit. At Caesarea there was repentance and faith followed by the immediate gift of the Spirit and then baptism conferred. In the case of the Gentiles the gift of the Spirit was needed to prove the acceptance of the Gentiles into the Kingdom and the people of God. In the case of the Samaritans the apostles accepted the faith and repentance but this too needed to be sealed for the sake of the Samaritans, with the gift of the Spirit. Jesus had not ministered to Gentiles, but he had ministered to the Samaritans, so much so that they understood him to be the Saviour of the world (John 4:39-42), a fact which had not escaped the apostles.

In Acts 19:1-6 confusion has followed an incorrect translation of verse 2. This translation poses the question, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit after you believed?' It has been taken to mean, 'One believes and later one receives'. The R.S.V. translation, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' goes closest to translating the two coincident aorists. It emerges that they had not believed in Christ. They had not had Christian baptism. They had not known of the coming of Christ. They believe in Christ, and are baptised with Christian baptism. They are then given the gift of the Holy Spirit in the same way as the Samaritans, by the laying on of (apostolic) hands. It must be noted that such a group cannot, conceivably, be found today, since it was a pocket of Johannine disciples. It cannot therefore be normative.

Paul's baptism and receiving of the gift of the Spirit is the only explicit account of a single person receiving the gift. Paul has doubtless come to faith and repentance through his encounter with Christ. He is told by Ananias who has laid hands on him, 'Arise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on his name' (Acts 22:16). He is also told that Christ has sent Ananias to lay hands on him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Spirit. In this event repentance, faith, baptism, and the reception of the Spirit are all present. It would seem, by the same token, that conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 was attended with Spirit-baptism, for the eunuch 'went on his way rejoicing' (cf. I Thess. 1:5-6). Likewise, in the case of the Philippian gaoler and his family, there is great joy (Acts 16:31-34). In this case there was repentance and faith preceding baptism, and joy following it. In the epistles, as we have seen (e.g. Gal. 3:1-6, 13-14, Ephes. 1:13-14, Rom. 5:5, II Cor. 1:22), the order of receiving the gift of the Spirit is believing and then receiving. The rite of water-baptism is rarely mentioned, and, as it happens, never in these situations. The closest to such a mention is in Titus 3:1-7.

What, then, may be considered as normative? Surely repentance and faith should be followed by baptism, and the expectancy of the gift of the Spirit should be present. The question is, 'Without being baptised in the Spirit is one truly a

member of God's Kingdom, sealed to be in it in eternity, and is one a living member of the Messianic community which is in the service of the Kingdom and working at its behest?'

These elements of this question we will now try to answer.

(ii) Regeneration and Enduement

(a) Regeneration and Spirit Baptism.

The 120 gathered to await the coming of the Spirit may be said to be believers. John 13:5-11 may indicate that the disciples (Judas excepted) were regenerate, if not the remainder of the 120, although this too seems reasonable to assert. At the same time it is not clear from Acts 11:17 whether the believing happened at Pentecost or prior to it. The history of the word 'I believe' in John's Gospel seems to point to various grades of belief and even belief which was not to be trusted (e.g. John 1:50-51, 2:11, 2:23-25, etc.). However this may be, the disciples had yet to have that revelation which would fully disclose the Father and the Son to them. This is shown in John 14:1-26, 15:25-26, 16:12-15. At Pentecost the disciples were to have illumination (revelation) as well as enduement of power. It is clear from the event that this is what happened.

What of the 3,000 who believed and were baptised? The answer is that they must have received both regeneration (forgiveness, justification, salvation, adoption) and enduement. Doubtless men like Stephen and Philip and others who were known to be filled with the Spirit received the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. We are not told of any special phenomena attending their reception of the Spirit, although this does not mean none may have happened. If we took the case of the 3,000 as normative then believers should both receive forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit. We have seen that to receive the gift of the Spirit is to be baptised in the Spirit.

At Caesarea the message was not 'You will be baptised in the Spirit'. It was the message of Messiah who was anointed with the Spirit, crucified and raised. As Peter was saying, 'To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name'¹. They believed (and repented) for the forgiveness of sins, and at that point received the gift of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the Spirit fell on them.

What happened to the Samaritans? They believed on Jesus (Acts 8:12). Did they then receive forgiveness of sins? Were they regenerate? John 16:7-11 makes it clear that the Spirit must have been present for conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgement. This is sometimes called the prevenient work of the Spirit. Were they regenerated? The most we know is that the Spirit had not been received as a gift thus incorporating them into the Kingdom and the people of God. Acts 11:17 makes it clear that the coming of the Spirit did this. We do know that having received the Spirit the affair was regarded as fulfilling normative conditions, that is, the Samaritans were now regenerate, and equipped with the Spirit. Simon Magus undoubtedly saw something. 'Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

(b) Regeneration - With or Without Enduement?

Would we have seen - in Acts - a situation, which, when complete did not include both the regenerative work of the Spirit, and the anointing which gives enduement of power? We have seen that enduement of power was to witness to Christ. How then could one witness without enduement, and how could one be endued if one were not regenerate. We have to come to one of two conclusions: either one can

be regenerated and not necessarily endued with power, or one is regenerated and also endued with power. The problem with looking to the Book of Acts for this normative position is the little that is said or indicated in respect to our questions. Because it represents an initial principial operation it cannot be claimed that this will be normative for all times. We mean that Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles were being brought, initially, into the Kingdom and the people of God. This having been done, what would generally follow would be seen to be normative.

(iii) Regeneration and Witness

It goes without saying that no man who has not been regenerated could possibly witness to Christ, not anyway, normatively. Can he then be regenerated and yet lack power? To give these answers we must not look at cases which seem to relate to our questions. We should look at what the Scripture says and work from that.

It is certain that the fruit of the Spirit are really the character of Christ, and that to manifest these fruits is to witness to Christ. Without these the witness must be deficient. Paul was able to say to the Thessalonians, 'You know what manner of men we were amongst you, for your sakes.' Could one then have the fruit of the Spirit but lack enduement of power? Would a life filled with love, joy and peace, (etc.) nevertheless lack power for, say, proclamation? Or would one having apparent power for proclamation truly proclaim if, say, the fruit of the Spirit were lacking? Are not both essential for normal witness to Christ. If one is led by the Spirit and walks by the Spirit does he do this without enduement of power, or having been endued with power, should not one walk in the Spirit and be led by him? (Cf. Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:17-18.)

If true witness to the Son is to be involved in, and part of, his Sonship (Gal. 3:26-29, cf. Rom. 8:14-17), then to have 'the Spirit of His Son', i.e. the 'Spirit of Sonship', must surely mean one has been baptised in the Spirit. One cries 'Abba! Father!' along with the Spirit who also cries, 'Abba! Father!' Is there any true witness to Christ if we do not have the Spirit, and can we have the Spirit without having been baptised in the Spirit? I Cor. 12:12-13 seems to suggest we not only become members of Christ's body through the Spirit, but that we drink the Spirit also (cf. John 7:37-39).

(iv) Spirit-Baptism and Gifts

In I Cor. chs. 12-14 it appears that it is normative for a Christian to have, at least, a gift. 'It is the same God who inspires them all in every one' (12:6). 'All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills' (cf. 12:11, cf. Hebrews 2:4).

Would it be normative, in the early church, not to have a gift? What gifts then would be most appropriate? What would the gifts be for? Paul answers some of these questions. The Spirit gives to every man, accordingly, as the Spirit himself sees fit. Prophecy, generally speaking, would be valuable because it builds up the church - which is what love is all about (Ephes. 4:11-16). The gifts are for the good of all, i.e. 'the common good' (12:7).

How then do these gifts relate to the witness? Some gifts such as apostle and evangelist, and even those of healing and miracles would relate to the world. They would be signs and accompaniments and expressions of the preached Word. Other gifts build up the church, for witnessing is primarily corporate (cf. Phil.1:27-28, etc.). There is at least one gift which edifies oneself, that is speaking in tongues. I Cor. 14:4 says,

'He who speaks in tongues edifies himself'. What is wrong with one edifying oneself? Also 'For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God'. What can possibly be wrong or deficient about that? '...he utters mysteries in the Spirit'. What is wrong with that? The only thing that can possibly be deficient is that these mysteries, unless interpreted by an interpreter, edify the speaker only. Yet if he is edified the body has at least that much start!

Would it be normative to be baptised in the Spirit and so equipped for power and not have a gift or gifts? Or, since 'to love is to give' ('God so loved that He gave...') can one express love without gifts? Is love better expressed with gifts acquired? We may debate whether the charismata are 'natural' or 'supernatural' gifts but our question is really this: 'May one manifest the fruits of the Spirit, all of which are subsumed under 'love', and not have gifts to give rein to, and fulfil, these fruit of the Spirit?' The answer would seem to be, 'No! Surely the loving one has gifts, and has power, and so witnesses to Christ.'

What gifts then are said to have accompanied being baptised in the Spirit? The fact is, none. On the day of Pentecost the 120 spoke in tongues, i.e. in languages that were known and recognised. The Gentiles at Caesarea did exactly what the Jews had done at (their) Pentecost: 'They spoke in tongues and extolled God'. Were these two elements, speaking in tongues, and extolling, or did the audience hear the words of the tongues? It does not greatly matter. What they did may have been what the former disciples of John did at Ephesus: 'spoke with tongues and prophesied' (Acts 19:6). Possibly, even probably this also happened at Samaria (Acts 8:17-18). Yet whatever happened in these events Paul places the gift of tongues amongst all the other gifts in I Cor. 12:28-30 and says clearly that not every one has every gift. Tongues is a gift.

Finally, if it be suggested that following the experience of being baptised in the Spirit all spoke in tongues, then it would also have to be insisted that following this baptism all prophesied, for this they did at Pentecost (Acts 2: 14ff, cf. Joel 2:28-29), at Caesarea where 'extolling God' is the same as 'telling the wonderful works of God (Acts 10:46, 2:11) and of course in Acts 19:6 the former disciples of John spoke with tongues and prophesied. It is best then to see that these special events were followed with manifestations of the Spirit, but that those manifestations were the witness to Christ spoken of in Acts 1:8.

(v) The Miracle of Regeneration and the Fruit of the Spirit

(a) Regeneration and Its Fruit.

The accounts of regeneration or the Scriptures relating to it such as II Cor. 5:17, John 3:3-14, I Peter 1:23, Titus 3:1-5, I Cor. 6:9-11 - amongst others - teach us that regeneration is an incredible and powerful miracle. To nominate it as a mere beginning or even a good beginning, and then to nominate some following experience as more dynamic is to miss the whole point. The transformation of a human being, once unregenerate, dead in trespasses and sins and in the 'uncircumcision of the flesh' (cf. Deut. 30:6), dead to God, and energised by evil, and wholly under the power of sin, is indeed a miracle beyond any human understanding. To be an 'old creation' and become a 'new creation', to be unclean and become clean, to be rebellious and become obedient - these are matters too great to be comprehended. Yet that is what happens in 'the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit'. Could such a dynamic work be accomplished, and it not release the person into the dynamic of true witness to Christ? Is not indeed that happening the very witness itself? These questions must be answered.

In the O.T. such elements are clearly taught. When Nicodemus questioned the new birth (regeneration, being born of the Spirit) Jesus said, 'Are you a master (teacher) in Israel, and you do not know these things?' He meant that Nicodemus should understand these things from Scripture. Perhaps Jesus pointed to David's cry in Psalm 51:10, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.' He could have led him to two or three very important Scriptures.

In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God spoke of the new covenant and forgiveness. Forgiveness would be the result of God's grace, and the heart would now love God and keep His commandments, and know God. Parallel to this is Ezekiel 36:17-38. In this passage God promises to cleanse Israel, and then restore her as a kingdom (i.e. 'the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel' - Acts 1:7). How does He do this? By giving a new heart - i.e. regeneration. How does the heart become regenerated? In the same manner as in the N.T., (a) By forgiveness and cleansing, and (b) By putting the Holy Spirit in the heart. Surely this is the true parallel to Jer. 31:31-34.

More than this, the same promise 'the restoration of the kingdom to Israel', is found in Ezekiel 37. The basis of this restoration is the outpouring of the Spirit, and that outpouring brings the regeneration of the members of the nation, and forges them into a fighting force! That is the outpouring effects what in Ezekiel 36 is the inputting of the Spirit, i.e. putting the Spirit into the hearts. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:24-28 and Ezekiel 37:1-14 the result is the same, namely a new heart and true obedience. To cap all this, Ezekiel 39:25-29 God once more promises to 'restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel...' He says, 'I will not hide my face any more from them, when I pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, ' says the Lord God.'

We can see now that it was to such promises the disciples looked when Jesus spoke of the Kingdom and promised Spirit-baptism, i.e. Spirit-outpouring. Such relate primarily to the Kingdom (for them of Israel) which was to be universal, and not limited to Israel although including Israel. In these prophecies both regeneration and enablement to witness ('a mighty army'), especially through obedience are nominated. Indeed it is the new pure Israel which is, in its very holiness, the true witness (cf. I Peter 2:9-10, and Exodus 19:5).

Finally, on this score, Jesus actually pointed to Numbers 21:4-9, showing the incident of the snake pinned to the pole. This means that new birth comes from looking at the Cross. It is life out of death. Yet, because Jesus mentions the action of the Holy Spirit in new birth, it must mean that it is the Spirit and the Cross which effect this wonderful action. Consistent with this are the messages given at Pentecost, Samaria and Caesarea, and also the coupling of the redemptive work of Christ and the Spirit in such significant passages as Romans 8:1-3, Galatians 3:1-3, 13-14, 1 Cor. 6:11 and Titus 3:1-7.

(b) The Fruit of the Spirit, the Fruit of Regeneration.

The work of regeneration is mentioned in Romans 5:5-10 where man's weakness, irreligion, sinfulness, and enmity is mentioned to contrast the love and grace of God through which He redeems. In the midst of this Paul says, 'The love of God has been poured (flooded) into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.' One wonders whether anything can transcend a flooding of our hearts with love. This surely must be the highest experience of any human being. One wonders whether the flooding of love can be anything less than the flooding of the Spirit (John 7:37-39), i.e. anything less than being baptised in the Spirit.

Hence when we return to the matter of power to witness it can mean no less than production of the fruit (or, harvest) of the Spirit. If we think of producing these fruits as painful

mortification of the flesh, or gradual acquisition of character, then we have missed the point that such fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. To put it another way, the Gospel-seed which the Spirit sows brings the fruit of the Gospel, i.e. love, joy, peace, and so on. For example, the love that responds to God's love, (I John 4:19), the peace of justification (Rom. 5:1), and the joy of salvation (cf. Psalm 51:12, I Peter 1:8, Rom. 15:13) are fruits of redemption. Without these there is no true witnessing. In John 17:20ff, Jesus said the oneness of love would show the world the Father had sent the Son, for the fruits of his coming are the love and unity of his people.

Again love given in regeneration produces the effects of which the prophecies speak in Jer. 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:24-26, and so on. Love produces love for God and man, and is the motivating force for true obedience - 'If you love me you will keep my commandments' (cf. II Cor. 5:14, I John 5:2). It is love which makes one obligated to preach the Gospel (Romans 1:14-15), and it is love which makes us serve others (cf. Ephes. 1:15), yet it is 'love in the Spirit' (Col. 1:8). The greatest witness is love, and by Love, for God is love, and we do not witness authentically where that love is absent.

11. Conclusion To Our Study

(i) Experience and Scriptural Rationalisations

To this point we have sought to argue for what we have said from the Scripture. This is what most seek to do. The less presuppositions we have, and the less we have to have, the more unbiased our argument. Nevertheless many who have had exceptional or wonderful experiences of God, of the Son, and of the Spirit have sought to rationalise such by seeking to interpret their experiences as they believe Scripture verifies or authenticates them.

The **first** thing about an experience is that no one can rightly deny what we believe we have experienced. If a man believes he has seen a three-headed bear we must allow that he believes he has seen this. If a man actually has seen a three-headed bear then we must not deny this, especially if we too have caught a glimpse of that unusual creature. From that point, where the viewer begins to explain and rationalise his experience he may or may not be right. Normally there would have to be undeniable criteria.

Secondly, any experience is attended by, and is in the context of a large number of factors. Interpreting that experience according to certain doctrinal criteria may be very good, but unless the criteria themselves are wholly correct then the interpretation may not be correct. If for any reason one has to be right, then probably some essential elements (i.e. essential to truth) may be missing.

When we consider the differences that exist between the ethos and mores of the early church situation, and ours today, we may have some trouble in interpreting experiences. Under the dynamic apostolic preaching certain responses took place. It may well be under weaker preaching, less dedication, and the like that our responses may be necessarily weaker, and perhaps different to a degree. What we mean is that without interpreting our experiences we should look clearly - and without prejudice - to the Scriptures and their teaching, and seek, patiently, to see the various categories into which they may fit. Even if they do not fit any of these we should not be frustrated.

What matters, beyond all things, is that we be true to the truth, at least so far as we know and recognise it. For example, what did the early church think,

having had the experience of the Spirit at Pentecost (a) as the 120 filled with the Spirit, and (b) as the 3,000 baptised and receiving the Spirit - what did this church think when suddenly all were filled with the Spirit, i.e. second affusion? (See Acts 4:31.) Did they think they were re-baptised? Did they feel the first affusion was not enough, or that it had waned? What then of men who were said to be 'full of faith and the Holy Spirit'? Does that not seem to infer some were not in that state, the state say of Stephen, Barnabas, Philip, Peter, Paul and others? It may or may not infer that. What we do know is that each time there was a filling - even in habitually filled men - there was a fresh surge to (even) greater witness, or an enablement to continue in a steady witness to Christ. Interpreting these experiences according to some doctrinal or even experiential 'grid' could have proved useless, and even wrong.

(ii) Being Continually Filled is the Real Issue

The test of a Christian's capacity to witness is whether he is 'going on being filled' at this present moment or not. It is erroneous to speak of every Christian who has (of course) been filled through Spirit-baptism, as being 'Spirit-filled'. The best we can say is, 'The Spirit is always present', even though grieved (Ephes. 4:30) or quenched (I Thess. 19-20).

If this being filled with the Spirit were constant and automatic then there would be no point in Paul saying, 'Go on being filled with the Spirit' (Ephes. 5:18), or 'Be aglow with the Spirit' (Romans 12:11), or 'Walk in the Spirit' (Gal. 5:16, 25). We always need what Paul says is 'that which the Spirit supplies' (Phil. 1:19) because God 'goes on supplying the Spirit' (Gal. 3:5).

In other words, the grand beginnings - call them regeneration, Spirit-baptism, Spirit-anointing or what you will - are as nothing if there is not a 'going on in the Spirit' (Gal. 3:3, Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:16ff). The power for witness which is on the one hand the fearless proclamation in the power of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:5, I Thess. 1:5, I Peter 1:12) and on the other hand the love-flooded life, are surely the criteria by which we should walk daily. All arguments about experiences count for nothing unless these elements are present.

At best they remind us of the great things that have happened. At worst they show us that 'having begun in the Spirit we are now ending in the flesh'. This should make us repent of having abandoned our first love (love in the Spirit), and having repented turn again to do the first works - the works of the Spirit and of love (Rev. 2:1-6). Surely then God will give new seasons of refreshing, and surely His people are constantly in need of these.

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