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THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN THE CHURCH
AS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

A. The Subject

1. Importance of the Subject

The nature of the Church and the person of the Holy Spirit are both subjects of intense interest in theological circles today. The ecumenical movement has necessitated a focus on the Church and the keen awareness of the need for a renewed spiritual vitality in Christianity has greatly contributed to the present focus on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The combining of these two foci into a single focus is necessary if a clear view is to be had of either the Church or the Holy Spirit since they are closely related. The Spirit is active in the Church (primarily, though not exclusively) and as a result of this activity something of the nature of the Church becomes clearly perceived. The nature of the Spirit's activity in the Church will therefore be the primary focus of this paper.

But there is a more practical need which demands a study of this nature; the Church can be renewed and revitalised only when the Holy Spirit is given his rightful place, when Christians begin relying not on themselves but on God. Thus, an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church is vital to the proper and effective functioning of the Church.

2. Delimitation of the Subject

This paper will deal with the role of the Holy Spirit

in the Church and not in any other realm such as the world or the life of the individual Christian. Such a limitation is necessary and valid because of the scope of the paper and the theological and practical need which this paper is attempting to meet.

On the other hand, only those areas in the life of the church related to the working of the Spirit will be considered. Much can be said about the Church which will not nor could not be said in this paper since space would not permit, nor would it have a bearing on the topic which we are considering.

In short, our attention will be focused only where the Holy Spirit and the Church intersect and overlap.

B. The Expected Contribution of the Study

As already pointed out, this study will help to give us a better understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Church. In a day when so much is being said about the Church there seems to be a tendency to bypass the very core of the Church's being and life. This study will seek to prevent such a tragic error.

This study will also contribute to a Biblical understanding of the Spirit's role in the Church. The contemporary emphasis on Biblical studies seems to have bypassed this all important topic. Therefore this study will give a Biblical perspective to a topic of great importance which has not to date (to the author's knowledge) received the attention it has warranted from Biblical scholarship.

Finally, a study of this kind could prevent a great deal of confusion and error on behalf of the Church leaders who are caught in a cross-current of opinion on this topic which unfortunately is theoretical, mistaken or distorted. The Biblical doctrine will be presented as clearly and succinctly as possible.

C. The Plan of Procedure

Before a study on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church as found in the New Testament can be undertaken it must be clear from a Biblical standpoint what the meaning of "the Holy Spirit" and of "the Church" is. Therefore the first chapter will deal with the person of the Holy Spirit; who or what he is from the Biblical evidence. The second chapter will consider the nature of the Church and will deal specifically with those aspects which have the greatest bearing on our study, i.e., the Church as the ecclesia and the Church as the Body of Christ. These first two chapters will sharpen our understanding of exactly what is meant by the terms 'Holy Spirit' and 'Church' in the following discussion. Each focus will be sharpened before they are merged for the heart of the study.

Once our understanding of the basic concepts is clarified we will consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church by focusing on: the Spirit in the formation of the Church, the Spirit in the organization and administration of the Church, and the Spirit in the internal and external ministry of the Church. Thus the role of the Holy Spirit in the whole life of

the Church will be examined.

Finally, there will be a summary and conclusion in which the findings of this paper are drawn together and an application made to our modern day situation.

D. The Sources of the Study

The primary concern of this paper is to discover the New Testament teaching on the subject and therefore the primary source will be the New Testament materials themselves. In getting at these materials the original languages will be used when necessary and the scholarly opinion of others will be eagerly sought to supplement, and perhaps correct, the writer's own personal study.

Various books, commentaries and periodicals will be employed to extract as much truth as possible from the scriptures on this subject. Above all the writer prays that the Spirit of Truth will shed his light on this endeavor.

PART I

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION:

THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before we can consider the role of the Spirit in the Church it is necessary for us to consider what is meant by "the Holy Spirit". In a preliminary study such as this it is hardly possible to do justice to a subject as vast and intricate as the New Testament concept of the identity of the Holy Spirit; yet such a study is necessary for the conclusions of this chapter will determine the course of this entire study.

When the New Testament is examined for light on the subject of the Holy Spirit one is impressed by the elaborate mosaic of statements made and concepts presented, both implicit and explicit. Surely the reason for this is that "long before the Spirit was an article of doctrine it was a fact in the experience of the primitive Church. This explains why the New Testament statements about it exhibit both such diversity and such unity."¹

In this chapter our concern will center on who, or what, the Spirit is. Is the Spirit a person? Is the Spirit divine, i.e., what evidence do we find for the traditional trinitarian concept? What is the relationship of the Spirit to Christ? What is the Spirit's relation to God? No easy

¹Eduard Schweizer, The Spirit of God, Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theological Word Book of the New Testament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), p. 24.

answers are to be found to these questions and yet it is necessary to examine the evidence and arrive at a preliminary conclusion if this study is to be given direction.

A. The Personality of the Spirit

The first question that must be asked is whether or not the Spirit is a person or an impersonal force. The answer to this gives meaning and importance to the remainder of this chapter.

A question has to be asked about the Spirit which it is not necessary to ask about Christ, namely: Is the Spirit a person? This question is not the same as: Is the Spirit persona in one or more of the senses used by the writers of the early Church and Medieval times? The question means: Has the Spirit a nature and activities which are in certain ways analogous to the nature and activities of human beings, these points of analogy being possession of thought, feeling, and will, and existence as an individual centre of consciousness which is capable of relationships with other persons? ¹

The New Testament answer to this question is by no means uniform and various contemporary authors have come up with opposite conclusions. One says, "Even when the writers seem to be describing the Spirit as a person, the basic New Testament idea is always that it is a supernatural force coming into our earthly lives. Sometimes they call it simply the 'power of God'. Thus the New Testament does not speak of the Spirit as a person."² However another author claims, "The

¹Arthur W. Wainwright, The Trinity in the New Testament (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), p. 11.

²Ernest F. Scott, I Believe in the Holy Spirit (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), pp. 47, 48.

Holy Spirit is not an influence, nor an attribute, nor an emanation, but a person. ... He is not simply, as the etymology of the word Spirit might imply, the breath of God, nor the abstract power of God, nor the life of God, nor the life of Christ - but God Himself."¹ Alan Richardson goes to the heart of the difficulty when he notes,

Our modern difficulties about the relation of the Spirit to God arise because we hold a conception of personality unknown to the biblical writers. We think of separate and distinct personalities, hard and impermeable, each sharply distinguished from the others: hence our 'problem' of the doctrine of the Trinity. In the Bible persons are not thus separate and distinct; they flow into one another.²

This certainly helps in our consideration of the problem but the basic question still needs to be answered, Does the Holy Spirit exist as an individual center of consciousness which is capable of relationships with other persons? This is what is meant by the use of the term "person."

When the New Testament is examined for an answer to this question evidence is found in support of either of the two possible views. At one time the Spirit is described in personal terms and at another in impersonal terms. In the Acts there are more than sixty references to the Spirit. On examination we find that eighteen of these describe the Spirit in personal terms. He is seen to be a person who speaks (1:16; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 28:25), forbids (6:6), thinks good

¹Dougan Clark, The Offices of the Holy Spirit (Philadelphia: National Holiness Publishing House, 1878), p. 1.

²Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper Bros., 1959), p. 103.

(15:28), appoints (20:28), sends (13:4), bears witness (5:32; 20:23), snatches (8:39), prevents (16:7), is lied to (5:3), tempted (5:9) and resisted (7:51 - cf.6:10). Most of the other references describe how men are filled with the Spirit (2:4; 4:8; 9:17; 13:9), act through the Spirit (21:4) and in the Spirit (19:21). Although these latter references do not of themselves imply that the Spirit is a person, neither are they necessarily contradictory to the impression given by the other passages.¹

When the epistles and the synoptics are examined one sees that, as in the Acts, "the number of definitely personal references to the Spirit is small compared with the large number of references which can be otherwise interpreted."² However, before we reach a conclusion on the basis of mere quantity of usage we must try to relate and correlate what we find in scripture. As Wainwright points out,

It would be wrong to assume that the New Testament is always consistent. ... Consistency was not their primary aim. Nevertheless, they did not deliberately court inconsistency. ... Since there is no inconsistency between the personal descriptions of the Spirit and those which are not necessarily personal, there is no strong case for believing that the New Testament writers embraced at one and the same time two conflicting doctrines of the Spirit.³

We must examine the references which describe the Spirit as a person in order to do justice to the New Testament view. If they were only few and scattered they could be pushed

¹Wainwright, op. cit., p. 201.

²Ibid., pp. 202, 203.

³Ibid., p. 203.

aside as being metaphorical, but since they are fairly numerous, and occur in a wide variety of writers an honest appraisal of them is necessary. We have seen that Luke speaks of the Spirit as a person in the Acts. Paul in his epistles also speaks of the Spirit as though he were a person. The Spirit leads (Rom. 8:14), bears witness (Rom. 8:16), intercedes (Rom. 8:26), searches everything (I Cor. 2:10), cries (Gal. 4:6), is grieved (Eph. 4:30). According to the Johannine writings the Spirit bears witness (John 15:26), teaches (John 14:26), declares and conducts as a guide (John 16:13) and is a witness (I John 5:6). "He is described as *παρακλήτος* which may be translated 'Comforter' or 'Advocate,' both of which are personal titles. The evangelist gives the title *παρακλήτος* to Jesus as well as the Spirit, and there is no reason to doubt that both Paracletes were regarded as personal."¹

In other parts of the New Testament we also find language which implies that the Spirit is a personal being. In Matthew the Spirit leads Christ into the wilderness (4:1) and speaks in the disciples (10:20); in Luke's gospel the Holy Spirit teaches (12:2). According to the First Epistle of Peter the Spirit testifies (1:11). According to the First Epistle to Timothy, he speaks (4:1). The author of Hebrews says that the Spirit speaks and bears witness in the writings of the Old Testament (3:7), and several times in the Apocalypse the Spirit is said to speak (2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 14:13).²

¹Ibid., p. 201.

²Ibid., p. 201.

In the light of this evidence we must conclude with Wainwright that "there is abundant evidence that the Spirit was regarded (in the New Testament) as a personal being, who was capable of experiences of grief, and approval, who could forbid and be lied to, who could guide and inspire."¹

But how do we relate this to the greater number of passages that can be interpreted as speaking of the Spirit as an impersonal being, a force, a power, an effluence rather than as a person. At this point Bultmann's distinction between the two concepts of the Spirit as used in the New Testament is of value. Bultmann calls one concept the Animistic interpretation of Spirit in which the Spirit is an independent personal power which can fall on a man and take possession of him, as in the Old Testament. The other is the Dynamic interpretation of the Spirit in which the Spirit is an impersonal power which like a fluid fills a man, the latter being a Hellenistic concept.² Both of these concepts are used in the Acts and the epistles of Paul especially.

How are these basic differences resolved? Wainwright makes a suggestion which offers the best explanation for the Biblical evidence as we find it.

The dynamic descriptions of the Spirit do not actually imply that the Spirit is impersonal. They would be consistent with the belief that the Spirit is personal. On the other hand the references which imply that the

¹Ibid., p. 200.

²Rudolf Bultmann, The Theology of the New Testament, pp. 155-7, as cited in Wainwright, op. cit., p. 202.

Spirit is a person are in conflict with the belief that the Spirit is impersonal. The only view which can account for all the references and preserve a general consistency is the view that the Spirit is personal.¹

In other words there is no contradiction between the dynamic and animistic concepts if it is accepted that the Spirit is personal; but if the Spirit is thought of as being impersonal there is a contradiction which cannot be resolved.

There are certain passages in which the dynamic and the animistic passages are used side by side without any problem in the mind of the author. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (DYNAMIC) and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (ANIMISTIC). (Acts 2:4). "And the Spirit told me to go with them (Animistic) ... As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them" (Dynamic) (Acts 11:12,15).

The author was not conscious of any inconsistency when he included in the same passage descriptions of the Spirit in both animistic and dynamic senses. He was able to do this because the dynamic references were consistent with the passages in which the Spirit was said to behave like a person.²

In conclusion it appears that although there is no systematic presentation of the personality of the Spirit, or his existence as a person, the evidence can most readily be accounted for if the view is taken that the Holy Spirit, in the mind and thinking of the New Testament writers, is a person who is capable of relationships with other persons.

¹Wainwright, op. cit., p. 203.

²Ibid., p. 204.

B. The Spirit in the Trinity

It is a well-known and universally accepted fact that there is no clearly defined Trinitarian statements in the New Testament. However, the traditional Christian viewpoint has consistently seen the basis for the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament witness itself. "Although the New Testament writers said nothing clearly and definitely about God's threefold nature yet they seemed everywhere to take it for granted. They always related the action of the Father to the action of the Son and the Spirit."¹

The problem of the Trinity finds its origins for the Church in the person of Jesus Christ. Because of faith in Him and what He accomplished a new problem for monotheism was created. Early tendencies were more binitarian in nature than trinitarian, yet once Christ was recognized as God the way was opened for a similar recognition of the Spirit of God. From the beginning the problem of the Trinity was connected closely with Christian worship, for in the New Testament the Trinitarian character of its worship "is chiefly found in the worship of the Father through the Son in the Spirit, and, to a lesser extent, in the worship of the Son."² Thus Christian experience made necessary a reconsideration of the Christian thinking about the nature of God, not without an awareness of the great problems involved.

¹Ernest Scott, op. cit., p. 50

²Wainwright, op. cit., p. 7

The radical change in thinking which this involved was not easy to come by and therefore not all, or even most statements concerning the Holy Spirit are compatible with the traditional concept of a tri-une God. Here, however, an important principle must be applied:

... in interpreting any document the most significant passages are those, however few in number, where the writer says something which is startlingly new, rather than those, however numerous, in which he uses language which would give no shock to his contemporaries . . .

In examining the New Testament evidence we shall therefore rightly regard as most significant those passages which describe the Holy Spirit as personally distinct from the Father and the Son and at the same time treat Him as Divine.¹

One of the most discussed and well-known passages of this nature is the unmistakably authentic baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 where Jesus instructs his disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Most scholars agree that this statement can be traced to Jesus Himself or was so early in the church tradition as to be an undisputed statement by 85 A.D. (The many interesting and pertinent aspects of this passage cannot be considered within the scope of this study). Concerning this passage Schweizer states,

A special place belongs to the command to baptize in Matt 28.19 ... What is astonishing about this is not the reference to the Spirit at baptism, so much as the naming of the Spirit's name alongside the other two names. This means that here $\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is understood in a completely different sense from that in any other passage in Matthew. ... Once the 'Lord,' $\kappa\upsilon\acute{\rho}\iota\omicron\varsigma$, was placed next to God, it

¹Hartill, op. cit., p. 40

would have been very easy for the Spirit to be added. This did not involve speculation over their mutual relationship; it was rather a proof that God cannot be demonstrated as the apex of a monotheistic system, but can only be encountered when he meets the Church in person: in the Son, or else (for the individual) in the Spirit, in which the encounter with the Son takes place.¹

The completely different sense in which the term 'Spirit' is here understood is on a par with the Father and the Son, and yet not in any way identical or subservient to either.

This same attitude is displayed by Paul in I Corinthians 12:4-7, "Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one." Another passage in which we find this equivalent usage of Christ, God and the Spirit is the benediction in II Corinthians 13:14 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

In I Peter there is a statement which also speaks of the Spirit as distinct from the Father and the Son and also Divine. Peter speaks of those who were "chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ."

These statements could not be explained unless it is admitted that the early Church saw the Spirit as a Divine person, for if this were not true these statements would certainly be blasphemous. It now remains to be seen what exactly

¹Schweizer, op. cit., p. 32.

is the relation between the Spirit and Christ and between the Spirit and God the Father.

C. The Spirit and Christ

Is there a distinction between the Spirit and Christ or are they to be identified with each other? To begin to answer this question we must consider first the life of Christ on earth and then his resurrected life in relation to the Spirit.

In viewing the life of Christ one is impressed by the small number of references to the Holy Spirit in comparison to the rest of the New Testament. We find an explanation for this in the fact that "before the death of Christ the Holy Spirit was incognito, unknown to the disciples, although the Spirit was present to and active in Christ himself. ... We need not therefore be surprised that there are comparatively few references to the Holy Spirit in the Gospels, save in connection with the birth or the baptism of Jesus."¹

In the birth and baptism of Jesus we see the Spirit as separate and distinct from Christ, and this holds true throughout the synoptics. There is no indication that the Spirit is to be identified with Jesus at any point. Jesus is born as a result of the Spirit's activity (Luke 1:35), the Holy Spirit descends on him (Luke 3:22, etc.), he is full of the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1), and he casts out demons by the Spirit of God (Matt. 12:28). Jesus regarded the

¹Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 107.

Spirit as a person who was able to speak through men (Mark 13:11), and against whom blasphemy could be committed (Mark 3:29). The Spirit was God's Spirit and guided men in the composition of the scriptures (Mark 12:36). "The most important of all these sayings is the quotation from Isaiah 61:1 (Luke 4:18), in which Jesus claimed that the Holy Spirit had anointed him. The blessing of the Spirit was the guarantee of his Messianic office."¹ "In 4:4 Luke introduced the Spirit again, and from then on the dominant description of Jesus is that of one who possesses the power of the Spirit."² Again we note that "when Jesus speaks of the finger of God, the Spirit of God acting through Him, it means that in Him there came to its consummation the creating, the revealing, and the redeeming power of God."³

Thus a close connection between the earthly life of Christ and the Holy Spirit is seen. It is the Spirit who is active in the life of Christ guaranteeing his Messianic office; but the Spirit is always over-against Jesus and never in any way identified with him.

However, when the relation between the Spirit and the risen Christ is examined the problem becomes more difficult and complex for evidence is found which would apparently identify the two as well as distinguish between the two.

¹Wainwright, op. cit., p. 213.

²Schweizer, op. cit., p. 37.

³William Barclay, The Promise of the Spirit (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 24.

Certain passages apparently fail to differentiate between the risen Lord and the Spirit. In Acts Peter addresses a voice that comes to him in a dream in one instance as 'Lord' (10:14) and then in another instance in the same context it is said that the Spirit spoke to him (10:19). The question that must be asked here is if *κύριε* means the risen Lord Christ or if it is a term of address such as Saul uses in Acts 9:5. Also in Luke 12:12 Christ says the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples what to say, whereas in Luke 21:15 Christ tells his disciples that he will give them a mouth and wisdom. The question that must be asked here is how does Christ give his disciples this mouth and wisdom if not by sending the Holy Spirit who will teach the disciples what they are to say. Schweizer takes these two examples in Acts and Luke as evidence that either the Spirit or the risen Lord can be referred to interchangeably.¹ However, the truth of this conclusion is dependent on the interpretation of these various passages in the light of the questions that are posed above.

The statement of Christ, "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you" (John 14:18), is often interpreted to mean that Christ is identifying himself with the Paraclete. Thus Richardson comments, "the Spirit, the Paraclete whom Jesus will send from the Father, will bear witness in and through the witness of the disciples (John 15:26f.), and the action of the Spirit is the action of the Risen Christ himself who comes to his disciples in the coming of the Paraclete

¹Schweizer, op. cit., pp. 38, 39.

(cf. John 14:18, 'I come unto you')."¹ However, Wainwright observes, "It is possible that when Jesus says 'I go away, and I come unto you' he is speaking of the coming of the Spirit. But since he speaks in the same chapter of the difference between himself and 'another Paraclete', it is more likely that 'I come to you' refers to his own resurrection."² This view is strongly supported by what follows, "Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me." (14:19). Christ was seen by the disciples in his resurrected body and not as the Holy Spirit.

Another passage in which the Spirit and the risen Christ seem to be identified is found in Romans 8:9,10: "But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness." In this passage we see that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are identical, there is no distinction at all between the two. However, in this we find no clear statement on the relation between the Spirit and Christ. We can certainly agree with Cyril Richardson when he comments, "Paul never resolves the issue of the contrast between Christ and the Spirit; and the fact that his phrase 'in Christ' is really synonymous with his other

¹Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 109.

²Wainwright, op. cit., p. 221

phrase 'in the Spirit,' betrays the lack of careful distinction."¹

But because there is not a careful distinction we cannot assume that the two are identified. Paul here is discussing the Christian life.

It is a life which is both 'in the Christ' and 'in the Spirit'. (These phrases) are not interchangeable in the writings of Paul. Christians are not exhorted to 'put on the Spirit,' or 'to conform to the image of the Spirit,' But they are called upon to 'put on Christ' and conform to his image.

This Power (in whose sphere we live) is not something nameless and unknown. It is identical with the ascended Lord — so long as one does not think of the ascended Lord in himself, but only in his dealings with the Church. Paul is hardly touched by the metaphysical question how God, Christ and the Spirit are related to each other.³

Many times the functions of the Spirit and Christ may overlap but it does not follow from this that the two are identical, for Paul never writes of 'him that raised up the Spirit from the dead.'⁴

For the most part we find in scriptures the Spirit distinguished from Christ. "The New Testament supports the view that the Spirit was not identified with Christ, but was regarded as personal....The Spirit did not respond to the Father in the same way as did the Son."⁵ In the Johannine writings especially we see that the Spirit is come to continue the work

¹Cyril Richardson, The Doctrine of the Trinity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 51.

²Wainwright, op. cit., pp 219.

³Schweizer, op. cit., pp. 82, 83.

⁴Wainwright, op. cit., p. 218.

⁵Ibid., p. 223

of Christ but is in no way identical with him. In John 14:16 we read: "I will pray the Father and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever." (See also 7:39; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:22).

The presence and work of the Spirit in the post incarnate period is always related in some way to the work of Christ. "The presence of the Spirit is always secondary to, and consequent upon, the presence of the incarnate Christ. It is Christ, and not the Spirit, who became incarnate and wrought in history the work of God for the salvation of men."¹

The author of the Fourth Gospel . . . presents the relation of the Spirit to Christ chiefly in terms of continuation; Paul . . . presents the experience of the Spirit . . . as the complement to the fact of Christ. . . . The Spirit continues the presence of Christ beyond the brief span of his historical appearance and completes it by effecting its inward apprehension among men. In both emphases, however, the Spirit is presented in a purely Christocentric reference.²

II Corinthians 3:17 - At this point it is necessary to introduce this most discussed, disputed and controversial passage with reference to the relation between the Lord Christ and the Spirit. The problems involved made it necessary to introduce this problem at this point in our study.

A superficial interpretation of this verse would certainly bring one to the conclusion that Christ and the Spirit are identical. But what does Paul mean when he says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord

¹George S. Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 26.

is, there is freedom." Referring to this passage Barclay comments that this is the most startling thing that Paul says about the Spirit. He goes on to say:

When Paul wrote that, he was not thinking in terms of the doctrine of the Trinity and the persons in the Godhead; he was not thinking theologically at all; he was speaking from experience, and his experience was that to possess the Spirit was nothing less than to possess Jesus Christ.¹

The traditional interpretation of this passage is that in verse 16 Paul is making a reference to Exodus 34:34 and that verse 17 is Paul's comment and means "Now ὁ κύριος in the passage which I have just quoted denotes the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." "So the majority of the Greek Fathers interpret the passage ... and it is difficult to regard any other interpretation as doing anything but violence to the context."²

However, since the Lord is usually used in reference to Jesus, Paul may here be speaking of Christ.

The context supports the link with Yahweh and with the quotation from Exodus. But since Old Testament quotations which were originally about Yahweh are sometimes transferred by Paul to Christ, it is possible that in II Corinthians 3 he means 'Christ' by 'the Lord.' Moreover, in this epistle there is no clear instance of the application of the title 'Lord' to God the Father. Elsewhere in the epistle the 'Lord' is Christ. These considerations support the view that Christ and the Spirit are being identified. . . . The identification of Christ with the Spirit was not in the foreground of Paul's thought. . . . At the most it may be argued that

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 68.

²A. E. J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ, p. 155, as cited in Hartill, op. cit., p. 41.

while he did not consciously identify Christ with the Spirit, the implication of his thought might lead to such an identification.¹

Paul's point is that the Lord is represented by the Spirit in his relationship with men. As far as men are concerned, the Lord confronts them as the Spirit. He does not intend to identify the Spirit with Yahweh, but having written "The Lord is the Spirit," he does not alter his words but qualifies them by a reference to "the Spirit of the Lord."²

Schweizer interprets this by pointing out the following:

In II Corinthians 3:17 the lord (κύριος) is identified with Spirit (πνεῦμα). . . . It is clearly stated, then, that the Spirit (πνεῦμα) is the ascended Christ, and that turning unto him is union with the realm of the Spirit. iii. 17b makes a distinction between Lord (κύριος) and Spirit (πνεῦμα); but this is only to clarify 17a, which does not assert the identity of the two personalities, but only indicates by the word Spirit the mode in which the Lord exists. "Spirit of the Lord" is simply used as periphrasis for his mode of existence, in other words for the power in which he encounters his Church. When Christ is seen in terms of his role for the Church and of his works of power within the Church, he can be identified with the Spirit; but insofar as Christ is also Lord over his own power, he can be distinguished from that power, just as "I" can always³ be distinguished from the power which goes out of me.-----

Schweizer concludes his consideration of this passage saying "It cannot be maintained that Paul, even though he readily ascribes the same functions both to Christ and to the Spirit, nevertheless never makes the two equivalent."

Richardson views this verse differently.

Now the Spirit in Paul is distinguished both from the Father and from Christ. On that question there can be no

¹Wainwright, op. cit., p. 217.

²Ibid., pp. 226, 227.

³Schweizer, op. cit., p. 49.

doubt. In one passage (the one here being discussed, II Cor. 3:17) he does, indeed, seem to equate the Spirit and the Lord. . . . But the meaning of this verse is NOT that Christ and the Spirit are identical, but that, in his exegesis of an Old Testament verse (Exod. 34:34) Paul¹ understands the "Lord" there referred to as the Spirit.

The many problems and interpretations of this passage justify Plummer's comment after a careful study. "It is a passage, about the exact meaning of which we must be content to remain in doubt."²

However our conclusion can be positive for "it is obviously uncritical to let this one text, one interpretation of which seems to equate Christ and the Holy Spirit, outweigh thirty other passages in which S. Paul distinguishes them."³

So we see that though there is a close connection between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, and that the work of the Spirit is closely and directly related to the work of Christ the two are never seen to be identical, except for a few scattered references whose interpretation is doubtful. The Spirit continues and at the same time complements the work of Christ.

D. The Spirit and the Father

What is the relationship between the Spirit and God? Are the two identical or is the Spirit only an extension of God? The New Testament testimony in no way gives clear answers

¹Alan Richardson, op. cit., pp. 59 60.

²Alfred Plummer, II Corinthians (International/Critical Commentary) (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1960), p. 104

³Hartill, op. cit., p. 41.

to these questions since they are questions which never presented themselves to the writers of scripture, but, rather, only to a later generation. However, scripture does give us evidence which will help us to answer some of these questions satisfactorily.

We see that the Holy Spirit is often described in terms which are limited to God and said to carry on functions which are attributed to God alone.

That the Holy Spirit is very God is proven not only by His identification with God in the baptismal formula and apostolic benediction, but also in his possession of God-like attributes. He is the eternal Spirit. Heb. 9:14. He is omnipotent. Luke 1:37. And he is omniscient. I Cor. 2:10. Divine works are ascribed to Him. He shared in the creation of the world. Gen. 1:2. He creates new creatures in Christ. John 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17. He raised Christ from the dead. Rom. 1:4; 8:11. His proceeding from the Father and from Christ (John 15:26; 16:7) also proves His deity.¹

Wainwright is at pains to point out that in the New Testament there is no indication that the Spirit was believed to perform the uniquely Divine functions, except for John 16:8-11 in which the Spirit is said to pass judgment.² He goes on to point out that except for Genesis 1:2 and Psalm 33:6 "there is no statement in either the Old Testament or the New Testament which supports the idea that the Spirit was active in the Creation of the world."³ Neither is there evidence in

¹Ralph M. Riggs, The Spirit Himself (Springfield; Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1949), p. 6.

²Wainwright, op. cit., p. 231.

³Ibid., p. 231.

the New Testament that the Spirit was worshipped or received prayer.¹ But this is not an indication that the Spirit is not in himself divine.

The Holy Spirit is intimately connected with the person of God. "The Old Testament never uses the expression 'the Holy Spirit' absolutely but it speaks twice of God's Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10); the Spirit of God has no existence apart from God any more than the spirit of Elijah can exist apart from Elijah. God 's Spirit is God acting."² "The Spirit of God is the active principle which proceeds from God and gives life to the physical world. (Gen. 2:7). It is implicitly connected with the phrase 'and God spake.' . . . In this connection the same definition holds good, of the Spirit of God as the creative, active, personal power of God."³

The question which must be raised is: Does this view of the Spirit eliminate the possibility that the Spirit is capable of relating to God in a personal way? Wainwright seems to answer in the affirmative when he says,

Wisdom, Word and Spirit were regarded in Judaism as an extension of the personality of God, but there was little evidence that they responded to God in a full and reciprocal personal relationship. The Spirit in Paul is very much on a par with these Judaistic concepts. The Spirit of God leads men and drives them, but there is little suggestion that the Spirit responds to God. Even when Paul describes the Spirit as making intercession, the Spirit does this through the mouth of man, when he enables a man to pray. The heavenly intercession of

¹Ibid., p. 228.

²Alan Richardson, op. cit., pp. 104,105.

³Schweizer, op. cit., p. 3.

Christ involves a much greater degree of reciprocal activity than the Spirit's intercession.¹

Wainwright certainly seems to be stretching a point in his discussion of Romans 8:26ff. The Spirit operates in the Christian's heart and therefore certainly intercedes to God through man, since this is the area of his operation. We see in this passage in Romans that the Holy Spirit "is a heavenly power of God -- over against the Father -- with a mind of his own and operating in the Christian heart."² It is one thing to say that the Spirit has no independent existence apart from God, and it is quite another to say that the Holy Spirit has no independent existence at all.

The most revealing verse about the nature of the Spirit in Paul is I Cor. 2:10,11, "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." Here we see that the Spirit is no mere extension of God but is the very center of his being, as man's spirit is the center of his being. "It is not merely God's breath, but his self-awareness, his mind, his inner being. It is his self consciousness, his very being, the center of his 'person,' as we might say. . . . Spirit therefore contrasts with Christ, insofar as the latter is God's image, while the former is his inner being."³

¹Wainwright, op. cit., p. 220.

²Cyril Richardson, op. cit., p. 50.

³Ibid., p. 50

The Spirit certainly is not only an extension of God, God active, but He is the Spirit of life (John 6:63; I Cor. 15:45), who breathes life into the new Creation, the Church, as originally he breathed life into the first creation (Gen. 1:2; 2:7; etc.); or alternatively he is the life (the ruach, the pneuma) thus breathed into the new creation (John 20:22; Rev. 11:11). The Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, since he is the Spirit received in baptism, whereby Christians are adopted into the household of God as joint-heirs with Christ; the Spirit bears his inward testimony, reassuring the baptized that they are indeed sons of God and thus enabling them to cry "Abba," Father (Rom. 8:12-17; Gal. 4:6).¹

So we conclude that the Spirit is intimately connected with the Father, is viewed by the new Testament writers as being Divine; yet he is not identical with God (the Father) or only an extension of God which has no personal existence, but he has a personal existence and can relate to the Father in a personal way.

E. The Unity of God

In light of what has been said it is necessary to point out the dangers of a tri-theism, setting up the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as three separate and distinct Gods, although very closely related. The unity of God is a basic supposition of the New Testament writers, and though the person of Jesus Christ presented serious problems to Jewish monotheism this view of God was never abandoned. "The Bible . . . draws no definite lines between the functions of what we have been accustomed to call the three persons in the Godhead. Rather it speaks of God alone, but God acting in Christ, God acting in the Spirit."²

¹Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 111.

²G.A.F. Knight, A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of the Trinity, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1953), pp. 58,59.

Schweizer sees the role of the Spirit in Christ's life as showing that God himself is at work.

The original significance of the gift of the Spirit in Baptism is that it marks the beginning of the Messiahship. . . . No difficulty is felt at this stage about the place of the story alongside that of the miraculous conception by the Spirit. . . . Both stories are concerned to announce the already accepted uniqueness of Jesus by recounting God's direct intervention at certain points in his life. This is their way of saying that in Jesus, God himself is at work.¹

So here again we see that the working of the Holy Spirit is really viewed as the working of God. The work of the Spirit is intimately and inseparably bound up with the work of Christ, "When the Spirit of truth comes . . . he will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."² Here we see expressed the fullness of the relationship between the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The unity of God can also be seen in Paul's understanding of God. When Paul discusses the Spirit

his concern is not to replace the concept of 'power' by the concept of 'person', but to show that this power is not an obscure 'something' but is the way and manner in which the Lord of the Church is present. For that reason the Spirit can be placed on a level with the Lord, or subordinated to him, quite indifferently (II Cor. 3:17, 18). For that reason also Paul can occasionally use God, Lord and Spirit interchangeably, simply because their encounter with the believer always takes one and the same form. The clearest instance of this is I Cor. 12:4-6, not only because all three concepts there correspond to each other, but also because the Spirit, as it is manifested in

¹Schweizer, op. cit., p. 30.

²John 16:13-15.

the life of the Church, is defined precisely as the 'manifestation of the Spirit,'¹ and is distinguished from the source of this activity.

The intimate relation between the work of God, Christ and the Spirit is so close that there can be no separation of functions. Where one person is present and working the other two are also present and working. Galatians 4:4-7 is a good illustration of this.

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba". Father." So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.

God works in or through the Son and in or through the Spirit, and when the Spirit and the Son work, God is working.

Richardson points out:

The God of the New Testament revelation is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now made known to us through his historical and personal self-disclosure in the three permanent and essential ways of his being God. In every activity of each of the three 'persons' of the² Godhead it is always the one-and-the-same God who acts.

Traditional Christianity had to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in order to combat heresy by best explaining the New Testament evidence which we have been considering in part in this chapter. A brief statement of the traditional position will perhaps best summarize our findings.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity affirms that while God is one, he exists as three persons. "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." says the so-called Athanasian creed. "There is one person of the

¹Schweizer, op. cit., pp. 82,83.

²Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 123.

Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost." They are all one, co-eternal, uncreated, incomprehensible and almighty. Yet they are three persons.¹

We must go on to say that each person of the Godhead does not have his own peculiar function separate and distinct from the others, but where one works the others work, where one is present the others are present, as in the Creation, in judgment, in the believer, in the Church. Thus a hard and fast distinction, between the Father, Christ and the Spirit is very difficult, even impossible, to make where their work and functions are concerned; yet when it comes to their person a distinction must be made.

Certainly this position is not without its great difficulties, and yet of all the possibilities it is the one which gives the greatest cohesiveness to and brings the clearest understanding from the New Testament testimony.

Thus when we consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church we will examine not only those passages which deal with the Holy Spirit explicitly but those which deal with any divine working in the Church.

¹Cyril Richardson, op. cit., p. 13



CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH

The Church must be the next focus of attention in the study in order to clarify and define our concept of the realm in which the role of the Holy Spirit is being considered.

The abundance of literature which has been published in the last twenty-five years on the nature of the Church is a good indication of the vastness and complexity of such a study. The New Testament writers themselves employ many and varied images and descriptions of the Church.¹ It is not possible to treat this subject thoroughly in the scope of this chapter, therefore only those aspects of the Church which are relevant to the activity of the Holy Spirit will be considered. Thus, in this chapter our concern will center on the meaning and significance of ecclesia and, more important, on the concept of the Church and the Body of Christ.

A. The Church as the Ecclesia

The dictionaries show that both the religious and secular usage of the Greek ἐκκλησία cover the two ideas of coming together and being together "and this seems to point to some such rendering as 'gathering', which has the advantage of being

¹An excellent study of these images is found in Images of the Church in the New Testament by Paul S. Minear (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1960)

available for the abstract as well as the concrete."¹ We have here a dual concept of convocatio and congregatio, the calling together and the community constituted by that calling, and this polarity must be maintained.²

In the term itself there is no religious connotation but the emphasis is on the purpose of the gathering.

If etymology is to suggest any part of our interpretation, we must deny . . . that as ecclesia the Church is a community called out of the world by God. Such a qualification . . . is not present in the word itself. . . . What ecclesia emphasizes is the purposiveness of the assembled community.³

The LXX uses the word 'church' (ἐκκλησία) over 80 times. Apart from wholly unimportant exceptions, it always means a specific assembly of the people where they gathered for a definite purpose and dispersed again when the business at hand was completed. Greek usage knows no other possibilities. . . . The word in Greek is not stamped with a religious impression.⁴

The non-religious nature of the word is seen in the New Testament itself where ἐκκλησία is used three times in one chapter (Acts 19:32,39,40) to mean an assembly or gathering of the heathen.

In general the term ecclesia is used in the New Testament to signify a community called out of the world by God, but

¹K. L. Schmidt, Ecclesia, Bible Key Words, from Gerhard Kittel's Theological Wordbook of the New Testament (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1950), p. 4.

²Claude Welch, The Reality of the Church (New York: Scribner's, 1958), p. 65

³George Johnston, The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament (Cambridge: The University Press, 1963), p. 36.

⁴Eduard Schweizer, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament Regarding the Church": Theology Today, Vol. 13, Jan. 1957, p. 471.

this is only because of the unique connotation given to the word by the early writers.

The word ecclesia describes the 'people who belong to the Lord.' This word is one of the favorite words of the New Testament, being used some 115 times. But the idea it embodies appears far more frequently than that. The New Testament writers are often speaking about 'the people who belong to the Lord' when they do not use the word ecclesia. The New Testament gives to this word however a very special meaning. It uses it not merely to describe an assembly¹ of people, but quite consistently speaks of the assembly.

The genitive 'of God' often makes explicit the religious nature of the assembly (I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16,32; 15:9; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; I Thess. 2:14; I Tim. 3:5,15). It is also used with other terms signifying the Church, such as Israel (Gal. 6:16) and temple (I Peter 2:4-10; II Cor. 6:14-17; I Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:11-22, John 2:13). Even when the term 'of God' is not used it is to be understood in most of the cases.

However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the Church is a human community. Welch observes:

The significance of [the church as a people believing] is shown in an unexpected way in the New Testament. . . . (There are) passages in which the word ecclesia is used in an apparently casual and 'neutral' sense: the seven churches in Asia (Rev.), the 'church throughout all Judea and Galilee' (Acts 9:31), 'every church' (Acts 14:23), 'all the churches' (Rom. 16:4,16), 'the whole church' (Rom. 16:23), 'the persecuted church' (Acts 8:1,3), the manifold references to the church simply as the company of Christians, and to particular churches in cities and areas . . . (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phil. 1:2; . . .

¹ Donald G. Miller, The Nature and Mission of the Church (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1957), p. 12

Acts 15:30; . . . I Cor. 11:18 and 14:4,19,23,28,35). In such designations as these the primary reference is . . . to the concrete company of Christian persons, and the church is not described in any particular way. . . . These passages are important because they express what is taken for granted throughout the N.T., that the Church is patent-ly and indisputably (we might even say, first of all) a human community responding. This belongs to the essence, the ontology, of the church. That is to be seen also in the central N.T. meaning of the word 'ecclesia,' signifying the people called forth by God.¹

Though the human aspect of the ecclesia must be kept in sight, the Church cannot be understood apart from Jesus Christ. "Over against all sociological attempts to comprehend the Church, it must be noted that for Paul, for those who followed him, and for the Fourth Evangelist, ecclesiology and Christology are identical,"² or perhaps more accurately Paul's doctrine of the Church is an extension of his Christology.³ The calling and the existence of the Church are found in the fact of Jesus Christ and his redeeming work.

Ecclesia, that is, 'Church' should be reserved for the society which gathered itself into a vital fellowship as a result of the Resurrection inspired and called by God. It is new as resulting from the regal power exerted in Christ for salvation; as an 'Israel' united to a Suffering Servant it is set to bear witness, to Jew and Gentile, of the love and redeeming grace of God; it stands under the Cross, a group which henceforth, so long as it is true to the Lord it acknowledges, has no national bounds.⁴

[Christians] had been made God's people solely by the

¹Welch, op. cit., pp. 46,47

²Schmidt, op. cit., p. 21

³J. A. T. Robinson, The Body (London: Student Christian Movement, 1952) p. 49.

⁴Johnston, op. cit., p. 57.

call, the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. To be the "people of God", then, was identical with being "the people of Jesus". . . . Here [in I Cor. 1:2 and Acts 20:28] it is plain that the Christian church was brought into being by Jesus. . . . The church, therefore, is the community of those who¹ live by the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

However, not only does the Church owe its existence and ongoing life to the person and work of Jesus, it is also the realm in which Jesus Christ is at work. "According to the New Testament the Church can be defined in no other way than as a sovereign sphere involving a group of persons through whom Jesus Christ himself works in the world."² It is this activity of Jesus in and through the Church which makes it unique. "With more or less clarity the whole New Testament asserts that Jesus Christ continues to live in the Church. This and this alone, differentiates the Church from all other religious groups."³ The life of Christ in the Church will be considered more carefully in the next section on the Church as the body of Christ.

Before we move on it is necessary for our purposes to see and understand the relation between the universal and local Church, for such an understanding will help us in our consideration of the realm in which the Spirit is active and working.

¹Miller, op. cit., p. 13

²Schweizer, op. cit., p. 476

³Ibid., p. 482.

The Church in the New Testament sense is not the total of all the local congregations of believers, but each local congregation is the Church. Paul does not differentiate between 'Church' and 'congregations'. He applies the genitive 'of God' to ecclesia in both the singular and the plural.

Strong support is found in I Cor. 1:2 and II Cor. 1:1 for the contention that the Church is not a great community made up of an accumulation of small communities, but is truly present in its wholeness in every company of believers, however small. The proper translation in those verses is not 'the Corinthian Congregation'—taking its place beside the Roman, etc.—but 'the Congregation, Church, Gathering as it is in Corinth.'¹

But to say that each local congregation is the Church of God is not meant to imply that there are many separate and distinct Churches of God. Rather, though each local church is the Church of God, yet all the churches together are also the Church of God. The only difference allowed between the churches is that of locality; otherwise each church (or congregation) is the Church of God, as well as all the congregations together being the Church of God.

Like the book of Acts, the Pauline letters use the word 'church' for the whole people of God (e.g. Acts 9:31; I Cor. 12:28), as well as for the concrete manifestations of this people in a particular place. The Christian believers of Corinth are not 'the Corinthian Church', but 'the church of God which is at Corinth' (I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:1). That is, the Church is not a great community made up of an accumulation of small communities . . . but it is truly present in its wholeness in every company of believers, however small.²

¹Schmidt, op. cit., p. 10

²Bruce Metzger, "The New Testament View of the Church," Theology Today, Vol. XIX (October, 1962), p. 376.

The members of the various local congregations are knit together because they all belong to God's one ecclesia which is made manifest in their particular location. It is this understanding of the essential oneness of God's ecclesia which made possible Paul's collection for the poor in Jerusalem— "which was not so much for 'the poor in Jerusalem' as for 'the poor in Jerusalem.'"¹ A proper view of the relation between the local church and the universal Church will avoid the errors of both the schismatic and the despiser of the local church.

So we see that the Church, the ecclesia, is a human community called out of the world by God's act in Jesus Christ, living in the power of Christ's death and resurrection for the purpose of having the living Christ make himself known to the world through this community.

B. The Church as the Body of Christ

We must now turn our attention to perhaps the most important, and without doubt the most controversial, description of the Church given in the New Testament: the Church as the Body of Christ. A right understanding of the meaning of this description is vital in a study of this kind. The variety of exegetical opinions put forth by Biblical scholars is a humbling influence upon anyone who desires to formulate authoritatively and absolutely the exact meaning of this term. Yet necessity dictates that the problem be tackled and a satisfactory solution be derived. This will be our task for the remainder of

¹Schmidt, op. cit., p. 13.

the chapter. Especially important is the relation between Christ and the Church, for if the latter is identical with Christ, the extension of the incarnation, then all the functions of the Church can be considered the work of the Spirit. If Christ and the Church are not identical the Spirit can be seen to be active in the Church.

At the outset it must be pointed out that the term 'Body of Christ' is employed in a relatively few number of instances in scripture.

'Church' and 'body', we must remember, are explicitly connected in only five of the New Testament writings, and all of these are from the 'Pauline' corpus . . . whereas other images appear both more widely and more frequently in the NT. This . . . ought to put us on guard against exclusive preoccupation with this image.¹

What is more is that the term does not always have the same meaning.

The image [of the church as the body of Christ] is not used by [Paul] uniformly and consistently, and it does not always serve the same purpose: sometimes Christ is identified with the whole (I Cor. 12:12), sometimes he is the head (Eph. 4:16; Col. 1:18), sometimes the head is simply part of the body and dependent on the other members (I Cor. 12:21), sometimes the body is dependent on Christ the head (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19).²

These facts indicate the danger of taking this one image, removing it from the rich diversity of the New Testament witness, and thereby gaining a partial and even distorted understanding of the full scope of the New Testament teaching

¹Welch, op. cit., p. 148.

²Ibid., p. 182.

regarding the community of God's people."¹

However, it must be pointed out that the surprising, even startling, description of the Church as the Body of Christ sets it apart from the other images employed and justifies its careful and extensive study. Moreover, this image helps to throw light on the New Testament teaching as a whole concerning the Church; and, in the opinion of the author, contains within it all the essential elements put forth in that teaching.

The concept of the Church as the Body of Christ is intimately linked to the view of the Church which sees its origin in the death and resurrection of Jesus and which sees the living Christ made manifest in the Church.

The crucified body of Jesus is the place in which man finds sense to his life, because the crucified Jesus becomes for him the token of God's incredible love and the challenge to service which makes his life meaningful. Again, the truth of this is manifested in the resurrection in which Jesus proved to be not dead, but a living Lord of the church. . . . This body of Christ is, for Paul, something like a sphere, a realm, a reach, into which man has to go or to be put in order to find his life. . . . It is the church, understood as the place, the realm, the sphere, in which Jesus, crucified but raised two thousand years ago, is still telling us of God's love, and is still challenging us and calling us under his lordship.²

The church is the body of Christ precisely because it lives as a result of all that Jesus Christ has done for its sake.

It is united with him by the fact that his history, namely his life and death and resurrection, is the

¹ Metzger, op. cit., p. 379.

² Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ, (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 46.

foundation of the church's life, without which it would not exist at all. The church exists in the body of Christ or through the body of Christ crucified and risen for the sake of the world. . . . Outside of this body of Christ, given for its sake, the church does not exist.¹

But there is also the strong element of the present ongoing life of Christ in the church which is emphasized by the term 'body of Christ.' "Christ here and now is both sovereign over the church and the one who fills it with his presence, so that it is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all (Eph. 1:23)."² "Christ for Paul is not simply the embodiment of the people or its dominant member, but the source and life of the community, which depends upon him. And in Ephesians, the 'one new man' (2:15) which is the church, is created in Christ, and the body is explicitly that of his person."³

The Church is the instrument of the risen Lord to work in the world today and in this sense can also be viewed as being the body of Christ. This is true because a material body is needed to accomplish a mission in a material world; and the Church is the material body which Christ employs, if not exclusively, then at least especially.

The Church is the means of Christ's work in the world . . . he still needs a body to be the instrument of his gospel and of his work in the world. This is what is meant by the assertion . . . that the Church is 'the extension of the Incarnation'. The phrase is, of course

¹Ibid., p. 55.

²Dale Moody, "The Nature of the Church," Review and Expositor, Vol. 51 (April, 1954), p. 212.

³Welch, op. cit., p. 256

misleading if it is taken to mean that the actual Church in the world today is already Christ's perfected humanity; not till the 'day of Christ' will the Church of redeemed sinners be in actuality what it is now eschatologically, the perfect manhood of Christ.¹

That which most truly makes possible the designation 'body of Christ' with regard to the Church is the presence of Christ in her midst. "Matthew 18:20 enunciates the promise that Jesus will be in the midst of two or three who are gathered together in His name. It is in virtue of this presence that the Church is the Body of Christ."² Markus Barth points out that when Paul says to the Corinthian Christians "You are the body of Christ . . ." (I Cor. 12:27) he means that Christ lives who did and does all the great things for you and with you . . . you are held together by the power of Christ who is 'in you,' 'in me,' 'in us.' You will live, you will be active . . . for he lives for and in you. "So the body of Christ concept presupposes and proclaims the life and power of Jesus Christ, his resurrection and kingship over miserable sinners and a confused church."³

In the designation of the Church as the body of Christ the emphasis is on Christ, his life, his death, his resurrection,

¹ A. Richardson, op. cit., p. 256.

² D. O. Via, "The Church as the Body of Christ in Matthew," Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. XI (September, 1958,) pp. 271, 272.

³ Markus Barth, "Chapter on the Church, the Body of Christ; Interpretation of I Corinthians 12," Interpretation, Vol. XII, (April, 1958), p. 145.

his ongoing work, and not on the Church itself. Here we see the convergence of ecclesiology and Christology. Here we see the body of Christ as a name which first and foremost glorifies Christ, and then only because of His reflected glory does the Church come into focus.

It is praise and glory of Christ the head, and of the life-giving Spirit, rather than secret self-glorification of the flesh which is at the heart of the name 'body of Christ.' Not despite but because of its allusion to the body on the cross and to the miserable bodily life of all men 'body of Christ' is a Christological, not an ecclesiological term.¹

But what is implied concerning the relationship between Christ and the Church in the term 'body of Christ?' Is this term a metaphor and nothing more? Does it imply an identity between Christ and the Church? If so, in what way are the two identical? To these and other related questions we shall now turn our attention.

The meaning of the term 'body' to Paul and those to whom he wrote is essential to our understanding of the significance of the 'body of Christ.' The influence of the Hebraic and Greek concepts on the thinking of Paul is a problem which is not (and perhaps never will be) resolved by modern scholarship. However, it is now recognized that Paul, as one with the training of a Pharisee, was more influenced by Hebrew thought that has heretofore been appreciated. Of one thing we can be certain, for Paul the body meant the whole person, both physical

¹Ibid., p. 149.

and spiritual.

In Hebraic thought 'body' means 'self,' almost what we mean by 'personality'; thus, for instance, Paul writes, 'I beseech you brethren . . . to present your bodies (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν) a living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1), meaning, of course, 'present your whole selves.' We may think of the *σῶμα Χριστοῦ* as the 'person' of Christ, provided that we do not think of 'person' as a bodiless spirit (cf. Luke 24:37,39). It is the Hebraic concept of the one and the many, the Hebraic view of what we call 'personality', which lies behind the conception of the Church as the body of Christ.¹

Man cannot be viewed as an individual in isolation from others, and therefore "the New Testament view of the life of the Christian can only be understood in the light of the Old Testament conception of the solidarity of Israel."²

'Body' is understood by Paul as man in his relation to God, and his fellowman . . . man is seen primarily not as an individual, but as a being in communication with God and other men. This is the first and theologically important result of our investigation of the New Testament understanding of the body.³

The surprising statement in I Cor. 12:12 "just as the body is one and has many members . . . so it is with Christ" is seen to be possible only because the idea that a whole tribe is included in its ancestor is familiar to Paul.⁴ Here we see again the Hebrew concept of solidarity. It is the idea of

¹ A. Richardson, op. cit., p. 254.

² Welch, op. cit., p. 49.

³ Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ, p. 76.

⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

solidarity which lies behind the expression 'in Christ,' for a person is in Christ when he is in his Church, which is his body.

Neither Paul nor John, when they speak of being in Christ or of Christ's being in us, is saying anything at all about an experience of mystical identification. They are simply using the familiar language in which the Hebrews had for centuries expressed their awareness of the solidarity of the human race, of the relatedness of persons with persons within a social or national whole, and of the living reality of historical events and personages at the present time. . . . The many can be — indeed are — one. Mankind is Adam; it will be Christ. The Church, the community of those baptized into Christ, is Christ, that is, is God's Son, is the Servant of the Lord, is the Son of Man.¹

Markus Barth points out: "The term 'body of Christ' is understood as one expression, condensation, or reflection of the Old Testament, the apocalyptical and possibly also rabbinical concept of 'corporate' or 'representative personality.'"² This is a good summary of all that we have said so far on this matter.

However, J. A. T. Robinson takes a radical departure from the above view. His point is that by the term 'body of Christ' Paul did not have a corporate or representative personality in mind but a single, corporal, personal organism, Christ Himself.

The use of the word 'body' to mean a group of people is to us so familiar—'corporate' in fact now means 'social' and nothing else—that it is easy to forget that it was quite unfamiliar, if not entirely unknown, to the

¹ A. Richardson, op. cit., p. 250.

² Markus Barth, op. cit., p. 138.

people to whom Paul was writing. Further, it is important to recognize that the Apostle is not apparently conscious of making any innovation in his usage.¹

It is of great importance to see that when Paul took the term *σῶμα* and applied it to the Church, what it must have conveyed to him and his readers was (to employ a distinction which itself would have surprised him) something not corporate but corporal. It directed the mind to a person; it did not of itself suggest a social group. Hence, as Prof. A. M. Ramsey has well remarked, "to call the Church *τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ* was to draw attention to it not primarily as a collection of men, but primarily as Christ Himself in His own being and life" (The Gospel and the Catholic Church, 35).²

If we do not count I Cor. 1:13 . . . Paul first uses the language of the body in relation to the Church in I Cor. 6:15: "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?" He appeals here to a conception with which he assumes the Corinthians will already be cognisant. Now, in this instance he is quite clearly referring not to a society but to a person, viz. Christ. To say that individuals are members of a person is indeed a very violent use of language--and the context shows that Paul obviously meant it to be violent.³

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the materialism and crudity of Paul's doctrine of the Church as literally now the resurrection body of Christ. . . . The body that he has in mind is as concrete and as singular as the body of the Incarnation. His underlying conception is not of a supra-personal collective, but of a specific personal organism. He is not saying anything so weak as that the Church is a society with a common life and governor, but that its unity is that of a single physical entity: disunion is dismemberment. For it is in fact no other than the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ.⁴

The significance of Robinson's view on the meaning of the term 'body' is very great for our understanding of the

¹Robinson, The Body, pp. 49,50

²Ibid., p. 50.

³Ibid., p. 50

⁴Ibid., p. 51

meaning of 'the body of Christ.' The truth of his contention however, is open to serious question. The fact that most of the passages under consideration deal with unity in the Church (as we shall see more specifically shortly) might indicate that Paul had a corporate, rather than a corporal, concept in mind. This author can find little justification for Robinson's view in Hebraic thought, in which the idea of solidarity and the corporate nature of Israel is prominent. Even if Robinson lends too great a role to the Greek concept of Body in the thinking of Paul and the early Church (which appears to be his basic error although he does recognize the Hebraic influence), Eduard Schweizer, after a careful study of a Greek idea of 'Body',¹ comes up with a conclusion different from Robinson's in some important respects.² Further, it appears that Robinson has failed to bring together the Hebrew concept of solidarity or 'corporateness' and the Greek concept of the body. Schweizer observes:

When speaking of the unity of Christ's people, the New Testament will bring together both the Hebrew insight that man necessarily is incorporated into this people and into God's history with his people, and the Greek term "body" depicting such a unity in the image of a human body. In this way, the New Testament will speak of the body of Christ which is not an individual³ body, but a body including all its different members.

¹Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ, pp. 9-22.

²He observes that Stoic philosophers viewed the body in some cases as "a body consisting of separated unities, such as an army, a people, or an ecclesia...." Ibid., p. 13.

³Ibid., p. 22.

In conclusion we can say "the expression $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ [means] Christ is a 'one' who includes within his resurrection-body 'the many,' i.e. a corporate personality, if that term is understood theologically rather than psychologically."¹

The fact that unity is obviously a great concern of Paul in his usage of the term 'the body of Christ' is strong evidence for the interpretation which sees the corporate emphasis in the use of 'body.'

One important clue to the significance of the body-figure, and its prominence in the Pauline literature, is its relation to the problem of the unity of the church. Nearly all the explicit references to the church as the body of Christ are directly connected with this problem, either in the discussion of the image itself or in the context.²

Passages which explicitly connect the figure of the body with the unity of the church are: I Cor. 6:15; 10:16f.; 11:29; 12:12-27; Rom. 12:4; Eph. 2:13-22; 3:6; 4:4; 11-16; Col. 2:9-19; 3:15.

The problem of unity is of course manifold; it may mean outright division and dissension in the church, or it may mean the betrayal of life in Christ which is a breach of community. . . . It is significant that all but one of the other 'body' passages also refer to the relations within the body, and specifically to the headship of Christ (Eph. 1:22; 5:23,29; Col. 1:18). They are thus not foreign to the problems of unity. Only Col. 1:24 stands alone here.³

Robinson refuses to recognize this concern of Paul for unity in the use of the body image. In commenting on I Cor. 12:15-27 he is surely stretching a point when he says, "The point . . .

¹Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 254

²Welch, op. cit., p. 149.

³Ibid., p. 149, Footnote

is not that the different members must be united among themselves (the question of schism does not enter till v. 25, and then it is quite incidental to the passage), but precisely that there must be more than one member if there is to be a body at all.¹

The whole context indicates that Paul uses this illustration to encourage unity among the Corinthians, rather than pride over particular gifts which would only serve to disunite them. The point is that regardless of how great may appear the disparity between the various gifts, each one is needed for the life of the whole church and therefore (this being the major point) the Corinthians are to be united.

The Corinthians are fundamentally and primarily the body of Christ, and only in a secondary way individual members (v. 27). The main reality is the oneness of Christ's body. The individuality of the members is only a secondary characteristic of the one body.²

All members of the body need one another and together they constitute the body of Christ.

The unity of the Church cannot be conceived of apart from Jesus Christ. "The relation of the members to each other is determined by their relation to Christ; the members are one body because the head is one (cf. Eph. 4:15f.; 2:20f.; Rom. 12:4f.; Col. 2:19). That is, the church is said to be the body of Christ because the members are brought together in him."³

¹Robinson, op. cit., p. 59.

²Schweizer, op. cit., p. 63.

³Welch, op. cit., p. 172.

And although "Romans 12:4ff. and I Cor. 12:12ff. show Christians in relation to one another as members of one body, and not in relation to Christ; . . . this is only a formal contrast, like that between love to God and love to neighbor."¹ Only as the Church lives in Christ can it be one body.

The body of Christ idea underlines the total dependence of the church on Christ's deeds for its sake. But the word "body" means in the Greek language of that time 'unity,' as it is illustrated by the image of the human body in which all members co-operate. Therefore both statements are made in the same expression: the church lives exclusively in the mutual love of its many members helping one another and being helped by one another. . . . Thus the church cannot be one body except by living in Christ, as Christ's body. And² it cannot live as Christ's body except by being one body.

We must now turn to the problem of the implications of the description of the Church as the body of Christ for our understanding of the relationship which exists between Christ and the Church. Are the two to be identified in the sense that they are equal? Is Christ above, or over against the Church? In what sense can we say the Church is the body of Christ? These and similar questions demand our careful consideration, if we are to examine the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

It is almost certain that the concept of the Church as the body of Christ came to Paul as a result of his conversion experience on the road to Damascus. He came to realize that in persecuting the Church he was persecuting Christ himself (Acts 9:4; 22:7f.; 26:14f.), and he impresses the same truth on

¹Schmidt, op. cit., p. 20.

²Schweizer, op. cit., pp. 55,56.

his converts: Sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ (I Cor. 8:12)."¹ Though his conclusion may go too far, Robinson rightly observes concerning the Damascus road appearance:

When we examine the narratives of this appearance itself we find stressed in each account of Paul's conversion how the heart of the revelation which came to him was the fact that the Church he was trying to stamp out was no other than Jesus Christ Himself. . . . The appearance on which Paul's whole faith and apostleship was founded was the revelation of the resurrection body of Christ,² not as an individual, but as the Christian Community.

But to what extent is the description of the Church as the body of Christ to be taken literally, or metaphorically, or analogically? Opinion on the nature of this designation is varied and yet it would be contrary to the purposes of this chapter to leave the question unanswered. The Church is not the actual resurrected body of Jesus Christ for Christ ascended on the fortieth day after his resurrection to be with the Father and he sent the Holy Spirit to His Church.

When it is said that the term 'the body of Christ' as applied to the church is not an image or a figure but a reality, then language is simply being misused. The phrase 'body of Christ' is a term, which qua term is an image or a concept like any other word or term; it is language and not the object which it designates, and as such is precisely like all other New Testament descriptions of the church. One may suspect that much of the insistence that this term (in contrast to others) is to be taken 'ontologically' or 'realistically' is simply a confused and confusing way of saying that this is a

¹Richardson, op. cit., p. 255.

²Robinson, op. cit., p. 58

particularly important and revealing description of the church. And that may well be true.¹

If it is said that the 'body of Christ' is a literal description of the Church justification must be given for taking this image and saying that it is different from all the other images of the Church, the Church is the risen humanity of Christ, whereas it is only like a building, a vine, a nation, or a bride. "This is thus not a figure, or a comparison, or a metaphor, but an assertion of identity, an equation: Church=risen body of Christ."² Markus Barth notes: "the term 'body of Christ' is a metaphor wherever, as in I Cor. 12:27, the church is equated or seemingly identified with it. It is as much and as little suited to allegorical and literal use as the parallel terminology for the church, which operates with such words as temple, house, vine, plantation."³

However, we must not assume that every time Paul speaks of the body of Christ he is speaking of the Church, or speaking metaphorically.

The term 'body of Christ' is not a metaphor whenever Paul describes what has been done with us and to us 'in' or 'through' the flesh or body of the incarnate and crucified Christ, as, e.g., Rom. 7:4; 8:3; Col. 3:15; 1:22; Eph. 2:15f.; I Peter 2:24; Heb. 10:10. . . . The same is true of I Cor. 12:12. . . . Unless this verse is forced to yield what it does not contain, it describes only Jesus Christ, and him in his humanity. . . . An equation or identification of the church and Christ seems to be out of line. . . . His one body is according to I Cor. 12:12-13, the election, union, formation, manifestation

¹Welch, op. cit., p. 181.

²Ibid., p. 182

³Markus Barth, op. cit., p. 144

of the many into one. His cross performed and completed a perfect work.¹

Barth seems to be in error concerning his interpretation of I Cor. 12:12. There is nothing in the context which would indicate that Paul is speaking of the body of Christ on the cross, and in fact, such an interpretation is incompatible with Paul's purpose in this portion of the letter. Schweizer discerns the true meaning behind this verse.

Verse 12 contains the image of the human body which has many members and yet is one. The amazing fact is the end of the verse where Paul does not say, as we should expect: '. .. so it is with the Church.' He says: '. . . so is Christ' (author's translation). This shows how deeply the apostle's conviction is rooted in the faith that the church is living entirely by Christ's own life in it. Hence the different members of the church with their various contributions to the life of the congregation can be one because they are one in Jesus Christ.²

The body of Christ concept may be viewed as being more than a metaphor if we do not go to the extent of Robinson and take this term as a literal description as seen when he states that Christians "are in literal fact [underlining mine] the risen organism of Christ's person in all its concrete reality. What is arresting is his identification of this personality with the Church."³

The Church is the body of Christ, though not in a literal sense. We can certainly agree with Richardson:

It is right to speak of the Church as the resurrection

¹ Ibid., p. 143.

² Schweizer, op. cit., pp. 61,62.

³ Robinson, op. cit., p. 51

body of Christ, i.e., the manhood which Christ carried into heaven at his ascension to the Father (Eph. 2:6), even though we recognize that such language is metaphorical. Yet it is true metaphor, expressing a reality which cannot be expressed in any other way.¹

But although Christ does identify himself with the Church (Acts 9:4, etc.) we cannot go so far as to say that the Church itself is the extension of the Incarnation of Christ himself.

The idea of the church as the body of Christ has nothing to do with the idea of an extension of Christ himself in his church. . . . Paul did not combine any concept of a mystical unity with the idea of the church being the body of Christ. . . . The conception of a mythological, physical unity of Redeemer and redeemed seems not to be at the root of the Pauline body of Christ.²

This is in direct conflict with Robinson's statement: "ὁ ἄμα is to be interpreted corporally, as the extension of the life and person of the incarnate Christ beyond His resurrection and ascension."³ The error of deification of the Church must not be read into the Pauline concept of the Church as the body of Christ. Markus Barth correctly observes:

If the 'whole Christ,' Christ the representative, is Christ and his people, if we can daringly say: Christ is the church as much as or much more than Jacob is Israel, we still have no reason to make the opposite statement and to make of the one way movement of representation and covenant a simple reciprocal equation. Ontological speculation, but not the Bible, might conclude: if one is the many, then the many are the one, or for the one.

The New Testament proclaims clearly that the Many belong to the One through the spiritual, actual,

¹Richardson, op. cit., p. 256.

²Schweizer, op. cit., p. 54.

³Robinson, op. cit., p. 57

irreversible miracle of faith. The irreversibility is denied where the Church is deified and equated with Christ.¹

That the risen Christ identifies himself with the persecuted church is one thing (Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14). . . . That the church extols herself to almost divine rank by considering herself identical with Christ is another thing. The fact that the words 'body of Christ' are often used by Paul in a metaphorical sense does not by any means deny that Christ and his people do 'realistically,' 'ontically,' 'literally' belong together. But the metaphor warns against an eagerness to identify man and God on an ontological ground that is different from the history and life of the crucified and risen Lord. We are never Christ himself, but we are his body. . . . There is a world of difference between the self-assertive statement that we, the church, are Christ, and the bashful amazement of those who are told that they are the body, the members of Jesus Christ.²

Before this phase of our study is concluded we must look at two other images, that of the Church as the Bride of Christ and of Christ as the head of the Church his body, because of the light these shed on our understanding of the Church as the body of Christ.

The Bride of Christ: The Church is described as the bride of Christ in II Cor. 11:2-3; Eph. 5:21-32; and in Rev. 19, 21, 22. Christ is also spoken of as the bridegroom in Mark 2:19; and John 3:29. This image reveals to us the completeness of our relatedness to Christ, and also the fact that Christ is greater than the Church which is subject to him.

The idea of the bride of Christ, which is intimately bound up with that of His body and members, first occurs explicitly in II Cor. 11:2: "I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." It is worked out fully in Ephesians 5:22-33.

¹Markus Barth, op. cit., p. 141.

²Markus Barth, op. cit., p. 146.

Here . . . the unity between Christ and Christians is that of 'one flesh,' and as in I Cor. 6 the doctrine of the Body of Christ arises in discussion of the most physical relationships of bodily life.¹

We can not spiritualize away the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ for "nothing could more vividly illustrate the fact of the wholeness of our redemption in Christ than this declaration that our union with him is no merely 'spiritual' thing, but is as physical as the union of man and wife; Christ redeems our bodies as well as our 'souls.'"² (Eph. 5:23).

Not only is the Church subject to Christ the bridegroom, but the eschatological goal of the Church toward which it is heading is brought out by the bride figure.

The image of the bride may lead us to the hearts of the mystery of the church's being. If it speaks of the union of the church with Christ, it also defines the nature of that present union by referring to a union which is to be. The church is subjected to Christ as its savior, and remains until the last times the betrothed being presented to Christ.³

The understanding of the being of the church comes to expression clearly in the image of the Bride of Christ, as adumbrated explicitly in Eph. 5 and Rev. 21 and 22. Certainly this image denotes the intimacy and permanence of the union of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:25, 31f.), and like the image of the body, it portrays the necessary subjection of the church to Christ, its head and savior (Eph. 5:23f.). . . . Thus St. Paul speaks of betrothing the Corinthians to Christ, as the church to be presented to Christ as the pure bride (II Cor. 11:2). And in the Apocalypse the image of the bride is decisively an eschatological figure. Here the church can by no means simply be identified with the bride of the Lamb who has made herself ready for the marriage (Rev. 19:7; 21:2). The

¹Robinson, op. cit., p. 53

²Richardson, op. cit., p. 257

³Claude Welch, op. cit., p. 134.

perfect adornment (21:2,10ff.) and readiness of the bride belong to the time of the consummation which is yet to come.¹

And so we see that "this body [the Church] after the analogy of any body has a beginning, a growth and a completion in the future presentation of the body as the bride of Christ."²

Christ, the Head of the Body: In this image we can see the fact that Christ is above the Church, that he is perfect while the Church is imperfect even at the same time that we say Christ is the ecclesia itself.³

In Ephesians and Colossians . . . Christ is said to be the head of the body: "he is the head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1:18); "he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body . . ." (Eph. 1:22; cf. Eph. 4:15; 5:23; also I Cor. 11:3). Christ, in this metaphor, is the Head of that body of which Christians are members; while the Head is perfect the body is incomplete and is being built up by the apostolic, pastoral and teaching ministry of the Church into 'a fullgrown man' (Eph. 4:11-16), the whole Christ.⁴

The image of Christ as the head of the body brings out the complete dependence of the Church on Christ. "That Christ is the head means that the church is absolutely dependent on him and subject to him. . . . That the church is subject to Christ as the head means also that the church is governed by him through the Spirit."⁵

¹ Ibid., pp. 131,132.

² Dale Moody, op. cit., p. 212

³ K. L. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 16

⁴ Richardson, op. cit., p. 256

⁵ Welch, op. cit., p. 176.

There is a new spiritual personality, Christ the soul, the Church the body. The body is His, He is the self. In our modern categories His are the head and the heart. For He is not only controller and director, but the vital centre too. To be Christ's is to be part of this personality, to belong to His body.¹

In the above statement we have what is perhaps one of the best insights into the relation between the Church as the body of Christ and Christ as the head of the Church.

So from our brief study of the images of the Bride of Christ and Christ as the head of the Church we can agree with Welch that:

It is impossible to say simply that the church, as his body, is identical with Christ. Especially in the earlier epistles is Christ pictured as over against the church; he is its Savior and Lord. But even in Ephesians 5:21-32, where in terms of the body the unity of Christ and the Church is most strongly emphasized, the church is subjected to Christ as its head, stands over against him as the bride who is loved (yet as his own body), and is saved and cleansed by him.²

In conclusion, the relevance of this image of the Church as Christ's body can be seen when we realize that

the church can be the body of Christ only if it is willing to suffer and thereby to be the body of its Lord, who, in his body, goes into the world, serving all mankind. If the church is willing to live in this way as Christ's body, often suffering and dying, it will experience time and again that he himself creates in it that obedience and that readiness for self-sacrifice, in which he as its Lord encounters the world and converts Gentiles into members of his body.³

¹Johnston, op. cit., p. 93.

²Welch, op. cit., p. 168

³Schweizer, op. cit., p. 78.

PART II

THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

CHAPTER III

THE SPIRIT IN THE FORMATION AND LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Now that we have examined the Spirit and the Church separately it is necessary to view the two in relation to each other. This chapter will be concerned with the role of the Spirit in the formation of the Church and in its continued existence and life.

A. The Spirit in the Formation of the Church

Did the Church come into existence at Pentecost or was the Church in existence before the coming of the Spirit? The answer to this question is determinative for our understanding of the relationship between the Spirit and the Church. There are some who hold to the former view and others who hold to the latter view, each on the basis of the New Testament evidence, and each properly and with justification. But these views need not be contradictory for they both contain an element of the truth, and a careful examination of the evidence will lead us to a proper synthesis resulting in what I feel to be the true New Testament position.

The concept of the Church as the Israel of God or the people of God indicates that the Church has its roots in the covenant of God with the nation of Israel which has not been superceded by a new covenant.

Not only the particular passages and texts of the New Testament, but the whole historical setting in which Jesus is presented to us, as the Christ who was to fulfill the vocation of Israel, has reassured us in believing—not that He founded a Church, but that he refounded the Church, the true Israel henceforth consisting of those who believed that Jesus was the Christ, or the Christ was Jesus; and that in the persons of the twelve apostles He re-equipped it with a body of officers in the place of those who had lost their position by their absolute rejection of 'the counsel of God.'¹

The Church's origins can be traced even further back in history as R. Newton Flew does when he points out,

The Ecclesia of God is the People of God, with a continuous life which goes back through the history of Israel, through prophets and martyrs of old, to the call of God to Abraham; it is traced back farther still to the purpose of God before the world began. The origin of the Ecclesia lies in the will of God.²

But granted that the Church has its roots in the past and a continuous life which can be traced back to God's purpose, the question arises: Did Jesus really intend to found a Church or is the Church merely an interim organization erected by Christ's disciples when the Parousia failed to materialize and thus totally outside of the plan or expectation of Christ? The fact which lends the greatest weight to the desire of Jesus to found the Church is the calling of the twelve by Christ to live with and learn from him. "Jesus gathered together a band of disciples, as the Remnant, the little flock which was to be the nucleus of the new Israel, to live as God's children under His Kingly Rule, to serve Him in expectation of the final

¹Charles Gore, The Holy Spirit and the Church, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 108.

²R. Newton Flew, Jesus and His Church, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1938), pp. 257, 258.

consummation."¹ If Christ truly believed in the eschatological event of the Kingdom's coming in an immanent or immediate sense his careful instruction of the twelve during the latter part of his ministry would have been totally senseless. If, on the other hand, Christ's emphasis was not as eschatological as men like Albert Schweitzer would have us believe, then the gathering of a community around himself to carry on his mission after his departure would be logical and understandable. "So we are left believing the New Testament record that Jesus Christ did intend to perpetuate His work in the world for a period which he refused to define."²

Though Christ gathered a community around Him to continue his mission this community was not what he intended it to be until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Church certainly had its origins previous to the day of Pentecost, but not until the Spirit came were the gathered disciples the Church in the truest sense of that term.

On that day (Pentecost) we may say that everything was ready for the Church's life to begin. Christ's atoning work had been completed. His revelation of the Father in word and deed was complete. The nucleus of His Church was chosen and ready. . . . And yet, they had to wait. All was complete, and yet nothing was complete until the Spirit of God Himself should be breathed into the new race of men. Only then, empowered by Him, could they go forth to proclaim the message of salvation and to baptise men in the Name of Christ unto remission of their sins. In every truth it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that constitutes the Church.³

¹Ibid., p. 58.

²Gore, op. cit., p. 110.

³Lesslie Newbigin, The Household of God, (New York: Friendship Press, 1953), p. 98.

So important is the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost to the life of the Church that Pentecost has rightly been called the 'birthday' of the Church, "not of course in the sense that the origin of the church is to be identified simply with Pentecost, but because the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost was the decisive and constitutive event in the erection of the church as worshipping and witnessing community."¹

It was at Pentecost that the Lord, by the power of His Spirit, welded into a Church the souls on whom the work had exercised a saving efficacy. The Holy Spirit, at the commencement of what is called His 'mission,' collected the disciples into a living unity; and this great work of the Spirit is called the Church. . . . the habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22)²

Pentecost is "the key to the New Testament conception of the Church as it is the explanation of the preaching of the Gospel, first in Jerusalem, then throughout Palestine and finally through the Roman Empire."³

The way we can view Pentecost in the total picture of the Church extending back into the Old Testament is to see the coming of the Spirit as discontinuity in continuity, as the climax and fulfillment for which all else had been the preparation. The coming of the Spirit was not a development from within the Church but an act of God who poured out His Spirit. On the other hand the Spirit did not come to an

¹Claude Welch, op. cit., p. 218

²George Smeaton, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. 230.

³Robert C. Walton, The Gathered Community, (London: Carey Press, 1946), p. 12.

indiscriminately assembled group but to men and women who had been prepared by God through the Old Israel and supremely through the redemption wrought by Christ. But in fact the Church did not really exist in its fulness until the Spirit was given and the disciples were filled with the Spirit.

Pentecost is decisive for the existence of the church because through that event the community of followers of Jesus is made to be truly responding and witnessing community. The act of revelation and reconciliation, on which the church is founded, is not completed with Easter, but only with the gift of the promised Spirit (who is at the same time the Spirit of promise). Thus God in the mystery of his act calls the church to be and makes it an effectual means for his own work in the world, a community of witness, of service in love, and of hope.¹

Emil Brunner sees the relation between Pentecost and the Church's existence as being so important that he can say, "The outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the existence of the Ecclesia are so closely connected that they may be actually identified. Where the Holy Ghost is, there is the Christian communion."² This statement may be too extreme, yet it indicates the inseparable connection between Pentecost and the Church, the all important role of the Spirit in the formation of the Church.

With the coming of Pentecost a new element came into the life of the disciples (and the world) which was previously non-existent. In fact it could not possible have existed. Only subsequent to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ could the spirit be given and a new order or dimension

¹Welch, op. cit., pp. 226,227

²Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 11.

of life appear.

At Pentecost, the Spirit of the risen Christ was breathed into the company of believers who were gathered in the upper room. Together, they became the body of Christ, living by His Spirit within them. The new order of life into which Jesus had entered by his resurrection was now brought to earth in the fellowship of His people. The church was a new creation, a bringing into being of that which did not exist before. In this sense, it is a miracle which has no parallel in human experience.¹

At this point it is possible to raise a very serious objection for it is obvious from the scriptures that the Holy Spirit was active and working before Pentecost (Acts 1:16; 4:25; II Peter 1:21; Luke 1:15,35; etc.). Is it possible to maintain that the Spirit was first given at Pentecost? "This question is vital for support of the belief that the Church may look to this date as its new beginning; for if the event were nothing unique for the Spirit, the Church could make no special claim for Pentecost."²

An understanding of the eschatological belief of the earliest Christians, as demonstrated in the New Testament, is our key to this problem. For the gift of the Spirit to men was seen to be an indispensable aspect of the coming of the new, messianic aeon, against which the old aeon before Jesus Christ was contrasted. . . . Assuming the historicity of most of Acts, we encounter testimonies which are wholly inexplicable apart from the recognition that a new departure had been made in the intercourse between the Spirit and human beings, a new and unique relationship of power and response, which Paul calls 'the first fruits of the Spirit,' and which apostolic tradition dates from the day of Pentecost and not before.³

¹ Donald G. Miller, The Nature and Mission of the Church, p. 23.

² J. Robert Nelson, The Realm of Redemption (London: The Epworth Press, 1951), p. 43.

³ Ibid., p. 44.

Pentecost does not signify the first appearance of the Spirit but a new awareness of the reality of the Spirit who is now at work in the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ.

What Pentecost designates . . . is certainly not the appearance for the first time of the Spirit or his distinctive gifts, but the endowment of God's people with the Spirit and his gifts in a new way. This is a new pouring out of the Spirit upon the community, a 'filling' of the church with God's Spirit in a way which fulfills and transforms all other and previous working and presence of the Spirit, but is yet continuous with these.¹ (See Acts 1:18)

Roland Allen deals with this problem decisively when he points out that the disciples

did not for a moment question the truth that 'men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' but they did not for a moment suppose that the men of old had received the gift of the Holy Ghost which they had received. The gift which they had received was quite distinct from that inspiration granted to the prophets of former days. It was so different that St. John could write that before the Ascension of Christ 'the Holy Ghost was not yet because that Jesus was not yet glorified' (John 7:39).² . . . The Holy Spirit of God might, and did, inspire prophets and good men outside the Church, but only Christians had this gift, because this gift was Christ's gift. The Holy Spirit received at Pentecost and given universally to Christians was peculiarly 'the Spirit of his Son.'³

¹Welch, op. cit., p. 220.

²John speaks of the existence and activity of the Holy Spirit previous to the glorification of Christ (1:32) and therefore does not mean that the Spirit was not yet in existence. "The Spirit was not yet" (7:39) refers to the Spirit's presence in the believer, which would be necessary to have living water (the Holy Spirit) flow out of the heart. The Spirit will be in the disciples (14:17) because Christ is going away to send Him to them (16:7). Christ's glorification makes possible the indwelling of the disciples by the Spirit, which was previously impossible and in which sense the Spirit was not yet.

³Roland Allen, The Ministry of the Spirit (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), p. 9.

So we see that the coming of the Spirit after the glorification of Christ was different, though not divorced, from the presence and activity of the Spirit before Christ was glorified. And this coming of the Spirit was decisive in the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ.

B. The Spirit in the Life of the Church

The Church is the Body of Christ because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who is decisive in the life of the Church and only because of the Spirit's presence is the Church different from other human groups. "The Christians at Corinth are soma Christou, Christ's Body, forming an organic structure, the vital power of which is Christ's life within it. On His indwelling through the Spirit the existence, continuance, and achievement of the Church's life-purpose depend."¹ The reason that the Church can be differentiated from the nation of Israel is its possession of the Spirit.

That which most decisively marks the Church off from the old Israel, and which stamps it as the eschatological community, is its common possession of the Spirit. So it is that: 'in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, and were all made to drink of one Spirit' (I Cor. 12:13); 'There is one body, and one Spirit' (Eph. 4:4). It is this Spirit . . . that enables those who are in the Body of Christ to participate already, in this age, in the resurrection mode of existence.²

In Acts we also see the viewpoint that the mark of a Church is the presence of the Spirit. The Churches of Judea walked in

¹George Johnston, op. cit., p. 90

²J.A.T. Robinson, The Body, p. 72.

fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (9:31). In Antioch the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (13:52). It is the gift of the Holy Spirit which demonstrates and guarantees the reality of Christian experience and ultimately acceptance by the existing Church (10:45; 15:8).

Flew notes that in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Christian believers have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the powers of the age to come (6:4-5). God has confirmed the testimony of those who first heard the Lord, not only by signs and wonders and various miraculous powers, but by distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His purpose (2:4). There is no divergence here from the view of the primitive community. . . . He (the author) does definitely place the gift of the Holy Spirit as a characteristic mark of the Ecclesia.¹

Even when the Spirit is not mentioned explicitly there is an indication of the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Such an instance is I Peter 2:5 where Peter says, "and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Concerning this verse we see:

The dominant sense of the word 'spiritual' in the New Testament is 'God-given,' or 'partaking of the Spirit of God,' the divine Spirit. It is probable, therefore, that in I Peter 2:5, we should also find a reference to the Spirit who has set the Ecclesia apart, as the holy People of God to offer up sacrifices of thanksgiving in the Spirit. The Spirit is the creative principle in the Ecclesia.²

¹Flew, op. cit., pp. 232, 233.

²Ibid., p. 225.

Only because the Spirit is integral to the Church's existence is the Church both divine and human at the same time. The human aspect of the Church is all too obvious, though it has often been overlooked. But because the Spirit is present in the Church in such a vital way, the Church cannot be understood apart from this presence.

The Ecclesia is what it is through the presence of Christ dwelling within it. He is present with it through His Word and His Spirit. . . . Therefore, because the Holy Spirit is the very life-breath of the Church, the Church participates in the special character of the holy, the numinous, the supernatural, in the hallowing presence of God: for that reason the Christian society itself is a miracle. It is therefore in point of fact unintelligible from a purely sociological standpoint.¹

The Christian community does not exist as such without the Spirit's presence and activity, Schweizer observes:

There was no 'Christian' community in the sense of a group of persons with unique attributes that distinguished them from others. Wherever and whenever it happened that Christ became living in a group of persons, there the Church was found. . . . The unique thing is the presence of the power of God.²

"It is precisely in the Spirit that the Church experiences the presence of God."³ The Church may exist in form without the life of the Spirit in it but in such a case it is a hollow structure, an empty shell.

The Church lives . . . by the living power of the Spirit of God. It was by the Holy Spirit that the Word

¹ Brunner, op. cit., p. 12.

² Eduard Schweizer, Theology Today, XIX, p. 472.

³ Eduard Schweizer, Spirit of God, p. 34.

took flesh of the Virgin Mary. It is by the Holy Spirit that He has now a new body, a body into which only the Holy Spirit can engraft us. Therefore it is only by the living power of the same Holy Spirit that we can either abide in His fellowship or bear witness to His grace. All that is done without Him is mere counterfeit, an empty shell, having the form of a Church but not its life.¹

However true the above statement may be, we must at the same time avoid identifying what was accomplished in Christ's baptism and that which was accomplished at Pentecost. "That the baptism in the Jordan and the Pentecost story are in no way assimilated to each other is an indication that for Luke the gift of the Spirit to Jesus is on an altogether different level from the gift to the Church."²

So we see that the Holy Spirit is in reality the life of the Church as long as we remember that where the Spirit is there also is Jesus Christ and God the Father.

While it is true that the Spirit's presence is essential to the existence of the Church, it is also true that the Spirit works primarily (if not exclusively) in and through the Church.

As Jesus passes out of sight into the heavens . . . the stage which He has left is occupied (in the Acts and the Epistles) by the coming and activity of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of the Father and the Son—and He too receives embodiment—that is, the Spirit appears as inspiring and fashioning the Church, and the Church appears as the only organ of the Divine Spirit and instrument of the great salvation.³

¹Newbigin, op. cit., p. 105.

²Schweizer, op. cit., p. 38.

³Gore, op. cit., p. 35.

To say that the Church is the only organ of the Divine Spirit may be too radical a statement as H. Wheeler Robinson demonstrates:

The God of the Church is also the God of Nature and of History, and our too ready dualisms often obscure the truth about Him. We shall be nearer that truth if we keep in mind His constant activity as Spirit in the whole extra-ecclesiastical world, whilst emphasising the unique and supreme activity of His operation through the historic personality and work of Jesus Christ.¹

However valid Robinson's observation may be, it is apparent that the New Testament viewed the sphere of the Church as that in which the Spirit works; no other possibility is allowed.

While its motions are incalculable, the sphere in which (the Spirit) works is always the Christian church. Old Testament thought in its later stages advanced beyond the conception of the Spirit as the sole possession of Israel, but the parallel idea in the New Testament is always maintained. The Spirit is the gift of Christ to his people, and no one outside of their fellowship can share in it. At the same time, though restricted to the church it is imparted to all its members.²

When we remember that the Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ by declaring what is His to the disciples (John 16:14) and to empower the disciples to witness to Christ and preach the Gospel (Acts 1:8; 4:8, 31) we can readily understand that the Spirit must work in and through those who have believed the Gospel. Otherwise the Spirit would have to convey these truths in isolation from the life and work of Jesus Christ which is the foundation of the Church, and this would be impossible since

¹ H. Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1928), p. 157.

² Ernest F. Scott, The Spirit in the New Testament, (New York: George H. Doran Co., n.d.), pp. 88, 89.

the Spirit is in truth the Spirit of Christ whose coming is possible only because Christ has been glorified (John 7:39).

So the Spirit is vital to the creation and formation of the Church in which the Spirit is at work in a manner in which he cannot operate outside of the Church. In a very real sense no strict dichotomy can be made between the Holy Spirit and the Church.

The inseparability of the Church and the Holy Spirit is nowhere made more clear than when we consider that, in the belief of many Christians, the same day of Pentecost was of unique and critical importance for both. It was on this day that the actual constituting of the ἐκκλησία took place. At the same time, the Spirit was given, or 'poured out,' to the disciples. And the latter event was the cause and manifestation of the former.¹

At the same time it is important to avoid the error of combining the Spirit with the Church to the extent that they are seen to be identical.²

The church is called one body because the Spirit operates in that body. The Spirit does so in divine freedom: the church exists only through him, he never exists through the church. . . . So the church lives . . . only and immediately from the Spirit who remains free in his miraculous operation and defies captivity and clamping in fetters of tradition and institution.³

Thus we see that the Spirit is intimately involved in, and indispensable to, the life of the Church.

¹Nelson, op. cit., pp. 41,42.

²See below, pp. 80-82 for a more detailed study of this problem.

³Markus Barth, Interpretation, XII, p. 153.

C. The Spirit in the Koinonia of the Church

A very important function of the Spirit in his role in the Church is the creation of the koinonia, the fellowship, which is perhaps the most important aspect of the Church's life. "If we ask what is the most characteristic and comprehensive work of the Holy Spirit, according to the New Testament, there can be little doubt that we should answer in one word, 'fellowship.'"¹ An examination of the opening chapters of Acts will show the importance of the fellowship in the Church. The disciples "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14). "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place" (Acts 2:1). After Pentecost we read that as a result they were "attending the temple together" (Acts 2:46), "the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32), and "they were all together" (Acts 5:12).

Just as Pentecost was crucial in the formation of the Church, the coming of the Spirit is of great importance in the development of the koinonia. "To the question, What happened at Pentecost? we may answer a fresh revelation of God's activity in the present which resulted not only in a new experience of God through Christ in the lives of all believers, but a new quality of fellowship."²

¹H. Wheeler Robinson, op. cit., p. 141

²Flew, op. cit., p. 151.

The company of disciples, although still active members of the old Jewish church, discovered that they were bound to one another by even deeper ties through the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Paul was to describe this 'as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,' or 'participation in the Spirit.' (II Cor. 13:4,14; Phil. 2:1). In this way they became a unique community with a special mission within the larger commonwealth of Israel, which they sought to bring to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Because this profound sense of fellowship among those earliest believers was created by the Spirit of Christ, it can rightly be called a 'spiritual unity.'¹

Lindsay Dewar observes that at Pentecost

a new sense of fellowship was created, which soon came to be known as 'the koinonia of the Holy Spirit' (II Cor. 13:10). The koinonia, or fellowship, was a new and unique experience. The infant company of believers 'were of one heart and one soul' (Acts 4:32), and it was simply a spontaneous manifestation of what S. Paul calls the oneness of the Spirit, i.e., the oneness created by the Holy Spirit.²

Because the Holy Spirit has been given it is possible for men to have communion with each other "for upon the inspiration of the Holy Ghost rests the koinonia, the communion of men with each other, the fact that they are knit together in an organism which includes both equality and difference, the fundamental equality of all and their mutual subordination each to the other."³ Acts 4:31,32 is a good illustration of the close connection between the gift of the Spirit and the fellowship of the new community. The Spirit created the

¹Oscar J. F. Seitz, One Body and One Spirit (Greenwich, Connecticut: Seabury Press, 1960), pp. 90,91

²Lindsay Dewar, The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1959), p. 46.

³Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 63.

community for "the company of those who believed" were not a conglomeration of individual, unconnected, self-existent units, but they were a unity "of one heart and soul." So strong was this sense of unity that no one considered that he owned any possessions unto himself but "they had everything in common."

The role of the Spirit in the koinonia of the Church is also clear from Paul's discussion of the use of the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12. No one can take pride in a spiritual gift, no matter how spectacular, because "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (12:7). The Spirit is active for the good of the whole fellowship, and not for a few specially privileged individuals. (The role of the Spirit in the unity of the Church will be considered shortly.)

Surely it was this fellowship which was the characteristic mark of the early Church and which was a powerful witness to the truth of the Gospel.

The amazing power of the early Church to convert the pagan Roman world was based upon its positive Gospel of Redemption, but equally upon itself. For the power of the corporate Spirit of the redeemed in Christ is incalculable. The slave is made equal with the master. Burdens are shared in Christian love. The sick are healed by the laying on of hands of the loving brotherhood. Demons of loneliness and fear are driven out. Down through the centuries this power of the Spirit, "proceeding from the Father and the Son" has fed Christian life.¹

But the question arises: What is the nature of this fellowship created by the Holy Spirit and how does it differ

¹Theodore O. Wedel, The Coming Great Church (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945), p. 72.

from that of other groups? Koinonia was originally a word of business and secular Greek, and it meant partnership. Thus Paul can speak of "taking part (*κοινωνία*) in the relief of the saints" (II Cor. 8:4). Thus, inherent in the concept of fellowship is the idea of sharing.

The author of the Acts clearly intends the word [*κοινωνία*] to point forward to the sharing of material goods and the mutual supply of the material needs as in Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37, as well as to the fellowship in the Temple worship, in united prayers, and in the private ritual acts of the community. Christian fellowship at its highest has always been of this quality, uniting the practice of common worship with care for the material needs of those who were poorer or in want. Such fellowship in the Spirit derives from Him who gave the Spirit, and who in His earthly life taught his followers to share with one another all that they had received from God.¹

But that which made fellowship possible, which created the desire and impetus to share, was, the work of the Holy Spirit.

'The fellowship of the Holy Spirit' II Cor. 13:4 is most naturally taken as an activity of the Spirit comparable with and resulting from the active grace of Christ and the active love of God which is expressed in and through that grace (cf. Rom. 15:30, 'The love of, i.e. produced by, the Spirit'). The fellowship is a fellowship with God through Christ mediated by or in the Holy Spirit, so agreeing exactly with the teaching of Ephesians 2:18, 'through Him (Christ) we now have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.'²

However, the fundamental idea of koinonia is not primarily that of fellowship or association with others.

Most scholars are agreed that the fundamental idea which *κοινωνία* conveys is that of 'participation in something which others also participate.' This definition is

¹Flew, op. cit. p. 153.

²H. Wheeler Robinson, op. cit., p. 18

sharply distinguished from the generally held, but inaccurate, notion that the word means simply 'fellowship,' in the sense of association with other persons.¹

Hendrikus Berkhof has an excellent discussion on the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with reference to II Cor. 13:14. He observes:

What do the words ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος mean? The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is the grace which he grants. The love of God is the love which God bestows upon us. It is therefore obvious that we must describe the fellowship of the Spirit as that fellowship or community with God and with one another which is the gift of the Spirit. However, in other cases the genitive after κοινωνία is a genitive of the object and points to that with which one has fellowship, that in which one partakes. Then the correct translation would be: the participation in the Holy Spirit. The arguments for either translation are equal.²

He then proceeds to combine the two ideas.

We see how the word κοινωνία covers two realities, the communication of the Spirit and the communion with one another. Both inseparably together. As soon as we come to participate in the reality of the Holy Spirit through Word and sacraments, we enter also by the very same act into community with all those who have the same participation in the Spirit.³

Thus we see that the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is a sharing with others of what one shares with Christ, it is a combined vertical-horizontal relationship, the horizontal being made possible because of the vertical relationship with God by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the Church's life. Those who lie to the Church, lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). The

¹Nelson, op. cit., p. 53.

²Hendrikus Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 57.

³Ibid., p. 59.

Holy Spirit is party to the decisions of a Church Council (Acts 15:28). The Church is, in the most exact sense, a koinonia, a common sharing in the Holy Spirit.¹

Because the Church is the common sharing of the Holy Spirit it is only within the Church that one can know the fulness of the Spirit, the fulness of fellowship with the Son. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) are meaningful only within a fellowship and not to an individual in isolation from others. Though the Spirit may be received by faith apart from a direct connection with the fellowship of Christians, as is the case with Cornelius (Acts 10:44), such an experience will inevitably connect one with other Christians. (This is illustrated by the subsequent baptism of Cornelius - 10:47,48.)

While the vocation of believers included personal fellowship with Christ himself [I Cor. 1:9], this was not something that could be had in isolation from others. It involved the community of people of which he is Lord; the body of which He is the Head.

This sense of community is vividly expressed where the word 'fellowship' is connected with the common meals shared by all members of the church as the outward sign of their unity in Christ. . . . Any idea of private communion with Christ that did not also involve real and active participation in the life and work of the Christian community was totally unthinkable in the New Testament.²

To be the object of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, to be called by Him into the relationship of faith in Christ, to receive power from Him and to enjoy the fruit of His benefaction, and so to be drawn into true community with other persons—all this means to participate in the koinonia of the Church.³

¹Newbigin, op. cit., p. 97.

²Seitz, op. cit., pp. 93,94

³Nelson, op. cit., p. 66.

Not only is the fellowship created by the Spirit and is the fulness of the Spirit realized within it, but the Holy Spirit makes possible the continued life of the community. It is in the Spirit that the Christian lives and can thus have fellowship with those who also walk in the Spirit.

Life in this community is life in the Spirit, or by the Spirit, and marked by the fruit of the Spirit, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control' (Gal. 5:22f.). It is life in truth, into which the community is led by the Spirit (Jn 16:13ff.); it is the life of children of God, who have been adopted as sons and into whose hearts God has sent the Spirit of his Son, crying 'Abba! Father!' (Gal. 4:6). It is the life of liberty, of freedom from the law and the bondage of sin and death (Rom 8:2; II Cor 3). And life in the Spirit is supremely the life of love, the first of the fruits of the Spirit, God's own love given to us, 'poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,' the greatest of the gifts and the prime test of the working of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Rom 5:5; I Cor 13; I Jn 4).¹

Thus we see that the love which is made possible by the Spirit is that which is the essential element in the fellowship. If the love does not exist the fellowship is not possible; and the love can exist only because the Spirit of Christ makes it possible.

Though we emphasize the presence of the Spirit in the fellowship of the Church, and his role in creating and sustaining that fellowship, we must avoid the error of some who would identify the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of the community. One writer has gone so far as to draw a parallel between the esprit de corps of a school and the Holy Spirit of the Church.

¹Claude Welch, op. cit., pp. 218, 219.

Schleiermacher is perhaps the most famous theologian who makes the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the Christian community identical. His three cardinal propositions are that: (1) the Holy Spirit is the union of the divine Being with human nature in the form of the common Spirit animating the community-life of believers; (2) every one regenerated participates in the Holy Spirit, so that there is no life-fellowship with Christ without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and vice versa; (3) the Christian Church, animated by the Holy Spirit is, in her purity and perfection, the complete image of the Redeemer and every regenerate individual is a completing element in this fellowship.

Up to a certain point, this classical statement brings out the truths . . . that fellowship is of the essence of the Church and that it is created by the Holy Spirit through the historical work of Christ, and that God is really present in the community through the Holy Spirit. But it does not bring out adequately the transcendent, as it does the immanent, elements of Christian experience. The emphasis falls on the subjective, instead of on the objective, side of the Christian consciousness. The spirit of the community is not something that exists outside of the individual members of the association. That spirit is really existent, but its existence depends on the constituent individuals who share it.¹

The New Testament writers certainly viewed the Holy Spirit as being something other than the community. In Acts, the Holy Spirit guides Philip to the Ethiopian's chariot apart from any possible connection with the fellowship (Acts 8:29,39); the Holy Spirit falls on Cornelius and those who heard the preaching of Peter without their coming in contact with the community.

¹H. Wheeler Robinson, op. cit., p. 148

Paul speaks of the Spirit as searching everything, even the depths of God (I Cor. 2:10), something which a human community could not do but to which such a knowledge could only be revealed. Christ promises to send his disciples another Counselor "even the Spirit of truth . . . you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you." (John 14:17). The Spirit is sent to the disciples by Christ and is not created by the gathering together of those who believe in Christ. In other words the Spirit has a real existence apart from the community of believers. This is not to diminish the importance of the koinonia in the work of the Spirit in the Church but it safeguards against an unscriptural limitation of the work of the Spirit.

We must not confine the work of the Holy Spirit to the creation of fellowship, and still less, of course, to its ecclesiastical expressions; but we are justified in saying that the Spirit of Jesus Christ always works towards the end of fellowship, and finds His highest expression within its realization.¹

It is apparent, in summary, that the Spirit in the Church gives rise to the koinonia which is the characteristic mark of the Church. It is the Spirit who takes a group of men and women and brings them into the reality of fellowship with God, and thus with one another, which can be seen nowhere else. The presence of the Spirit molds a congregation of people into the ecclesia of God exhibiting that love of God by which it springs into a living, vital fellowship.

¹H. Wheeler Robinson, op. cit., p. 142.

D. The Spirit in the Unity of the Church

Very closely bound up with the koinonia of the Church is the unity of the Church. The Church can know unity because of the fact that there is one Spirit who creates the fellowship. Therefore there cannot be many different fellowships but only one; "there is one body and one Spirit" (Eph. 4:4).

The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that the Spirit . . . is the divine cement which holds all the structure of the Church together. The unity of the Church is not a unity of organization, administration, government; the unity of the Church comes from the fact that the one Spirit pervades the whole Church.¹

"The Church is ONE not in consequence of its efforts after union,—nor in virtue of the mutual harmony which pervades its different parts, for these are fruits and pledges of a previous unity in the Lord,—but in virtue of the one indwelling Spirit."²

The unity of the Spirit is by definition a spiritual unity and therefore cannot be created by the work of any organization or government in the secular realm apart from the Spirit. This is not to say that the Spirit does not work through organization but to point out that unity can be only superficial if it is not created and sustained by the Spirit.

The Church can never have unity in and of itself.

The unity of the church as the body is finally and fundamentally a unity which the community has, not 'in itself' but in its head and savior. . . . It is the unity created by participation in his one humanity; it is unity of the one Spirit who works in the Church.³

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 85.

²Smeaton, op. cit., p. 233.

³Welch, op. cit., p. 172

Viewing the role of the Spirit in the unity of the Church,

Alan Richardson observes:

Church membership was participation in Holy Spirit (II Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1); the Spirit of unity (cf. Ezek. 11:19) worked so mightily that 'the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul' (Acts 4:32); under the unifying power of the Spirit the Christians 'had all things common' (Acts 2:44-47). There is one body of the believers because there is one Spirit (Eph. 4:3f.); all the individual Christians have been made to drink of the one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:18).¹

Because the Spirit is the Spirit of unity he will bring all who believe into the unity of the Church.

The Spirit (came) to baptize in the name of Jesus Christ the one hundred and twenty in the upper room, that with Him they might grow into one living Body. Thenceforward there have been no isolated believers, independent one of another, but members of one Body whose head is Christ.²

So crucial is the role of the Spirit in the unity of the Church that his presence and activity overcome the greatest of barriers. The greatest walls between peoples were broken down when the Spirit was present. Even the barrier between Jew and Gentile had to dissolve before the conclusive evidence of God when he gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his Gentile friends. Peter relates to the Jewish Christians what took place and concludes with the irrefutable argument: "If then God gave the same gift (of the Spirit) to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was

¹Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 110.

²Rene Pache, The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), p. 163.

I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17).

The gift of the Holy Ghost is thus seen to be the one necessity for communion. If the Holy Ghost is given, those to whom He is given are certainly accepted in Christ by God. All who receive the Spirit are in reality and truth one. They are united by the strongest and most intimate of all ties. They are all united to Christ by His Spirit, and therefore they are all united to one another.¹

The first evidence of the community-creating action of the Spirit is the fact that in the Church the two so bitterly opposed groups, the Jews and the Gentiles, come together to build one body. . . . (Eph. 2:14,22). This coming together of the Jews and the Gentiles under the reconciling pressure in the body of Christ overcomes all barriers of national, social, sexual, and racial kind.²

In discussing I Corinthians 12:12-14 Markus Barth points out the way in which the Spirit creates the unity within the Church in relation to the work of Christ.

The Spirit . . . has tied them (the Corinthians) to the one Christ, who is a unity comprehending the most exclusive . . . differences among men; his life in the body reveals the fact that the life of all mankind is now bundled together, collected in one, condemned and redeemed in one representative person. He, the many-in-one, the one-for-all, the unity of the diversities which man cannot himself overcome is confessedly their Lord.³

The work of the Spirit in the Church and the world is based upon and is an extension of the work of Christ.

Finally, the unity of the Church is conceived of in universal as well as local terms in the New Testament, namely in Ephesians and Colossians.

It is only in (Ephesiain) and in the kindred epistle to the Colossians written about the same time, that we hear of a Church of all believers, an universitas fratrum

¹Roland Allen, The Ministry of the Spirit (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), p. 57.

²Berkhof, op. cit., p. 56

³Markus Barth, op. cit., p. 132

Christianorum. As Dr. Hort acutely remarks, this universal Church is not regarded by St. Paul as the sum of all the local churches but as the sum of all the Baptized; 'the members which make up the one Ecclesia are not communities but individual men.' As the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the heart of each member of the local community, binds all together in a corporate unity; so, by dwelling in all the faithful everywhere, it creates the worldwide unity of a Catholic Church. . . . The unity of the Church in a particular city or province, the unity of the whole congregation of Christ's flock, alike come from one Spirit which gives to both their corporate life.¹

Thus, from this chapter, we see that the Spirit is crucial to the Church and without his work the Church could have no fellowship or unity, it would be lifeless, and furthermore it could not even have come into existence. Should the Spirit leave the Church nothing would remain but an empty shell.

¹Henry Barclay Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 311.



THE
SOCIETY
OF
MUSICIANS

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT IN THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH

The Church, as a social entity as well as a Divine community, must have a certain form which it takes in each concrete situation. In other words, the Church must have some kind of order. This is not to say that the Church must have one particular order, for an examination of the New Testament indicates the simultaneous existence of varied orders in different locations. The Corinthian Church with its freedom and the Palestinian Church with its apparent rigidity each represent a form of order.¹

In this chapter we will not seek to establish the supremacy of one order over another but will demonstrate the key role of the Spirit in the establishment and operation of order in the Church. Since the New Testament witness deals with one type of order more than others (due to practical rather than preferential reasons) it may appear that this study is one-sided in its approach. Such is not our intention. We will seek to go behind the form in order to determine, in general, the Holy Spirit's activity in this aspect of Church life.

¹An excellent study of the various possibilities for order in the New Testament Church is made by Eduard Schweizer in Church Order in the New Testament (London: Student Christian Movement, 1961).

A. The Church Governed by the Spirit

"The life of the primitive community, if the record in the book of Acts can be accepted, was governed almost from the first by the belief in the Spirit."¹ With Pentecost a new awareness came to the disciples of the presence of Christ and of his activity by the Holy Spirit in their midst. The Spirit had been promised by Christ (Acts 1:5) to empower the disciples to bear witness to him as the risen Lord, "and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Because of this mission made possible by the Holy Spirit, nothing in the life of the Church could remain outside his control.

The belief grew up that since the Spirit had been given by Christ for the advancement of his cause it must be operative in all that belonged to Christian worship and enterprise. The church was distinguished from all other societies in that it was governed by the Spirit.²

A possible difficulty arises when it is noted that the New Testament speaks both of Christ as the one who governs the Church (as in Eph. 4:7ff.) and of the Spirit as the one who governs the Church (as in I Cor. 12:11). However this difficulty disappears when we recall that God is One and where one person of the trinity is operative so are the other two.

The regulation of the Church's life—sometimes spoken of as if it were retained in Christ's own hand, sometimes described as if it were committed to the Holy Spirit—must be regarded as two announcements of the same great

¹Ernest F. Scott, op. cit., p. 81.

²Ernest F. Scott, op. cit., p. 108.

truth, without any difference, two sides of one and the same thing. The Lord Jesus, the Mediator, does all by the Holy Spirit in fostering, quickening, guiding the Church; and so intimately are these two things conjoined, —the Melchizedek-priesthood on the one hand, and the dispensation of the Spirit on the other,—that they must constantly be seen together (Acts 2:33). The exalted Christ continuously acts for the Church's good by His Spirit through the word.¹

And just as Christ bound himself to humanity by the incarnation so does the Spirit continue the work of Christ on the human plane by binding himself to a concrete human community to complete the work of Christ.

It must be insisted that as God is one, and works always and indissolubly as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the pattern of the Spirit's working is an incarnational pattern. . . . That is, the work of the Holy Spirit in the church is a work in and through human flesh and blood, works and acts, finite sociality and historicity, the very earthen structure of our common life.²

The Spirit is active in the Church, in a community composed of earthen vessels. And it is here that the glory of the Church is seen, not what the Church is in and of itself, but the amazing graciousness of God who dwells in and motivates and governs the Church by His Spirit. The glory belongs to the Divine presence and not to the container, though in the last analysis the two cannot be absolutely separated for if the Spirit is removed the container will ultimately crumble and destroy itself.

The Holy Spirit is not only free to judge and to remain transcendent over all human forms and formulations, but free to bind himself to the concrete, to use precisely the fragile vessels, the workaday pots of our historical forms. God does not choose to redeem history

¹Smeaton, op. cit., p. 237

²Claude Welch, op. cit., p. 228

apart from history, nor create new community apart from human community. The Spirit works in and by means of flesh and time and human togetherness.¹

The Holy Spirit works in and through the Church in order to continue the work of Christ in the world.

The Spirit, however, is never bound by man, never controlled by the 'workaday pots of our historical forms' to which he binds himself. As we have seen² the Holy Spirit is above and transcends the Church and therefore is never the property of any man or Church to use to attain human, as over against divine, ends.

Because the Spirit—for Paul as for the Old Testament—is God's Spirit, and therefore, faces man without ever becoming his property which he can treat as he likes, he demands obedience. Only the fanatic, therefore, can fail to see that in the Church too there is an order. The question is simply what sort of obedience and order it is.³

Thus it is due to the transcendence and Lordship of the Spirit over the Church that order or organization becomes necessary. The Christian cannot act in any manner he desires but must always live in obedience to the Spirit, thus the freedom which allows man to do whatsoever he desires must be absent from the Church in order to be replaced by the freedom which enables him to respond to the leading of the Spirit of God.

It is the Spirit who gives power to the works of the Christian preaching, which as mere words can accomplish nothing (I Cor. 2:4; I Thess. 1:5; Rom. 15:19). It is

¹Ibid., pp. 75,76

²See above p. 82.

³Eduard Schweizer Church Order in the New Testament, p. 99.

the Spirit who guides the Church in its day-to-day activity (Acts 6:3), directs its missionary work (Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 16:6-8), supplies all the different gifts which are required for its common life (I Cor. 12:4-30; Phil. 1:19), and leads it into all the truth (John 16:13). It is the Spirit who rules over the Church's worship and fellowship (I Cor. 14). And the Spirit Himself gives the spiritual sight by which he is to be discerned.¹

The Spirit is never absent from any activity of the Christian as an individual or of the Christian fellowship at large. A reading of the Acts of the Apostles shows how dependent the early Church was on the Spirit's direction and inspiration.

This living energy which provided the means whereby all difficulties, however unforeseen, could be overcome, what could it be but the Spirit of God, vouchsafed to His Church. Before Paul, therefore, the conviction had taken root that all Christian activities, and not merely the charismata proper, were due to the higher power now working in the church. The Christian life, in its whole extent, was governed by the Spirit.²

And it is clear, especially from I Corinthians 12-14, that "in Paul's view the Spirit is operative in all the activities to which Christians are called."³ In commenting on I Corinthians 12, A. J. Gordon observes that the Holy Spirit's oversight "extends to the slightest detail in the ordering of God's house, holding all in subjection to the will of the Head, and directing all in harmony with the divine plan."⁴ Thus, all aspects of the Church's life come under the direction and control of the Spirit.

¹Newbigin, op. cit., p. 99.

²E. F. Scott, op. cit., p. 119.

³Ibid., p. 118

⁴A. J. Gordon The Ministry of the Spirit (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publ. 1896), p. 129.

An important function of the Spirit in the Church which is intricately bound up with his government of the Church is guidance. The Spirit who governs does so by making known his mind and will to the Church which in turn responds with obedience. The leading of the Spirit was very real to the early Church.

The early Church in the day of Acts had a tremendous consciousness of being divinely led. . . . It was not that the Holy Spirit was a substitute for careful thought; it was not that the Holy Spirit absolved a man from the duty of thinking and planning. It was that the leaders of the early Church were forever conscious that they were never left to take their decisions alone.¹

In Acts the leading of the Spirit in the expansion of the mission of the Church is evident by the guidance of Philip (8:29), the preaching of the Gospel to Cornelius (chapters 10 and 11), the sending out of Paul and Barnabas (13:2,4), the decision of the council at Jerusalem (15:28), and the guiding of the missionary enterprise (16:6,7; 19:21). It is only when we appreciate the reality of the Spirit's guidance of the early Church that we can appreciate the seriousness of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

We must read this incident in the light of the fact that in the early Church every decision of the Church was regarded as a decision of the Spirit and, therefore, he who tried secretly and treacherously to evade the decision of the Spirit was guilty of lying to the Spirit.²

In all the Church's decisions there was this reliance on the guidance of the Spirit of God, even when it is not explicitly

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 57.

²Ibid., p. 61.

stated. The choosing of the twelfth disciple took place after the disciples had prayed (Acts 1:24) and the men who were chosen as deacons were required to be "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3). However, we must reiterate that the fact of the Spirit's guidance did not dispense with careful thought and the need for thinking and of planning on the behalf of the disciples. But "in arriving at a decision in a question of doubt, the apostles in the Acts were guided solely by their sense of the Spirit behind the action, not by any speculation as to consequences which might ensue."¹ (This fact is most clearly demonstrated in the decision of the council at Jerusalem to allow Gentiles into the Church.)

Paul was acutely aware of the role of the Spirit in the guidance of the Church.

It is the Spirit who guides decision within the Church. When Paul has given his decisions on the complicated problems which have been troubling the Church at Corinth, his only claim is: 'I think also that I have the Spirit of God' (I Cor. 7:40). He does not claim to decide as expert in Church law; his only claim is that he is a man of the Spirit.²

The author of the fourth gospel speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth: "When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (John 16:13). The guidance of the Spirit is to be for the purpose of revealing

¹ Roland Allen, op. cit., p. 50.

² Barclay, op. cit., p. 85.

the truth of Christ to the Church and not for the purpose of a proper course of action as we have seen previously. However, these two aspects of guidance, though not identical, are very closely related for the proper course of action is determined by a knowledge of the will of the Lord and Master of the Church.

The Holy Spirit is the One who governs the Church, leading, guiding and directing it in all things. The Church is not left by Christ to carry on His work alone, but He continues His work Himself by inspiring and guiding the Church, in all aspects of its life, by the working of His Spirit in its midst.

B. The Gifts of the Spirit

When one comes to consider the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the Church it becomes evident that the Spirit is the One who has an essential role in the organization and administration of the Church. However, we must again point out the indivisible nature of the Godhead in order to avoid confusion and even serious error.

The Spirit is not to be separated from Christ, nor does the New Testament make such a separation. The Spirit which is at work in the Church is indissolubly associated with Jesus Christ. . . . Only the most narrow and short-sighted exegesis can isolate the New Testament assertions about the gifts and fruits of the Spirit from the whole context and perspective in which they are found, a context which makes it perfectly clear that these are inseparably gifts of the Father through Christ and fruits of life 'in him.' These are the forming of Christ in the believer.¹

The Spirit, as the one who governs the Church, is concerned for the ongoing life of the Church, that it be of such

¹Welch, op. cit., pp. 220,221.

a quality that the Church can fulfill the mission which it received from Christ. The Spirit accomplishes that which is necessary in the Church by the bestowal of His gifts. "It is the teaching of Paul that every gift which is needed for the successful operation of the Church is a gift of the Spirit."¹ "It is . . . the Spirit who enables the Church to work in the service of the living God. In Ephesians 4:11,12 we learn that the gifts bestowed on the Church are sometimes the very men themselves whom the Spirit has qualified for the ministry."² (The significance of the fact that men are sometimes the gifts given by the Spirit will be discussed when we consider the Spirit and Offices in the Church.)

The gifts of the Spirit have as their source the Lord Jesus Christ who works by the Spirit (God cannot be divided). The ministries spoken of in Ephesians 4:11,12

come fresh from the hand of the exalted and glorified Christ at the Father's right hand in heaven. Eph. 4:8. They are His own provision for the continual need of ministry in His church until she has arrived at her appointed consummation; they reveal His continued love and thought for His own on earth, even though He has "ascended on high."³

The divine sovereignty in the giving of gifts to the Church is stated very clearly in the New Testament.

The preparatory gifts of the Spirit are given "as He will" (I Cor. 12:11): the resultant ministries are "set"

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 83.

²Pache, op. cit., p. 168.

³Donald Gee The Ministry Gifts of Christ (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.), p19.

in the Church by God (v. 28): the men who embody them are "given" by Christ. Eph. 4:11. It is often not sufficiently remembered that He has a title of the "Lord of the harvest," and nothing is clearer in the New Testament than the authoritative direction of the Spirit in all the activities of the early church.¹

The gifts of the Spirit are those gifts which come from the Spirit, 'of the Spirit' being a subjective genitive. This must not be confused with the gift of the Spirit in which 'of the Spirit' is an objective genitive designating that the Spirit himself is the content of the gift. "The charismata (gifts) of the Spirit are not the same as the gift (dorea) of the Spirit, the first being what the Spirit gives and the second being the Spirit as such."²

An examination of the gifts mentioned by Paul in Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; and Ephesians 4:11 gives a good indication of the richness of the diversity of these gifts which the Spirit gives to the Church. Furthermore, the fact that these lists differ in the gifts enumerated indicates that Paul did not intend these to be all-inclusive and thus other gifts could probably be added to these lists.

The unity of the body of Christ is a unity in which there is rich diversity, not rigid uniformity. The community which his Spirit creates is not to be thought of as an efficient organization like that of an army. . . . Of course, its members are called into common loyalty to Christ their Lord, but it is his love that unites them in love for one another.³

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²Dale Moody, op. cit., p. 215.

³Seitz, op. cit., pp. 95,96

This diversity of gifts in no way contradicts the unity of the Church. It is this very principle which Paul drives home by his analogy of the Church and the human body in I Corinthians 12:14ff. The way to insure unity in the midst of such great diversity is illustrated in 12:22-25.

Paul wants to say that the more gifted members have to honor their less gifted brethren by putting their own gifts into the service of these less honorable members. We have nothing for ourselves. All we have is subjected to the goal 'that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another' (12:25).¹

The reason for such a rich diversity of gifts is that the Church has a great variety of services to be performed and many various needs to be met. Seitz notes this when he comments that the list in I Corinthians 12:4-6

was obviously not intended to be complete, for in other places Paul mentioned still other gifts, such as service, teaching, and exhortation (Rom. 12:6-8). All that Paul meant to point out to his readers was the fact that many different kinds of work need to be done in the church, and that some members are endowed with the ability to do one thing, some to do another.²

Since the manifestation of the Spirit³ is given to each for the common good (I Cor. 12:7) all the ministries, or gifts exercised

¹Berkhof, op. cit., p. 57.

²Seitz, op. cit., p. 98.

³Paul uses various words to designate the subject of which he is speaking. Πνευματικῶν, or spiritual things or matters is used in 12:1, ἡ φανερωσις τοῦ πνεύματος or manifestation of the Spirit is used in v.7, and χαρίσματα or gifts in v. 31 and elsewhere. It is apparent from the context that the same thing is intended by these various designations and that Paul uses these terms interchangeably. Therefore we will use the term 'gifts of the Spirit' in order to avoid confusion on this matter.

in the Church, are on the same level, since they all contribute to the same goal.

In principle, all ministries in the one body of Christ are on the same level. This is shown by the list of the various gifts in I Cor. 12:8-11. There is no hierarchy of gifts and the sequence of the mentioned services is given more or less at random. It is quite different in Romans 12:6-8 or even at the end of I Corinthians 12. One thing, however, is clear: speaking in tongues ranges at the end of the list, not because Paul despises it—I Corinthians 14:5 is proof to the contrary—but precisely because the Corinthians over-valued it, in spite of the fact that it is of no help to others.¹

To say that all the gifts are on the same level is not to say that all are of equal value to the Church. Paul could tell the Corinthian Christians to "earnestly desire the higher (literally, the better) gifts" (I Cor. 12:31), thus indicating that there are some gifts which are better than others for they contribute in a greater way to the edification of the Church. It is for this reason that Paul considers prophecy of more value in the Church than speaking with tongues (I Cor. 14). The lists in Romans and the end of I Cor. 12 indicate a descending order of value. Concerning the latter Seitz observes:

Undoubtedly, when Paul drew up such a list, he mentioned the more important services before those which were of lesser value in the life of the church. Probably the church could get along without 'speaking with tongues' more readily than it could fulfill its mission to evangelize the world without the services of apostles. It could do without working of miracles more easily than it could without teachers to nourish new converts in the faith.²

¹Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ, p. 61.

²Seitz, op. cit., p. 99.

The apostle Paul launches into a discussion of spiritual gifts in I Cor. 12-14 because of the difficulties raised by the improper exercise of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues; and this was due to an overvaluation of the gift. To go into a full discussion as to the exact nature of this gift would cause us to stray too far from our stated purpose, i.e. to examine the role of the Spirit in the Church. However, we can safely state that glossolalia is an ecstatic language which does not require the use of the mental faculties (I Cor. 14:14), is not generally understood by those who hear it and therefore needs interpreting (14:5) and is to be used as a sign for unbelievers and not for believers (14:22). This latter statement would indicate that glossolalia could very possibly be a language as in Acts 2¹ where we read that the devout men commenting on what they heard said, "how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language (ἑκάστην τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γλώσσης)" (Acts 2:7). The indiscriminate use of glossolalia in the Church would lead an unbeliever to think the Christians were mad (14:28), but when properly exercised and understood by an unbeliever it will be a sign because it reveals the presence of a Divine influence or is seen to be the fulfillment of prophecy (14:21).

Though the exercise of glossolalia caused special problems in the early Church the presence of this miraculous gift greatly influenced the understanding of the disciples as to the

¹There is no valid reason to view the gift of tongues in I Corinthians any differently from the gift as described in Acts. The fact that the same terminology is used in both cases shows that the early Church made no such differentiation.

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nature of all the gifts and ministries exercised in the Church.

None of (the gifts) was so striking as the glossolalia, and apart from that strange outbreak the other gifts of prayer and eloquence and enthusiastic faith might have been attributed to natural causes. But it was now recognized that all the other energies were kindred to the speaking with tongues and must have the same origin. A power from above had been communicated to the church, and was declaring itself in these marvelous gifts.¹

If this gift, the first of which the Church received at Pentecost, came from God and was miraculous, then surely God was at work in the Church and all that happened was the result of his divine activity. The primitive Church

was impressed with the wonderful character of Glossolalia and similar gifts. They were manifestly new and miraculous, and all the gifts now exercised in the service of Christ must likewise be new. To outward seeming they might be nothing but inborn capacities, applied to higher ends, but in reality they were heavenly gifts, now imparted for the first time by the Spirit. It was reserved for Paul to conceive of the Christian life as governed in its whole extent by the Spirit and therefore supernatural.²

No gift, no matter how common or routine, is present in the Church unless the Spirit gives it. The Spirit's control of the whole spectrum of the Church's life extends to even the most apparently insignificant of functions. To Paul the manifestations of the Spirit need not necessarily have an extraordinary character.

That is why, unlike the Corinthians, he includes among these manifestations 'help', administration, and in other places 'service', and 'acts of mercy', 'contributions', and 'championing' (Rom. 12:7-8). Still more significant is his notable depreciation of speaking with tongues, which the Corinthians regarded as the most exceptional and indeed the highest of the gifts of the Spirit. This means that extraordinariness is felt to be

¹Scott, op. cit., p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 91.

basically irrelevant as a criterion; it would do just as well as a criterion for the religious experience of pagans (I Cor. 12:2). The real criterion for measuring the value of lack of value of the gifts of the Spirit is the confession, Jesus is Lord, and at the same time the edification, the expediency, of the Church.¹

Glossolalia served another purpose than revealing the fact that all gifts in the Church were gifts of the Spirit. The appearance and presence of this gift brought the realization that the Holy Spirit himself was present in the Church. Glossolalia had broken out of its own accord, in a way that could not be explained for it was not even expected.

The church felt justified, in view of this wonderful phenomenon, in its belief that a new and mysterious power had been vouchsafed to it. What could this power be but the Holy Spirit, which God was to pour out on His people in the last days.²

Thus for Luke, in Acts, the gift of tongues and the coming of the Spirit upon believers are intimately connected. The disciples are filled with the Spirit and speak in other tongues on the day of Pentecost (2:4); Peter and those with him were amazed "because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God" (10:45,46); in Ephesus "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (19:6). Elsewhere in Acts the filling with the Spirit is obvious and may or may not be accompanied by tongues (4:31; 8:17,18).

However, the evidence is not sufficient to lend support

¹Schweizer, Spirit of God, pp. 66,67.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 108.

to the view that the filling with the Spirit is invariably accompanied by tongues. This conclusion cannot be justified by considering Acts alone; and the rest of the witness of the New Testament is certainly opposed to such a view simply because of its complete unconcern over the relation between the two.¹

However, the importance of glossolalia in the early Church should not be minimized for it clearly demonstrated the creative work of the Spirit in the Church as the One who gives gifts to the Church and is Himself present in its midst.

Before leaving the subject of gifts a possible difficulty in the interpretation of I Cor. 12:4-6 must be confronted. E. F. Scott supplies us with the needed insight for a right understanding of this passage.

(Paul) defines the gifts by three different terms which might seem to imply a difference in kind. "There are diversities of gifts (Χαρισμάτα) but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of administrations (διακονία) but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations (ἐνεργήματα); but it is the same God who worketh all in all." It has often been supposed that Paul here makes a distinction between the charismata proper and activities which cannot be ascribed in the same direct manner to the Spirit. But when his language is examined more closely it becomes evident that he is only considering the same gifts from three different points of view, as proceeding from the Spirit, as advancing the cause of Christ, as giving effect to the will of God.²

The gifts of the Spirit are given by Him to the Church by his free sovereign decision and choice. Every gift in the

¹The argument from silence in this case is overpowering, and such an argument need not be improper. If this connection between glossolalia and the filling with the Spirit was so intimate, surely tongues (whether sign or gift-though the former has no scriptural support) would be much more prominent in scripture.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 113.

Church comes from the Spirit. But it is also true that every person in the Church has received the Holy Spirit and a gift from him to be used in the Church.

Everyone has the Spirit—"Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9). Everyone therefore, without exception, is given his ministry, and the diversity of these rests solely on their free assignment by the Spirit himself, who gives what he pleases to everyone (I Cor. 12:11).¹

In Ephesians too Paul speaks of the grace that "was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (4:7) and of each part of the whole body "working properly" (4:16). These very clearly demonstrate the fact that each person has a role to play in the body by the exercising of a gift granted by the risen Lord. It is here that we see the truth of the statement that "all Christians had their share in the Spirit, and the gifts imparted by it were theoretically all on the same level. This is the view that underlies Paul's conception of the church as the 'Body of Christ.'"²

Thus, from an examination of the gifts of the Spirit³

¹ Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 100.

² Scott, op. cit., p. 112.

³ A justifiable objection may be raised at this point concerning our sole preoccupation with Pauline materials. Some would express the view that the other writers in the New Testament have little or no concern or knowledge about the gifts of the Holy Spirit as discussed by Paul. This is deduced from the silence of the other authors upon this subject. (We find mention of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 2:4 and I Peter 4:10, 11 but this is only in passing.) The argument from silence here is not valid for Paul speaks of the gifts of the Spirit only in connection with the one body or Church unity and only when the occasion requires it. It is very possible that the other writers never had cause to discuss the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore, we must deal with the materials as we find them in the scriptures and avoid seeing that which does not exist.

we see the all important role of the Spirit in the organization and administration of the Church. By His sovereign distribution of gifts to each of the members of the Church the Spirit directs and controls all that takes place in the worshipping community. This is not to say that the Church does not need men to assume positions of responsibility in the area of organization and administration, but the major work in this area, as in every area of the Church's life, is performed by the Spirit.

Even those men who do have administrative tasks exercise their responsibility only because the Sovereign God has appointed "administrators" (κυβερνήσεις, lit., administrations) in the Church (I Cor. 12:28). The word κυβερνήσεις probably makes reference to those who superintended the externals of organization.

(It) is derived from the idea of piloting a ship (Acts xxvii. 11; Rev. xviii. 17), and hence easily acquires the sense of directing with skill and wisdom. . . . The term, which is found nowhere else in N.T., may be equivalent to ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι. We must, however, remember that we are dealing with gifts rather than with the offices which grew out of the gifts.¹

The Spirit is vitally involved in every aspect of the organization and administration of the Church.

C. The Spirit and Offices in the Church

To what extent does the Holy Spirit create offices in the Church? Some expositors claim that the existence of an

¹Robertson and Plummer, I Corinthians (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961), p. 281.

office in the Church is outside of the work of the Spirit while others claim that offices are created by the Spirit. However, before this matter can be examined a more basic problem must be explored: Is the institutional aspect of the Church's existence incompatible with the activity of the Spirit in the Church? (For our purposes we will define an institution as an organized society.)

Emil Brunner is very strongly opposed to any association of the Church as an institution with the work of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes that the Church is a pure communion with no stated hierarchy.

The New Testament Ecclesia, the fellowship of Jesus Christ, is a pure communion of persons and has nothing of the character of an institution about it: it is therefore misleading to identify any single one of the historically developed churches, which are all marked by an institutional character, with the true Christian communion.¹

When Paul is enumerating the various charismata to which special types of service are adapted, he includes the charisma of Kybernesis, of government, as one amongst others without according to it the slightest degree of preference. This service too is needed, so he argues, and the charisma corresponding to it exists; but this service is only one among others and authorizes no sort of hierarchical structure.²

If a hierarchy of rank is deemed a necessary aspect of an institution, such a hierarchy did not exist in and of itself apart from the Spirit's activity. All gifts were given by the same Spirit and therefore one person did not occupy a higher position than another person because of the decree of the Church.

¹Brunner, op. cit., p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 33.

As a Church that is still living in time, it consists of many members, none of whom is perfect, so that each depends on the other's service; and there is therefore an abundance of different gifts and tasks. At the same time, however, the Church is a new entity. . . . The miracle of this newness is shown by there being no fundamental organization of superior or subordinate ranks, because the gift of the Spirit is adapted to every Church member.¹

The realization of the equality of all saints before the Lord was a powerful force against the tendency to set up one group, or faction or ministry as superior to another.

In all its arrangements for worship and social life the new community sought to mark itself out as different from all societies of this world, in which there were rulers formally appointed and careful distinctions between class and class. But this idea of equality, suggested in the first instance by the memories of Jesus' life-time, was reinforced from another side. The Spirit had now come in the place of Jesus. . . . Now that he was gone the Spirit directed them in his stead, and in the manner which he desired. Everything like organization was therefore avoided as contrary to the inner nature of the church. It was the community of the Spirit, and must be willing in all things to order itself by that divine guidance.²

The Church glorified not itself but the ruling presence of Christ by the Spirit in its midst, and therefore a man-made hierarchy would be entirely out of place.

The New Testament Church speaks of itself only as the 'assembly' of God, and it does not employ all kinds of honor bearing titles for the different kinds of service rendered in its midst. (It uses *διακονία*, 'service'-a word used in connection with slave labor to describe the functions performed by individuals in the Church.) By so doing, the uniqueness of the role of Jesus is emphasized.³

However, in light of the New Testament witness it is

¹Schweizer, Church Order, p. 99.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 109.

³Schweizer, Theology Today, p. 475.

necessary to say that the Holy Spirit is concerned with the institutional aspect of the Church's existence. But this comes as a result of the Spirit's work and not the imaginings of man.

In Ephesians 4 we hear about the risen Christ, who is identical with the Spirit and who 'gave gifts to men' (v. 8). These gifts are, at the beginning of the passage (v. 7) and at its end (v. 16), the charismatic gifts to all members which are necessary for the upbuilding of the community. Nevertheless there is a certain order in these gifts. As primary gifts of the risen Christ are mentioned, 'that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers' (v. 11). Apparently we have to do here with an institutional element which is seen as a direct gift of the Spirit. The Spirit is not only interested in hearts or in faithful communities but also in organizations. However: He is not interested in organizations as ends in themselves for the passage goes on to say that these gifts were meant 'for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ' (v. 12). . . .The institute has priority, but it finds its aims in the community to which it is an instrument.¹

Surely the existence of deacons, elders, apostles, prophets, teachers, the constant admonitions to leaders and the appeal to congregations to obey their leaders demonstrate the existence of organization within the early Church, one which is established and maintained by the Holy Spirit. All of the Church's life was under the guidance and control of the Spirit.

The guidance and presence of the Spirit does refer, according to the New Testament, to the development of structure of thought and act, of institution and order in the church. It is also expressed in those aspects of the community's life which are not susceptible of formalization and institutionalization. . . . This presence and work of Christ in the Spirit are expressed in the whole quality and character of personal existence in the community.²

¹Berkhof, op. cit., pp. 61,62.

²Welch, op. cit., p. 232.

Although we admit to the presence of structure due to the Spirit's guidance in the early Church, we find a variety of structures in the New Testament.

There is no such thing as "the" Church structure peculiar to the New Testament. The structure changed as this or that point was strengthened to meet threatening dangers. The Church can only attest to the living Christ when it abandons the security of officialdom and the confidence in its own spiritual attainments so that authority might rest in its Lord himself.¹

Thus we see that the Church does exist as an institution, but this is due solely to the working of the sovereign Spirit and not to the reasonings of men apart from the Spirit as in other social groups.

The control of the Spirit in the Church is evident in the manner in which men were selected to occupy important positions in the Church. "At the outset the idea of spiritual control was taken seriously. The men to whom the direction of the church was entrusted were not officially appointed, but were men chosen directly by the Spirit."² It cannot be denied that offices, in the sense of regulation of functions, existed in the Church from the beginning. Even Emil Brunner admits to this, even though he objects to the terminology because of his extreme emphasis on the divine nature of the Church.

There was in the Ecclesia a regulation of the functions—scripture declares this explicitly (I Cor. 12:11)—assigned by the Holy Ghost to the various individual

¹Schweizer, op. cit., p. 483.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 110.

members who were thus equipped to perform their special services—falsely represented as 'offices.' For an office belongs to a public organization; an office is part of an institution. The diakoniai however, the services, should be conceived on the analogy of the organs with their specific functions which inhere in a living body.¹

Though Brunner's point is well taken, for simplicity sake we will speak of those equipped to perform special services or ministries as occupying an office.

In filling an office the Church did not weigh the pros and cons of various individuals' abilities, but it sought out the mind of the Spirit who had equipped his choice with the necessary gifts to fill the office.

The church confined its choice to men who were manifestly endowed with the Spirit, and aimed at nothing more than at ascertaining the Spirit's preference. It was assumed that the decision had been made already, and all that remained for the Church was to discover and ratify it. . . . From first to last the one object of the church meeting was to entrust the Spirit solely with the choice of the men who were to act as its instruments.

The primitive ideal was thus a ministry that should consist wholly of men endowed with spiritual gifts, so that the church should be controlled in all its enterprise by the power from above.²

In Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in Romans, I Corinthians and Ephesians we find that the ministry, or office, is not created by the Church but by the Spirit whose special gifts mark out this man and that for special functions.³ However, these ministries are possessed by the Church as a whole and are to be used for the good of the Church, "for the equipment of the

¹Brunner, op. cit., p. 50.

²Scott, op. cit., p.111.

³Flew, op. cit., p. 260.

saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Especially in Ephesians do we see that the gifts of Christ to the Church are men who exercise special ministries, that it is God who creates 'offices' in the Church.

Peter's view of the ministry is essentially the same as Paul's. Schweizer observes concerning I Peter:

It is maintained in 4.10f., as it is by Paul, that the gift bestowed by God creates the ministry. . . . 'Each' is called to such service in the Church; and the Pauline knowledge that in the Church everyone is responsible and free for service is also maintained.¹

In the Acts also it is evident that men are chosen for office in the Church because they are already filled with the Spirit.

St. Luke constantly tells us that the persons upon whom hands were laid for some special office in the Church were men who had already received the Holy Spirit. This is definitely stated in the case of the seven (6:3) and of St. Paul (9:17) and of Barnabas (11:24). Similarly, we are told of the disciples at Antioch in Pisidia that they were 'filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit' (13:52) before their elders were appointed (14:23). Indeed it is apparent that men were everywhere chosen for special office in the Church because they were full of the Holy Spirit.²

The role of the Spirit in filling an office in the Church is seen clearly in the case of elders. In Acts 20:28 Paul reminds the elders of the Church at Ephesus that it is the Holy Spirit who made them guardians "to feed the church of the Lord."

St. Paul held that the presbyters or bishops of the local communities derived their authority from the Holy

¹Schweizer, Church Order, p. 11.

²Roland Allen, op. cit., p. 38.

Spirit: 'take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit . . . appointed you overseers (*ἐπισκοποι*). The words may refer to the solemn ceremony of ordination described in the Epistles to Timothy, and the prophesying by which it seems to have been preceded.¹

Surely, whatever significance it did have, the laying on of hands on men who were set apart for a special ministry did not signify the conveyance of the Holy Spirit, since the possession of the Spirit was of primary importance before the person was chosen. All ministries or offices in the Church, both miraculous and quite common-place, were supplied by the Spirit.

Undoubtedly in St. Paul's view, the 'teachers,' 'helps,' and 'governments,' whom he mentions among Christ's gifts to the Church, were as much 'charismatic,' as much empowered for their function by a gift of the Spirit, as apostles or prophets or workers or miracles. It was the Holy Spirit (who) made men presbyter-bishops (Acts xx. 28).²

It must be pointed out that the most important office in the early Church, that of apostle, was very definitely a spiritual gift also. To go into the intricacies of the problem of what constituted an apostle would not be possible at this point, but the cruciality of the Spirit's work is obvious in the exercise of this ministry.

It is . . . important to note that Apostleship, whatever else it involved, was a spiritual gift. It may be that this charisma was supposed to rest on immediate disciples, or on men who had been set apart in some particular way for arduous service; but these circumstances did not in themselves constitute an Apostle. There needed to be the 'grace' imparted directly by the Spirit, and what

¹Swete, op. cit., p. 322.

²Gore, op. cit., p. 143.

it consisted in we are not told. Most likely it was so comprehensive in its nature that it could not be formally defined.¹

It is the Spirit who creates the office (or the ministry) and who supplies the Church with the men needed to fill the offices, men who are filled with the Spirit and endowed by him for service in and to the Church.

Thus we see from this portion of our study how the Holy Spirit is intimately involved in the organization and administration of the Church by his constant guidance, his governing activity or Lordship over the Church, his giving of charismatic gifts to equip the Church and his setting of offices or ministries in the Church to enable the Church to exist and function in the world. Without the constant activity of the Spirit the Church would become an archaic institution completely ineffective in an ever changing world.

¹Scott, op. cit., p. 115.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRIT IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

The final consideration of this study is one which is truly the climax of all that has preceded. The Church was formed, lives and has an order in order to accomplish a purpose, and broadly speaking the ministry of the Church is that by which the raison d'etre of the Church is realized. It is in the ministry of the Church that the Spirit's role is most obvious and most significant. The ministry of the Church is ultimately not of men but of God, and it is God who, by His Spirit, enables the Church to fulfill the role which He has given it in the world.

The ministry of the Church can be viewed in a two-fold manner: the internal ministry directed toward Christians as such and the external ministry directed toward unbelievers.

The Church has a twofold function, neither side of which can be neglected. It is (1) a HOLY SOCIETY in the world, maintaining a state of separation from the world, meeting together for the worship of God, and walking according to His will for mutual edification as well as for God's declarative glory; it is (2) a MISSIONARY INSTITUTE, with a view to propagate or extend the gospel to them that are without.¹

The Holy Society is concerned with the internal ministry while the Missionary Institute is concerned with the external ministry. However, it must be stated at the outset that

¹Smeaton, op. cit., p. 233.

while a distinction can be made between these two aspects of the Church's ministry they can never be separated one from the other. For it is only as the Church proclaims the gospel of Christ that the Church is edified, and only as the Church is edified can it truly proclaim the Gospel.

A. The Spirit in the Internal Ministry of the Church

The Christian life is one which is lived in community with others¹ and must constantly be renewed by the activity of the Spirit. It is the maintenance and the renewal of the Christian life within the community which is the focus of our concern in the consideration of the internal ministry of the Spirit.

1. Edification. - The Spirit is active in the Church in order to perfect the body of Christ, to bring the saints to "mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

The perfecting of the Body of Christ is the final purpose of the coming of the Paraclete. Churches and the members of churches are being 'builded together' in the fabric of the Universal Church, that they may become 'a habitation of God in the Spirit.' (Eph. 2:22; 4:13).²

It is in the purpose of the spiritual gifts given by the Spirit that we see the Spirit active in edifying the Church. "His gifts are given to each man, not for his private profit, but for the common good of all."³ And it is this fact which prevents

¹See above, Chapter III, Section C.

²Swete, op. cit., p. 316.

³Seitz, op. cit., p. 96.

any single member from thinking that his gift is all important.

The value of spiritual gifts is not to be found in the fact that they mark out their bearers as 'spiritual people,' but that they build up the Church (I Cor. 14). It is true that the building-up happens through the 'spiritual', but then everyone is 'spiritual', everyone has his charisma. If individuals break away, they thereby show themselves to be 'unspiritual', sarkikoi.¹

This was exactly what the Christians at Corinth failed to understand, and thus Paul had to correct them.

According to them [the Corinthians] the effects of the Spirit can be most clearly seen where he appears in the most unusual way, where everything natural, everything that can be grasped by the reason, recedes: in the gift of tongues. But that is exactly what Paul opposes; he pushes it to the last place, not because he despises it, but because it is not particularly suited to edifying the Church.²

The life of the Spirit which edifies the Church comes from the exalted Lord Jesus Christ into all the members. When each member of the Church is in vital contact with the Lord then growth and edification become possible. Christ is the One "from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). "The Spirit is not named here, yet the word supply (τὰς ἐπιχορηγίας) points not obscurely to its gifts."³ In the New Testament the result of any activity with regards to the edification of the Church, determines its source. "If

¹ Schweizer, Spirit of God, p. 80

² Schweizer, Church Order, pp. 101,102

³ Swete, op. cit., p. 311.

the result of the Spirit's activity is the building up of the whole church, it is God's Spirit. If not, it is a foreign and evil spirit."¹

The activity of the Spirit in the Church which is his primary means of edification is the disclosure of the presence of Christ, the proclamation of his Lordship (I Cor. 12:3) and the glorification of his presence (John 16:14). When Christ's presence is discerned in the midst of his people, the Church is edified.

The primary work of the Holy Spirit which is to be considered is this: that through Him men are enabled to recognize the presence of Jesus Christ. The mystery of the Trinity is especially pertinent here; for in virtue of the unity of the divine nature, the presence of the Spirit includes the presence of Christ and of God.²

Nelson points out four aspects of the Spirit's work all of which are seen to contribute to the edification of the Church.

So we observe in the New Testament teaching and witness four major contributions of the Holy Spirit to the faith and life of the Church. He makes the presence of the glorified Christ a reality to men in all generations. He calls men to faith and leads them in life as sons of God. He gives them the 'fruit' of Christ-like character. And he binds them together in their sharing of the life of *κοινωνία*.³

The edification of the Church is therefore seen to be one of the most important aspects of the Spirit's activity in the internal ministry of the Church.

2. Worship. - The Church has been described as a community gathered for worship. This description, though not

¹Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ, p. 58.

²Nelson, op. cit., pp. 48,49.

³Ibid., p. 58.

comprehensive, brings out the great truth concerning the central role of worship in the life of the Church. It is in worship, as Jesus Christ is lifted up and exalted, that the Church is edified, that various gifts are exercised, and that the Spirit ministers to the needs of Christians.

But worship is not an act of man directed toward God exclusively, for true worship is possible only when the Holy Spirit is active in the midst of believers.

The true worship of God is in the Spirit (Phil, 3:3). Worship is not primarily a matter of edifices or liturgies; it is primarily a matter of the Spirit. Where the Spirit is absent, all forms of worship are futile and unavailing; where the Spirit is present, men know that they are in the presence of God.¹

Not only must the Spirit be present, but the initiative to worship must come from Him.

Paul firmly believed that the initiative in Christian worship always came from God, rather than from men. It was God who sent the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of believers, enabling them to call him by the very name which Jesus had used in prayer. That name was 'Abba.' . . . (Romans 8:26-27) . . . Paul went so far as to say that no one can confess Jesus as Lord except by the Holy Spirit, and included faith among the gifts of God (I Cor. 12:3,9).²

And the promise of Christ to be in the midst of two or three gathered in his name (Matt. 18:20) points ahead to the presence of Christ by the Spirit in the midst of the worshipping Church.

The activity of the Spirit in the worship of the Church

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 85

²Setiz, op. cit., p. 103.

may be seen most clearly by the freedom exercised in worship so that the Spirit could move without hindrance in the various contributions of the believers to the worship. "What then brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." (I Cor. 14:26)¹ "The worship is arranged for the single period of the assembly so that God's gifts may be unfolded for the Church's benefit with as little hindrance as possible."² The only proviso is that no one activity (such as tongues or prophecy) dominate the worship and that all things be done for edification (12:27-30). There is therefore freedom for the exercise of spiritual gifts which are given and inspired by the Holy Spirit in the worship of the Church. And thus the Spirit's role in worship is clearly seen.

3. Various Ministries. - The various ministries exercised within the Church are all given by the Spirit and do not arise from natural ability.

The Christian society as it is seen in the New Testament . . . is 'the house of God, the congregation of the living God, pillar and basement of the truth' (I Tim. 3:15). Such a view of the Church naturally affects our estimate of the ministry of the Church. The officers of a spiritual body are charged with spiritual work, and need spiritual power to do it.³

¹The validity of taking as normative the form of worship as practised in Corinth may be questioned. However, no clear picture of worship is to be found elsewhere. (Acts 2:42 is not clear), and Paul gives his whole-hearted consent to this form. In fact the Spirit is quenched when prophecy is despised (I Thess. 5:19). Thus, though perhaps not normative, this form is certainly acceptable, and further it is all we have to inform us.

²Schweizer, Church Order, p. 102

³Swete, op. cit., p. 323.

"All Christian service . . . is rendered by the Spirit of God. The ministry of the New Covenant is a ministry of the Spirit. . . . And being such, it demands the special assistance of the Holy Spirit."¹ With this awareness we will proceed to examine the Spirit's role in various specific ministries that are exercised in the internal ministry of the Church.

One of the most important ministries in the early Church was that of prophecy. The prophet was highly regarded for he was the one by whom the Spirit spoke to the Church.

The Christian prophets were the mouthpiece of the Spirit, insomuch that when they spoke under His influence the Spirit is said to have spoken. . . . So far as they were effective instruments for the building up of the Church or the conversion of unbelievers, this was due to the Spirit of prophecy—a gift entrusted to the prophetic order and not common to the whole body of believers. Of the reality of this gift and of its generally beneficial results the New Testament writers entertain no doubt. (I Cor. 12:10; 14:1ff.; I Thess. 5:20; I Jo. 4:2; Apoc. 19:10).²

"A 'prophet' in the New Testament sense is one who speaks from the impulse of a sudden inspiration, from the light of a sudden revelation at the moment (apokalupsis - I Cor. 14:30)."³ The revelation came from the Spirit but was not infallible for others had to weigh what was said (I Cor. 14:29) and test everything (I Thess. 5:21) to insure that it was the Spirit who inspired the message and not an evil spirit or the prophet himself.

¹Ibid., p. 319.

²Ibid., p. 321.

³Donald Gee, op. cit., p. 39

The prophet's ministry had a two-fold nature in that he spoke concerning both the present and the future. "Prophecy consisted in an ecstatic eloquence, of which the themes would be the mysteries of the future, the hope of the Lord's coming, the great verities of the Christian faith."¹ The prophet spoke in the public worship to reveal truth (I Cor. 14:25) and to exhort and edify the Church (I Cor. 14:3-5), but never guided the Church in its decisions. Agabus could prophesy the coming of a famine (Acts 11:28) or the fate of Paul at Jerusalem, but he did not offer any guidance. It was the disciples who determined to send relief (Acts 11:29) and Paul who decided to go up to Jerusalem. Further, the dispute over circumcision in Acts 15 was settled without reference to the gift of prophecy. "It can truthfully be affirmed that there is not one single instance of the Gift of Prophecy being deliberately resorted to for guidance in the New Testament."² In the Johannine literature especially we see emphasized the role of the Spirit in prophesying what is to come. The Holy Spirit

remains the Spirit of prophecy, guiding the Church into all truth (John 16:13), shewing the things which shall come to pass hereafter (Rev. 1:19; 4:2; cf. 1:1; 22:6), i.e. such 'revelations' of the parousia as are disclosed in the Apocalypse.³

¹Scott, op. cit., p. 116.

²Donald Gee, Concerning Spiritual Gifts (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.), p. 44.

³Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 114

The role of the Spirit in the ministry of prophecy was very important to the life of the Church.

Closely allied to the gift of prophecy is the gift of tongues used in conjunction with the gift of interpretation. In the Church, tongues can be used rightly only if there is one to interpret (I Cor. 14:27), for only then will the other believers understand what is said and thus be edified. "He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets so that the church may be edified" (I Cor. 14:5). It is evident that tongues plus interpretation is equivalent to the gift of prophecy in the mind of Paul. Also the Spirit's role is evident in this aspect of the Church's ministry, for he is the one who inspires these various gifts.

From Paul's lists it is obvious that next to Apostles and Prophets were ranked the Teachers (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11f.).

Their work must have been something more than that of mere instruction, or else it could hardly have been counted among the chief spiritual gifts. It may be inferred that 'teaching' in the early church involved an element of revelation. The teacher was expected to unfold the hidden meaning of Scripture, with the aid of the Spirit which had inspired it.¹

"It is not instruction or official appointment that makes a man a teacher, but only that inward growth that is inspired by the Holy Spirit."² The fact that one is a teacher because of a spiritual gift (God appointed . . . teachers - I Cor. 12:28

¹Scott, op. cit., p. 117.

²Schweizer, Church Order, p. 114.

His gifts were that some should be . . . teachers - Eph. 4:11) indicates that

the man is not a teacher merely by virtue of natural ability and inclination; this may provide a background, but shining above and through all else will be a conspicuous gift of the Spirit if he be a real gift of Christ to the church.¹

The teacher's main task is to open up and reveal the basic precepts of the faith and to add nothing new. The teacher has to do with the 'tradition' of the Church. The Spirit, who is active in and through the teacher, "teaches nothing but what was 'from the beginning'. Wherever anything else emerges, it simply shows the presence of a false spirit."² This is seen in the epistles of John. The teacher must not only transmit tradition but must also interpret it through the inspiration of the Spirit.

Though teachers are given to the Church by the risen Lord, in reality it is the Spirit who is the Church's true teacher.

The continued witness of the Spirit in the Church implies a continual teaching of the Church by the Spirit. This also has a place in the Lord's great promise of the Paraclete: 'He shall teach you all things. . . . He shall lead the way for you to enter into all the truth. (John 14:26; 16:13).³

The Spirit not only recalled our Lord's words, but revealed heights and depths in Him hitherto unsounded, declaring that which is His, and thereby (since whatsoever the Father has is His) declaring also that which is the Father's. It was in some sense a new Christ that

¹ Donald Gee, Ministry Gifts of Christ, p. 63.

² Schweizer, Church Order, p. 126.

³ Swete, op. cit., p. 314.

the Church came to know after the Pentecost: 'even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him thus no more,' i.e. we know Him after the Spirit, by a process different from that of bodily intercourse and by which He is placed in a new light.¹

Thus we see that the Holy Spirit is intimately connected with the ministry of teaching in the Church.

There are other ministries that are operative in the Church's internal ministry which are gifts of the Spirit. Some of these are workers of miracles, healers, helpers (I Cor. 12:28), giving of service, exhortation, giving of contributions, giving aid, and doing acts of mercy (Rom. 12:7,8). It would not be possible to study each of these in detail, but it is sufficient for our purposes to note that each of these ministries, regardless of the apparent insignificance of some, is inspired and made possible by the Holy Spirit who is active in every area of the Church's activity.

B. The Spirit in the External Ministry of the Church

"The church was not called by God to become an end in itself, but the means of bearing the good news of his reconciling love to the world."² The Church's major task is missionary in nature, to be Christ's witness in Jerusalem . . . and to the ends of the earth (Acts. 1:8).

The first Church . . . conceived itself to be God's own people, brought into existence by His saving activity

¹Ibid., p. 313.

²Seitz, op. cit., p. 112.

in Jesus Christ the risen Lord. It was a Messianic society, expectant and inspired, and as such missionary in the highest degree.¹

And the Church recognized the importance of mission because it knew that the Spirit was given to empower it to witness (Acts 1:5,8). This is seen most clearly in the Acts.

It is in the revelation of the Holy Spirit as a missionary Spirit that the Acts stands alone in the New Testament. The nature of the Spirit as missionary can indeed be observed in the teaching of the gospels and the epistles; but there it is hinted rather than asserted. In the Acts it is the one prominent feature.²

1. The Spirit Inspires Missionary Work. - Without the presence of the Holy Spirit in its midst the Church cannot carry on missionary work. "The peculiarity of Luke's testimony lies in its demonstration that a church which has no special power to fulfil its missionary task in a concrete way is a church without the Spirit."³ The absolute necessity for the Spirit's activity in the Church's missionary task is stressed by Roland Allen when he notes that Acts

....is the record of the acts of men moved by a Spirit given to them. The conclusion is irresistible, that the Spirit given was, in St. Luke's view, a Spirit which impelled to missionary work, in fact a missionary Spirit.⁴

St. Luke in the Acts is speaking of the spread of the gospel in the world, and therefore points out how the Holy Spirit, at crucial moments, directed the minds

¹Johnston, op cit., p. 66.

²Allen, op. cit., p. 21.

³Schweizer, Spirit of God, p. 50.

⁴Allen, op. cit., p. 17.

and the actions of the apostles to that end. He is writing of the Holy Spirit primarily as the dictator and inspirer of missionary work.¹

It was as men received the gift of the Spirit that they obeyed the missionary impulse of the Spirit to witness to unbelievers. The gift of the Spirit and the preaching of the gospel to those outside the Church are intimately connected. At Pentecost the gospel was preached by Peter and three thousand were converted (Acts 2:1-41); when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit they spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31); when Paul was filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17) he immediately proclaimed Jesus (v.20). "He[Luke] speaks not of men who, being what they were, strove to obey the last orders of a beloved Master, but of men who, receiving a Spirit, were driven by that Spirit to act in accordance with the nature of that Spirit."²

Moved by the Holy Spirit given to them, the Apostles went forth as missionaries. The Holy Spirit filled them with a desire for the salvation of men in Jesus Christ; He revealed to them the need of men. As they came into contact with different types and orders of men, so the Holy Spirit filled them with desire for the salvation of these and with the same sense of their need. They could not but preach, Hence arose the great controversy over the admission of the Gentiles into the Church.³

We must avoid the identification of the missionary impulse of the Spirit and the missionary journeys taken by the disciples in any absolute sense. Surely the journeys were

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 52.

inspired by the Spirit (Acts 13:2) but it was not necessary to travel in order to always obey this missionary impulse.

All who received the Spirit were more or less conscious of the missionary impulse of the Spirit. . . . It is obviously necessary to avoid the mistake of thinking that the reception and expression of the missionary Spirit necessarily involves going on missionary journeys, or that missionary journeys are necessarily truer and fuller expressions of the missionary Spirit than any other. The Spirit of redeeming love is manifestly expressed as truly striving for the salvation of men at home as in preaching to the heathen beyond the seas. It is the reception and the expression of redeeming love which is of importance, rather than the manner or the form or the work in which that Spirit is expressed.¹

Thus the preaching of Peter to the Jews in Jerusalem was just as much a result of the missionary impulse of the Spirit as were the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul.

2. The Spirit Directs Missionary Work. - We have already discussed the role of the Spirit in the guidance of the Church,² and we will now look more carefully at the Spirit's role in guiding and directing the Church's missionary enterprise.

"One of the unmistakable features of Acts is the way in which it tells us that every great decision which the Church took was taken under the guidance of the Spirit."³ This is clearly seen from an examination of Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2,4; 15:28-29 (all of which have already been discussed).⁴

¹Ibid., p. 60.

²See above, pp. 93-95.

³Barclay, op. cit., p. 56.

⁴See above, pp. 93.

The significant fact is that every one of these references to the Spirit is a reference to an occasion on which a decision was taken to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. It was the Spirit who made the Church a missionary Church; it was the Spirit who enabled the Jewish leaders of the Church to forget Jewish intolerance and Jewish particularism and Jewish exclusiveness. It was the Spirit who enabled the Jewish leaders of the Church to see that Israel was chosen for a light to the Gentiles. The plain fact we see in Acts is that, had it not been for the guidance of the Spirit, the Church might well have remained nothing more than a sect of Judaism.¹

It was the certainty of the guidance of the Holy Spirit that made the Church move into areas which were never previously considered. Had the disciples carefully evaluated every move and its consequences the Church may never have grown. However, the Spirit was directing the Church and in obedience to him the Church grew rapidly.

The path by which the apostles reached the truth was submissive obedience in act to the impulse of the Holy Spirit. When the moment came, when the Spirit in them moved them to desire men's salvation, and to feel their need, they acted, they spoke, they expressed that Spirit of love and desire, not knowing what the result of their action might be, nor how to justify it intellectually, certain only that they were directed by the Holy Spirit.²

A. L. Humphries makes a very interesting observation concerning the way in which the Spirit led the early Church.

Now the record shows that the inception of a forward movement was often the act of individuals, and they were not always the recognized leaders of the Church but members of its rank and file. . . . In all these cases the Church finally gave its official approval to what had been done, but the fact, nevertheless, remains that the Church, viewed collectively, did not lead, but was led³ by prophetic spirits, the men of the hill-top, within it.

¹Barclay, op. cit., p. 56.

²Allen, op. cit., p. 47.

³Humphries, op. cit., pp. 157, 158.

The truth of this statement can be seen in the activity of Philip in Samaria, Peter with Cornelius, Paul on his missionary journeys and even in the preaching of those who fled the persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 8:4). These men did not consult any official or authoritative group but acted on what they believed to be the guidance of the Spirit. The Church followed this activity with its consent because the guidance of the Spirit was obvious in their actions. But above all it was the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believed which confirmed the guidance of the Spirit in each case. This was especially crucial in the admitting of Gentiles in the Church (Acts 11:16-18).

Nothing could be more plain or unambiguous. The gift of the Spirit was a visible, recognizable, unquestionable sign that God had accepted these Gentiles as His own people, and before that fact the most massive and fundamental theological convictions simply had to give way.¹

In this widening of the Christian community the hand of the Spirit is traced. By falling on Samaritan converts He, in the eyes of the leaders of the Church, endorses their admission into it. . . . In the acceptance of the Gentile Cornelius—a grave step as evidenced by the controversy which it awakened at Jerusalem—there was another widening of the frontiers. . . . Here again the Holy Spirit was the determining factor in the decision. Not only was it under the special direction of the Spirit that Peter went to Caesarea at all, but the manifest reception of the Holy Spirit by Cornelius and others, even while the Apostle was preaching, was an end of controversy.²

The changes that were brought about by the direction of the Holy Spirit in the missionary enterprise of the Church

¹Newbigin, op. cit., p. 96

²Humphries, op. cit., pp. 153, 154.

necessitated a corresponding change in the thinking of the Church with regard to the will of God and its own mission. Because of the activity of the Spirit "slowly and almost unconsciously the Church, through the Spirit operative within her, was being led to see wider horizons and grasp larger ideas."¹

The picture which the historian of Apostolic Christianity is at pains to give us is that of the Church enlarging not simply its bounds but its ideas, reaching out to wider horizons because it was realising also its own meaning for the world, passing out of the contracted atmosphere of Jewish Messianism into the spiritual and universal—all under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit. It is because Luke so tells the fascinating story as to make us see it from this point of view, that Acts is justly called 'The Gospel of the Spirit.'²

So the Spirit is seen to be active in the guidance of the Church and in the direction of all phases of the missionary enterprise.

3. The Spirit Works Through Men. - The Spirit, who is the one who inspires and directs the external ministry of the Church, uses men to bring the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to unbelievers. He does this through all believers in their witness for Jesus Christ wherever they go, and he also does this through men who are especially equipped by him for the spreading of the gospel. "The Holy Spirit's testimony to the world at large is not borne directly but through the Spirit endowed church members."³ There was an order of evangelists in

¹Humphries, op. cit., p. 155.

²Ibid., p. 157.

³Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 112.

the Church which was especially equipped by the Spirit to preach the gospel to unbelievers.

The word 'evangelist' occurs only three times in the New Testament. 'Philip the evangelist' (Acts 21:8), 'He gave . . . some evangelists' (Eph. 4:11), 'Do the work of an evangelist' (II Tim. 4:5). Its meaning of course is, one who brings the evangel; a preacher of the gospel; literally 'a messenger of good tidings.' In spite of these somewhat scanty references, Eph. 4:11 makes it plain that 'evangelists' constituted in the early church a distinct and well-recognized order of ministry, separate from that of apostles, prophets, pastors or teachers.¹

But much more prominent than the evangelist is the apostle in the preaching of the gospel. The apostle's ministry was wide and varied, his over-all task being the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of churches where people responded to his message. Again, it would not be possible to examine all that is involved in the work of an apostle (difficult exegetical problems included), but it is important to note that the apostle was a key figure in the external ministry of the Church.

It was the mission of the apostles to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This gives us the necessary key for understanding the nature of the 'apostolic' church, in the New Testament sense of that term. It is a witnessing church.²

Roland Aalen notes the central place that preaching Christ had in the ministry of the apostles in the early Church.

The Holy Ghost was given: forthwith the apostles began to preach Christ. They began to preach Christ

¹Donald Gee, The Ministry Gifts of Christ, p. 46.

²Seitz, op. cit., pp. 87,88

to those who did not believe. There is in the Acts only one speech after Pentecost addressed to believers: it is the farewell speech of St. Paul to the Ephesian elders. As for the rest, all are missionary sermons.¹

Paul conceived of his apostleship as bringing with it a commission to preach the gospel. Thus he could say: "For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16).

The Spirit given to the apostles is . . . seen to have created in them an internal necessity to preach the Gospel. 'We cannot but speak,' they say. Throughout this book of Acts the Spirit is revealed primarily as a Spirit impelling those to whom He comes to carry to others that which they have received. He is revealed as a Spirit of redeeming love active in those to whom He comes rather towards others for their salvation than in themselves for their own personal perfection. . . . The first sign of the Spirit's presence in the Acts is activity for the salvation of others; conviction of His personal work is the second and later sign.²

Schweizer rightly observes that in Acts "the chief thing for which the Spirit is responsible is the preaching of the disciples."³ Thus we see that it is the Spirit who is responsible for the preaching of the gospel in the first place.

But very closely connected with the preaching of the gospel was a responsibility of equal importance for it was integrally related to that preaching: that was the administration of the Spirit, making possible the receiving of the Spirit by those who believed.

¹ Allen, op. cit., p. 22.

² Ibid., p. 27.

³ Schweizer, Spirit of God, pp. 42,43.

This administration of the Spirit is the key to the apostolic work. It alone explains the promise of remission of sins in the preaching of the apostles. It alone explains the assurance of forgiveness which filled the hearts of their converts. It alone explains the new power which was manifested in the life of the Christian Church, the new striving after holiness, the new charity expressed in organized form for the amelioration of the sufferings of the poorer brethren. It alone explains the certainty of the hope of eternal life which filled the souls of the Christians and enabled them to face persecution and martyrdom. It alone explains the new sense of the value and dignity of the body which led to a new enthusiasm for purity of life and created hospitals for the care of the diseased. It alone explains the zeal for the salvation of men, which carried the gospel of Christ throughout the then known world.¹

The apostles "not only revealed the Spirit by their words and deeds, they not only convinced men that they had received the Spirit, but they administered the Spirit."²

A study of Acts reveals that the Spirit was not always administered by the apostles. Cornelius received the Spirit while the gospel was still being preached (Acts 10:44), and the Spirit filled all who were praying together apart from any activity of the apostles (4:31). However, Peter and John were called to Samaria so that the Christians there might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15), and Paul had to lay hands on the Christians in Ephesus so that they could receive the Spirit (19:6). The incident in Samaria is a good indication that the normal procedure was for the apostles to administer the Spirit, though this cannot be said in any absolute sense because of the diversity of the witness. Even Ananias, who held no apostolic

¹Allen, op. cit., pp. 42,43.

²Ibid., p. 39.

office, could be used by God to administer the gift of the Spirit (or more accurately, to be God's channel for the administration of this gift). The important point is not the manner or mode in which the Spirit was administered, but the fact that all did receive the Spirit in one way or another.

When we consider how frequently reference is made in this book to the Holy Spirit, and how important St. Luke manifestly considered the gift to be, it is indeed hard to escape from the conclusion that he was far more profoundly concerned with the reality and universality of the gift than he was with the mode of administration of the gift.¹

The Spirit equipped men to preach the gospel so that he could fill those who responded to that preaching.

4. The Spirit Himself Bears Testimony. - Though it is true that the Spirit is active in and through men to bear witness to Jesus Christ, it is also true that the Spirit bears direct witness to the saving power of the Gospel by the awe-inspiring acts which he makes possible. In the Acts

the Spirit bears testimony to the Gospel simply because it is a wonder-working power. Men are compelled to acknowledge that the church is entrusted with a divine mission, since it exhibits in its life and worship those marvellous phenomena which are evidently of God.²

The gift of tongues 'amazed and perplexed' the onlookers (Acts 2:12) and thus prepared them for Peter's teaching. When the lame man was healed the people 'were filled with wonder and amazement' (3:10). In Samaria the multitude gave heed to Philip's preaching when they heard him and saw the signs which

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 93.

he did (8:6). In Paphos the proconsul believed the preaching of Paul after Elymas the magician was struck blind at Paul's word (13:4-12)¹ In Romans 15:18,19 Paul speaks of what Christ has wrought through him "to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit." Again, Paul speaks of his message as coming to the Corinthians "in demonstration of the Spirit and power" (I Cor. 2:4). The writer to the Hebrews points out that God bore witness to the message of salvation "by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will" (Hebrews 2:4). So it is obvious that the Spirit was given for the support and advancement of mission, but at the same time "the Spirit was the chief witness to the truth of the Gospel."²

The disciples have no authority or equipment in and of themselves for the preaching of the gospel. It is only as the Counselor, the Spirit of truth, who is sent to bear witness to Christ (John 15:26) moves and works in and through the disciples that the gospel can be preached effectively.

When the risen Lord bestowed the apostolic commission upon the Church and empowered it to continue His mission, the very heart of His act lay in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. . . . (John 20:21-23). It is as

¹These references are not intended to be exhaustive. Further, there is no implication in what is here said that signs and miracles were indispensable to the preaching of the gospel; they simply prepared the hearers to listen and to accept its truth.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 92.

anointed with His Spirit that they are bearers of His commission, and in no other way. In precisely the same way the command to be witnesses to Him is inseparably connected with the gift of the Spirit. 'Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:8).' Indeed, as we have already seen, the Holy Spirit is Himself the primary and essential witness, and it is only His presence in the disciples which gives them the authority that makes it possible for them truly to witness to Him.¹

The Holy Spirit is the one who is first and foremost the witness to Jesus Christ and only as the Church partakes of the Spirit can it be an effective witness for Christ.²

The Spirit is actively involved in, and intimately connected with every phase and aspect of the Church's ministry. Without him the Church could not have an effectual ministry at all. In the edification of believers, the worship of the Church, the varied ministries within the Church, it is the Spirit who is working. In its missionary outreach the Spirit inspires and directs the Church, using men whom he himself fills and equips to preach the gospel. The total ministry of the Church is possible only because the Spirit is present and active in its midst.

¹Newbigin, op. cit., pp. 104,105.

²It must be stressed, however, that the Spirit does not work in a vacuum. "The witness of the Spirit is borne in and through the Body of Christ." (Swete, op. cit., p. 312.)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary

In this study I have attempted to examine the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church from the viewpoint of the New Testament writers. I have proceeded by studying the New Testament witness as widely and extensively as possible and by reading a variety of commentators and authors in the area of concern. This latter task accompanied, supplemented and in some respects preceded my own personal study, for in pursuing various opinions I was led to new scriptural testimony and a new appreciation of the significance of certain passages which had already been studied.

In choosing secondary sources I purposely sought authors who had varying viewpoints in order to get an appreciation of the various possibilities in interpretation in this unsystematized area in which there are almost as many opinions as there are writers. Due to the nature of the study it was not possible to go into a discussion of the various interpretations (except for certain portions of chapters one and two) so I therefore selected those materials which were closest to the scriptural testimony as I interpreted it from my own study. After a careful consideration of another's findings I sometimes found it necessary to revise my own thinking and understanding of the scriptural testimony.

In retrospect I see this approach as being a very desirable one. Areas of great importance were opened up;

areas of which I was not aware when I first conceived of this study. Also, materials which had already been studied gained new significance and much broader applications.

From the outset it was clear that before the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church could be considered it would be necessary to clarify the meaning of the terms 'Holy Spirit' and 'Church.' And as a result the first two chapters were written and considered to be a preliminary study which would pave the way for the pursuit of the major topic. One's understanding of either the Holy Spirit or the Church would determine the direction of the entire study. It was for this reason especially that the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ was carefully considered, for a shallow or incorrect understanding of this terminology could abort the entire study.

The division of the materials into the Spirit's role in the formation and life of the Church, the organization and administration of the Church, and the ministry of the Church seemed a logical and very convenient one. Each of these divisions is a unit in itself and there is very little overlapping between chapters. The divisions within the chapters were more difficult to make and were determined by the way the materials themselves suggested.

In handling the scriptural materials an attempt was made to see the Biblical testimony as a unity rather than as a conglomeration of various viewpoints. Thus I felt free to put Pauline, Johannine and Petrine materials side by side whenever

it seemed advisable to do so for the complete treatment of a topic. Differences among the scriptural writers were not eagerly sought out, nor were they ignored when they appeared. The one aim in using the New Testament witness was to use all the materials that were significantly relevant (directly or indirectly) and to exclude nothing of importance. This aim, though difficult, I trust was achieved.

B. Conclusion

The one overriding conclusion which is evident from this whole study is the absolutely essential role of the Holy Spirit in the Church at every level. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings to the Church the one ingredient that distinguishes it from every other social group, and that is the divine element, himself.

The Church and the Holy Spirit are not identical. The Church is not simply the extension of the incarnation nor is the Holy Spirit the spirit of fellowship, the esprit de corps, of the Church. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ, stands over against the Church as its Lord to whom the Church must ever look, while at the same time he is also the very life of the Church, the one who fills, inspires and animates it. At the same time the Church is the vessel which the Spirit uses to work in the world, for just as the body must have life to be of any service, so also must the life have a material form of expression in a material world. Therefore, though the Church and the Spirit are not identical they are so closely related as to

be inseparable from our standpoint.

By his coming the Spirit is the one who made possible the formation of the Church as we know it. He is intimately involved in, and indispensable to, the life of the Church. He creates the koinonia and establishes and maintains the Church's unity. He is the one who truly governs the Church, guiding and directing it in all things. He gives gifts to men and makes it possible for these men to exercise their gifts in the Church. He thereby is active in the organization and administration of the Church. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the ministry of the Church in all its many aspects. He works for the edification of believers and makes possible the true worship of God, and he creates ministries such as prophets and teachers within the Church to minister to believers. He inspires, directs and equips the Church for its missionary outreach to unbelievers and at the same time himself bears witness to Christ. Surely there is no area in the life of the Church which is not an outgrowth of the life of the Spirit within.

There are certain areas which deserve more careful consideration which could not be given in this study. The role of the Spirit in the all important office of apostle needs to be clarified. The significance of baptism as a rite of entrance into the community and as an important event in the receiving of the Spirit needs to be examined. Does one receive the Spirit because he is admitted into the community in which the Spirit is present or does one receive the Spirit and thereby gain

entrance into the Church? This question is of great significance and an answer should be sought. Finally, in order to balance a study of this kind it is essential to examine the human element in the Church and the role that man has in the Church. This would prevent a distorted view of the Church as it really is.

Finally, this study should have a great deal to say to the modern Church. The findings of this study need to be applied specifically to the Church today in a relevant and meaningful fashion. Surely this study does not speak of past-event alone. It does speak of a time when a vital and dynamic Church turned the world upside-down for the sake of Jesus Christ, and this could be done because Christ Himself, by the Holy Spirit, was truly the Lord and Life of the Church. We today must recapture the understanding that the Holy Spirit is the one and only indispensable presence in the Church of Jesus Christ.

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