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Spirit of Holiness or Spirit of the Age? *The Holy Spirit in the Teaching of Paul*

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In various quarters today it is suggested that Restoration churches in general, and Churches of Christ in particular, are pneumatologically challenged. The Restorationist way of being Christian is described as deficient in its experience of the Spirit's presence in the Christian life; the rationalism of Bacon, Locke, and Reid is held to be the tap root of Restoration theology, and such soil is reckoned as inhospitable to the reception of the Spirit. Traditionally in Churches of Christ, it is being taught, the work of the Spirit has been thought to be mediated through the rational principles for the interpretation of Scripture outlined for Restoration Christians as early as Alexander Campbell's *Christian System*. As this critique has sometimes been epitomized, "We have relegated the Holy Spirit to the role of retired author."

No doubt there is much in this critique of Restorationist rationalism that merits consideration.¹ Some concern may be justified,

¹The fullest such account of the Restoration tradition to date is by Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), esp. 92-116. More popular and explicitly confessional is C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 1988), esp. 75-87 and 101-112. Robert Webber traces the eclipse of affect by reason in Protestant Christianity beyond the Enlightenment to Ulrich Zwingli, whose perspective was developed by the Protestant scholastics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

however, regarding the effects of disseminating this critique in churches and the use to which it is put in re-forming congregational faith and practice. The equation of Restorationism with rationalism may encourage the supposition that pushing the pendulum in the opposite direction is the manifest will of God; if convinced that an excess of reason has denied the Spirit entry into our churches, we may jump to the conclusion that a visible surfeit of emotion is a sure indication of the Spirit's presence.

Such "emotionalizing" of the faith, increasingly evident in Churches of Christ, is by no means limited to any one tradition but can be seen in all Christian communions open to the influence of the charismatic movement.² Ironically, some observers have concluded that the emphasis on visible emotion encourages conservative churches to confuse the experience of the Holy Spirit with the immediacy and intensity of individual sensory experience that is one of the principal values of contemporary secular culture—most vividly and tragically evident in the drug culture, but present also to a less intense degree in various forms of popular entertainment. These observers argue that the assimilation of the church to this culture—while surely contrary to the intentions of those Christian leaders furthering the process of emotionalizing the faith—is in fact the result.³

notably the Reformed theologian Abraham Kuyper (*Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978]) 95–97.

²For the "convergence" of charismatic worship with traditional, see Robert Webber, *Renew Your Worship: A Study in the Blending of Traditional and Contemporary Worship* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson) 1997.

³See Neil Postman's chapter "Shuffle Off to Bethlehem," in *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking, 1986) 114–124; Quentin J. Schultze, *Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991); Kenneth A. Myers, *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1989); Harold O. J. Brown, *The Sensate Culture* (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1996). In terms of H. Richard

A renewed engagement with the Spirit of God, distinct from the spirit of the age, must be mediated through the witness of Scripture to the Spirit's sanctifying work. The letters of Paul loom large in any quest to rediscover the biblical witness concerning the identity and work of the Spirit. Further, Pauline pneumatology has recently received renewed attention with an eye towards its significance for the life of the contemporary church.⁴ A reconsideration of the Pauline witness is thus an appropriate step towards a fuller appreciation of the Spirit's transforming work in the life of the believer and the ministry of the church.

In particular, this essay seeks to identify three key elements of Pauline teaching on the Spirit: (1) the Spirit's role as the agent of God's new, eschatological creation; (2) the Spirit's work creating and sustaining communities of this new creation; and (3) the moral transformation of these communities as the present outcome of the Spirit's work in the life of the church. As we will see, Paul's understanding of the Spirit that Christians share does not encourage preoccupation with our individual emotional states; the Holy Spirit poured out on the church through Christ rather invites us to engage with God's redemptive purposes, which extend

Niebuhr's well-known typology, these critics warn that contemporary evangelical Christianity tends towards "the Christ of culture"; Richard John Neuhaus's suggestive reformulation of Niebuhr's typology in terms of "church and world" (*The Catholic Moment: The Paradox of the Church in the Postmodern World* [New York: Harper & Row, 1987] 16–24) argues that the proper stance is "church and world in paradox" (the term Neuhaus finds preferable to Niebuhr's more frequent "dualism"; see *Christ and Culture*, [New York: Harper and Row, 1951]) 149–189).

⁴Most exhaustively in Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994); Fee's *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996) distills and develops the conclusions of his more encyclopedic work. See also Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996) 103–135.

to the renewal of the whole creation. Paul preached not the hedonistic spirit of the age but the Holy Spirit of the age to come.

The Spirit and the Ends of the Ages

In Pauline teaching, the Spirit with whom we are in contact in the church of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of the Father, granted by the Father to the Son, and now, at the intersection of two ages, shared through the Son with all those who are made his in baptism. As we will see, the crucial test of who presently belongs to the Son—i.e., of who is truly in possession of his Spirit—is the moral quality displayed by persons claiming that the Spirit is at work in them. More than extraordinary states of experience, it is the character of believers that indicates which spirit is at work in them.

In 1 Cor 10:11, Paul describes Christians as those “on whom the ends of the ages have met.”⁵ That is, the end of “the present evil age” (Gal 1:4) has abutted the beginning of the new age of salvation inaugurated through Christ’s death and resurrection. Christians live at the juncture of an age dominated by the power of sin and one in which Christ will be recognized as Lord of all. It is the Spirit that enables Christians to confess the Lordship of Christ in advance of all creation. The confession of Jesus as Lord will resound from the heights of creation to the depths on the last day (Phil 2:11); Christians are enabled to acknowledge the sovereignty of Christ even now, by the power of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:3).

The Pauline perspective has been well captured by Richard Neuhaus.

⁵This is the literal translation offered by Richard B. Hays, who rightly draws attention to this text in his excellent account of Pauline ethics (*The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation. A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996] 16–59, esp. 19–27). Other translations of New Testament texts herein are the present writer’s.

To live by the authority of Christ is to abandon the search for authority as authority is understood in other vocations. Compared with other members of the diplomatic corps at the courts of the world, an ambassador for Christ is in an awkward position. Most ambassadors bear the authority of and are legitimated by the sovereignties that they represent. But the sovereignty of the one we claim to represent is itself in question. The claim is under the shadow of a history shadowed by powerful evidence against his sovereignty. The shadow will not be dispelled, the question will not be answered, until he returns in glory.⁶

In the Pauline perspective, the Spirit is the agent through which the Father presently enables his ambassadors to attest Christ's sovereignty by their words and deeds, and the Spirit is also that power which will ultimately make Christ's sovereignty manifest to every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. This dimension of Pauline teaching on the Spirit is perhaps the least often explicitly stated in the letters, but it is nonetheless crucial to our apprehension of the Spirit's work.

The Spirit's work can clearly be seen as eschatological in Rom 1:3-4, although the point is made more clearly in the Greek text than in most English versions. Introducing himself and his Gospel to the Roman church, Paul describes the Christ whose sovereignty he proclaims as one "designated Son of God in power by the Spirit of holiness through [the] resurrection of dead ones." The expression "Spirit of holiness" is a Hebraic way of saying "the Holy Spirit," so it is by the action of his Father's Spirit that Jesus has been powerfully designated God's Son in the resurrection. It is striking, however, that in this passage Paul does not refer to Jesus' resurrection "from the dead" (as in 1 Cor 15:12); he says rather that Jesus has been "designated son of God in power by the resurrection of dead ones"—that is, by the resurrection of all the dead, of

⁶Richard John Neuhaus, *Freedom for Ministry* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 69.

which Jesus' resurrection is the beginning.⁷ Jesus' own resurrection is not an isolated incident in human history but the first installment of the general resurrection that marks the transition from this age to the next.

The same perspective is evident in Paul's description of Jesus' resurrection as the "firstfruits," the initial ingathering that signals a bountiful harvest yet to come (1 Cor 15:23); it is noteworthy that Paul uses the same agricultural image to describe the Spirit received by Christians as the gift Christians have already received which is the harbinger of the full harvest of resurrection and renewed creation yet to come, when God's adopted children will experience the redemption of our bodies from death (Rom 8:23). The same point is expressed in commercial imagery when the Spirit is described as the "pledge" or "security" of the inheritance that God has promised his children (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14).⁸ The Spirit by which God raised Christ from among the dead will also be God's agent in the regeneration of all those whom he will transform so that they might share the life of the age to come.

Nor is the Spirit active at only these two points in the history of redemption; it is not as though the Father breathes the Spirit forth once for Christ's resurrection and then a second time for the general resurrection thousands of years later (perhaps even millions), in the meantime having no work for the Spirit to accomplish.⁹ Rather, in the

⁷An Old Testament text that likely informed Paul's teaching connecting resurrection and the Spirit (or "breath," as discussed above) is Ezekiel 37, the resurrection of the dry bones of Israel by the breath of God.

⁸For consideration of this understanding of salvation throughout the NT, see Dale C. Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

⁹Paul himself reckoned with a period of only decades between resurrection and parousia, which he expected to welcome (cf. 1 Thess 4:15-17; 2 Thess 2:1; 1 Cor 15:52; see Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* [Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998]

interim between Christ's resurrection and ours, the Spirit is powerfully at work drawing people into association with the risen Christ in preparation for his return in glory.

We have seen above from 1 Cor 12:3 that the Spirit is the agent of the Christian's confession "Jesus is Lord" (*Iēsous Kyrios*). Indeed, Paul says in that text that it is *only* the Spirit that can lead a person to confess Jesus as Sovereign. The acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord is of course not a matter of mere words; Paul's statement assumes that the person crying out *Iēsous Kyrios* means what (s)he says and is sincerely assuming the role of Jesus' slave (*doulos*), the term which answers to *kyrios* (as in 2 Cor 4:5). The Spirit is thus also the source of the power that enables Christians to live under the lordship of Jesus the Messiah.

It is in 1 Corinthians that Paul most fully discusses the gifts (*charismata*) that are granted to Christians by the Spirit, in particular the gifts of prophetic utterance and "speaking in tongues," which had caused such disruption in Corinthian worship assemblies (chaps. 12–14). It should not escape our notice that Paul first mentions such gifts at the opening of the letter (1 Cor 1:4–9), and there he describes these gifts as given by the Spirit to confirm the Gospel for those "awaiting the disclosure of our Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:7). As Paul describes the work of the Spirit, its effect is not to focus Christians on the immediacy of the present moment or on extraordinary experiences of spiritual ecstasy but rather to sustain the church in her mission until the coming of the Lord. The

esp. 243–256). Although the "delay of the parousia" has given rise to considerable hermeneutical exertions in the past 150 years of scholarship, the central claims of the Pauline Gospel are not significantly affected by the elapse of a greater period of time than Paul envisioned; see Austin Farrer, "A Return to New Testament Christological Categories," *Theology* 26 (1933) 304–318.

Spirit at work in Christians is the Spirit by which God raised Christ Jesus, and by which he will raise Christians, from the dead (Rom 8:11); this Spirit draws the church forward towards the eschatological life that awaits God's heirs adopted through Christ.

The Spirit communicated to believers in Christ is eschatological: the revelation that the Spirit communicates concerns God's recreative purpose in Christ, and the consummation of this Spirit's work will be achieved in the age to come. It is this consummation of God's saving work—those blessings prepared by God that eye has not yet seen, nor ear heard, nor human minds conceived—that the Spirit makes known to the church through the ministry of Christ's apostle (1 Cor 2:9–10). The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the spirit that leads the church towards God's future; far from focusing our attention on the ecstasy of the present moment, the Spirit of Christ beckons us forward and invites us to participate in the holy future that God is preparing for his faithful ones in Christ.

Living in Accordance with the Spirit

How does the Spirit work to prepare the faithful to welcome Christ at his return? Paul answers that the Spirit accomplishes the moral transformation of believers into the image of Christ. Romans chap. 8 supplies the fullest exposition of this theme in the Pauline corpus. Here, drawing on an image widespread in ancient moral exhortation, both Jewish and Greco-Roman, Paul refers to moral conduct under the figure of a journey down a path that forks into two ways, requiring a decision about which path to follow.¹⁰ Paul's particular Christian adaptation of this

¹⁰For the image of the "Two Ways," see e.g. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.21–33; 1QS 3:13–4:26; *Didache* 1:1–5:2; and discussion by Abraham J.

hortatory tradition is found in the labels he supplies for the two roads that lead from the fork, i.e., the two directions in life one may pursue; the choice is between “walking in accordance with the flesh” and “walking in accordance with the Spirit” (Rom 8:4). The context of this statement in Paul’s exhortation to Roman Christians helps the reader see the difference between these two ways of living.

Romans chap. 8 begins by reiterating a conclusion first stated in Rom 5:15–19, that Christ’s death and resurrection results in the overturning of the verdict of condemnation (*katakrima*) pronounced on Adam by the divine Judge; instead, those who are incorporate in the eschatological Man Jesus Christ share in the verdict of acquittal (*dikaiōsis*) that God has pronounced on Jesus, which he signified by raising him from the dead.¹¹ This earlier discussion is taken up in Paul’s statement that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). The advance here made over chap. 5 is that the latter abstractly states the consequences of acquittal in the heavenly court, in terms of universal human history; in chap. 8, these consequences are presented in concrete terms addressed to a sinful Gentile whose soliloquy Paul depicts in 7:7–25—much as contemporary preachers will sometimes represent others as speaking in their sermons, especially in the form of a dialogue (as throughout Romans) and sometimes at even greater length than Paul in chap. 7.¹²

Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Library of Early Christianity 4; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 135.

¹¹The original exposition of this point continues into chap. 6, with baptism as the faithful act by which Christians are incorporated into Christ, “baptized into Christ Jesus, baptized into his death” (6:3).

¹²For this interpretation of Rom 7:7–25 as “speech-in-character,” see Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994) 258–284. The

Paul comes to v. 4's contrast between proceeding through life in accordance with the flesh and proceeding in accordance with the Spirit by way of the Incarnation, by which God "condemned sin in the flesh [of Christ]," i.e., in his faithful and obedient offering of his bodily flesh in death, to which God responded by raising and exalting Christ, as detailed in Rom 3:21–26 and 5:15–21. Jesus' faithfulness towards God even unto death, described in these two pivotal texts, is exemplified in chap. 4 by appeal to Abraham, who "considered his own body as already dead . . . and [also] the dead condition of Sarah's womb" (Rom 4:19) yet "trusted on God who raises the dead and names the things which are not as things that are" (Rom 4:17).

To walk in accordance with the flesh, then, is to proceed on the assumption that the prospects for human fulfillment are limited to those the created order offers; it is to leave the God who raises the dead out of account when planning one's course. Had Abraham walked in accordance with the flesh, he would have declined to chart his course by the promise that God would create a great nation from his descendants, he would have maintained his residence among the Chaldeans, and he would never have consented to offer his heir back to the God from whom he received him; had Jesus made his way through his incarnate life in accordance with the flesh, he would have refused to accept death—by shameful crucifixion, no

textual point that most strongly favors Stowers's interpretation is the reading *se* in 8:2, which represents Paul as turning in dialogue to the imaginary speaker of the preceding passage and announcing to him the deliverance from his plight afforded by the Gospel: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you [my friend] from the law of sin and death." The variants are best explained as secondary to the second person singular pronoun, introduced to make sense of the text when its dialogic character was effaced due to construing Romans as a general theological treatise.

less (cf. Rom 6:6)—as this was clearly no way to claim his Davidic inheritance (cf. Rom 1:3–4). To walk in accordance with the Spirit is to follow in the steps of Abraham (cf. Rom 4:12) and of Jesus (cf. Rom 15:1–7). It is to be guided by trust (*pistis*) that what the Creator promises he will fulfill, any appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

The “renewal of the understanding” that Paul appeals for in Rom 12:2 permits Christians to bridge the gap between life in accordance with the flesh and life in accordance with the spirit, between our conformity to the present age, of which Paul warns, and our transformation into people of approving God’s good and well-pleasing will now brought to fruition in Christ, for which he appeals. The new life that the Spirit brings about is one in which self-centered concerns give place to concern for the Messiah’s fellow servants, a manner of life most fully described in Rom 12:1–15:13.¹³ The agency of the Spirit in this transformation is most evident in Rom 8:13; it is “by the Spirit” (*pneumati*) that Christians mortify the actions of the fleshly body that lead to death, and so find the resurrected life of the risen Lord. The result of this process at work in the church’s mission is the creation of a fellowship “sanctified in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:16) for eschatological presentation to God.¹⁴

Moral transformation as the aim of the Spirit’s work is evident also in Paul’s description of the “fruit” of the Spirit, i.e., what the Spirit

¹³On the communal virtues encouraged in this section of Romans, similar to the manner of life encouraged by Stoics and mild Cynics—as contrasted with the individualistic virtues associated with self-mastery by harsh Cynics—see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 317–323.

¹⁴For the “offering of the Gentiles” as not something Gentiles offer (i.e., a subjective understanding of the genitive) but as Paul’s sacrificial offering of sanctified Gentiles to God (i.e., an objective genitive), see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 712, citing Phil 2:17 as a comparable image.

yields when implanted and cultivated in a human life (Gal 5:22–23). Such instruction on the sanctifying work of the Spirit formed an element in the preaching of Paul that founded new congregations, part of the ABC's of Christianity as Paul taught it.¹⁵ This can be seen from 1 Thess 4:3–8, where Paul describes his converts' "sanctification" (*hagiosmos*, v. 3) in sexual behavior as the will of God, "who grants you his Spirit, which is holy (*to pneuma autou to hagion*, v. 8)"; and this is but a reminder of Paul's instruction to his converts at the outset of their Christian experience, "the precepts we gave you through the Lord Jesus," (v. 2), "just as we also told you previously (*proeipamen*) and attested" (v. 6). That this was Paul's general missionary practice is confirmed by 1 Cor 6:11, where Paul recalls the sexual and other vices that the Corinthians abandoned when at baptism they were "washed, . . . sanctified (*hēgiasthēte*), . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

The qualities that Paul lists under the heading "fruit of the Spirit" are not states of mind but moral dispositions that result from the Spirit's work in the lives of believers, dispositions that direct individual Christians' energies towards the community of the faithful. When Paul speaks of "peace," for example, he is not referring to a state of internal tranquillity that might equally well be obtained through aromatherapy; he is referring to the communal well-being (including but not limited to the absence of hostilities within the community; cf. Gal 5:15) that marks lives

¹⁵This is clearly the case with the vices that Paul lists under the heading "works of the flesh" just previously in Gal 5:19–21; Paul reminds the Galatians how he had "previously said (*proeipon*) that those who practice such vices shall not inherit God's kingdom" (5:21). It is likely that in the course of this same prior instruction Paul had outlined the contrasting behavior that *does* qualify one as God's heir, in terms similar to those rehearsed as "the fruit of the Spirit" in 5:22–23.

lived in union with Christ. Further, the “works of the flesh,” with which the fruit of the Spirit is contrasted, focus on vices that disrupt the life of the Christian community. This communal focus of the life inspired by the Spirit leads us to the final aspect of Pauline pneumatology that we will note, which may be the most surprising to many modern Christians.

The Spirit and the Body

In Paul’s teaching, the Spirit’s work does not focus on the individual Christian. Rather, the Spirit’s focus is directed towards the good not of the individual Christian in isolation but towards the health of the body, and to the good of the individual Christian as a member of the body contributing towards its growth.

A good entry into this perspective can be found in Roman 8:3–4. Here the result of Christ’s incarnation, presented in v. 3 as the culmination of God’s history with Israel from the giving of the Torah at Sinai, is that “the just requirement of Torah [is] fulfilled among us, who walk not in accordance with the flesh but in accordance with the Spirit” (Rom 8:4). The concrete shape of this fulfillment in local Christian communities is suggested in Rom 13:8–10, where Paul returns to the terms of Rom 8:4 in his exhortation of the Roman Christians. Loving the neighbor as oneself (Lev 19:18) involves the keeping of all the commands of Torah; a community governed by love is one where Torah has found its fulfillment (*plēroma*, 12:10).¹⁶ Paul’s term for the Torah (*nomos*), borrowed from the Greek translation of Old Testament, itself would suggest a

¹⁶Luke Timothy Johnson has noted other important connections between Romans 8 and 12–14 in his paper “The Work of the Spirit and the Formation of Character,” read to the Character Ethics and Biblical Interpretation Consultation of the SBL Annual Meeting in San Francisco, 23 November 1997, which he kindly made available for the writing of this paper.

communal orientation to Paul's readers, since it is the term for a national "constitution."¹⁷ The just requirement of Israel's constitution is fulfilled not by isolated individuals but among the people of God newly reconstituted around the Messiah whom they acclaim as Lord by the power of his Spirit.

The communal focus of the Spirit's work is further evident from the role that Paul ascribes to the Spirit in his own ministry of planting and nurturing churches. Reminding the Thessalonians of his ministry which founded their community, Paul recalls that "our gospel did not come to you in word alone but in power and in the Holy Spirit and in full conviction, just as you know what sort of people we became among you for your sake" (1 Thess 1:5).¹⁸ Addressing the more troublesome Corinthians, Paul expresses the same point with the metaphor of a letter dictated to a scribe: "You are our epistle, inscribed on your hearts, known and read by all men, openly displayed that you are an epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink but *with the Spirit of the living God*" (2 Cor 3:2-3).

In Rom 8:23, the reference to Christians who possess the Spirit groaning as we await "the redemption of our *body*" in the singular suggests that Paul speaks of the one body of Christ in which Christians are incorporate as members, which Paul will mention in Rom 12:4-5, just after referring to the individual bodies of the Christians composing the church in Rom 12:1; there too the several bodies offered to God in

¹⁷See Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 34-36.

¹⁸The context makes it clear that it is the Holy Spirit working through the apostle and his associates that is recalled here; God's "election" of the Thessalonians (v. 4) is documented by recalling first the character of the instrument through whom God worked to bring it about (v. 5) and then the response of the Thessalonians to Paul's preaching (v. 6). The same alternation from preaching to response is evident as the reader moves from 1:9a to 1:9b-10 and from 2:1-12 to 2:13-16.

obedient service constitute only one sacrifice (*thusia*), i.e., they are taken up into Christ's sacrifice of his body, which serves as the model of Christian ethical behavior in Rom 15:1–6. In what is likely a passage reflecting prior instruction, with which Roman Christians as well as Corinthians may have been familiar, Paul uses the verbal cognate of *thusia* in reference to Christ's paschal sacrifice (1 Cor 5:7). Paul is quite clear that the Spirit is the agent by which Christians are first united with the body of Christ in baptism (1 Cor 12:12), and his allusion to the Lord's Supper as "spiritual food" and "spiritual drink" (1 Cor 10:3–4) strongly suggests that the Spirit's unifying work continues in the meal that forms the regular expression of this body's oneness (1 Cor 10:16–17).

The best known Pauline text on the Spirit asks to be read in the same light. Paul's discussion of the Spirit's *charismata* in 1 Corinthians 12–14 begins with an elaboration of the image of the church as the body of Christ (12:12–28), continues with an exemplary discussion of love (i.e., active concern for fellow members) as the animating principle of this body (chap. 13), and concludes with a series of specific directives for Corinthian worship assemblies (chap. 14). These directives stress the need to subordinate one's perceived gifts to the needs of fellow worshipers for knowledge of God and communion with him through Christ (see esp. vv. 4, 12, 19, 23–25, 26).¹⁹

Conclusion

In 1949, Dorothy Sayers produced a parody of a catechism summarizing what most non-Christians suppose Christians to believe; her purpose was

¹⁹For fuller discussion of these chapters in the context of 1 Corinthians and Paul's apostolic ministry, see Jeffrey Peterson, "How Shall the Seeker Say Amen? The 'Seeker' and the Service in First Corinthians," *Christian Studies* 13 (1993) 25–31.

to draw attention to the failure of churches to communicate the essential claims of the faith to persons outside their fellowship. About the Holy Spirit, she wrote

Q.: What does the Church think about God the Holy Ghost?

A.: I don't know exactly. He was never seen or heard of till Pentecost. There is a sin against Him which damns you forever, but no one knows what it is.²⁰

Sayers's comments—intended to shame Christians into thinking through our faith and articulating it clearly enough for outsiders to understand what Christians believe—suggest that Restoration churches are by no means unique in lacking a clearly articulated doctrine of the Spirit.

Conversely, the vital impulse at the heart of the Restoration vision is especially pertinent in a consideration of the Spirit's work, not only among Restorationist Christians but within all communions. Perhaps surprisingly, this consideration of Paul's teaching on the Spirit suggests that such Restorationist emphases in pneumatology as can be discerned are not without precedent in the earliest exponent of the Christian faith.

For any Christian confused about the work of the Holy Spirit—or for any church—the first order of business is a thorough and prayerful reconsideration of the scriptural witness to the Spirit's work, of which this essay represents at best the beginning. Only such re-engagement with the Scriptures can enable preaching and conviction that will truly open Christians to the power of God's Spirit, rather than making the church captive to the spirit of the age and the fashion of the moment.

²⁰Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed or Chaos?* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949; reprinted, Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1995) 22. Sayers is not as well known as C. S. Lewis, but her writings on the church's faith repay reading as well as his, especially her meditation on the doctrine of the Trinity, *The Mind of the Maker* (Cleveland and New York: World, 1941).

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