

JOHN WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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This paper will, at the beginning, briefly summarize John Wesley's doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the function this doctrine has in his theology as a whole. The question of the relation between "Spirit" and "Word" will then be explored, and the way Wesley's understanding of this relationship compares with that of Classical Protestantism. We will then examine the place of the Holy Spirit in two areas of Wesley's theology, namely hermeneutics and soteriology, comparing his understanding with that of the American holiness movement, in an attempt to explore the implications of his views for Contemporary Wesleyanism.

I. The Experiential Focus of Wesley's Doctrine

John Wesley had little interest in a purely speculative theology.¹ His energies were mostly invested in soteriological concerns. In his theology of the Holy Spirit, therefore, he turns quickly from such doctrinal matters as the nature, personality, and procession of the Holy Spirit, and the place of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity, to those subjects more directly related to the *ordo salutis* and the work of the Spirit in Christian experience.

On the former things, nevertheless, he did have some opinions, and it is important at the outset to understand what they were. In his understanding of the Trinity, Wesley aligns himself with those credal formulations long considered definitive in historical Christianity. In the words of one of his brother's hymns, he claimed to be "fix'd on the *Athanasian* mound,"² although in his 1775 sermon, "On the Trinity," he disclaims that statement in the creed which asserts that anyone who does not assent to said creed cannot be saved. And he defends Servetus in his objection against Calvin to the terms "Trinity" and "Person" because they were not Biblical.³ Sounding much like Augustine who tolerated the formula "three Persons" as a description of the Trinity, "not in order to express it, but in order not to be silent,"⁴ Wesley says:

I dare not insist upon anyone's using the word Trinity, or Person. I use them myself without any scruple, because I know

of none better: But if any man has any scruple against them, who shall constrain him to use them?⁶

Despite this similarity, and despite his appreciation for the Athanasian Creed, which is "Augustinian through and through,"⁶ Wesley was probably closer to the Cappadocian Fathers than to Augustine in the way he uses trinitarian language and images.⁷ Just as on another doctrinal issue, Wesley said he came "to the very edge of Calvinism,"⁸ so on the issue of trinitarianism, because of the operational distinctions he sees between the persons of the Godhead, he probably comes closer to the edge of tri-theism than to modalism.⁹

Be that as it may, Wesley is well within orthodox boundaries. On the Trinity, as on so many other doctrinal matters, he is loyally Anglican. In his 1784 abridgement of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles for the American Methodists, he includes Article One, "Of Faith in the Trinity," unchanged.¹⁰ Likewise on the issue of the Spirit's "procession," Wesley retains the Anglican Article Five (as the Methodist Article Four). This article affirms the procession of the Spirit from the Son as well as from the Father. Wesley thus agrees with the Western church against the East in the "filioque" controversy.¹¹

Wesley believed also in the "personality" of the Holy Spirit. He repeatedly makes use of personal pronouns and images as he describes the Spirit's relationship to humans.¹² A perusal of the Wesleys' *Hymns on the Trinity*¹³ reveals a conception of the Holy Spirit as "a living, active, 'personal' presence who enters into an intimate interpersonal fellowship with man, and is addressed as a recipient of prayer, praise, and worship."¹⁴ In his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, his comment on John 15:26 is quite explicit in regard to the Spirit's personality:

The Spirit's coming, and being sent by our Lord from the Father, to testify of Him, are personal characters, and plainly distinguish Him from the Father and the Son; and His title as the *Spirit of Truth*, together with His proceeding from the Father, can agree to none but a divine person.¹⁵

But for Wesley the main point of such scriptural teachings is not merely that the Spirit is a person in relation to the Father and to the Son, but that the Spirit is a person *in relation to us*! When the Spirit deals with us, it is not some impersonal "influence" with which we have to do. It is none other than the personal God himself in His outgoing relational activity.

Thus Wesley's interest in the doctrine of the Trinity and, more particularly, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, is altogether non-speculative. These doctrines are decidedly related to human redemption. His interest is soteriological from the beginning to the end, and the Holy Spirit is a key principle in his soteriology. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is expounded by Wesley in the context of religious experience.

Absolutely, all of the Godhead is present and operative in the Holy Spirit; *functionally* or *redemptively* the Holy Spirit is the earthly vicar of the heavenly Father and Son. The indwelling Spirit applies the work of Christ to the soul of man and initiates and administers the Christian life.¹⁶

All there is of God is unreservedly involved in our redemption, in both its objective and subjective aspects. There is no experience of God that is not an experience of the Holy Spirit. Every experience of God is, at one and the same time, an experience of "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (II Cor. 13:14, NIV). This claim might seem to be contradicted by what we earlier called Wesley's "operational distinctions" between the persons of the Trinity, or what medieval theologians called the doctrine of "appropriations."¹⁷ This is the concept in which a work which properly belongs to the whole Godhead is attributed (appropriated) to only one of the three Persons. Wesley was utilizing a form of the "appropriations" doctrine when he defined *justification* as "what God does for us through his Son" and *sanctification* as "what he works in us by his Spirit."¹⁸ But these definitions show that Wesley understood clearly that *both* justification and sanctification are the work of God—the whole God, not just one third of God.

Nevertheless he also understood that it is as the Holy Spirit that God first "touches base" with us, and it is through the Spirit that we first encounter God in His redemptive activity. Henry P. Van Dusen has described the Holy Spirit as "God near" and "God mighty," as "God-at-hand" and "God-at-work," *intimacy* and *potency* being the Spirit's distinctive characteristics.¹⁹ There is no way that we can know God apart from the Spirit's activity. J. Paul Taylor, capturing the heart of Wesley's understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, writes:

He is the one with whom we have to do, first of all. He comes to close quarters with us all, touching the inner springs of our being in what the old theologians called 'preventing grace,' the gracious action of God upon us, long in advance of saving grace, checking, reproving, creating the sense of guilt and the longing to be something higher and better than we have been. The Spirit is the special representative of the holiness of the one Godhead, and it is his mission to make men holy.²⁰

In "A Letter to a Roman Catholic," Wesley writes:

I believe the infinite and eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, to be not only perfectly holy in himself, but the immediate cause of all holiness in us; enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting our persons to Christ, assuring us of the adoption of sons, leading us in our actions; purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies, to a full and eternal enjoyment of God.²¹

Wesley's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is soteriological, practical, experiential, having received its early development in the context of Wesley's own existential quest—among the intellectuals at Oxford and among the Indians in Georgia, and culminating in his "heart warming" experience at Aldersgate. For the general work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, he uses the word "inspiration." He defines this inspiration as an "inward assistance of the Holy Ghost"²² and as a spiritual breathing, which he holds to be a Biblical term and a meaningful one. "Breathing," he says, "bears a near relation to spirit."²³ Inspiration, in this sense, is "the main doctrine of the

Methodists," according to Wesley.²⁴ At least four characteristics of this "inspiration" may be discerned: immediacy, universality, variability, and perceptibility.²⁵ By *immediacy*, Wesley means that the assistance which the Holy Spirit gives us, even though mediated by the various means of grace, is given directly, and is "as immediately breathed into you by the Holy Ghost, as if you had lived seventeen hundred years ago."²⁶ Such inspiration is *universal*, given not to a special class of persons nor to a special age in history, but to all who savingly believe in Jesus Christ.²⁷ This inspiration *varies* from person to person. Wesley says "there is an irreconcilable variability in the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men."²⁸ "The same Spirit worketh in every one; and yet worketh in several ways, according to His own will."²⁹ Finally, and most important for this essay, this inspiration of the Holy Spirit is *perceptible*. "The inspiration of the Holy Spirit must necessarily be perceived by him who receives it."³⁰ In his correspondence with "John Smith" (widely thought to be the *nom de plume* of Bishop Thomas Secker³¹) in the late 1740's Wesley writes at great length about perceptible inspiration. He defines it as "that inspiration of God's Holy Spirit whereby He fills us (every true believer) with righteousness and peace and joy, with love to Him and all mankind."³² "Christian faith," Wesley asserts, "implies a direct, perceptible testimony of the Spirit, as distinguishable from the suggestion of fancy as light is distinguishable from darkness; whereas we suppose he imperceptibly influences our minds."³³ To Dr. Rutherford, sometime Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, Wesley wrote, in 1768, that inward feeling is not inconsistent with reason, that one may be "inwardly conscious" of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and that "love, joy, and peace, are inwardly felt, or they have no being."³⁴

These four characteristics of the Holy Spirit's inspiration reveal Wesley's emphasis on the *experiential* nature of true religion. In his sermon on "The Means of Grace," he affirms that "outward religion is nothing worth, without the religion of the heart."³⁵ This leads us to the next consideration:

II. "Spirit" in Relation to "Word"

We now turn from "inspiration" as Wesley uses the term (i.e. to describe the Spirit's work in the *ordo salutis*, as sketched in the above section) to a topic which for systematic theology may be said to have prior significance, namely, "revelation." Wesley, who seems to have used the term "revelation" only infrequently, would undoubtedly have seen it as part of the *ordo salutis* itself, as the working of prevenient grace. Nevertheless revelation is a concept that, in dogmatics, properly belongs in prolegomena. Our interest here is in the part played by the Holy Spirit in revelation, both in Christian theology in general and in Wesley's theology in particular.

Revelation, as an event of divine-human encounter, can never be described only as an *objective* or a *subjective* happening. It always involves two parties.³⁶ Of course the initiative is always from God's side. God alone makes the encounter possible. But God cannot effect this encounter unless His human partner responds to the divine overture. Revelation is not even revelation if it is not perceived and acknowledged from the human side. Although the initiative is unilateral, there must be mutual involvement of the two parties in the encounter.

But because of our fallenness, humankind cannot recognize the revelation. Therefore, in the words of Hendrikus Berkhof,

to God's coming down into our world must . . . correspond a creative leap of our cognition beyond its own limitations. Both a heightening and a liberation of our cognitive faculty are needed; and that is beyond our ability. Beside the revelation we need the illumination of our mind to be able to perceive the supernatural in the natural and the divine majesty in the humiliation. No revelation will be effected unless God works in us with this double revelational activity. He must make himself present in our reality and he must open our eyes to make us see his presence.³⁷

For this double activity systematic theology uses the concepts *Word* and *Spirit*. In the Bible, Word often stands for the whole of the revelational event, although revelation is not always in the form of words alone. Revelation also happens in events, visions, cultic rites, and supremely in the Incarnation of the Logos. When systematic theology labels all this as "Word," the communicative nature of revelation is emphasized. The Word makes its appeal to us, wanting to be heard. But if hearing actually takes place, "the word event, the *speaking* of the word, has apparently been augmented by another event, the *hearing* of the word."³⁸ To bring this about is the work of the Spirit, that is, of God who not only comes to us from outside, but opens our ears from within and enables us to hear the speaking of God. As Martin Luther put it, "after a man has heard the word with his ears and grasped it with his heart, the Holy Spirit, the real teacher, comes and gives power to the word so that it takes hold."³⁹

This bi-unity of Word and Spirit has not always been held in proper balance in the history of theology. Theological thinking has often proceeded either objectivistically from the divine side or subjectivistically from the human side.

For much of its history, the church paid little attention to the role of the Spirit in revelation. To be sure, Western theology has always given place to the subjective human role in matters of the *fruit* of faith and the living of the Christian life. But only since the Middle Ages has the role of the human subject in the revelational event been given due recognition. Through Luther, Descartes, Kant, and Schleiermacher, among others, the human role takes on new significance.

In theology this meant an increasing emphasis on the role of the Spirit as a medium of revelation beside the Word. Some went so far as "to ascribe to the Spirit, and thus to the subjective pole, an independent content over against the objective event of revelation."⁴⁰ Anabaptists, Quakers, and enthusiasts overemphasized the subjective and the immediate experience of the Spirit in the individual. Luther and Calvin rejected this type of emphasis and maintained that the Spirit's function is *referential*, i.e., to refer us to Christ, to open our eyes not to see the Spirit in ourselves, but to see Christ outside ourselves.⁴¹ Later the followers of the Reformers became divided over the "how" of this referral, Lutherans arguing that the Spirit worked *per verbum* ("through the Word") and Calvinists holding that the Spirit worked *cum verbo* ("together with the Word").⁴² Each position had its dangers. The Lutheran view could easily lead to a working of the Word that is automatic;

the Calvinist position opened up the possibility of a separation of the Spirit from the Word and an autonomous operation of the Spirit. This exemplifies the difficulty theology has had in steering a middle course between the Scylla of objectivism and the Charybdis of subjectivism.

The bi-unity, or duality, of Word and Spirit does not mean that there are two separate sources of revelation. If Spirit is seen as a separate source beside the Word, then a subjectivism ensues in which, by claiming illumination by the Spirit, we may rise above the objective revelation of the Word. This makes the Spirit a pseudonym for our own individual aspirations and ideas. On the other hand, if we view the Spirit as the convincing power of the Word, resident in the Word itself as its "heart" or "center," we imprison the Spirit in the Word and thereby diminish his role in the revelatory event. At the same time we lessen the effectiveness of the Word, for the Word does not *automatically* convince the hearer. Even the *Incarnate* Word did not! There is no such thing as word-magic. Word and Spirit are thus not interchangeable; and yet they are one. They constitute an indissoluble unity. *Logos* and *pneuma* cannot be separated. Luther said: "One cannot separate the voice from the breath. Whoever refuses to hear the voice gets nothing out of the breath either."⁴³ Each complements the other. The Spirit enables us to hear and understand the Word. As Kilian McDonnell says,

the authority of the Bible, whether it is inspired or not, is not a thing to be taken for granted. It has always to be shown and identified. But how does that happen? Only as the Holy Spirit proves the worth and meaning of the scriptures and brings us into the truth. One cannot know God unless somehow God is actually present within the knower. And this happens through the Spirit.⁴⁴

"All understanding is subjective, but it is always the subjective understanding of a trans-subjectively experienced reality."⁴⁵ Hendrikus Berkhof has put it well:

The Spirit moves through the world in the shape of the Word in its various forms. The Word is the instrument of the Spirit. But the Spirit is not the prisoner of the Word, nor does the Word work automatically. The Word brings the Spirit to the heart, and the Spirit brings the Word within the heart.⁴⁶

Now what is the significance of this for John Wesley's doctrine of the Holy Spirit? In discussions of Wesley's structure of religious authority, much has been written about the "Wesleyan quadrilateral" of Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. It has been argued, on the one hand, that, in Wesley, these four are coordinates, and, on the other hand, that tradition, experience and reason are really subordinates of Scripture.⁴⁷ Instead of using the "quadrilateral" model, either pro or con, a more fruitful way to examine Wesley's structure of authority might be along the lines of the double operation of Word and Spirit.

I will here outline a threefold suggestion that will occupy the remainder of the paper: (1) I will suggest that Wesley maintained a proper balance between Word and Spirit at two very crucial points in his theology. One point is in his hermeneutic; the other is in his soteriology. Both can be placed

under the rubric of "the witness (or testimony) of the Holy Spirit," although in each instance the term will be used "in a sense not quite the same, nor yet entirely different"⁴⁸ from the other. In the first instance I refer to the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*—the "inner witness of the Holy Spirit" to the truth of the Word. In the second instance I refer to Wesley's doctrine of assurance—the "witness of the Spirit" to both our adoption and our entire sanctification. (2) I will also suggest that this classical Wesleyan balance was to some extent lost in the theology of the American holiness movement, at both the hermeneutical and the soteriological points. (3) Finally, I will hold that contemporary Wesleyanism will serve itself best by attempting to recover the classical Wesleyan balance between Spirit and Word, both hermeneutically and soteriologically. This threefold suggestion will be in the background and will cut across each of the two remaining sections of this paper.

III. The "Testimony of the Spirit" in Wesley's Hermeneutic

In the theology of the Protestant Reformation the Holy Spirit is inseparably associated with the Word. The doctrine which depicts this association is that of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, which received its classical formulation from Calvin, but has antecedents in Luther. In his disagreement with the Roman Catholic system in which the Word is made subject to the power and operation of the Church, Luther discovered that "there is a power in the Word that is able to leap over the gulf of the centuries and speak directly to the heart of the believer."⁴⁹ This power makes the written Word truly a living Word. This living Word is encountered "only where the Word proves itself to be the vehicle of the Living Christ, 'the cradle in which Christ lies.'"⁵⁰ This can happen only by the power of the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. This *testimonium* is, in Luther, associated primarily with the word of preaching rather than with the written words of Scripture. It is in the actual proclamation of the Gospel, that the witness of the Spirit becomes operative. Luther said:

The gospel . . . is nothing else than the preaching and proclamation of the grace and mercy of God which Jesus Christ has earned and gained for us through his death. It is properly not something written down with letters in a book but more an oral proclamation and a living word: a voice which sounds forth into the whole world and is proclaimed publicly so that we may hear it everywhere.⁵¹

This means that the *testimonium* is connected with the Word *in use*; it bears no implication with regard to the Word *antecedent* to its use, such as its inspiration or canonical authority.⁵²

Calvin's concept of the *testimonium* is essentially the same as Luther's, but he introduces an additional element. In Calvin, "the Word is not only the *instrument*, but also the *object* of the Spirit's witness."⁵³ The Spirit certifies the Scripture's divine origin.⁵⁴ The inner witness of the Spirit is "equivalent to an affidavit that God is the author of Scripture."⁵⁵

Calvin developed no theory of inspiration to explain *how* the Word of God came to be written. He simply based its authority on its divine origin. He is content to say that it was by the Spirit of God that the prophets and

apostles spoke, and to rest this conviction on the testimony of that same Spirit within our hearts. He was content to leave the fact of inspiration within the realm of Spirit.

However, Calvin's successors proceeded to go beyond this and elaborated a rational or quasi-rational account of the way in which the Word was inspired into prophets and apostles. In this way, Protestant Orthodoxy transformed inspiration into a theory which was capable of objective verification.⁵⁶

In summarizing the Reformation's legacy regarding the relationship between Word and Spirit, the following can be said: Luther held Word and Spirit together in a creative balance. Calvin maintained the balance, although by teaching that the Word is the *object* as well as the *instrument* of the Spirit's witness, he opened the way for Protestant Orthodoxy to place most of the weight on the former, so that the authority and power of the written Word lay altogether in the inspiration of its writers rather than in that of its hearers. Although Protestant Orthodoxy cannot be blamed for all the faults of modern Fundamentalism, there are lines that can be drawn between them—dotted lines, at least, if not solid ones.

And now to John Wesley. Wesley had, like Calvin, a strong doctrine of the inspiration of the written Scriptures. He could even say that some passages of Scripture were "Spirit dictated."⁵⁷ He often refers to Scripture as the "oracles of God."⁵⁸ He says:

The Scripture, therefore, of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste prefer to all writings of men, however wise or learned or holy.⁵⁹

Wesley believed "the best way to know whether anything be of divine authority is to apply ourselves to the Scripture."⁶⁰ He quotes Luther to the effect that "divinity is nothing but a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost,"⁶¹ both the language and the words of Scripture having been given accurately by the Holy Spirit.⁶² This Spirit-inspired Scripture contains no error and is infallibly true.⁶³

Such statements as these may, at first glance, look like a Fundamentalistic mechanical dictation theory of inspiration. But several considerations argue against such an interpretation. For one thing, Larry Shelton is undoubtedly correct when he says of Wesley:

His statements about Scripture must be interpreted from within the context of eighteenth-century thought, and efforts to super-impose on various proof-texts the framework of twentieth-century fundamentalist epistemology must not be considered legitimate examinations of his positions on the Bible.⁶⁴

Important as this historical context is in interpreting Wesley's view of Scripture, even more important is Wesley's own emphasis on the "inner testimony of the Holy Spirit." This was for him "the primary basis for the authority of Scripture and the authenticating factor in its inspiredness."⁶⁵ As Shelton again says, "it seems ironic that the clearest statements on the *testimonium* of the Holy Spirit can be found in Reformed creeds and that spiritual bases

for the authority of Scripture are more clearly presented in some Reformed seminaries than in Wesleyan ones which emphasize a strong theology of the Spirit."⁶⁶

This irony is compounded by the fact that Wesley himself stood with the Reformers in his advocacy of the "inner witness of the Holy Spirit" as a hermeneutical principle. This doctrine was not developed formally in Wesley as it had been in Calvin. It was not used as a key concept in a great theological controversy as it had been used by Luther in his dissent from Rome. But it is clearly a part of Wesley's structure of authority and a key to understanding his hermeneutics.

Wesley's strong insistence that the Biblical writers were divinely inspired and that Scripture constituted the "oracles of God" did not mean that its power rested solely on those facts and that no further authorization was necessary. Before Scripture can do its saving work, the same Spirit who inspired its writers must now inspire its readers and hearers. He says: "The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those who read it with earnest prayer."⁶⁷ This thought is richly enshrined in the Wesley hymns. For example, number LXIV in the collection of "Hymns on the Trinity," which has as its dual text II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21:

Spirit of Truth, essential God,
Who didst Thine ancient saints inspire,
Shed in their hearts Thy love abroad,
And touch their hallow'd lips with fire,
Our God from all eternity,
World without end, we worship Thee.

Still we believe, almighty Lord,
Whose presence fills both earth and heaven,
The meaning of the written word
Is still by inspiration given,
Thou only dost Thyself explain
The secret mind of God to man.

Come then, Divine Interpreter,
The scriptures to our hearts apply,
And taught by Thee we God revere,
Him in three persons magnify,
In each the Triune God adore,
Who was, and is for evermore.⁶⁸

There is no power or profit in reading or hearing the Scriptures apart from the accompanying witness of the Spirit of God.⁶⁹ Wesley asks:

For what can be more undeniable than this, that our preaching also is vain, unless it be attended with the power of that Spirit who alone pierceth the heart? and that your hearing is vain, unless the same power be present to heal your soul, and to give you a faith which 'standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God?'⁷⁰

In the "Hymns for Whit-Sunday," number XXVII, we read:

Spirit of Faith, come down,
Reveal the things of God,
And make to us the Godhead known,
And witness with the blood.

No man can truly say
That Jesus is the Lord,
Unless Thou take the veil away,
And breathe the living word.

Inspire the living faith,
(Which whosoe'er receives
The witness in himself he hath,
And consciously believes.)⁷¹

And again Wesley writes: "Revelation is complete, yet we cannot be saved unless Christ be *revealed* in our hearts, neither unless God cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the *inspiration* of His Holy Spirit."⁷² Wesley spoke of the Scripture as "our rule" and the Spirit as "our guide" or "leader" who applies the Word redemptively to our hearts.⁷³ Without this application by the Spirit, the written word is powerless. In his comment on Acts 7:38, Wesley says the "oracles of God" are living and powerful *because* they are "applied by the Spirit."⁷⁴ On John 15:3, he says the Word is the "grand instrument of purifying the soul" when it is "applied by the Spirit."⁷⁵ And on Hebrews 4:12, the Word of God is "living and powerful" as it is "attended with the power of the living God."⁷⁶

It should be clear by now that John Wesley had a clear understanding of the bi-unity of Word and Spirit (as this bi-unity was delineated in Section II, above) and that he held the two in proper balance, neither merging Spirit into Word so that the former is imprisoned in the latter, nor separating them to the extent that there are two separate sources of revelation. Word does not work automatically, and Spirit does not work autonomously. I suggested earlier that this Wesleyan balance was, to some extent, lost in the American holiness movement. This fact has, I believe, already been sufficiently documents by Wesleyan scholars, and will require little elaboration here. Dr. Paul Bassett had made this point in his article in the Spring, 1978 issue of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* entitled "The Fundamentalist Leavening of the Holiness Movement, 1914-1940; The Church of the Nazarene: A Case Study."⁷⁷ Bassett shows how during those years in which the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy raged in American Protestantism one holiness denomination was influenced to some extent by a Fundamentalist view of the "inerrancy" of the Biblical autographs. He shows also how this influence was resisted, largely through the efforts of theologian H. Orton Wiley. As far as the "official" theology of the denomination is concerned, as exhibited in its Article of Faith on Scripture, this resistance was successful. The Fundamentalist "leavening" was not as successfully resisted officially in all the holiness denominations, a case in point being the Wesleyan Church's official statement on Scripture.⁷⁸

In his *Christian Theology*, Wiley, resisting both Liberalism and Fundamentalism, takes a position that is neither, but is "a genuinely Wesleyan

third alternative,"⁷⁹ in which the Wesleyan bi-unity of Word and Spirit is maintained with integrity. He says:

Spiritual men and women—those filled with the Holy Spirit, are not unduly concerned with either higher or lower criticism. They do not rest merely in the letter which must be defended by argument. They have a broader and more substantial basis for their faith. It rests in their risen Lord, the glorified Christ. They know that the Bible is true, not primarily through the efforts of the apologists, but because they are acquainted with its Author. *The Spirit which inspired the Word dwells within them and witnesses to its truth.* In them the formal and material principles of the Reformation are conjoined. The Holy Spirit is the great conservator of orthodoxy.⁸⁰

To whatever extent a Fundamentalist view of Scripture has "leavened" the holiness movement, to that extent the movement has abandoned the balance between Word and Spirit which characterized Wesley, and has placed more and more of the weight on the "Word" side of the scale—with "Word" being understood more and more exclusively as the "written words" of Scripture. As we have seen, in the light of some of Wesley's statements about Scripture, some have concluded that he held a Fundamentalist view of the inerrancy of the autographs and that this was for him the foundation of religious authority. But, as Shelton says,

these kinds of expressions relate primarily to his verbal dictation tendencies in inspiration, and are not used to establish an inerrantist basis for authority. His epistemology is different from that of Fundamentalism which bases Biblical authority on an assumption of the nature of the external text of the autographs. The Classical Christian approach to authority was never to base authority or infallibility on the original autographs and neither was it to base doctrinal issues on even the external text alone. Luther, Calvin, and the Fathers looked at the inner spiritual content, ultimately Jesus Christ, as authoritative. The external text would surely be at one with the internal sense given by the Holy Spirit, but the form of the external text was by no means ever the criterion for infallibility, which was a spiritual issue.⁸¹

This Classical Christian approach mentioned by Shelton is clearly Wesley's approach—the bi-unity of Spirit and Word.

IV. The "Witness of the Spirit" in Wesley's Soteriology

We come now to another use of the concept of the Spirit's testimony in Wesley's theology—his doctrine of assurance. Although Wesley considered the "grand depositum which God had lodged with the people called Methodists"⁸² to be the doctrine of Christian perfection, he also regarded assurance or the "witness of the Spirit" to be one of the main doctrines of the Methodists. Of this doctrine, he writes:

It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain, and defend this doctrine; because it is one grand part of the testimony which God has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by His peculiar blessing upon them in

searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of His children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years well nigh lost and forgotten.⁸³

The witness of the Spirit is twofold in nature, consisting of a direct witness and an indirect witness. The direct witness was defined in 1746 in the sermon, "The Witness of the Spirit," and repeated unchanged twenty years later in the second sermon by the same title.

The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my Spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.⁸⁴

The indirect witness is "an influence of the Holy Spirit's work which man draws from the quality of his life according to certain criteria of the Christian life set forth in scripture."⁸⁵ If one is producing the fruit of the Spirit, "even 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance,'" he may infer from this that he is a child of God. But one should not rest in one of the witnesses without the other. Both are necessary in order to constitute a valid assurance. "Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit, which is separate from the fruit of it. . . . Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness."⁸⁶

Wesley taught that not only could one receive the witness of the Spirit (both direct and indirect) that he/she was a child of God, but that one could also receive such a witness (both direct and indirect) to his/her entire sanctification. In a discussion of perfection in the "Plain Account," the question is raised, "when may a person judge himself to have attained this?" Wesley's reply was:

When, after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction than that he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. Not that 'to feel all love and no sin' is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time, before their souls were fully renewed. None therefore ought to believe that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification.⁸⁷

Here the analogy between justification and sanctification is apparent. Again, in the "Plain Account," the question is asked, "But how do you know, that you are sanctified, saved from your inbred corruption?" Wesley answers:

I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. 'Hereby we know that we are of God,' in either sense, 'by the Spirit that he hath given us.'

We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit. And, First, by the witness. As, when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit, that our sins were forgiven; so, when we

were sanctified, he bore witness, that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first; (as neither is that of justification;) neither is it afterward always the same, but like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former.⁸⁸

The witness of the Spirit, then, is given not only to those who are children of God "in the lowest sense" (justified) but also to those who are children of God "in the highest sense" (entirely sanctified), "By this then also 'we know that we are of God,' and in what sense we are so; whether we are babes, young men, or fathers, we know in the same manner."⁸⁹

The fully sanctified may also be assured of their spiritual state through the indirect witness of the fruit of the Spirit.⁹⁰ The change at justification was mixed with selfishness and love of the world, but the fully sanctified undergo a complete change in the instant of entire sanctification.⁹¹ In Wesley's opinion, the person who judges according to all the marks pertaining to entire sanctification need not run any risk of self-deception.⁹²

From a Scriptural standpoint, this may be the weakest point in Wesley's doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. The assurance of entire sanctification has been denied by such a sympathetic student of Wesley as W. E. Sangster, on the psychological ground that no one can know the depths of his subconscious self sufficiently to claim that he is free from sin.⁹³ Earlier, R. Newton Flew had made the same point.⁹⁴

But the most valid criticism of Wesley's view is not psychological but Scriptural. The New Testament does not speak unequivocally of a witness of the Spirit to entire sanctification that is clearly distinguishable from the witness of the Spirit to our justification, new birth, and adoption. The most direct New Testament reference to the witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16) is found in the context of Paul's discourse on adoption. The same is true of the similar statement in Gal. 4:6. Passages such as Acts 15:8-9, Hebrews 10:14-15, and I Cor. 2:12, are sometimes used as proof-texts for the witness of the Spirit to entire sanctification,⁹⁵ but such an exegesis is by no means unambiguous.⁹⁶ The idea of "the witness of the Spirit" in the New Testament is usually, if not always, associated with our adoption into the family of God or to our new birth, not with the degree of sanctity we have attained. The Spirit witnesses not to a state of sanctity but to the reality of a relationship. The Scriptures which Wesley offers as support for the assurance of entire sanctification are those which deal primarily with the assurance that we are children of God. Wesley himself recognizes that it is only *by implication* that they can be understood as referring to the assurance that we are among the "higher class" of Christians.⁹⁷ Sangster is correct when he says that Wesley "carried over, without any apparent sense of crossing a gulf, the conviction that we could be assured that our sins were forgiven, and affirmed that we could be assured of our sanctification as well."⁹⁸ Rattenbury points out that Wesley's teaching at this point was "an analogical deduction from the experience that comes to men when they know their sins are pardoned."⁹⁹

Rattenbury is correct in saying that Wesley developed this doctrine analogically rather than supporting it strictly from Scripture. But this is more

of a problem for those who require proof-texting to establish the viability of a given doctrine, than it is for those who understand the dynamics of the bi-unity of Word and Spirit in revelation. In the way Wesley asserts the doctrine of the Spirit's witness to entire sanctification, we see something of the balance between Word and Spirit in his theology. Resting on the "Word" (in this case Scripture) for the basic fact of the reality of the Spirit's witness, he is willing also to allow "Spirit" a position of authority as regards the application and operation of that witness. This seems more authentic than one modification of Wesley's view which emerged in the American holiness movement in the nineteenth century. I refer to the teaching of Phoebe Palmer on the witness of the Spirit. At the end of the second section of this paper, I suggested that the classical Wesleyan balance between Word and Spirit was to some extent lost in the thought of the American holiness movement. Since Phoebe Palmer's theology represents a clear paradigm of this loss, at the point of soteriology, it will be fruitful here to examine and analyze her views.

Phoebe Palmer's religious work and personal testimony are familiar to every student of the American holiness movement. She started a women's Bible study and prayer group that began in 1835 and grew into the historically famous Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness under her leadership. Sorrow visited the Palmer home on several occasions as three of the six Palmer children died in infancy. The impact of these deaths upon Phoebe was profound, and in the aftermath of these losses she finally resolved a long-standing struggle over entire sanctification, testifying to having received the blessing on July 26, 1837.¹⁰⁰ She and her husband preached to thousands in both Britain and America. She was instrumental in establishing the Camp Meeting movement. She published much and read widely. She has been the subject of several recent studies dealing with her contribution to feminism.¹⁰¹ But her most significant contribution to Wesleyan theology lies in her development and articulation of a theological system known as the "altar theology."

The "altar theology" was developed to provide what Mrs. Palmer called a "shorter way" into holiness—a shorter way than that envisioned by the Wesleys and taught in early Methodism. As we have seen, John Wesley emphasized entire sanctification as the birthright of every Christian, to be entered into by faith, but also to be evidenced by the witness of the Holy Spirit—both direct and indirect. To be sure, Wesley taught that entire sanctification was received by *faith*, just as Phoebe Palmer was to teach it, but he also taught that one should not claim to have received it until he had the witness of the Spirit.¹⁰²

With this teaching of Wesley as her heritage, Phoebe Palmer struggled for years in her search for entire sanctification, and could never find the experience and the witness which she so earnestly sought. Her solution to the dilemma was to develop the altar theology.

Oddly taking her cue from a Biblical passage whose context has nothing to do with entire sanctification, nor with the witness of the Spirit thereto, but rather contains a list of "woes" pronounced by Jesus upon the hypocrisy of the scribes and pharisees, Palmer lifts out the clause, "the altar sanctifies the gift" (Matthew 23:19) and makes the idea expressed there the foundation of her doctrine of assurance! She says:

Christ is the CHRISTIAN'S ALTAR. Lay body, soul and spirit upon his merits. . . . Remember, that it is not left optional with yourself whether you will believe. 'This is the command of God that ye believe.' Believe steadfastly that the blood of Jesus cleanseth. Not that it can or will, but that it *cleanseth now*. Covenant with God that you will believe this, his revealed truth, whether your feelings warrant belief or not. The just shall live by faith.¹⁰³

Palmer's success was in large measure due to her clarity in the method of obtaining the experience, and in the fact that she made Scripture the basic evidence. She stressed the immediate availability of the second blessing. She insisted "that holiness, instead of being an attainment beyond her reach, was a state of grace in which every one of the Lord's redeemed ones should live."¹⁰⁴ In short, her explanation was: When Christians give themselves unreservedly to God and trust the promise, the work is accomplished. There is no need to wait for further evidence, although she allows that further evidence will follow. Feeling is not a trustworthy index, but God's promises are trustworthy. She says:

What is the evidence of entire sanctification? . . . How might an offerer at the Jewish altar arrive at an evidence that his offering was sanctified? In the first place, God had explicitly made known just the sacrifice required, and the manner in which it should be presented. If the offerer had complied with these requirements, he, of course, knew he had done so.¹⁰⁵

To put it another way, whereas Wesley had taught that entire sanctification is evidence by the witness of the *Spirit*, Phoebe Palmer taught that it is evidenced by the witness of the *Word* (the Word meaning, in her case, a written statement found in the Scriptures, even when used out of context). The Word says "the altar sanctifies the gift," therefore when we have brought the gift of ourselves to the altar we know that we are sanctified, without the need for any other evidence, either sensible or supernatural.

Thus with one bold stroke Phoebe Palmer had cut through the prolonged search and struggle which often characterized the early Methodists as they traversed the path toward perfection. She had shortened to "nothing flat" the time one must wait for the assurance of his/her entire sanctification. No supernatural evidence, no "inward impression on the soul," no empirical fruit of the Spirit, lay across the threshold which one must cross to enter in to a state of entire sanctification. One only needed the Scriptural promise, "the altar sanctifies the gift." If I have brought my gift (i.e. myself) to the Altar (i.e. Christ), I know that I am *ipso facto* sanctified.

What shall we say of the Palmer modification of the Wesleyan way? Was it an improvement over the teachings of the Wesleys and their followers? Doubtless it had one pronounced result. As we have indicated, it eliminated the soul searching and struggle and the Bunyanesque strictures and obstacles that marked the way of the spiritual pilgrim's progress as he became a seeker after holiness in the Wesleyan mode. In doing this, it made for a clearer certainty about attainment. By its quite logically explicated promise

of certainty, it promoted personal testimony to the attainment of the blessing.

But for these gains (if indeed they were gains), the Holiness Movement paid a heavy price. This price can, at least in part, be calculated as follows:

(1) The Palmer modification opened the way for the *structure* of the doctrine of holiness (or what Wesley called its "circumstance") to become prominent, almost overshadowing the *substance*.¹⁰⁶ In Palmer's system, the accent was on the "instantaneousness" of the blessing and the method of attainment. In a moment of presenting the gift, a believer is sanctified, *by the very act of presenting it and believing it to be accepted!*

(2) This involves a type of *rationalism*. Faith was seen as believing a proposition—"the altar sanctifies the gift." Thus the working definition of faith moves from "personal trust" to "intellectual assent." The move may be slight, and it is subtle, but it is a move nevertheless. A logical syllogism is at work in Palmer's altar theology: *Major premise*: The altar sanctifies the gift. *Minor premise*: I have brought my gift to the altar. *Conclusion*: My gift, therefore, is sanctified. This can be called "sanctification by syllogism" and, as William M. Greathouse remarks, "syllogistic holiness is not scriptural holiness."¹⁰⁷ In a sympathetic treatment of Palmer's theology, Melvin E. Dieter acknowledges that "those who accused her of setting up a theological syllogism were not completely in error, for one of the patterns into which the theology and preaching of the ensuing holiness movement often fell, was to press upon seekers after holiness too simplistic a stereotyped formula for the promised attainment of so existential a spiritual experience."¹⁰⁸

(3) Closely related to this rationalistic bent in Palmer's altar theology is her understanding of holiness in terms of duty. God requires holiness now.¹⁰⁹ "Whether *convicted* or otherwise, *duty is plain*. . . Knowledge is conviction."¹¹⁰ "The voice of duty is literally *the voice of God to the soul*."¹¹¹ Greathouse calls attention to one consequence of such a concept: "Mrs. Palmer's insistence on holiness as a present *duty* tended to introduce an element of fear, which at times led to an unscriptural 'holiness or hell' teaching, that is, that those who die without a conscious experience of entire sanctification would not be saved."¹¹² This contrasts sharply with Wesley who, in expounding on holiness as "the more excellent way," says:

I would be far from quenching the smoking flax—from discouraging those that serve God in a low degree. But I could not wish them to stop here: I would encourage them to come up higher. Without thundering hell and damnation in their ears, without condemning the way wherein they were, telling them it is the way that leads to destruction, I will endeavor to point out to them what is, in every respect, 'a more excellent way.' . . . I do not affirm that all who do not walk in this way are in the high road to hell. But this much I must affirm, they will not have so high a place in heaven as they would have had if they had chosen the better part.¹¹³

(4) In the logic of Palmer's system of holiness theology, the importance of ethics was diminished. There was no need for Wesley's "direct witness" of the Spirit—a divinely created "inward impression on the soul." But neither was there any need for Wesley's "indirect witness" as well—the

empirically observable fruit of the Spirit and the evidence of a holy life. This is not to say that Phoebe Palmer did not believe these things should, and would, follow the bringing of the gift to the altar. She did. But to make them unnecessary for professing sanctification, she opened the way for a profession which is not followed by real possession, not to mention growth in grace. I do not say this was her intention. I am quite sure that it was not. But it has been an all too unhappy result. One way to describe this result is in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words, "cheap grace." Cheap grace, as Bonhoeffer described it, was a corruption of Luther's doctrine of *justification* by grace through faith. But today, in too many instances, we Wesleyans have developed our own brand of cheap grace which is a corruption of the doctrine of *sanctification*. It is a type of "eternal security" with regard to holiness. We do not say "once saved, always saved" as Calvinists do. But, given the inner logic of the "altar theology," it is possible to assume "once sanctified, always sanctified." The inverted self-deceptive thought-process may work like this: "Since I am sanctified, pure in heart, free from sin, none of my actions or attitudes can be considered sinful." Thus the need for confession, or what Wesley called "the repentance of believers," which he held to be necessary for growth in grace,¹¹⁴ practically disappears from holiness theology. The altar transaction having been made, by an act of the human will, with no witness or fruit of the Spirit being necessary for the claiming of the blessing, such a "sanctified antinomianism" may result. It is not a *necessary* result, but it is a possible one. In systematic terms, Palmer has moved the assurance of entire sanctification a step forward in the *ordo salutis*. In Wesley, entire sanctification is logically (and sometimes chronologically) prior to the assurance of it. In Palmer, the act of offering the gift of oneself on the altar is an act which brings both entire sanctification and the assurance thereof, the two being indistinguishable (both logically and chronologically). As Timothy L. Smith puts it, "the distinction between the 'witness of the Spirit' and the exercise of faith for the experience was blurred by this teaching."¹¹⁵

(5) The diminished importance of ethics in the inner logic of Palmer's altar theology can be seen as rooted in a theological understanding whose antecedents and affinities lie in a tradition other than her own. Although loyally Methodist, Palmer, in developing her altar theology, used images and models that were more at home in Reformed theology than in Wesleyanism. Not schooled as a theologian, except in a self-made sense, she can be excused for such an indiscretion. (Whether or not present-day Wesleyanism can be equally excused for perpetuating the same images and models is another question!) Richard S. Taylor has recently called attention to this indiscretion of Palmer's, which he calls the "weak link" in her system. He says:

The weak link in the chain of Mrs. Palmer's argument is in drawing too close a parallel between the ceremonial principle of altar sanctification and the New Testament teaching. 'Whatever touches . . . the altar . . . will be holy' (Exod. 29:37) means that any offering placed on the altar shares in the sanctity of the altar. The altar (one might say) "claims" it for God. It becomes hallowed and any misuse is a desecration. But this is holiness by association, not by purging. It is *positional*, and hence *imputed*.¹¹⁶

Taylor goes on to comment about the New Testament text from which Palmer took her cue for the altar theology:

When Jesus made reference to this (Matt. 23:19) in rebuking the scribes and Pharisees, He was confirming the principle of hallowedness by presentation within the context of Old Testament ceremonialism. To extend this as a descriptive of the New Testament mode of sanctification is highly questionable because it opens the door to (1) the equating of sanctification with consecration . . . , (2) implying a merely positional holiness, and thus (3) an imputed holiness.¹¹⁷

Thus, for Taylor,

it is a non sequitur to conclude that the sanctification effected by Christ is on the same basis as, and no more than, the sanctification effected by the Old Testament altar.¹¹⁸

Taylor's comments underscore a major weakness of the "altar" model and phraseology. Such a model is not capable of bearing the freight that Wesleyan theology needs to convey. The only holiness such a model can convey is a merely *imputed* holiness, not an *imparted* holiness.¹¹⁹

(6) There is an incipient *humanism* at work in the altar theology. Not only does Palmer highlight the role of free will (in contradistinction to "free grace" in Wesley), she also views the experience of entire sanctification to be in large measure the result of the actions she herself has taken to overcome spiritual darkness. The human decision thus takes on a degree of causality it never had in Wesley. Rather than passively awaiting some "experience" originating from outside the self, Christians must take their spiritual destiny in their own hands within the privacy of their personal lives. The altar transaction was a personal decision, a human act, which was the beginning of the creation of a new self. A number of historians of the American holiness movement have depicted how the movement as a whole fits into and reflects its nineteenth century American context.¹²⁰ But Theodore Hovet focuses specifically on Phoebe Palmer herself and claims that she was the first influential person in the mainline evangelical churches to express the "American spirit" in theology. Palmer had articulated a Christian "pragmatism" which argues that God's kingdom is not a closed system into which the Christian enters by the grace of God alone but a spiritual reality brought forth in this world by the holiness instigated by human action.¹²¹ Hovet further claims that Palmer's altar phraseology "brought the Romantic spirit into evangelical Protestantism."¹²² He goes on to say:

As unlikely as it may seem . . . Palmer's teaching introduced to evangelical Protestants a vision of spiritual freedom, a Faustian quest for knowledge and experience, and a love of the unbounded appropriate to that Romantic era and to such an individualistic culture.¹²³

The six observations elaborated above constitute at least a part of the price paid by the holiness movement for Phoebe Palmer's modification of Wesleyan theology in general and of the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit in particular. It is amazing that such a powerful influence as Palmer has wielded on the holiness movement down to the present day could rest so

deliberately on a Biblical statement which she discovered and took so completely out of context.

I have analyzed Palmer's altar theology in some detail because it has been so influential in the holiness movement and because it presents a graphic example of the way that movement lost a proper balance between Spirit and Word. Palmer's modification of Wesley's doctrine of the witness of the Spirit to entire sanctification may, I believe, be summarized as a shift from the classical Wesleyan bi-unity of Spirit and Word to an almost exclusive emphasis on Word—the latter being defined solely as the written words of Scripture and its appropriation being understood rationalistically. The irony is that this understanding and use of the Scripture dovetails neatly with, and may even have helped prepare the way for, the later encroachment of Fundamentalism within the holiness movement, even though the historical context in which Palmer's theology developed, and by which it was subtly influenced, was that of such American liberal ideals as pragmatism, individualism and Romanticism.

Conclusion

We have looked at the function which John Wesley's doctrine of the Holy Spirit had in his theology as a whole. And we have seen how this function was modified somewhat in the American holiness movement, the modification occurring especially at the points of hermeneutics and soteriology. In both instances the modification was caused by an abandonment of the bi-unity in which Wesley held Spirit and Word together, with the place given to Word being enlarged and the place given to Spirit being diminished.

The conclusion, then, can be stated quite briefly: Contemporary Wesleyanism can serve itself well by attempting to recover and maintain the Spirit-Word bi-unity which permeated John Wesley's theology, which he shared with Classical Protestantism, and which saved both his hermeneutic and his soteriology from the trap of a one-sided emphasis from which his followers have not altogether escaped.

NOTES

¹This is not to say, as many have said, that his was not a "systematic" theology. On the question whether Wesley was a systematic theologian, cf. Randy L. Maddox, "Responsible Grace: The Systematic Perspective of Wesleyan Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Fall, 1984, pp. 7-22.

²G. Osborn, editor, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* 13 Vols.; (London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 1868-72), VII, 315. Cited hereafter as Osborn.

³*The Works of John Wesley*, 14 Vols. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, reprint ed., 1979), VI, 201. Cited hereafter as *Works*.

⁴*On the Trinity*, V, 9-10. English text in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd series; New York, 1890-.

⁵*Works*, VI, 201.

⁶J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 273.

⁷E.g., see hymn number XXIII in Osborn, *Poetical Works* . . . , VII, 248-49.

⁸*Works*, VIII, 285.

⁹Thomas Rees, *The Holy Spirit in Thought and Experience* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1915), pp. 191ff. Cf. Lycurgus Starkey, *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 30-31.

¹⁰However, two years later, in 1786, from the Article's assertion that God is "without body, parts or passions," the Conference omitted the word "passions." Cf. Henry Wheeler, *The History and Exposition of the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1908), p. 15.

¹¹Cf. hymn numbers LXXXV and LXXXVI in Osborn, *Poetical Works*, VII, 264-65.

¹²John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1958), Eph. 4:30.

¹³Osborn, VII, 201-298.

¹⁴Starkey, p. 26.

¹⁵*Notes, in loco*.

¹⁶Starkey, p. 37.

¹⁷Cf. Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), I, 337.

¹⁸*Works*, V, 56.

¹⁹Henry P. Van Dusen, *Spirit, Son, and Father* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 18-19.

²⁰J. Paul Taylor, *Holiness, The Finished Foundation* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1963), p. 15.

²¹*Works*, X, 82.

²²*The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, John Telford, editor (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), p. 39. Cited hereafter as *Letters*.

²³*Works*, VIII, 107.

²⁴*Letters*, II, 64.

²⁵For a fuller treatment of these characteristics, in a different order, cf. Starkey, pp. 17-22.

²⁶*Works*, VIII, 107.

²⁷*Works*, VIII, 49, 76-111; *Letters*, II, 64.

²⁸*Letters*, VII, 298.

²⁹*Letters*, V, 175. Cf. VIII, 110.

³⁰Starkey, p. 19.

³¹*Letters*, II, 42.

³²*Ibid.*, 74.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴*Ibid.*, V, 364.

³⁵*Works*, V, 186.

³⁶Cf. Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 56-61, for a succinct analysis of the dual role of Spirit and Word in Christian theology, upon which the discussion in this section of the paper is, to some extent, based.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁸*Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

³⁹*D. Martin Luthers Werke*, 17:11, 459f. Cited by Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 37, note 9.

⁴⁰Berkhof, *Christian Faith*, p. 59.

⁴¹Cf. John 16:13-14, and Acts 2 where the context of the Spirit's coming was a sermon on the resurrection of Jesus. Cf. also II Cor. 4:6.

⁴²Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 37.

⁴³*D. Martin Luthers Werke*, 9, 633. Cited in Althaus, p. 38.

⁴⁴Kilian McDonnell, "The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *Theology Today*, July, 1982, pp. 144-45.

⁴⁵Berkhof, *Christian Faith*, p. 58.

⁴⁶Berkhof, *Holy Spirit*, p. 38.

⁴⁷For a defense of the latter position, cf. Allen Coppedge, "John Wesley and the Issue of Authority in Theological Pluralism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Fall, 1984, pp. 62-76.

⁴⁸Here I am borrowing the phraseology Wesley used in speaking of "repentance" in two senses. *Works*, V, 157.

⁴⁹George S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 73.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹*D. Martin Luthers Werke*, 12, 259. Cited in Althaus, p. 73, note 3.

⁵²*Hendry*, p. 75.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵⁴*Cf. Institutes*, I, 7, 2-4.

⁵⁵*Hendry*, p. 76.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

⁵⁷*Notes*, John 19:24.

⁵⁸E.g., *Notes*, Rom. 12:6; *Works*, VII, 294, 296.

⁵⁹*Notes*, Preface, p. 98

⁶⁰*Letters*, III, 128-129.

⁶¹*Notes*, Preface, p. 9.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³*Letters*, IV, 369; *Cf. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 Vols. (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), VI, 117.

⁶⁴R. Larry Shelton, "John Wesley's Approach to Scripture in Historical Perspective," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Spring, 1981, p. 36.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁷*Notes*, II Tim. 3:16.

⁶⁸Osborn, VII, 249.

⁶⁹*Works*, V, 188.

⁷⁰*Works*, VIII, 90; cf. VII, 331.

⁷¹Osborn, IV, 196.

⁷²*Letters*, VI, 28.

⁷³*Letters*, II, 117; cf. *Notes*, I John 4:1.

⁷⁴*Notes*, Acts 7:38.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, John 15:3.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, Heb. 4:12.

⁷⁷Paul Merritt Bassett, "The Fundamentalist Leavening of the Holiness Movement, 1914-1940. The Church of the Nazarene: A Case Study," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Spring, 1978, pp. 65-91.

⁷⁸*The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church* (Marion, Indiana: The Wesleyan Publishing House, 1980), p. 19.

⁷⁹Bassett, p. 67.

⁸⁰H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, I, 143, italics mine. See Wiley's entire discussion of the "three worthy monarchs" (Church, Bible, & Reason) which have been abused in the history of Christianity and "forced into a false and unworthy position before God and man." *Ibid.*, I, 140-142.

⁸¹Shelton, p. 38.

⁸²*Letters*, VIII, 238.

⁸³*Wesley's Standard Sermons*, 2 Vols., edited by Nehemiah Curnock (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), II, 343-44. Cited hereafter as *Sermons*.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, I, 208; II, 345.

⁸⁵Starkey, p. 71.

⁸⁶*Sermons*, II, 358.

⁸⁷*Works*, XI, 401-402.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 420. It is clear from the context that "sanctification" in this passage means "entire sanctification."

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 421.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 422.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 423.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 402.

⁹³W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), pp. 113ff., 160ff.

⁹⁴R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Christian Perfection in Christian Theology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 337.

⁹⁵Cf. J. Kenneth Grider, *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1980), pp. 118-19. Grider, however, is aware that such an interpretation of these texts rests on shaky ground, stating only that the witness of the Spirit is "implied" in I Cor. 2:12, and that Acts 15:8-9 "suggests that perhaps right on the heels of our Spirit-baptism, the Holy Spirit bears witness to what has been accomplished." Italics mine.

⁹⁶Cf. Richard S. Taylor's comment on Heb. 10:15: "This is often construed to mean the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to the believing seeker at the point of sanctification; but while there is such a witness, that is hardly the thought here." *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Volume 10 (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1967), p. 121. And cf. F. F. Bruce, who, on the basis of the Greek aorist participles *dous* ("giving") and *katharisas* ("cleansing") in Acts 15:8-9, claims that "God testified to the genuineness of these people's faith by giving them the Spirit and cleansing their hearts

in one *regenerative* moment." *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), p. 306, note 25. *Italics mine*. Of course Bruce writes from outside the holiness movement. Still, if Acts 15:8-9 be a text on entire sanctification, then we are not "given" the Holy Spirit until that second crisis. But this is contradicted by Rom. 8:9.

⁹⁷*Works* XI, 421.

⁹⁸Sangster, p. 161.

⁹⁹J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London: The Epworth Press, 1941), pp. 303-304.

¹⁰⁰Cf. Harold E. Raser, "Phoebe Palmer: Ambassador of Holiness," *The Preacher's Magazine*, Sept., Oct., Nov., 1983, pp. 20-23.

¹⁰¹Cf. Theodore Hovet, "Phoebe Palmer's 'Altar Phraseology' and the Spiritual Dimension of Woman's Sphere," *The Journal of Religion*, July, 1983, pp. 264-280; cf. Note 1, p. 264.

¹⁰²*Works*, XI, 401-402.

¹⁰³Phoebe Palmer, *Faith and Its Effects* (New York: Published for the author at 200 Mulberry St., 1854), pp. 349-50.

¹⁰⁴Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness, with Notes by the Way* (New York: Lane and Tippet, 1845), p. 33.

¹⁰⁵Palmer, *Faith and Its Effects*, p. 242.

¹⁰⁶Cf. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), chapters 15 and 16 for a discussion of "substance" and "circumstance" in Wesley's view of sanctification. For an explanation of what I myself mean by the terms "substance" and "structure" in Wesley, see my article "Sanctification and Selfhood: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Wesleyan Message," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Spring, 1972, pp. 3-16.

¹⁰⁷Paul M. Bassett and William M. Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness*, Volume II: "The Historical Development," (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985), p. 301.

¹⁰⁸Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, N.J., and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980), p. 31.

¹⁰⁹Bassett and Greathouse, p. 299.

¹¹⁰Palmer, *The Way of Holiness*, p. 19.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹¹²Bassett and Greathouse, p. 301.

¹¹³*Works*, VII, 28-29.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, V, 157.

¹¹⁶Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 126.

¹¹⁶Richard S. Taylor, *Exploring Christian Holiness*, Volume III: "The Theological Formulation," (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985), p. 181. *Italics mine.*

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 181-82.

¹¹⁹Furthermore, the "altar" is not a prominent New Testament metaphor for Christ. Hebrews 13:10 and Romans 12:1 may by inference be interpreted along such lines, but such an exegesis is at least questionable. Among the New Testament metaphors for Christ drawn from the Old Testament sacrificial system, those of Christ as the *priest* who offers the sacrifice, and of Christ as the *sacrifice itself*, are far more significant than the idea of Christ as the altar upon which the sacrifice is offered.

¹²⁰Cf. e.g. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 116-128; Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, pp. 26-32; and John L. Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (New York: Abington Press, 1956), pp. 109-113.

¹²¹Hovet, p. 269.

¹²²*Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹²³*Ibid.*

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