

# Preaching the Word in the Power of the Holy Spirit

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The main purpose of this essay is to focus attention on 'the Power of the Holy Spirit' but to do so without selling short what is properly involved in 'Preaching the Word'. We will therefore consider our subject by way of biblical, historical and theological reflections before thinking about it pastorally. No one who stands in the Reformed tradition should be able to think about a way forward for the church on any matter without first going 'back to the Bible' with regard to it but then also examining the inheritance transmitted in the church on the subject. That is what has been attempted in this paper. Each step in the argument presented is followed by a conclusion, printed in italics and numbered for ease of reference in subsequent discussion.

## Back to the Bible

Three truths that are laid down in the opening chapters of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians provide us with parameters for our study. They are echoed elsewhere in both Testaments, and in various ways. Hopefully, they still find general acceptance among us. They are,

- (i) the divinely given assignment to preach the gospel-word is essential not peripheral to its effectiveness (1Cor. 1:18; 2:1-3) and
- (ii) the preaching of that Word will not achieve its divinely intended result without the fertilizing, edifying ministry of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 3:6-8) and
- (iii) the intended result is the building of the church, a garden-shrine for God (1 Cor. 3:9-15).

Summarizing the argument of that letter, Calvin writes,

[Paul] shows in what estimation the ministers of the gospel ought to be held – that the honour given to them does not in any degree detract from the glory that is due to God – ... as all are his servants; all are mere instruments; he alone imparts efficacy and from him proceeds the entire result. He shows them at the same time what they ought to have as their aim – to build up the church.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul gives special attention to the Christian Ministry in what has been described as a parenthesis in his Second Letter to the Corinthians (see 2:12-7:4). In that section there is a passage which contains more detailed perspectives for our subject and it is set out below for convenience. The expressions in it that are material for our study have been bolded.

Therefore having **this ministry** by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or tamper with God's word, but by **the open statement of the truth** we would commend ourselves **to everyone's conscience in the sight of God**. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing **the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness' has shone in our hearts to give the **light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that **the surpassing power** belongs to God and not to us (2 Cor. 4:1-7, ESV).

Four matters can be identified which provide a specific foundation for our task namely:

## 1. 'This ministry'

Although the apostle Paul does not use the word 'covenant' in the section quoted, that is what he has in mind by the use of the demonstrative adjective. He has just referred to two covenants and their respective ministries; one made with Israel at Sinai and the other being the new covenant. He has done so largely by way of stark contrast. He regards his ministry as that of 'the new covenant' or 'of the Spirit' which gives life (see 3:6) and not that of 'the old [covenant]' (see 3:14) which brings death because it is 'of the letter' (of the law).

The sharp distinction made by such negative language should not however be regarded as a complete description of the old covenant or as a denial of any harmony between it and the new covenant. Paul used such diametrically opposed expressions because of the situation in the church of Corinth to which he was writing.<sup>2</sup> It was the seemingly ever-present Jewish pressure to comply with the prescriptions of the old covenant over against, or in addition to, the gospel, as essential for obtaining acceptance with God that required an unambiguous declaration to be made that the old covenant would be a means of death and condemnation if it were regarded as *only* a covenant of law promising life for perfect obedience. Of course the old covenant was not only that (and the apostle will make that clear shortly) but its ability to give the life it promised was something that had to be denied in order that the terms of gospel righteousness might be clearly maintained.

### Conclusion 1

*There is need today for such an unambiguous differentiation between law and gospel and not only between Protestants on the one hand and Roman Catholics and Orthodox on the other, but also among those that are Reformed, Presbyterian and Baptist.<sup>3</sup> Such discriminating and definitive handling of the law and the gospel is the necessary basis and distinctive character of preaching the word in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

## 2. The light of the gospel of the glory of Jesus Christ

The new covenant, however, does have its old covenant precursors. These are not merely ideas that are common to both – for example creation, covenant (law and promise), mercy and judgment – which could be regarded as just picture language, but actual Old Testament texts are mentioned in one way or another by the apostle. This is proved by Genesis 1:3 being quoted in 4:6, Moses being referred to in 3:12, allusions to Jeremiah 31: 31-34 and to Ezekiel 37 being necessarily made by means of the term 'covenant' and Psalm 116 being cited a little later in 4:13. Such references point to the fact that the 'old covenant' era was not destitute of redemptive truth and of authentic spiritual experience. What is more, it indicates that the new covenant whose ministry we are considering is every bit a divine arrangement or relationship with human beings as is the old. But Jesus Christ is the image of God, and so is the 'light' and 'glory' of the new covenant. The term 'image' refers to a representation that corresponds exactly to its counterpart. Light and glory refer to disclosure and, consequently, to knowledge. 'Glory' characterizes both covenants but the new has a 'greater glory' than that of the old. The term 'glory' is related to revelation.<sup>4</sup> A working definition of it would be 'someone revealed by something' and an examination of any verse in which it occurs would show who is being disclosed and by what. It is used of man as well as God; for example,

wealth or grey hair reveal something about man, just as the universe or the cross different things about God.

Wherever and however the term 'glory' is used of God in Scripture a basic harmony exists across the board because God is one. This means that the same God is revealed in each covenant but he reveals more of himself in the new than the old. Both concern righteousness, but the old records the kind of righteousness that each Israelite should furnish (but only the true Israelite could undertake) and the new reveals the righteousness that is found 'in the face [person] of Jesus [the] Christ' who is 'the image of God'. This good news brings 'light' and liberty from condemnation and increasing likeness to God for all who cannot keep the law but turn to 'the Lord who is the Spirit'. Having this 'greater glory' the new covenant is 'better' than the old.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conclusion 2**

*The written word of God that is to be preached is therefore any portion of either the Old or the New Testaments in its proper relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate and redemptive word, to whom the Spirit always bears witness. This requires the use of a redemptive-historical hermeneutic but that is not sufficient to qualify preaching as truly Christian. Jesus of Nazareth must be presented and proclaimed as the Christ of God and not just pointed out as the terminus ad quem of the sermon text.*

### **3. The open statement of the truth... to the conscience**

The spirit of truly Christian preaching is 'confidence' (3:4) and 'hope [expectation]' (3:12) that the gospel message will enliven and enlighten. This inevitably impacts proclamation, producing 'plainness of speech' (3:12) or boldness. This is in striking contrast to the ministry of Moses who, after seeing and being affected by the glory of Sinai, concealed that brightness from the Israelites because they drew back in fear, and so they did not have the benefit of seeing that the glory was fading (that is, it was temporary).

By contrast the Christian preacher not only 'tells [the truth] as it is' but also as it always will be – even though the greatness of this new covenant relationship is not perceived by many. Far from indicating that there is any failure in the new covenant, such a reaction is due to a human aversion that is the result of Satan's opposition. What is more, he addresses that truth to the hearer's conscience *coram deo*. The preacher stands before God and so speaks that he brings his hearers there too. He does so knowing that the truth will, to some degree, register its authenticity in every hearer – whatever the result will be. To speak for God does require careful and accurate handling of texts but also the consciousness of being God's spokesman (see 2 Cor. 2:17, 5:20).

### **Conclusion 3**

*The Greek word that is translated 'boldness' or 'plainness of speech' is a term that sums up the spirit of the New Covenant. It is used of address to human beings by way of witnessing/preaching (see Acts 4:13) and access to God in prayer and praise (see Eph. 3:12) and even appearing before him in eternity (see 1 Jn. 2:29).*

### **4. The surpassing power [of] God**

No preacher is left without divine assistance in the privilege and responsibility of speaking for God in Christ. The all-surpassing glory of the new covenant (3: 9-10) includes a similar plenitude of power

for its ministry (4:7). The apostle Paul frequently used superlative terms to describe the greatness of Jesus Christ and the resources that are available to the Christian and hence to the preacher. And he did this most notably when he wrote from prison, where glory and grace did not diminish but rather the reverse! In this realm hyperbole is reality! There is always something more, something beyond what has been received from the Lord, to enable further service for his praise. It is not possible for humans to measure the riches and the power of God. What applies to the length, breadth, depth and height of God's love in Christ is also true of his power.

#### **Conclusion 4**

*The power in preaching the covenant of grace and glory, sealed by Christ in his death, is therefore not due to human reason or rhetoric. It is manifested in someone and in something unimpressive from the world's standards and so easily dismissed. But clay pots contain heavenly treasure and exhibit divine power.*

#### **The Here and Now**

In recent decades the ministry of preaching has thankfully been regaining its proper place in many churches after a long period when it was marginalized and even forfeited by the combined forces of liberal theology and secular communication theory.<sup>6</sup> As part of this recovery of preaching, much has been written about the importance of a hermeneutic that is appropriate to the character of Holy Scripture and also of a homiletic adapted to the preacher's audience.<sup>7</sup> This distinction between hermeneutics and homiletics is often not appreciated by (would-be) preachers and that failure results in preaching that is too didactic and not at all prophetic. But correct interpretation and contemporary proclamation are two essential components of authentic preaching.<sup>8</sup> They correspond to John Stott's description of preaching as a bridge that connects the two banks of a river namely the worlds of Scripture and of contemporary hearers.<sup>9</sup>

Fuelling this renewal has been the recovery of a true biblical theology which looks at a text in its time-space slot in redemptive history and revelation. This is not the Biblical Theology movement of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, associated with the names of G.E. Wright or John Bright, that saw revelation as event but not word, in keeping with the theology of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. Instead it harks back to the work of Geerhardus Vos around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also extends to include the whole of the canonical text and not only the parts of it that record a divine encounter.<sup>10</sup> The late Ed Clowney had a profound influence at the two Westminster in this very area.<sup>11</sup> As a result, preaching classes have been given more prominence in the curriculum of seminaries and workshops in conferences have become popular. There is a new eagerness to 'preach the [whole] word' by the time-honoured method of *lectio continua* and a confidence as to how to do so in a way that does not amount to Spurgeon's mischievous witticism: 'ten thousand, thousand are their texts but all their sermons one'.

But in all this there has been what we will call a striking oversight, namely that not much explicit and concentrated attention has been given to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in such literature, and *certainly not to his power*. Numerous biographical studies of individual preachers have been published which have done so in connection with 'seasons of refreshing' but these do not carry as much weight as they should (one suspects) with those who are driven by the importance of exegetical accuracy and contemporary relevance. In this long-overdue attention that is being given to Holy Scripture, has the Holy Spirit been forgotten?

Sinclair Ferguson makes a remarkable comment on this matter in his preface to his book on the Holy Spirit. Recalling student days, he records that whenever an address or lecture was to be given on the Holy Spirit it would usually begin with the remark that ‘the Holy Spirit was, until recently, the “forgotten” person of the Godhead’. But no longer! Such days were past and gone because of the rise and growth of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement. But he then went further and claimed that the adjective ‘forgotten’ was not adequate as a description of the relation between the 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian/the church and the Holy Spirit. Instead he regarded the adjective ‘unknown’ as more accurate than ‘forgotten’ because the ‘new’ familiarity with the work of the Spirit did not extend to knowledge of him *as a Person*. Ferguson says that ‘the Spirit *himself* remains to many Christians an anonymous, faceless aspect of the divine being’.<sup>12</sup> If he is right (and he usually is!) then the situation is worse than is implied by the word ‘forgotten’.

Two recently-published collections of essays by a number of international preachers and teachers provide examples of what we are calling (somewhat euphemistically) an ‘oversight’. 1986 saw the publication of a number of most useful essays on *Preaching* edited by Samuel T. Logan Jr.<sup>13</sup> to which he contributed an essay on what makes preaching truly ‘an event’. It is entitled ‘*The Phenomenology of Preaching*’ but there is no essay specifically on preaching and pneumatology.<sup>14</sup> Logan does make a one-sentence acknowledgment in his essay that the Holy Spirit’s ministry is needed, but there is nothing more, nothing that refers to ‘*the demonstration of the Spirit and of power*’ (see 1 Cor. 2:4). In 1995 another collection appeared with the title ‘*When God’s Voice is heard*’.<sup>15</sup> It opens with two essays which deal with the sufficiency of Scripture and preaching the whole Bible and the authors, both Australians, make no reference at all to the Holy Spirit. A want of reference and absence of treatment is found in other similar books on both sides of the Atlantic. In so many of them another chapter needs to be written.

By contrast, Spurgeon has a chapter on ‘The Ministry of the Holy Spirit’ in his *Lectures To My Students* – and he did not ignore the practicalities of the task in that well-known work! Going further back to the very beginning of Puritan preaching (‘plain speaking and close dealing’) William Perkins defines the act of preaching as ‘the hiding of human wisdom and the demonstration or the manifestation of the Spirit’.<sup>16</sup> (Why did Perkins describe preaching as ‘prophesying’?) John Stott concludes his study of preaching which originally bore the title *I Believe in Preaching* with a section on ‘The Power of the Holy Spirit’. Lloyd-Jones majored on the subject in his lectures at Westminster, Philadelphia and there is a chapter in *Preaching and Preachers*<sup>17</sup> with the title ‘Demonstration of the Spirit and of the Power’. More recently Al Mohler has sounded the same note and done so in relation to our postmodern culture.<sup>18</sup>

The question can therefore be raised as to whether, in the campaign to restore the whole Bible as the ‘word’ for preaching, there has been a tendency to take the ministry of the Holy Spirit for granted. If that is so, how should that assumption be regarded? Can anything be said for it? Yes. We think that something can and should be said and it will be in a moment. But *something else* should also be said, and the concern that this might be forgotten instead of being restored to prominence in all appropriate ways and places is what animates this paper. There is not much of an emphasis at all on praying for the Holy Spirit’s power to descend on the ministry of the word and on the preacher and hearer alike. This is a tell-tale sign. Is this superfluous now that we have the whole Bible and the skills to interpret any passage in it? Or is it doctrinally unacceptable? These are uncomfortable questions but they have to be faced by those who uphold written Scripture as the Word of God: Is the Holy Spirit ‘forgotten’ or ‘unknown?’ Is his presence and activity taken for granted and so is it being minimised?

Interestingly, Jay Adams has recently written a little book entitled 'Preaching According to the Holy Spirit'.<sup>19</sup> Its origin is similar to T. David Gordon's book *Why Johnny Can't Preach*<sup>20</sup> namely a concern on account of poor, boring preaching, but Adams expresses dissatisfaction with books on homiletics as well! Using Matthew 10:19-20 and its synoptic parallels (a text only for likely martyrs?), Adams highlights 'the what, the how and the when' of preaching as the concerns of the Holy Spirit and he backs up his argument with reference to the material in the Acts of the Apostles. All that this little book needs to be complete is the recognition that there are degrees of power to be associated with the Holy Spirit's activity on preacher and hearer alike.

## Light from the Past

There are five points of reference for our subject that we ought to bear in mind. The first two are wholly positive; the next two are of indirect benefit in that they provoke at least strong reservations. The last is a bit like the proverbial curate's egg. It is therefore arguable whether our age is the best or the worst of times for considering our subject but that is a theoretical matter compared with 'the need of the times'.

In favour of its being 'the best of times' are the following two facts:

### a) The Corpus of Holy Scripture has been determined

The sixty six books of the bible were firmly recognized as the written word of God in the Christian Church in the latter half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The thirty nine books of the Old Testament were endorsed at the Council of Jamnia after 70 A.D. and the rabbis excluded the Apocryphal books from that list. In a similar way, that is by the testimony of the Spirit validating certain books in the consciousness of churches, the twenty seven books of our New Testament were endorsed as the Word of God at the Council of Carthage in 397 B.C. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Lutheran and Anglican churches recognised Apocryphal books as being acceptable for 'example of life and instruction of manners' but Genevan churches did not. No reformed tradition therefore recognised them as part of the church's rule of faith.

## Conclusion 5

*Extra-canonical books may be of interest and use to biblical scholars but they should **not** be regarded as part of 'the Word' to be preached from, and certainly not be given any decisive weight in relation to any Christian doctrine or the relationship between Scripture and the Spirit.*

### b) The Divine Personhood of the Holy Spirit has been confessed

The personhood of the Holy Spirit was expressed in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in 381 A.D along with that of the Father and of the Son in the Godhead. The relevant words are 'the Lord and Giver of Life who, together with the Father and the Son, is to be worshipped and glorified'. The full 'membership' of the Spirit in the Holy Trinity therefore does not need to be established as a point of doctrine today but it does need to be understood (in so far as possible) and strongly maintained in both worship and preaching.<sup>21</sup>

God is a tri-unity of persons. Each person of the Godhead acts in coherence with the other two (*circumincessio*) or the unity of the Godhead would be destroyed. There cannot be any competitiveness between them. God is a God of *shalom*. No person therefore acts (or could act) in an idiosyncratic way. But each person acts freely and sovereignly, that is when, where and how he

wills and this freedom entails acting with varying degrees of power to effect a purpose that is also shared equally by the others. Although a specific task is predicated of each person in creation and redemption the other two are neither uninterested nor inactive in those same acts.<sup>22</sup>

In the Creed just mentioned the Spirit is also designated as the one 'who spoke by the prophets'. This early formal connection between the Scriptures (Old Testament) and the Spirit via the prophets pointed to the coming of the Messiah in the New Testament era. This was perhaps due to the church's wish to reject a Marcionite excision from the New Testament of anything to do with the Old, a fear of sects – for example Montanism – or more probably to its desire to veto Arian or Semi-Arian exegesis of the Old Testament.<sup>23</sup>

### **Conclusion 6**

*The Spirit and the Word are therefore not on the same plane of reality. The former is God; the latter is not, seeing as it is the product of the Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17). This means that the Spirit is as free and sovereign in his activity as is both the Father and the Son, and that the Word that is his product is also his instrument. He remains the agent.*<sup>24</sup>

In favour of its being 'the worst of times' is the unavoidable fact that the elements of the heritage just referred to have been progressively and largely squandered in the last three hundred years or so. Although they were never without a challenge of some sort, for example the recognition of extra-biblical tradition in the Eastern and Roman Catholic churches, whether written or oral, and the growing detachment of Spirit from Word in Quakerism and Romanticism, revisionist movements have arisen with regard to them in churches that owe their existence to the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation. These movements have had considerable influence and so the Protestant world has been considerably altered in its belief, character and internal alignments. These movements are:

#### **a) With regard to Holy Scripture**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Enlightenment built on Kant's denial of any one-to-one connection between the meaning of Scripture's texts and the supernatural realm. The books of the bible became human (rather than divine-human) products and so their trustworthiness was made subject to human verification and their value dependent on human approval. The result, as is well known, was that the *sola scriptura* principle became threatened and was progressively abandoned. Attempts that were made to stem the tide in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the Continent by Hengstenberg, Krummacher, Keil & Delitzsch and Oehler met with little success, whereas Warfield and Machen and others were more successful in the States.

In the decades after the Second World War a neo-evangelical movement arose which restricted the infallibility of the Bible to matters of faith and conduct, centred on Fuller Theological Seminary. By way of reaction to this an International Council of Biblical Inerrancy was founded in 1978 in which the term 'inerrancy' was used so that the full scope of the term 'infallibility' might be maintained. In arguing this case great emphasis (understandably) was placed on the Holy Spirit's work in verbal inspiration that resulted in the inner harmony of the contents of Scripture, and addresses that were given at its congresses were published during the ten years or so of its existence. It was terminated in 1986 because of the realisation that the debate was not only over the text but with interpretative methods of it. The Chicago Statement marked the conclusion of this necessary enterprise. However plans are currently being made for its resurgence – due to the same sort of reasons that brought it into being in the first place!

## b) With regard to the Holy Spirit

Two 20<sup>th</sup> century movements need to be brought into the picture here, namely the Ecumenical Movement and the Charismatic Movement. The former had a 19<sup>th</sup> century precursor in the World Student Christian Federation and the latter was an outgrowth of older Pentecostal denominations. Both gained significance in the years following the Second World War.

The Ecumenical Movement may be said to have begun in 1910 with a concern about the great hindrance posed to the church's mission by her dividedness. In the years before 1939 it added a social dimension to its missionary vision but each of these retained its distinctiveness until 1970. Since then a larger multi-religious and socio-economic preoccupation has replaced the pursuit of a worldwide ecclesiastical union between the churches based on the settlement of doctrinal differences. In this movement the Spirit's ministry has been effectively disconnected from the production of Holy Scripture and from bearing unique testimony to the sole mediatorship of Jesus Christ. Instead the Spirit is linked with a zeitgeist composed of an all-embracing ecclesiastical tradition, a pursuit of social justice and the religious awareness of non-Christian religions.<sup>25</sup>

The Charismatic Movement originated in the mid-1960s. Although it was distinct from the Pentecostal denominations, it had elements in common with them – for example, a two-stage understanding of the work of the Spirit being necessary for every Christian, evidenced by *glossolalia*. From a psychological and sociological perspective, this movement may be considered as a result of the break-up of the structures of family, community and ecclesiastical life due to the Second World War. Elevating the importance of the individual, it caught on and soon swamped those earlier forms of Pentecostalism and the Christian Brethren. It even infiltrated the Ecumenical Movement, producing renewal movements in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communions. It has now morphed into a kaleidoscope of opinion and activity which has challenged profoundly the theologies and worship practices of many church traditions, but its main feature is its emphasis on the experience(s) of the individual Christian.

J.I. Packer addressed this charismatic phenomenon in his volume on the Spirit.<sup>26</sup> He makes the same basic emphasis as Ferguson does, namely that the Spirit is knowable but not as well known as he should be. Speaking somewhat imprecisely, the aim of this book was to bring an orthodox pneumatology to bear on charismatic pneumatology by way of biblical exegesis and theological evaluation. There is an immense amount of soundest sense in these pages but not that much on the preaching task. His views on that are, of course, well known and are found elsewhere.

Gerald Bray points out that a focus on the Spirit's work to the neglect of that of the Father and the Son in certain forms of the charismatic movement makes it,

difficult to tell what connection these [experiences] have with the gospel message of sin, righteousness and judgment. If nothing outside the self really matters, if it is what I feel and experience that gives me the assurance that I am on the right track, then no objective criteria will be allowed to interfere with my judgment. This attitude is common in certain charismatic circles, and it is the result of ignoring the Trinitarian context of the Spirit's promises and work. Its inadequacy can be seen in its fundamental self-centeredness and its tendency to reduce the knowledge of God to a series of unusual human experiences that have no obvious purpose beyond themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Something of relevance to our subject ought to be learned from these movements because they have forfeited the uniqueness of Holy Scripture and of the Holy Spirit, and also the proper relationship between them. How many times did one hear in theological faculties 'The Bible is a book like any other book'? How often has the Spirit been connected with the stirrings of the human spirit and neither with the text of the Bible or with its central focus, the Christ of God? A morass of intellectualism and mysticism, sacramentalism and sacerdotalism and, of late, environmentalism has broken the connection between the Spirit of Truth and the text of Scripture and the Spirit of Christ and that of Man. Mercifully, Holy Scripture exists and the Holy Spirit is still active. The former is definable in the sense that it consists of specific texts but alarmingly the work of the Holy Spirit is not as easily discernible to many Christians. The question as to how to differentiate between the Spirit and the 'spirits' would not occur to many people, let alone the answer to it – and that in spite of the New Testament's description of the Spirit as being 'true' and 'holy'!

### **Conclusion 7**

*Preaching lost its supreme place in the church because the church lost the Bible. Consequently the church forfeited the power of the Spirit and lost her influence in the world. The pulpit, the pew and the pavement are never as far apart as they may be spatially. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth, will never marginalise the Bible and exalt the Church, nor will he minimise the Lord Jesus Christ by drawing attention to himself. Nor will he deny the universal fallenness of human beings.*

### **c) With regard to the Holy Spirit in relation to Holy Scripture**

There is one other matter from the past that must not be overlooked. It is the position established as a result of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation which correlated Word and Spirit in such a decisive and definitive way that B. B. Warfield could say of Calvin that he was 'the theologian of the Holy Spirit'<sup>28</sup> and the late John Murray could write that 'The Word and the Spirit was the keynote of the Reformation. This was the legacy of Protestantism.'<sup>29</sup> The written Word was the product of the living Spirit who still spoke by means of it. The Scriptures were therefore the Spirit's voice, as is demonstrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews by the use of the present tense 'says' instead of the usual past tense of the verb 'written'. The Bible was (is) alive.

We have had the temerity to describe this legacy as being something of a mixed blessing because there was not complete agreement in the 16<sup>th</sup> century on how the Spirit was to be related to the Word. Continuing with the quotation just made Murray says,

But on the relationship between the Word and the Spirit a great deal of discussion had still to be conducted. It is a persistently recurring question whether the Holy Spirit works in the believer only in, by or through the Scripture or whether the Spirit works sometimes independently of the Scripture. Is the Spirit tied to Scripture?

Murray's use of the word 'still' in the above quotation indicates that the precise nature of this relationship, which is indeed a contemporary question, ran all the way back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century disagreement between the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. This is a very important matter for our subject that is generally not recognised. The possibility exists that those who regard themselves as Reformed may, in reality, be Lutheran on this matter.

We will therefore hear three voices on this. Two are 19<sup>th</sup> century men; one (Dutch) Reformed and the other Presbyterian, namely Herman Bavinck and Charles Hodge. The third is a contemporary voice; a Sydney Diocese Episcopalian, namely John Woodhouse.

## Herman Bavinck

Surveying the field, Bavinck raised the question as to ‘whether the Holy Spirit always works in the human heart directly and immediately without the Word (Anabaptists), or only by the Word (Lutherans), or exclusively by the sacrament (Rome), or *as a rule in connection with the Word.*’ (emphasis mine). He declares,

there is often disagreement over the power and efficacy of the Word, as well as the relationship between Word and Spirit. Nomism (Judaism, pelagianism, rationalism, Romanism) considers the special supernatural power of the Holy Spirit superfluous, while antinomianism (Anabaptism, mysticism) expects everything from the inner light of the Holy Spirit and finds in the Word only a sign and a shadow. By contrast both Lutherans and reformed, against nomism and antinomianism alike, taught that though the Holy Spirit can work apart from the Word, ordinarily Word and Spirit go together. Lutherans, however, prefer to speak of the Spirit working *per verbum* (through the Word) while the reformed prefer *cum verbo* (with the word).<sup>30</sup>

Bavinck’s concern is to maintain such a close connection between Word and Spirit that the Word – and by that he does not only intend to refer to Holy Scripture but also to its effects in the family, school, society and of course in the church – becomes a means of grace. Even so, he is anxious to say that the Spirit *may* act apart from the Word, for example in the case of children dying in infancy. But ordinarily the Spirit works in conjunction with the Word, or rather conjoins himself to the Word, and so it is not enough to speak of the Word as if it were also the Spirit. For example in relation to regeneration he writes,

We must never forget that the word of God... always comes with power. At the same time, it does not always produce the same effect, and the regenerating, renewing effect cannot be understood without acknowledging the work of the Holy Spirit as a distinct work.<sup>31</sup>

## Charles Hodge

Hodge considers the Word as the primary means of grace and contrasts the Reformed and Lutheran positions in the same terms as Bavinck.<sup>32</sup> He asserts that the Spirit may work apart from means but normally in association with them. He sees the Lutheran position as having something in common with both Rationalists and Remonstrants in that it locates ‘the efficiency of the Word of God in the work of sanctification [in] *the inherent power of the truth*’ (emphasis mine). He does however record that Lutherans speak of this power as divine and not just moral or human as the Rationalists did.<sup>33</sup> But even if this power in the Word is ‘inherent, divine and constant’ as Lutherans maintain, how then are its differing results to be understood? Here Reformed and Lutherans differ for the latter say that those results are related ‘to the subjective state of those on whom it acts’ and not ‘to the Spirit accompanying it at some times and not at others... [nor] to the Word’s having more power at one time than at another; [nor] to its being attended with a greater or less degree of the Spirit’s influence but to the different ways in which it is received’.<sup>34</sup> He regards Luther (‘glorious and lovely’ as he says he was) as having over-reacted against the Anabaptists and says,

In opposition to their pretensions he took the ground that the Spirit never operated on the minds of men except through the Word and sacraments; and as he held the conversion of sinners to be the greatest of all miracles, he was constrained to attribute divine power to the Word.<sup>35</sup> [i.e. not to the Spirit]

Continuing, he sets out the alternative,

He was not content to take the ground which the Church in general has taken, that while the Word and the sacraments are the ordinary channels of the Spirit's influence, He has left himself free to act with or without these or any other means.

And so he throws down the gauntlet to Lutherans (and to any others as well):

What, according to the Lutheran theory, is meant by being full of the Holy Ghost? Or, by the indwelling of the Spirit? Or, by the testimony of the Spirit? Or, by the demonstration of the Spirit? Or, by the unction of the Holy One who teaches all things? Or, by the outpouring of the Spirit? In short, the whole Bible, and especially the evangelical history and the epistles of the New Testament, represents the Holy Spirit not as a power imprisoned in the truth, but as a personal, voluntary agent acting with the truth or without it, as He please. As such He has ever been regarded by the Church, and has ever exhibited himself in his dealings with the children of God.

A letter from Hodge to Rev. Dr Robert Watts of the Presbyterian College of Belfast on the subject of 'The Witness of the Spirit' is found in A.A. Hodge's biography of his father.<sup>36</sup> It is a succinct and erudite statement that deserves not to be forgotten.

### **John Woodhouse**

Formerly an Old Testament Professor at Moore Theological College in Sydney, John Woodhouse contributed an essay entitled *The Preacher and the Living Word* to a Festschrift for Dick Lucas.<sup>37</sup> The material was originally given at an EMA conference in 1989 and was subsequently written up. After listing references to several writings on Spirit and Word in the context of the debate over inerrancy, he claims that 'None of these studies develops the intimate relationship between Word and Spirit that is on view in this [i.e. his] paper.'<sup>38</sup> That is factually correct and so what he has written is valuable, although it is brief. It is also important because of the growing influence of Matthias Ministries etc. in the UK and USA.

He aims to present 'a proper understanding of the relationship between the Word of God and the Spirit of God' because in his estimate 'Christian thought about the work of the Spirit has too often been separated from the Word of God.' To judge from his frequent and varied references to the Charismatic Movement, that is what he seems to have particularly in mind. For him, the notion which (at least) separates the Spirit from the Word and more often than not regards the Spirit as the necessary and vivifying supplement to it, is to be repudiated.

Instead he asserts that there is such an inter-relationship between the Word and the Spirit of God that the Word is alive. He shows this by citing specific verses that refer to the creation of the world, the formation of Israel and of the international church as a result of the power of the Word of God. He claims that in so many places in the New Testament the terms 'Spirit' and 'Word' are 'virtually interchangeable'. Underlying this association and giving it validity is the fact that,

English lacks a word which has the range of meaning of the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek *pneuma*. Both these words can mean 'wind' and 'breath' as well as 'spirit'. In many biblical texts the expression 'the Spirit of God' could well be translated 'the breath of God'. We will see then, that in biblical thought the Spirit of God is as closely connected to the Word of God as breath is connected to speech.<sup>39</sup>

This inter-connection between Spirit and Word is therefore well made. But it is over-made because Woodhouse repeatedly collapses the Spirit's work into the meaning of the Word. Luther's well known statement 'I did nothing: the Word did it all' was typical of him and it should not be considered as if it were a doctrinal definition.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, and with more accuracy to the whole of Scripture's teaching, Calvin says,

The work of the Spirit, then, is joined to the word of God. But a distinction is made that we may know that the external word is of no avail by itself, unless animated by the power of the Spirit... All power of action, then, resides in the Spirit himself and thus all power ought to be entirely referred to God alone.<sup>41</sup>

This is the kind of distinction that Woodhouse does not make. His comments on 1 Thessalonians 1: 4-6 and 2:13 show this. He claims that they make 'exactly the same point' in that they describe 'one experience, what they experienced when 'our gospel came'. But that is not the case, although they are related (see below). His treatment has the effect of conflating Spirit and Word instead of connecting them. He does exactly the same in what he says about Romans 8:16 and treats it in a way that is without any parallel in commentaries on Romans (I believe).<sup>42</sup> He does not relate it to verse 15 and so can write,

*How does the Spirit testify to me? The answer is surely by the gospel, by the Word of God. Are there two experiences, the word of God telling me that I am a child of God and the Spirit testifying with my spirit that I am a child of God? No, God's Word comes with the power of God's Spirit. God himself breathes his word to me. Receiving the *breath* of God and the *words* of God are not distinguishable experiences here. (italics original)*

It is because he does not consider how verses 15 and 16 correlate he deprives the Spirit of any independent testifying activity to the believer in relation to the matter of assurance. It is noteworthy that Woodhouse never speaks of 'faith *in Christ*' in this essay. Instead it is always 'faith in God'. This is because the gospel word is God's word and so faith must be 'faith in God'. But does not the New Testament refer specifically to Christ as the object of saving faith?

## Summary Conclusion

From all that has been advanced so far two doctrinal propositions can be deduced, namely,

### 1. The Word is conjoined to the Holy Spirit and must never be disconnected

The Holy Scriptures are God's inerrant and sufficient word and wherever and whenever any part of them is properly explained, God speaks by it. This means that the Scriptures do not become the Word of God. That is what they already are and what they will never cease to be – whatever other books will be written about them may say and however many copies of them may be sold! The Bible may one day cease to be the world's bestseller. (Perhaps it has already).

But any and every text from it may be truly prefaced with the words 'Thus saith (says) the LORD'. By 'the power of the Holy Spirit' is not meant something that brings God's silence or absence to an end. He is near whenever the book is opened and he speaks and acts. Nor may his power be sought as if he were not present in and with the Word. The powerful voice of God in the word of God has some self-evidencing quality in every conscience – whether men will believe or not. And there is also a 'word' (*sensus divinitatis*) that testifies to God's existence, wisdom, power and justice in the moral constitution of every human being (Rom. 1:18-2:16)

## 2. The Holy Spirit is 'greater' than the Word and must not be imprisoned in it

As a Divine Person the Holy Spirit is an agent and the Holy Scriptures are his chief instrument. His are the arms and hands that make the sword of the Word 'two-edged, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow' and his are the eyes that 'discern[ing] the thoughts and intentions of the heart' (Heb. 4:12). He uses the Scriptures as sovereign but in accord with the purpose of the Father and of the Son. He therefore works where he wills and as he wills, but in differing degrees of might as it pleases him. This is nothing but the principle which underlies the *modus operandi* in relation to the distribution of the *charismata* referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. And it is also present and active in degrees of grace given to believers – and held out to them as part of growth in holiness. The Spirit has been given, but he has more – much more – of the fullness of Christ to give.

### Need for the Future

If Theology is the queen of the sciences then Pastoral Theology is (arguably) the king of the disciplines – provided of course that it is theology applied! By contrast, the expression 'philosophy of ministry' is one that I often heard used approvingly in the States – but not, I hasten to add, in Westminster Seminary, California. Instead a *theology of ministry* is what is appropriate, and in connection with our subject it must be one that recognises the importance of 'the word of truth and the power of God' (2 Cor. 6:4)

As our subject is the preaching of the Word, we focus attention on men who are set apart to the Christian Ministry. Limiting our field in this way does not mean that we are forgetting or denying that the making known of the word of God is not restricted to pastor-teachers in the New Testament. Stott refers to what he calls the 'one another-ing' passages in the New Testament where all believers, female as well as male, are exhorted to mutual edification and witness-bearing. This is described as 'preaching' in Acts 6:4. Even so, it is the ministry of pastor-teachers in particular who exercise a shaping and forming influence on those who are in the church in their multi-form service for the Lord, both individually and corporately (Eph. 4:11-16).<sup>43</sup>

We have been saying that a suitable portion from somewhere in the verbally-inspired Scriptures must be *to the fore* in the preaching of the Word but also that *something more needs to be said* about the Spirit who attends it. We will now think about that 'something more' and do so in relation to the preacher himself, but also to his preaching.

The two texts from 1 Thessalonians to which reference has already been made are of help in enabling us to describe what is involved in 'preaching the word with power.' While they refer to the same 'event', namely the preaching of the gospel which brought the church into being, they describe it from its two sides: that of the preacher(s) and that of the hearer(s). The verb 'come' in 1:5 was a standard in which first-century rhetors introduced themselves to their audiences (see 1 Cor. 2:1 and also 1Thess. 2:1).<sup>44</sup> The verbs 'received and heard' in 2:12 are self-explanatory. John Stott comments on these verses,

We must never divorce what God has married, namely his Word and his Spirit. The Word of God is the Spirit's sword. The Spirit without the Word is weaponless; the Word without the Spirit is powerless... The truth of the Word, the conviction with which we speak it, and the power of its impact on others all come from the Holy Spirit. It is he who illumines our minds,

so that we formulate our message with integrity and clarity. It is he whose inward witness assures us of its truth, so that we preach it with conviction. And it is he who carries it home with power, so that the hearers respond to it in penitence, faith and obedience.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Preacher – The Spirit and the Word**

Preaching cannot be considered properly without attention being given to the preacher because the soul of his sermons is the outflow of his own spirit. No one who is in pastoral ministry has any grounds for thinking that his congregation will rise any higher than himself. That may happen but it is only because God is gracious to his people. Whenever and wherever it does it should be regarded as the exception rather than the rule.

This means that the beams of the glory of the new covenant must have shone in the preacher's heart, namely the grace of God in the gospel of Christ and the life of the Spirit as these are displayed in the Holy Scriptures (see 2 Cor. 4:4-6). This 'light' is the seed-bed in which the internal call to the work germinates and out of which it blossoms – both to the individual's own consciousness and for the church's endorsement. It is essential and irreplaceable. It conveys what no church or seminary can give. It underlies Romans 10:15 – a text that is overlooked.

Sadly, things are going wrong at this precise point and they have consequences for authentic preaching. The internal call is not only being ignored but denied. The trade wind here blows from Australia, from the Sydney Diocese. The message of *The Trellis and the Vine*, a book from Matthias Ministries, is much needed wherever there is an over-emphasis on the ordained ministry (not only in Anglican churches but also in Reformed and Presbyterian churches too). But it denies this call.<sup>46</sup> Several pieces in *The Briefing* say the same thing and Proclamation Trust seems to be echoing the message. Christopher Ash's helpful study of preaching emphasises the task and the character of the preacher does not mention the internal call.<sup>47</sup> David Jackman writes on 'Preparing the Preacher' in the Lucas Festschrift and does not mention it either. Philip H. Eveson's most timely article entitled '*Moore Theology*: A Friendly Critique' is a must-read.<sup>48</sup>

The internal call is often reduced to a matter of 'feeling' called – by both sides in this debate. It should not be, because while 'feeling' is involved, 'thinking' is most definitely required. While it is the activity of the Spirit who impresses this constraint on a man's conscience (to whatever degree it pleases him) he also endows the man with a varied measure of giftedness requisite for the work. 1 Timothy 3:1 is either ignored or not adequately considered. It is not just a human wish. It has two strong verbs, one of which is used for the constraining desire the Lord knew as he contemplated the work that the Father had given him to do (Lk. 22:15). This desire is also borne out in the 'qualifications' that follow. Luther's words 'The ministry of the Word belongs to all' are quoted but Calvin is not and he spoke of 'that secret call of which each minister is conscious before God, and which does not have the church for its witness'.<sup>49</sup> The Reformed tradition is therefore of an inward call which is inseparably associated with a measure of giftedness that can be greatly enlarged and then tested in the courts of the church. That God raises up men and gives them to his church in time of need is no longer part of our thinking and praying.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a discussion took place in the PCUSA over whether able young men should, as a matter of duty, consider becoming ministers. Breckinridge and Thornwell argued that there was no such obligation. For them it was impossible that the duty could exist prior to the call. Thornwell's discussion of this subject is incredibly moving and so is his lengthy excerpt from Breckinridge.<sup>50</sup>

Dabney also contributed to the discussion and while there are differences between him and them they all work within the necessity of the inward call.<sup>51</sup>

In my view Mike Plant's helpful article on the views of this triumvirate regarding the call overplays the difference between Thornwell and Dabney.<sup>52</sup> They do not 'inhabit a completely different thought world'. But there is a difference, and it may be no more than a matter of a word – the word 'duty'. Dabney's call to young men to give serious thought to the ministry can be seen as no more than any Christian man voicing the question 'What wilt thou have me to do?' – a question that is surely appropriate for every believer to ask. This is in the nature of an investigation and not a conclusion. To make known to office-bearers that one is contemplating the ministry is helpful as a first step – as is also to make known in the church that that is what ought to be done! After all, this is a specific need that the church ought to be praying about – and publicly (see Lk. 10:38). The strength and clarity of 'the call' will vary from person to person. Some will need encouragement to admit to themselves what they are contemplating; others will need to be tested by a delay.<sup>53</sup> This is a matter where wisdom is called for on the parts of all involved. But no one should seek the encouragement of the local church to begin a course of theological study without some degree of inner constraint and encouragement from church office-bearers.<sup>54</sup>

But the requirement of an internal call should not be jettisoned. It makes a man conscious of the 'unknown Spirit' in his mind and conscience, heart and life and it encourages him to give himself up to the Holy Spirit's control whenever he is preaching and not only when he is preparing. This is what is meant by unction in the preacher. Pierre Marcel describes it wonderfully. He writes,

When in preaching a man abandons himself to the freedom of the Spirit, he discovers that his faculties are developed above normal: freedom is given not only to the soul but also to the tongue, his mental perception is deeper; his ability to picture things in his mind is greater; truth works a greater power in his soul; his faith is more intense; he feels himself involved in a living and compact reality. His feelings are much more sensitive and spontaneously permeate his heart. He comes to think the thoughts of Christ, to experience the feelings and emotions of Christ... The Spirit endows his word, his expression with a natural freshness and vitality which gives the word a new and original appearance and which belongs only to the spoken style.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Preaching – The Spirit and the Word**

The mention of 'the spoken style' in the above quotation should not be overlooked. Although a sermon is a connected, pointed address<sup>56</sup> it is neither to be fashioned nor presented as a literary product. It is not cool communication but white-hot speech – no manuscript or auto-cue for the preacher and no hand-out or overhead projector for the congregant!!! We should so speak that people see and feel as well as hear – to make an impression as well as provide instruction.

In *The Archer and the Arrow*, a companion volume to *The Trellis and the Vine* (although it is not by the same author) Phillip Jensen works with an orthodox trinitarianism that is both ontological and economic. He connects the triune God both with the word (and words) of Scripture and the work of salvation in the heart and life of the sinner. But in relation to the preacher and preaching he only relates the activity of the Spirit to ascertaining the proper meaning of the text, communicating it intelligibly and its effect of the message on the hearer.<sup>57</sup> Praying for the help of the Spirit *is limited to these matters*. This amounts to a significantly diminished doctrine of the Spirit as Person and also the dimension of power. Using the title of the book the book there is much that is useful with regard

to the 'arrow' and the 'archer' but precious little 'about drawing the bow at a venture' (see 1 Kings 22:34).

What then is 'the power' of the Holy Spirit? This question has to be asked because we have been acknowledging that the Word is never without the Spirit and yet have been arguing that there is a greater degree of the Spirit's power. What does this greater degree look like? All that is meant in this paper by the powerful activity of the Spirit is that he pursues his standard, regular work as the Spirit of truth and holiness *with far more intensity and extensiveness than at other times*.

This matter relates to 'boldness', 'plainness of speech' or 'a door of utterance' (Acts 4:13, 29, 31; 1Cor. 16:8, 9; 2 Cor. 2:12, 3:12; Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:3). They are synonymous expressions and are the concomitants of the new covenant. They do not merely refer to opportunity to speak, much less to the existence of human need, but to the kind of speech that is in keeping with the character of the gospel of the glory of Christ. That was something that had to be prayed for – even by apostles. Paul knew the content of the gospel and what was to be said but he knew that he was dependent on the aid of the Spirit to say it as it should be said, so that people might receive it as it ought to be received (see 1 Cor. 2:1-4). He prayed for that and he asked the churches to do so as well. This, and its effects, are the divinely given extra – and it has degrees; to quote John Elias, 'fire cannot be carried in paper'.

This work is promised *and described* by the Lord Jesus Christ toward the conclusion of his Upper Room Discourse. In John 16:8-15 Jesus speaks of the coming of the Spirit and his ministry in the world (vv.8-11) and in the church (vv.12-15). While his words have a special sense for the 11 disciples who are to become apostles, they do not have exclusive reference to them.<sup>58</sup> Jesus is speaking of his disciples who are to be his witnesses but also to all who believe on him. The Spirit will endorse their testimony to unbelievers, convincing them of their unbelief, of their inadequate righteousness and of their liability to judgment. He will also disclose the Saviour to them as being God's exclusive and replete Mediator.<sup>59</sup>

The Book of the Acts describes such preaching and believing both by those who preach and those who come to believe. A comparison between the Gospels and the Book of Acts on both those counts almost reveals a different world. There is no more failing to understand, forsaking and fleeing on the part of the disciples and there is fearing on the part of the unbelieving Jewish and Gentile world. People turn to God from idols to serve him and wait for his Son from heaven. Others as well as they spread the message and it travels faster than human instruments can take it. In such a setting the Spirit is active beyond the regular witnessing ministry of the church; for example, Rahab had 'heard' but not from the Israelites, just as Macedonians had heard but not from Paul or the Thessalonians. He may even stir minds and consciences directly (by dreams!) and bring them to the truth or bring the truth to them (see Job 33:14-30). But this activity, that is apart from Scripture, is never in contradiction of the truth of the Word of God but in harmony with it. Such a change is evidence of the 'greater things' Jesus predicted the Holy Spirit would do as a result of his glorification (John 7:38). Time and again something like Pentecost happened and knowledge, joy, peace and power flooded the churches and flowed over their environment.

## Conclusion

The matters presented are seen as both *supports* for 'the preaching of the word' and as *signposts* as to how to think of 'the power of the Holy Spirit'.

Our conclusion is one of immense thankfulness that there is not 'a famine of the word of God' and that the Spirit has been attending the making known of its truth. It is not the worst of times – not really.

But it is not the best of times either. There are many for whom the gospel has not even come in 'words only', others for whom it has can no longer even remember those words. Others are familiar with some of the language but they are serving idols and have not turned to the living God (1 Thess. 1) It is not the worst of times but it could be a better time (Psalm 119:126) – a much better time. Is there not therefore urgent need in our time and place for God's people to pray that he might arise, scatter his enemies, gladden his people and bring the equivalent of the Ark of the Covenant – no, what is superior to it – to Zion, his holy temple (Psalm 68). In his Bible Annotations Matthew Poole wrote of this Psalm that, as David knew that

...both the ark and himself were types of Christ and that the church and people of Israel were types of the catholic church consisting of Jews and Gentiles, and that the legal administrations and actions were types of those of the gospel, he therefore, by the Spirit of prophecy, looked through and beyond the present actions and types unto the great mysteries of Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, and of the special privileges of the Christian church and of the conversion of the Gentiles unto God.

What we have been considering is what the Puritan, John Owen, desired and described as follows: When God shall be pleased to give unto the people who are called by his name, in a more abundant manner, 'pastors after his own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding', when he shall revive and increase a holy, humble, zealous, self-denying, powerful ministry, by a more plentiful effusion of his Spirit from above: then, and not until then, may we hope to see the pristine glory and beauty of our church restored unto its primitive state and condition.<sup>60</sup>

Since 1676 when those words were written something of that order has happened at many places and in many times. The like needs to happen again – and it can!

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<sup>1</sup> Commentary on 1 Corinthians

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Paul does not choose to use the term 'covenant' when there are not situational factors that require him to do so, such as a Jewish tendency or threat, as in 2 Corinthians, or when he is quoting the words of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 11:25). Being 'in Christ' is the way in which he prefers to describe new covenant reality. Of course the Epistle to the Hebrews is excluded from this comment as being non-Pauline.

<sup>3</sup> The literature here is extensive. It relates to the New Perspective on Paul and to Federal Vision. See *Covenant, Justification and Pastoral Ministry* (ed. R. Scott Clark; Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> For a study of 'glory' in the New Testament see A.M. Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* (London: Longmans, 1949)

<sup>5</sup> Although the distinctions between the old and the new covenants are only relative, they are not distinctions without a difference. They are the consequence of the greater revelation and its appropriate effects. The new covenant is to be distinguished from the Sinaitic covenant (and also the Abrahamic) by a much greater clarity and by finality.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Henry documented this in *God, Revelation and Authority* (Waco: Word Books 6 vols, 1976). David Wells did the same in his *No Place For Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) as did the French sociologist Jacques

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Ellul in his *Humiliation of the Word* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985). Ellul wrote 'Anyone wishing to save humanity today must first of all save the Word' (quoted in Wells, 187)

<sup>7</sup> See the writings of Sidney Greidanus, Haddon Robinson and Brian Chappell.

<sup>8</sup> There is a third component which is the theme of this essay.

<sup>9</sup> *Between Two Worlds. The Challenge of Preaching Today*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 137ff. Klaas Runia also uses this image in his Moore College Lectures of 1980 entitled *The Sermon Under Attack* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1983)

<sup>10</sup> Compare Vos' *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) with Goldsworthy's *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000)

<sup>11</sup> *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (London: Tyndale Press, 1961) and *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003)

<sup>12</sup> *The Holy Spirit. Contours of Christian Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1996) 12

<sup>13</sup> *Preaching* (ed. Samuel T Logan Jr.; Phillipsburg: P&R, 1986) and by EP under licence.

<sup>14</sup> Other contributors do emphasise this.

<sup>15</sup> *When God's voice is heard* (eds. Green and Jackman; Leicester: IVP, 1995)

<sup>16</sup> *The Art of Prophesying* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996) 71-72

<sup>17</sup> D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971) 304-325

<sup>18</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr., *He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2008)

<sup>19</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Preaching According to the Holy Spirit. Timeless Texts* (Woodruff, 2000)

<sup>20</sup> *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2009). The promised sequel *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture rewrote the Hymnal* appeared from the same publisher in 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity. In Scripture, Theology and Worship* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2004)

<sup>22</sup> *Opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*.

<sup>23</sup> For example, the use of Proverbs 8 in favour of the view that the Son was a creature or first of the creatures.

<sup>24</sup> Dennis E Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> For further information and evaluation see the author's *Gospel and Church* (Bridgend: Bryntirion Press, 1979) and also *Only One Way* (Nottingham: Day One, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999)

<sup>27</sup> Gerald Bray, Evangelicals Losing Their Way: The Doctrine of the Trinity, in *The Compromised Church* (ed. John H. Armstrong; Wheaton: Crossway, 1998)

<sup>28</sup> B.B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931) 21

<sup>29</sup> Review of The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience by G.F. Nuttall, in *Collected Writings Vol. 3* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth) 325

<sup>30</sup> The Spirit's Means Of Grace: Proclamation in *Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation. Vol. 4, Reformed Dogmatics* (ed. John Bolt; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2008) 441-460

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 442

<sup>32</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. 3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 466-485

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- <sup>33</sup> See quotes from several Lutheran theologians in these pages.
- <sup>34</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. 3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 481
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 484-5
- <sup>36</sup> A.A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust) 524-52
- <sup>37</sup> *When God's voice is heard* (eds. Green and Jackman; Leicester: IVP, 1995). See also articles in *The Briefing*, 10-12
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 61
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 55. There is however another word for 'breath' in Hebrew beside *ruach* (see Gen. 2:7)
- <sup>40</sup> See Stuart Olyott's article *Where Luther Got It Wrong and why we need to know about it* (Banner Magazine December 2009)
- <sup>41</sup> Commenting on Ezekiel 2:2
- <sup>42</sup> See John Murray on these two verses.
- <sup>43</sup> Even if we argue that the comma in the KJV rendering of Ephesians 4:12 should not be there, the work of teacher-pastors is necessary in order to the maturing of the body of Christ and, by extension, her witness in the world.
- <sup>44</sup> See Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) esp. 111-254
- <sup>45</sup> John Stott makes the requisite distinction and association in commenting on these verses in *The Message of Thessalonians* (Bible Speaks Today. IVP, 1991)
- <sup>46</sup> Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2009) 129-134
- <sup>47</sup> *The Priority of Preaching* (PT Media and Christian Focus, 2009)
- <sup>48</sup> *Foundations*, Autumn 2006. It would be useful if a friendly reply were to be made on all points raised.
- <sup>49</sup> *The Trellis and The Vine*, 58 and *Institutes*, Book 3, iv.13
- <sup>50</sup> See Ecclesiastical, *The Collected Writings of J.H. Thornwell, Vol. 4* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974) 15-42. Also John H. Leith, The Recruitment of Students, in *The Crisis in the Church: The Plight of Theological Education* (Louisville: WJK Press, 1997) 97-109
- <sup>51</sup> See What is a call to the Ministry? in *Discussions, Evangelical and Theological, Vol. 2* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust) 26-46
- <sup>52</sup> The Call to the Ministry, *Foundations*, Spring 2008
- <sup>53</sup> Issue 16 of Affinity's *Table Talk* lays out the difficulties associated with this whole process from the standpoint of those who are considering the ministry or have just entered into the work. It describes this whole area as a 'growing crisis'.
- <sup>54</sup> Lloyd-Jones had never preached in a church service before he went to Sandfields for the first time. When his wife asked him whether he was sure that he could preach his answer was, 'I can preach to myself'.
- <sup>55</sup> *The Relevance of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 20
- <sup>56</sup> See Dabney's *Evangelical Eloquence* published by Banner of Truth and much used by T.David Gordon in his book. It would have been better if the original title of this book, *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric*, had been retained by Banner's editor of the time!

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<sup>57</sup> I do not intend to demean by the use of the word 'only' but to draw attention to something else that is important (pp.72 & 78).

<sup>58</sup> See Andreas J. Kostenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and His Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) esp. 142-153

<sup>59</sup> See D.A. Carson, The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979); 547-566

<sup>60</sup> Nature and Causes of Apostasy from the Gospel. *Works VII* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust) 195