

THE CONGRUENCY OF 'JOHANNINE' & CHRIST-IAN BAPTISM -- Dr. F.N. Lee

126. The Older Testament's predictions of Pentecost Sunday

Rev. Dr. James Buchanan was sometime Professor of Systematic Theology at the Free Church College in Scotland's Edinburgh. In his famous book *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*, he states:⁷⁹⁹ "There are many passages in the Old Testament (Psalm 35 & 102:13-22) which are beautifully descriptive of the Spirit-ual revivals which occurred from time to time under the Jewish dispensation."

We should consider also those Older Testament passages which actually predict the much **greater** "Spirit-ual revivals" which would start on the **Newer** Testament's first **Pentecost Sunday** after Calvary. For it was then that the 'Pentecost predictions' of Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Proverbs, Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah (*etc.*) -- and especially Joel -- were all fulfilled.

127. The fullness of the Spirit from Malachi to Calvary

In New Testament times, yet still before Calvary -- as predicted by the Prophet Malachi⁸⁰⁰ -- John the Baptizer the Second Elijah was "filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb."⁸⁰¹ Nevertheless, even after his then going forth before Jesus "in the Spirit and power of Elijah"⁸⁰² -- John (for a while) later doubted his own faith in Christ,⁸⁰³ before re-repenting again.

Also the prenatal John the Baptizer's pregnant mother "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" -- when she became aware of the then-proximity of the only-just-conceived Saviour Jesus Christ.⁸⁰⁴ And after the Spirit-conceived birth of the Lord Jesus,⁸⁰⁵ we are told that "the Holy Ghost was upon" the prophesying Simeon.⁸⁰⁶

Thereafter, the divinely-unique and humanly-sinless child Jesus Himself "grew and waxed strong in Spirit" and "increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."⁸⁰⁷ Too, when about thirty years of age, after the Holy Spirit descended on Him at His water-baptism⁸⁰⁸ -- He was "full of the Holy Ghost" and "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."⁸⁰⁹

128. John the Baptizer filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb

The Newer Testament, then, would start when John the Baptizer "would be **filled with the Holy Ghost** even from his mother's womb." Thereafter, he "would go out ahead of Jesus -- in the Spirit and power of Elijah." Luke 1:15-17.

Comments Calvin regarding John the Baptizer:⁸¹⁰ "The power and grace of the Spirit will appear in him not only when he shall enter upon his public employment, but even from the womb he shall excel in the gifts of the Spirit.... The power of the Spirit, I acknowledge, did operate in John while he was yet in his mother's womb.... John, even when a child, would be...accompanied by extraordinary commendation of the grace of God...and very uncommon **abundance** of the **gifts** of the **Spirit**...."

"To Christ alone the Spirit was given 'without measure' (John 3:34), so that we may draw 'out of His fullness' (John 1:16); while to others it is distributed according to a fixed measure (First Corinthians 12:11 & Ephesians 4:7). But those who are more plentifully endued with

grace beyond the ordinary capacity, are said to be full of the Holy Ghost.... The more plentiful influence of the Spirit was, in John, an extraordinary gift of God....

"Let us learn by this example that, from the earliest infancy to the latest old age, the operation of the Spirit in men is free!... For when the Lord bestows so great praise on the outward doctrine, He does not separate it from the secret influence of His Spirit. As God chooses men to be His Ministers whose services He employs for the edification of His Church, He at the same time operates by them through the secret influence of His Spirit -- so that their labours may be efficacious and fruitful.

"Wherever Scripture applaud this efficacy in the ministry of men -- let us learn to attribute it to the grace of the Spirit, without which the voice of man would have spent itself uselessly in the air! Thus, when Paul boasts that he is a Minister of the Spirit (Second Corinthians 3:6), he claims nothing separately for himself...but asserts the power and grace of the Spirit in his Ministry....

"Satan labours, with amazing contrivance, to lower the effect of doctrine -- in order that the grace of the Spirit connected with it may be weakened. The outward preaching, I acknowledge, can do nothing separately or by itself. But as it is an instrument of divine power for our salvation, and through the grace of the Spirit an efficacious instrument -- what God has joined together, let us not put asunder!....

"The calling of John had no other design than to secure for Christ a willing ear and to prepare for Him disciples.... The angel [is right here and then] declaring John to be the usher or standard-bearer of...the eternal divinity of Christ 'with the Spirit and power of Elijah.' By the words 'Spirit and power' -- I understand the power or excellency of the Spirit with which Elijah was endued.... The same Spirit of God Who had acted efficaciously in Elijah, afterwards exerted a similar power and efficacy in [John] the Baptizer."

Matthew Henry remarks:⁸¹¹ "Those that would be filled with the Holy Ghost, must be sober and temperate and very moderate in the use of wine and strong drink.... 'Be not drunk with wine,' but 'be filled with the Spirit' -- with which that [being filled with wine] is not consistent! Ephesians 5:18....

"It is possible that infants may be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost even from their mother's womb. For John Baptist even then was 'filled with the Holy Ghost' Who took possession of his heart betimes.... An early specimen was given of it, when he 'leaped [up] in his mother's womb for joy' at the approach of the Saviour -- and afterwards it appeared very early that he was sanctified.

"God has promised to pour out His Spirit upon the 'seed' of believers (Isaiah 44:3).... Who then can forbid water that they should not be baptized, who for aught we know...have received the Holy Ghost as well as we -- and have the 'seeds of grace' sown in their hearts?"

129. The Second Adam Jesus Christ filled with the Spirit from His conception onward

It was said to the mother of Jesus: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon you.... Therefore also that Holy One Who shall be born from you, shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

"The angel," comments Calvin,⁸¹² "leads the virgin [Mary] to contemplate the power of the **Holy Spirit**.... 'The power of the Highest shall overshadow you.' For the Spirit may be

regarded as the essential power of God Whose energy is manifested and exerted in the entire government of the World as well as in miraculous events....

"The operation of the Spirit would be secret.... Christ must not be born by ordinary generation [or conception] -- so that He may be holy [from His **first** human hour onward]....

"He was conceived in a remarkable manner by the power of the **Holy Spirit**.... The truth of His human nature is not inconsistent with His deriving peculiar honour above all others from His divine generation, having been conceived out of the ordinary way of nature by the Holy Spirit....

"Christ, because He was conceived by...**Spirit**-ual power, is called 'the **Holy Seed**'.... Though Christ was formed of the seed of Abraham, yet He contracted no defilement from a sinful nature. For the **Spirit** of God kept Him **pure** from the very **commencement**.

:And this was done not merely so that He might abound in personal holiness, but chiefly so that He might sanctify His Own people." Indeed, even from their **conception** onward (First Corinthians 7:14).

As the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* (8:2f) observes: "The Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature with all the essential properties...yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the **Holy Ghost**. Luke 1:35."

Matthew Henry remarks⁸¹³ that Mary "shall conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost Whose proper work and office it is to sanctify. And therefore, to sanctify the virgin for this purpose -- the Holy Ghost is called 'the power of the [All-]Highest.'

"Doth she ask how this shall be? This is enough to help her over all the difficulty there appears in it: a divine power will undertake it -- not the power of an angel employed in it...but the power of the Holy Ghost Himself....

"The Holy Ghost, as the Power of the [All-]Highest, shall overshadow her, as the cloud covered the tabernacle when the glory of God took possession of it.... The formation of every babe in the womb, and the entrance of the **Spirit** of life into it, is a mystery in nature. None knows the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones are formed in the womb of her that is with child. Ecclesiastes 11:5....

"Much more was the formation of the child Jesus, a mystery.... The child she shall conceive, is a Holy One, and therefore must not be conceived by ordinary generation.

"Because He must not share in the common corruption and pollution of the human nature.... He shall be called 'the Son of God' -- as...an indication of which He shall now be formed by the Holy Ghost in the present conception."

Dr. Abraham Kuyper claims,⁸¹⁴ in an extended discussion of this point, that "it cannot be denied that in the preparing of the body of the Lord there is a peculiar work of the Holy Spirit. For the angel said to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:35). And again: 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife -- for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost!' Matthew 1:20.

"Both passages, apart from their prophetic meaning, evidently seek to produce the impression that the conception and birth of Jesus are extraordinary.... They did not occur after the will of man, but result from an operation of the Holy Spirit....

"It is erroneous to say that the Holy Spirit is the Creator of Jesus' body -- or... 'that the Holy Spirit was the Father of Christ according to His human nature.' Such representations must be rejected, since they destroy the confession of the Holy Trinity....

"We wish to emphasize therefore that not the Holy Spirit alone but the Triune God prepared the body of the Mediator. The Father and even the Son cooperated in this divine act.

"However, as we have seen in creation and providence -- in this cooperation, the work of each Person bears its own distinctive mark. From the Father, of Whom are all things -- proceeded the material of the body of Christ, the creation of the human soul, and of all His gifts and powers together with the whole plain of the incarnation. From the Son, Who is the Wisdom of the Father, disposing and arranging all things in creation -- proceeded the holy disposition and arrangement with reference to the incarnation. And as the correlated acts of the Father and the Son in creation and providence receive animation and perfection through the Holy Spirit -- so there is in the incarnation a peculiar act of the Holy Spirit through which the acts of Father and Son in this mystery receive completion and manifestation....

"This, however, may not be explained in the ordinary sense. It might be said that there is nothing wonderful in this. For Job declares (chapter 33:4), 'The Spirit of the Lord hath given me life.' And of Christ we read that He was born of Mary, being conceived by the Holy Ghost.

These two cover the same ground. Both instances connect the birth [and earlier also the conception] of a child with an act of the Holy Spirit.

"As regards the birth of Christ, we do not deny this ordinary act of the Holy Spirit which is essential to the quickening of all life, especially that of a human being -- yet we do deny that the conception by the Holy Spirit was the ordinary act. The ancient confession 'I believe in Jesus Christ [the Spirit-anointed One], His [the Father's] Only-Begotten Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost' -- refers to a divine miracle and a deep mystery in which the work of the **Holy Spirit must be glorified**....

"In this work of the Holy Spirit, two things must be distinguished: First, the creation of the human nature of Jesus. Secondly, His separation from sinners....

"The Scripture thrice puts the Holy Spirit in the foreground as the Author of the conception. St. Matthew says (chapter 1:18): 'When Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child by the Holy Ghost.' And again in verse 20: 'For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.'

"Lastly, Luke says (chapter 1:35): 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' These clear statements do not receive full recognition, unless it plainly be confessed that the conception of the germ of a human nature in the womb of the virgin -- was an act of the Holy Spirit.

"The account in Matthew 1:18-20 overlaps this.... It says that Mary 'was found [pregnant] with child from the Holy Ghost' -- and that the angel of the Lord assured her espoused Joseph, that 'what had been conceived in her is from the Holy Ghost.'"

Matthew, comments Calvin,⁸¹⁵ "says that Mary 'was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.' Not that this secret work of God was generally known. But the historian commingles, with the knowledge of men who saw well by outward marks that Mary was pregnant, the power of the Spirit which was still unknown....

"Joseph was a just man.... Nor ought we to have any hesitation in believing that his mind was restrained by a secret inspiration of the Spirit....

"The same remark is applicable to Mary's silence. Granting that modest reserve prevented her from venturing to tell her husband that 'she was with child by the Holy Spirit' -- it was not so much by her own choice as by the providence of God that she was restrained."

Matthew Henry adds:⁸¹⁶ "'Before they came together, she was found with child' -- which really was 'of the Holy Ghost'.... She had conceived 'by the power of the Holy Ghost' -- not by the power of nature. The Holy Spirit, Who produced the World, now produced the Saviour of the World -- and 'prepared Him a body' as was promised Him when He said 'Lo, I come!' Hebrews 10:5.

Rev. Professor Dr. George Smeaton explains:⁸¹⁷ "As to the unction of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit, it was different according to the three grades successively imparted. The first grade was at the incarnation; the second coincided with His baptism; the third and highest grade was at the ascension, [and His subsequent heavenly session] when He sat down on His mediatorial throne and received from the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost to bestow upon His Church in abundant measure....

"The first grade of this anointing with the Spirit, took place at the incarnation.... The words, as given by Luke [1:35], contain a brief description.... 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee [Mary], and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Wherefore that Holy One that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God'....

"The Holy Spirit was the Former of Christ's human nature.... The Holy One [being conceived now (*gennoomenon*), and later to be delivered or] born, of Mary -- should be called the Son of God.... 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee'.... The Lord's humanity was produced by the Holy Ghost in a supernatural way, which at once obviated the possibility of contracting guilt from Adam.... For He was the Second Adam -- the Son of man....

"The questions 'How could pure humanity [Christ] be derived from a defiled source [Adam] which uniformly entails corruptions on others?' -- is a difficulty which has staggered many." Such as "the Valentinians, the Anabaptists, the Quakers and some modern Plymouthists on the one side; and the entire Church of Rome on the other....

"The sects above named ["on the one side"], attempted to meet the difficulty by representing Mary as but a pipe...through which a heavenly body or flesh immediately created by the Holy Ghost but not formed from her substance was introduced into the World. But on that principle, the Lord Jesus would belong to another order of beings and would not be our brother born into our family (Hebrews 2:14)....

"The theory of Rome [on the other hand,] makes a sinless mother indispensable; and it is as faulty as that of the above-named sects.... As to the theory of...[Seventh-day Adventists and the pentecostalizing Edward] Irving, that our Lord took [upon Himself the nature of] **fallen** humanity -- it wholly mistakes the great end of the supernatural conception.

"According to the first promise given in Genesis (3:15), and announced by Isaiah [7:14] a second time -- the Saviour was to be born of a virgin..... The Holy Spirit was upon Him, accordingly, from the moment of His conception -- displaying His power in supplying Him with the...capacities and gifts...which were necessary for His high work....

"Everything required for the sanctification of the Lord's humanity was plentifully supplied by the agency of the Holy Spirit Who warded off every taint.... The soul of Christ, from the first moment of conscious existence, was filled with actual communications of the Spirit for such exercises...as were necessary in the experience of Him Who came as the Second Adam with the image of God restored in all its fulness (Psalm 22:10). He Who made man a temple of God at first, and Who was restoring it in the Incarnate Son, was incessantly active in conferring every conceivable gift and in signally augmenting these gifts in ever-increasing measure at successive stages for the great work to be performed."

130. The unborn John and his mother were filled with the Spirit before Jesus was born

We have already seen John the Baptizer was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. A little later, three months before John was born, when the by-now-pregnant Mary saluted the pregnant Elisabeth -- the baby [John] leaped up within her womb [Elisabeth's]. "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." Luke 1:41. Soon thereafter also her husband "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and he prophesied." Luke 1:67.

Calvin comments on the pregnant Elisabeth's unborn baby John: ⁸¹⁸ "'The babe started' [or startled alias leaped up within her womb] by a secret movement of the Spirit.... The expression 'she was filled with the Holy Ghost' means that she was suddenly endued with the gift of prophecy [viz/ forthtelling God's Word] to an unusual extent. For the gifts of the Spirit had not formerly been lacking in her. But their power then [or rather now and henceforth] appeared more abundant and extraordinary....

"Accordingly, Elisabeth affirms that her cousin [Mary] had been 'blessed' -- on account of the blessedness of her [Mary's] child. To carry Christ in her womb, was not Mary's first 'blessedness' -- but was greatly inferior to the distinction of being born again by the Spirit of God unto a new life.

"Yet she is justly called 'blessed.'" For she "had been 'blessed' -- when regenerated previously. And thereafter, God bestowed the remarkable honour of bringing into the World His Own Son through Whom she had been Spirit-ually re-newed [priorly].....

"She [Elisabeth] calls Mary 'the mother of her Lord.'" Indeed, the mother of the Lord of Elisabeth -- and also of Mary herself.

"This denotes a unity of person in the two natures of Christ -- as if she had said that He Who was begotten a mortal man in the womb of Mary, is at the same time the eternal God. For we must bear in mind that she does not speak like an ordinary woman at her own suggestion, but merely utters what was dictated by the Holy Spirit....

"It was by a hidden movement of the Spirit, as is evident from a former statement of Luke, that Elisabeth spoke. The same Spirit declares that Mary is 'blessed' because she 'believed'.... Mary was 'blessed' -- because, embracing in her heart the promise of God, she conceived and brought forth a Saviour to herself and to the whole World."

Thus Calvin. Here he opposes Rome's even-then-current theory of Mary's own no need for a Saviour.

Indeed, here he also anticipates Rome's later doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary herself (erroneously alleged to be sinless). *Per contra*, however, Luke 2:47!

Adds Matthew Henry:⁸¹⁹ "The babe' [John] leaped in her womb'... Now began to be fulfilled what the angel said to his father [Luke 1:15] -- that he [John] should be 'filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb'....

"Perhaps he [John] himself had some reference to this." For later (John 3:29), "he said: 'The friend of the Bridegroom rejoices greatly, because of the Bridegroom's voice'....

"Elisabeth was herself 'filled with the Holy Ghost' or the Spirit of prophecy [alias of forthtelling God's Word]. Thereby, as well as by the particular suggestions of the Holy Ghost she was filled with -- she was given to understand that the Messiah was at hand in Whom prophecy would revive and by Whom the Holy Ghost would be poured out more plentifully than ever....

"Those whom Christ graciously visits, may know it -- by their being 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' For 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His!'"

131. John's father was filled with the Spirit just after John was born

It seems that both of John the Baptizer's parents were already filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was conceived. For Luke 1:6 says that even then "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments...of the Lord blamelessly." And that is something only Spirit-filled folk could do.

This would then mean that when John's mother Elisabeth was later filled with the Spirit three months after conceiving John, when Mary and her just-conceived child Jesus approached her -- such was not the first time Elisabeth had become Spirit-filled. Such was, then -- in fact -- a **re**-filling with the Spirit.

The same thing happened to her husband Zacharias, shortly after John was born -- when "his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied." Comments Calvin:³³⁶¹ "We lately explained this phrase to mean that the servants of God received more abundantly the grace of the Spirit -- of which, at other times, they were not destitute.

"Thus we read that the Spirit was given to the Prophets. Not that on other occasions they lacked it, but that the power of the Spirit was more fully exerted in them when the hand of God as it were brought them into public view for the discharge of their Office.

"We must observe therefore the manner in which Luke connects the two clauses -- he 'was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.' This implies that divine inspiration at that time rested upon him in an extraordinary measure -- in consequence of which he did not speak like a man or private person, but all that he uttered was heavenly instruction. Thus, also Paul connects 'Prophecy' with **the Spirit**. 'Quench not the Spirit; despise not Prophecyings [alias forthtellings of God's Word]!' First Thessalonians 5:19-20. This teaches us that to despise instruction, is to 'quench' the light of 'the Spirit.'

"This was a remarkable instance of the goodness of God.... Not only did Zacharias recover the power of speech which he had not enjoyed for nine months [ever since just before John has been conceived], but his tongue became the organ of the Holy Spirit."

Matthew Henry adds:⁸²¹ "We have here the song wherewith Zecharias 'praised God' when his 'mouth was opened.' In it, he is said to 'prophecy'.... And so he did, in the strictest sense of prophesying.....

"He was qualified for this. 'He was filled with the Holy Ghost' -- was endued with more than ordinary measures and degrees of it, for this purpose.... God not only forgave him his unbelief and distrust.... But, as a specimen of the abounding of grace toward believers, He filled him with the Holy Ghost....

"Now Zacharias here blesses God...for the work of salvation that was to be wrought out by the Messiah Himself.... This it is that 'fills him' -- when he is 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' And it is that which all who have the Spirit of Christ, are full of."

132. The Spirit-filled Jesus during His human childhood

Not just before His birth as above, but also after His birth -- there are many indications that the fullness of the Holy Spirit given to Jesus at His very conception, thereafter never left Him or was even temporarily diminished. To the contrary, it is clear that He expandingly kept on being filled with the Spirit uninterruptedly -- even while He grew up toward His adolescence.

Just forty days after Jesus' birth, the devout Simeon had "the Holy Ghost upon him -- and it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." So he then "came by the Spirit into the temple" and saw the baby Jesus. Luke 2:25-27.

Calvin comments⁸²² regarding this Simeon: "He had the gift of prophecy. For 'the Holy Spirit was upon him'.... The Evangelist does not speak of 'the Spirit of adoption' (Romans 8:15), which is common to all the children of God, though not in an equal degree -- but of the peculiar gift of prophecy.

"This appears more clearly from the next verse and the following one -- in which it is said that he 'received a revelation from the Holy Spirit' and that, by the guidance of the same Spirit, he came into the temple.... This divine intimation, which he received in his individual and private capacity, was intended generally for the confirmation of all the godly.

"Jesus is called 'the Lord's Christ' [here] -- because He was anointed by the Father, and at the same time that He received the Spirit received also the title of King and Priest. Simeon is said to have come into the temple 'by the Spirit'; that is, by a secret movement and undoubted revelation -- so that he might meet Christ."

Here, Matthew Henry adds:⁸²³ "Christ has honour done Him.... Simeon and Anna now do Him honour, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.... This Simeon...was eminent for his piety.... Jews say that he was endued with a prophetic Spirit.... He [Simeon] 'waited for the Consolation of Israel' -- that is, for the coming of the Messiah....

"The Holy Ghost was upon him -- not only as a Spirit of holiness, but as a Spirit of prophecy. He was filled with the Holy Ghost and enabled to speak things above himself....

"Just then, when Joseph and Mary brought in the child to be registered as it were in the church-book among the first-born -- Simeon came by direction of the Spirit into the temple. The same Spirit that had provided for the support of his hope, now provided for the transport of his joy."

Jesus Himself thereafter grew up "and became strong in spirit [and in the Spirit] -- filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was upon Him.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:40 & 2:52.

Comments Calvin:⁸²⁴ "In the midst of His boyhood, Christ gave a specimen of His future Office.... 'The child grew, and was invigorated in Spirit.'

"These words show that the endowments of His mind grew with His age (French: 'with age the **gifts** and **graces** of the **Spirit** grew also and increased in Him'). Hence we infer that this progress or advancement relates to His human nature. For the divine nature could receive no increase....

"Christ received, in His human nature, according to His age and capacity, an increase of the free gifts of the Spirit (French: 'in gifts and graces of the Spirit') -- so that 'out of His fullness' (John 1:16), He may pour them out upon us. For **we** draw grace, out of **His** grace....

"Luke shortly afterwards adds that He grew in age and wisdom with God and man.... We must not suppose that Adam, while he remained in innocence, knew all things.... 'He [the Second Adam Jesus Christ] was invigorated in Spirit, and was full of wisdom.' Luke thus declares that whatever wisdom exists among men and receives daily accessions, flows from that single fountain -- from the **Spirit of God**."

Matthew Henry adds regarding the adolescent Jesus:⁸²⁵ "He grew in stature of body and the improvement of understanding in His human soul -- [so] that His natural body might be a figure of His mystical body [the Church] which, though animated by a perfect Spirit, yet 'maketh increase of itself' till it comes to 'the perfect man.' Ephesians 4:13-16....

"He was 'strong in Spirit.' By the Spirit of God, His human soul was endued with extraordinary vigour, and all His faculties performed their Offices....

"Whereas other children have foolishness bound in their hearts, which appears in what they say or do -- **He** was 'filled with wisdom.' Not by any advantages of instruction and education, but by the operations of **the Holy Ghost**."

So Jesus when a 'child grew and waxed strong in Spirit (*Pneumati*), filled with wisdom' (Luke 2:40). Smeaton comments:⁸²⁶ "This passage proves that we must ascribe to the **Spirit** all the progress in Christ's mental and spiritual development, and all His advancement in [human] knowledge and holiness.... He was filled by the Spirit with a wisdom which replenished all the powers of His rational nature....

"**All the gifts were supplied to Him by the Spirit**.... The Spirit was given to Him in consequence of the personal union, in a measure which no mere man could possess..., and making Him inwardly aware of His divine Sonship at all times (Luke 2:49).

"Thus the Spirit at the incarnation became the great guiding principle of all Christ's earthly history.... It was the Holy Spirit that formed His human nature.... The full [human] consciousness that He was the only Son of God Who came from God and went to God (John

13:3), flowed perpetually from the Spirit. The communication from the one [divine] nature to the other [the human] -- was by the Spirit....

"He had His hour for everything that He performed -- and a full consciousness, derived from the Spirit, that He was the Son of God. The Godhead dwelling in Him, made all due communications to His manhood -- by the Holy Ghost.... Nothing was undertaken -- but by the Spirit's direction.... The personal life of Christ as the God-man full of the Spirit -- was the natural basis of all His official activity."

Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr.'s observations here⁸²⁷ on Christ's human nature (weakened but never stained by our sins) are well worth recalling. "What Christ needed, was the gifts of the Holy Ghost -- to enable His weakened nature, in increasing measure, to be His instrument in the working out of His holy design and finally to transform His weakened [human] nature...by resurrection into a glorious [human] nature....

"The work of the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ is not exhausted in the incarnation.... We consider this work in the development of His human nature -- in...the work of the Holy Spirit in the development of the human nature in Jesus.... Knowing from the Scripture that not only man's gifts, powers and faculties but also their working and exercise are a result of the work of the Holy Spirit -- we see the development of the human nature of Jesus...and understand the meaning of the words that He received the 'Holy Spirit without measure' [John 3:34].

"For this indicates that His human nature also received the Holy Ghost. And this, not only after He had lived for years without Him -- but every moment of His existence [from His human conception onwards], according to the measure of His capacities.

"Even in His conception and birth, the Holy Spirit effected not only a separation from sin -- but He also endowed His human nature with the glorious gifts, powers, and faculties of which that nature is susceptible. Hence his human nature received these gifts, powers and faculties not from the Son by communication from the divine nature -- but from the Holy Ghost by communication to the human nature. And this should thoroughly be understood....

"However, this was not all. Not only did the Holy Spirit adorn the human nature of Christ with these endowments. But He also caused them to be exercised gradually, in order to enter into full activity....

"As the Holy Spirit with every increase of His human nature enlarged the exercise of its powers and faculties -- so He did also with reference to the relation of the human nature to God and men. For He [Jesus] increased in favour with God and men....

"Even apart from His Messiahship Jesus stood, with reference to His human nature -- during all the days of His humiliation -- under the constant and penetrating operation of the Holy Spirit. The Son, Who lacked nothing, but as God in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit possessed all things -- compassionately adopted our human nature....

"It is the peculiarity of that nature to derive its gifts, powers, and faculties not from itself but from the Holy Spirit by Whose constant operation alone they can be exercised. So did the Son not violate this peculiarity.

"Yet, although He was the Son, He did not take its preparation, enriching and operation into His Own hand. But He was willing to receive them from the hand of the Holy Spirit.

133. Further considerations about the Spirit-filled God-man

Kuyper then concludes the above explanation: "The fact that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism -- although He had received Him without measure at His conception -- can only be explained by keeping in view the difference between the personal and official life of Jesus." This shall be developed in our next Section.

Now, while here on Earth, the Second Adam Jesus Christ was filled with the Holy Spirit -- immeasurably. John 3:34 *cf.* Luke 3:21-23 & 2:38 & 4:1 & 4:4 & 4:18*f.* Yet as the sinless Son of God, He Himself was never born again; never converted; and never spoke in tongues.⁸²⁸

However, already at His very conception as the Son of man, the Holy Ghost came over His mother and the Spirit-ual power of the Highest overshadowed her. Consequently He, the Holy One born of her, was conceived by the Holy Ghost (and filled with that Holy Ghost even from His mother's womb).⁸²⁹

Later, when Christ was baptized with water and with Spirit, thus fulfilling all righteousness -- this did not mark His conversion. For He never had committed nor ever could commit the slightest sin from which to be converted.

Instead, Christ's baptism pointed to His union with the true members of His Church (and their conversion to Him). Their conversion -- as depicted in their own baptism with water and with Spirit.⁸³⁰

Christ Himself was filled continually and immeasurably with the Holy Ghost even from His very conception. Yet at His water-baptism, the Holy Spirit further descended and remained (or "abode") upon the already Spirit-filled Jesus -- for our sakes.⁸³¹

For our sakes, then, He was anointed and appointed by the Holy Spirit -- as our great Prophet, Priest, and King.⁸³² Indeed, after that -- He was driven by the Holy Spirit -- constantly.⁸³³ For God the Father did not measure or ration the superabundant extent to which He gave His Spirit to Christ the Second Adam alias the Holy One of God.⁸³⁴

134. The Mediator as the Spirit-filled God-man

As the (divine) Son of God, Christ had partaken of the divine fullness of the Holy Spirit from all eternity past -- and continues to do so, for all eternity future.⁸³⁵ And as the (human) Son of man, Christ was filled and kept on being filled with the Holy Spirit -- from His conception onward.

Moreover, the Spirit inhabited Jesus not just from the cradle to the grave. But as His human nature underwent growth, Christ kept on being filled with the Holy Ghost -- from His conception and birth, through His resurrection and heavenly session, and unto all eternity future.⁸³⁶

135. How Jesus became or waxed strong in Spirit

The unique and sinless Christ Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, nine months before His birth.⁸³⁷ The sevenfold Spirit rested upon Him since the very first second of His human existence as the budding offshoot of Jesse, in the womb of His human mother Mary.⁸³⁸

After His birth, the baby Jesus increased in the understanding and counsel and might and knowledge and in the fear of the Spirit of the Lord.⁸³⁹ "The child grew, and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was upon Him.... And when He was twelve years old...Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour, with God and man."⁸⁴⁰

When about thirty, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit in His Highpriestly Office.⁸⁴¹ After that, full of the Holy Ghost,⁸⁴² He was led and even driven by the Spirit⁸⁴³ in everything He did as a human being.⁸⁴⁴

In His divinity, He had always been full of the Spirit -- unincreasingly.⁸⁴⁵ In His humanity, He constantly increased in Spirit-fullness -- though there, too, even from His human conception onward, at each stage and throughout the growth of His human development, He always possessed the Spirit without measure.⁸⁴⁶

136 . Christ's Own Spirit-fruits and Spirit-gifts within and from Himself

In His human nature, the sinless human being Jesus Christ the Second Adam increased in the development and manifestation of both His Spirit-fruit⁸⁴⁷ and His Spirit-gifts.⁸⁴⁸ Somewhat like the unfallen first Adam.

As regards His Spirit-ual fruit: Jesus Christ increased in human love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance -- for the benefit of His disciples.⁸⁴⁹

Specifically, He commanded His Disciples to love one another as He had loved them (unto the end).⁸⁵⁰ He spoke to them so that His joy might remain in them, and so that their joy might be full.⁸⁵¹ As Prince of peace, He gave them His peace.⁸⁵² As He was patient with them -- so were they to be longsuffering with one another too.⁸⁵³ As He was gentle and kind -- so were also they to be.⁸⁵⁴ As He was good -- they too were to become full of goodness.⁸⁵⁵ As He was faithful and true -- they too were to become faithful.⁸⁵⁶ As He was meek -- they too were to become meek⁸⁵⁷ alias Law-abiding. And as He was disciplined -- so too were they to learn discipline,⁸⁵⁸ by being disciplined more and more.

Christ the Second Adam exercised also His Spirit-ual gifts. And, once again, solely for the benefit of His Disciples. These gifts included those of apostleship, prophecy, teaching, signs, healings, governments, tongues, wisdom, and knowledge.⁸⁵⁹

For He was the great Apostle Who would appoint some of His gifted Disciples to be His Apostles.⁸⁶⁰ He was the great Prophet Who would send out other Prophets.⁸⁶¹ He was the great Rabboni or Teacher Who would give some to be Teachers of His Church.⁸⁶² He performed powerful signs, and gifted others to do the same.⁸⁶³

He had great gifts of healing others, and He enabled also His Apostles to heal others.⁸⁶⁴ The government was upon His shoulder, and He gave Elders for government in His Church.⁸⁶⁵

He Who was the Word, enabled His Apostles and some of their converts to speak with new tongues *etc.*⁸⁶⁶ For He in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hidden, by His Spirit gave to one the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge -- by the same Spirit.⁸⁶⁷

137. Christ urged both Christians and Pharisees not to go seeking miracles

Jesus Himself was the Absolute Miracle; performed many miracles; and enabled also His Apostles to perform miracles. Yet it is very significant He Himself cautioned both Christians and Pharisees not to go seeking miracles -- by running after alleged performers of miracles!

Already in the Older Testament, one should recall that also God's Hebrews did not at first want to believe in Moses' miracles which he performed by the grace of Jehovah-Jesus. Exodus 4:4-9. Yet ungodly Pharaoh believed the false-miracles or lying-wonders of his own magicians. But he did not trust in the true miracles of Moses and Aaron, of which even he himself had been an eye-witness. Exodus 7:9-13.

At the beginning of the Newer Testament, **John the Baptizer performed no miracles** (and therefore never miraculously spoke in tongues). Yet many who heard him knew that what John said about Jesus, was true. John 10:41.

Jesus Himself, like John, was filled with the Spirit at His very conception. Thereafter, Jesus even kept on being filled with the Spirit throughout His earthly life. Luke 2:40-52 & 4:1,14,18.

Yet, **Jesus never once spoke in tongues.** Nor did He ever perform any miracle whatsoever -- until an adult. Then, His **first miracle** was to turn water into wine at Cana. John 2:7-11. This means the 'apocryphal gospels' later written long after the Apostles as well as the yet-later Koran are all in error -- where they claim the boy Jesus 'miraculously' breathed life into clay-pidgeons which then flew away!

At the Passover right after Jesus' above-mentioned first miracle of turning water into wine, many saw subsequent miracles which Christ did. But Jesus did not then confide in the Jews -- because He knew them all; and because He did not need anyone witnessing about man; and because He Himself knew what is in man! John 2:18-25.

So, when one of the Pharisees named Nicodemus then came to Him at night and said "Rabbi, we know that you are a Teacher come from God, for no one can do these miracles that you are doing unless God be with him" -- Jesus did not commend him for acknowledging this. Instead, He bluntly replied: "You must be born again!" John 3:1-7.

Jesus commended people's faith in **Him** -- not their 'faith' in His **miracles**. John 4:47-50. Moreover, Jesus told the Pharisees it was an evil generation that wanted to see miracles. Luke 11:17-29.

Thus one reads: "The Pharisees came forth, and began to question Him, seeking from Him a sign from Heaven -- tempting Him. So He sighed deeply in His spirit, saying, 'Why does this generation seek after a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation!' Then He left them." Mark 8:11-13.

Indeed, what did Jesus call those who "keep on seeking after a sign"? He called them -- a "wicked and adulterous generation!" Matthew 16:1-4.

Thus, when wicked King Herod hoped to see Jesus perform some or other miracle -- Jesus did not oblige him. Luke 23:8f. Indeed, Christ specifically warned His Disciples to avoid those who would claim to be christs and prophets and who would indeed do deceptive signs and 'wonders.' See: Matthew 24:24-26 *cf.* Mark 13:21-23.

Furthermore, soon after His resurrection from the dead, He rebuked even His Own Apostle Thomas for wanting to ratify empirically that Christ had indeed risen from the dead. Yet He Himself still commends those who, not seeing, yet believe. John 20:28-31 cf. First Corinthians 1:22 & 14:22.

Significantly, even after the miraculous resurrection of Jesus from the dead and His ascension into Heaven -- witnessing real miracles did not change the heart of Simon the magician even after his own baptism. For he still lacked the one thing needed -- viz., saving faith in Christ. Acts 8:13-22.

The fact is, the Bible never encourages us to look for miracles! Yet the whole of the Bible warns us against 'deceptive wonders' performable by Satan and false-apostles and even by the very one claiming to be Christ's true representative (cf. the Pope). Deuteronomy 13:1-3; Second Corinthians 11:13-15 cf. Second Thessalonians 2:9.

For even Satan and some of those who serve him, do have the power to do things which might (wrongly) seem to be **miracles**. Revelation 13:4 & 16:14 & 19:20.

138. Calvin on Christ's attitude toward those who over-value miracles

According to Calvin,⁸⁶⁸ Moses' rod did indeed miraculously turn into a serpent (and, later, *vice-versa*) -- even though Pharaoh's unbelieving heart remained hardened in spite of the evidence he saw with his very own eyes! Yet Pharaoh gullibly swallowed up the cheap imitations of his own magicians, even though they were sorcerers.

"Moses and Aaron," explains Calvin, "knew that they [themselves] were endued with divine power to work miracles.... [Yet] there is...reason for doubt respecting the rods of the magicians, since...the eyes of the wicked king were deceived by their illusions...."

"For the purpose of his impostures, Satan lays hold of things which are done by the secret judgment of God.... He [Satan] deceives by means of enchantments.... Pharaoh...was deceived by the juggles of his own magicians.... How many now-a-days, among the Papists, are followers of wicked superstitions!...."

"There would always be false-teachers who would oppose Christ's true Ministers.... God elsewhere testifies that when He permits false-prophets to work 'miracles' to deceive -- it is to prove men's hearts (Deuteronomy 13:3).... Satan...gives efficacy to the delusion, and so deprives them of their senses...."

"The wicked maliciously close their eyes against the manifested power of God.... Frivolous is that cavil which the Papists advance -- that the serpent is called the rod of Moses, just as the bread [Papists believe is] transubstantiated into the body of Christ, retains the name of bread...."

"They unskilfully confound two altogether-different things. Because, in the mystery of the Lord's Supper, the analogy between the sign and thing signifies always remains. In this miracle [of Moses,] the case is entirely otherwise."

For **that** truly was transubstantiation -- yes, **double** transubstantiation! First, from a real rod into a real serpent which even unbelievers could see had become a serpent; and then, later, from a real serpent back again into a real rod.

The Romish doctrine of the Mass, however, is only pseudo-transubstantiationistic. For only Romanists but not others there, think they 'see' bread being 'changed' into what even Romanists agree still looks like bread!

Indeed, that bread -- which only Romanists allege really changes into flesh -- Romanists say thereafter remains flesh (even though both Romanist and Non-Romanist observers say it still looks like bread). Mercifully, however, even Romanists do not allege it then gets re-transubstantiated back into the bread which all Non-Romanist observers know it has remained all along!

Hence, concludes Calvin: "The Papists would not prevail at all -- until they have **shown** that the bread is transubstantiated into the body..... [However,] the bread...remains bread!...

"The rod of Moses (they say), when turned into a serpent -- though it acquires the form of a serpent -- still retains its former **name** and is called a rod.... But what resemblance, real or apparent, do they find between an illustrious miracle and their fictitious illusion -- of which no eye on the Earth is witness?... That conversion [by Moses], was **visible** to the eye....

"We must [also] attend to the **illusion** -- to the rods of the magicians which the Prophet **did not choose to terms 'serpents'** -- lest he might seem to insinuate a conversion which had no existence! For those impostors had done nothing more than blind the eyes of the spectators.... It is certain that the eye alone was deceived, by the incantation of the magicians." Even as the eyes of Romanists are deceived by the incantation of their Romish priests at their Masses!

So then, to Calvin -- the transformations of Moses' rod into a serpent and back, were true miracles wrought by the Holy Spirit. But the alleged transformations of the Egyptian magicians' rods into serpents -- were as devoid of the Holy Spirit as are Rome's Masses.

Moreover, observes Calvin,⁸⁶⁹ "John [the Baptizer] did not perform **any miracles**.... We should not always judge from miracles!...

"John, who in other respects was a very great Prophet, was not given the honour of performing a miracle." Yet his teaching was vastly superior to that of Romanists who (like Pharaoh's sorcerers with their snake-like rods) falsely claim their own false-teachers regularly perform the alleged 'miracle' of the Mass!

Indeed, just like John lifelong -- also even Jesus Himself never performed any miracles, until He was thirty. Explains Calvin regarding Jesus' miraculously turning water into wine:⁸⁷⁰

"This was Christ's first miracle. For although the angel's proclamation to the shepherds that He was born in Bethlehem, and the star appearing to the Magi, and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him in the likeness of a dove were miracles -- yet, strictly speaking, they were not performed by Himself....

"Until He was thirty, he stayed at home like any private person. His Baptism [when thirty] was an admission into the exercise of His duties, after which He began to appear in public and show openly by clear proofs to what end He had been sent by the Father....

"He postponed the first proof of His divinity, until now. Marriage is greatly glorified, [in] that Christ not only honoured a wedding feast with His presence -- but also adorned it with his first miracle. "

Right after that, the Jews demanded Christ give them a further sign. As Calvin comments:⁸⁷¹ "Where they went wrong, was in refusing to admit the calling of Christ-- unless He performed [another!] miracle. For it was not a general principle that the Prophets and other Ministers of God had to perform miracles, nor had God bound Himself to this necessity.... In the same way the Papists today demand miracles." And so too do many Pentecostalists!

Even the Pharisee Nicodemus over-rated the importance of miracles. Yet, comments Calvin,⁸⁷² "since Prophets may deceive the ignorant with their deceits as fully as if they had by true signs proved themselves the Ministers of God -- what difference will there be between truth and falsehood, if faith depends on miracle?"

"Indeed, Moses expressly declares that in this way we are tested as to whether we love God (Deuteronomy 13:3). We know also Christ's warning, and Paul's (Second Thessalonians 2:8 f) -- that believers should beware of [pseudo-miraculous] lying signs by which Antichrist dazzles many eyes (Matthew 24:24).... Satan may strut about -- aping God!"

That is why Jesus said to a nobleman of Capernaum: 'Unless you people see signs and wonders -- you are not willing to believe!' John 4:48.

That nobleman, comments Calvin,⁸⁷³ "had no other idea of Christ than that He was a Prophet sent by God with the authority and power of proving that He was God's Minister -- by performing miracles!... Christ...rebukes him severely, and indeed all the Jews, for the...reason that they were too eager for miracles....

"But why is Christ now so harsh?... He saw that His **teaching** had little authority and was not only neglected, but despised outright; and moreover, that they were all set on miracles and that all their senses were overcome by stupidity....

"It was extremely perverse that in their stupidity and carnality, they had no reverence for the teaching unless they were roused by miracles.... Then, when miracles were performed -- they were so far from profiting by them, that they were just stupid and amazed. Thus, **there was no religion; no knowledge of God; no practice of godliness among them -- except in miracles!**

"On the same lines, was Paul's reproach that the Jews seek a **sign** [First Corinthians 1:22]. He means that they were unreasonably and immoderately attached to signs -- and cared little for the grace of Christ, or the promises of eternal life, or the secret power of the Spirit.... On the contrary, they rejected the Gospel disdainfully -- because they had no taste for anything but miracles.

"I wish there were not so many today suffering from the same disease! But nothing is commoner than the saying, 'Let the miracles come first; and then we will give ear to their teaching.' As if the truth of Christ should be so cheap to us -- unless it has another support!"

In Matthew 12:38f (cf. too Luke 11:16-29), Calvin comments⁸⁷⁴ that 'the scribes and Pharisees' conversing with Him "do not express such submissiveness, as to be prepared to yield to two or three miracles -- and still less to be satisfied with a single miracle.... They 'apologize' for not believing the Gospel, on this pretence -- that Christ shows no sign of it from Heaven that is sufficient to seal this doctrine.

"He had already performed miracles before their eyes sufficiently numerous and manifest. But as if these were not enough for the confirmation of **doctrine** -- they wish to have something exhibited from Heaven....

"He does not merely charge that age with malice, but pronounces the Jews -- or at least the Scribes, and those who resembled them -- to be a **wicked nation**. Thus declaring that they laboured under a hereditary disease of obstinacy.... [Christ says:] 'A sign shall not be given to it [*viz.* to their generation].' They had already been convicted by various miracles. Yet Christ does not abstain from exerting His power among them." Why not? "For the purpose of rendering them inexcusable!"

In Matthew 16:1-4 and Mark 8:11-13, Calvin comments⁸⁷⁵ that "'the Pharisees came'.... They demand that He 'shall give them a sign from Heaven.' But it is certain that a hundred signs would have no greater effect than the testimonies of Scripture!

"Besides, many miracles already performed had placed before their eyes the power of Christ -- and had almost enabled them to touch it with their hands! Signs, by which Christ made Himself familiarly known, are despised by them. And how much less will they derive advantage from a distant and obscure sign ['from Heaven']? Thus the Papists [and the Pentecostals] of our own day -- as if the doctrine of the Gospel had not yet been proved! -- demand that it be ascertained by means of new miracles.... The Jews are never satisfied, with any signs!"

Luke 23:8f tells us that 'when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. For he had long cherished a desire to see Him, because he heard many things concerning Him. And he hoped that He would see some miracle wrought by Him. And he asked Him, in many words. But He made no reply to him!'

Comments Calvin:⁸⁷⁶ "It is evident how greatly-wicked men are intoxicated, or rather bewitched, by their own pride.... Herod had long wished to see Christ. Why, then, did he not wish to hear Him -- so that he might profit by His doctrine? It was because he chose rather to amuse himself in beholding the divine power -- than to witness it, as he ought to have done, with devout and humble reverence....

"Even Herod, though he hoped that some miracle would be performed by Christ -- chose to have Him placed at his feet as a malefactor, rather than to receive Him as a **Teacher!** We need not wonder, therefore -- if God conceal His glory from wicked men who wish that He should contribute to their amusement, like some stage-player."

For the same reason, comments Calvin on the Olivet Discourse,⁸⁷⁷ Christ warns them that false-prophets will come -- prepared with no ordinary instruments of deception, with signs and wonders fitted to **confound weak minds**. For since it is by miracles that God attests the presence of His power, and since they are therefore seals of the true doctrine -- we need not wonder if imposters [seek to] gain credit by them....

"Our Lord declares that antichrists and false-prophets would be armed with 'miracles.' There is no reason why the **Papists** [and Pentecostals?!] should talk so haughtily on this ground -- or why we should be terrified by their boasting. In support of their superstitions, they plead miracles -- those very 'miracles' which the Son of God predicted would corrupt the faith of many!"

Finally, right after His Own resurrection from the dead as the greatest of all miracles, on John 20:31 Calvin comments⁸⁷⁸ that the Apostle John "committed to writing what should satisfy us.... Moreover, John was well aware of what the other Evangelists had written.... Nothing was farther from his intention than to supersede their writings.... No other use is here given to **miracles**, than to be aids and support of faith. They serve to prepare men's minds -- so that they may give greater reverence to the Word of God....

"Faith does **not** stick at **miracles**, but carries us straight to the **Word**.... The Evangelists themselves do not stop at relating the miracles, but dwell more on **doctrine** -- since **miracles**, by themselves, **would produce nothing but a confused wonder**.... These things were written -- so that we might believe!"

For miracles were ephemeral; but the Bible stands for ever. As Rev. Professor-Emeritus Norman Barker, former Principal of the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College, brilliantly stated -- even if the frequent Romish masses truly were miraculous and really did involve transubstantiation each time they were performed -- they would still not approach the quality and calibre of the non-miraculous Biblical and Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, what could ever be more **miraculous** -- than the long-finished inscripturation of the **Holy Bible**?

139. John did no miracles, but predicted Christ would baptize with Spirit and with fire

Christ's half-cousin John the Baptizer himself performed no miracles of the Holy Ghost. By and large, his Ministry was one of preaching and baptizing penitent covenant people and their families by sprinkling them. First Kings 18:31-34 *cf.* John 1:25-33.

Even the Baptist Evangelical Rev. Dr. Billy Graham once observed:⁸⁷⁹ "It has always interested me that many of the great men of both the Old and New Testaments performed no miracles. John the Baptist illustrates this:

"'And many came to Him (Jesus); and they were saying...'John performed no sign -- yet everything John said about this man [Jesus] was true!' And many believed in Him there' (John 10:41-42).

"So, though John performed no miracles, he exalted the Lord Jesus Christ Whom many then received. Remember that Jesus said of John, 'Truly, I say to you, among those born of women -- there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!' (Matthew 11:11)....

"Why do we not see the spectacular miracles today, that we read about in the Bible? Are few such miracles occurring, because our faith is small -- or could it be that God does not will the spectacular right now?

"Could it be that signs and wonders were gifts particularly appropriate to the special circumstances of the Early Church? I think so!"

Now John came baptizing with water. He said: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But He Who comes after me is mightier than I -- [He] Whose shoes I am not worthy to carry! He shall baptize...with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matthew 3:11 *cf.* Mark 1:7-8 & Luke 3:15-16.

Calvin here comments⁸⁸⁰ that John "represents Christ as the Author of Spirit-ual baptism.... It ought not to have any weight with us, that an opinion has long and extensively prevailed that John's baptism differs from ours.... The comparison...would involve great absurdities. It would follow from it that the Holy Spirit is given, in the present day, by Ministers....

"Scripture does sometimes, though not in a literal sense (*improprie*), ascribe to men what John here declares not to belong to men but claims exclusively for Christ. In such cases, however, the design is...merely to show what is the effect and advantage of signs -- and in what manner God makes use of them as instruments by His Spirit.

"Here also is laid down a distinction between Christ and His Ministers.... The ordinance of our Lord, viewed as a whole, includes Himself as its Author, and the power of the Spirit, together with the figure and the Minister....

"It is asked why John did not equally say that it is Christ alone Who washes souls with His blood. The reason is that this very washing is performed by the power of the Spirit....

"John reckoned it enough to express the whole effect of baptism by the single word 'Spirit'.... The word 'fire' is added as an epithet, and is applied to the Spirit because He takes away our pollutions as fire purifies gold."

Elsewhere, Calvin adds:⁸⁸¹ "This fact that the gifts of the Spirit were liberally poured out after the resurrection [and ascension and heavenly session] of Christ, does not go to establish a diversity of baptisms. For baptism administered by the Apostles while He [the pre-mortal Christ] was still on the Earth was called 'His baptism.'

"And yet, the Spirit was not poured out in larger abundance on it, than on the baptism of John. Nay, not even after the ascension did the Samaritans receive the Spirit above the ordinary measure of former believers -- till Peter and John were sent to lay hands on them (Acts 8:14-17)....

"Why, then, did John say that he baptized with water -- but there was One coming Who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire?... He contrasted his **own person** with the **Person of Christ** -- saying that while he was a Minister of water, Christ was the Giver of the Holy Spirit and would declare this virtue by a visible miracle on the day on which He would send the Holy Spirit on the Apostles under the form of tongues of fire."

It is significant that the *Westminster Confession* quite equates John's baptisms with Christ's also as regards the work of the Spirit therethrough. Proclaims Westminster:⁸⁸² "The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them. Neither doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of **the Spirit** and the Word of institution. **Matthew 3:11** and **First Corinthians 12:13.**"

Behold, exclaims Matthew Henry,⁸⁸³ "the dignity of Christ above John! See how meanly he speaks of himself -- [so] that he might magnify Christ.... 'I indeed baptize you with water.' That is the utmost I [John] can do!..."

"Sacraments derive not their efficacy from those who administer them. They [the Administrators] can only apply the sign. It is Christ's prerogative to give the thing signified. First Corinthians 3:6 & Second Kings 4:31....

"Though John had much power -- for he came in 'the Spirit and power of Elijah' -- Christ had more! Though John was truly great -- great in the sight of the Lord (not a greater was born of woman) -- yet he thinks himself unworthy to be in the meanest place of attendance upon Christ....

"'He shall baptize you' -- that is, some of you -- 'with the Holy Ghost and with fire'.... It is Christ's prerogative to baptize 'with the Holy Ghost.' This He did in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit conferred upon the Apostles, to which Christ Himself applies these words of John. Acts 1:5. This He does in the graces and comforts of the Spirit given to them that ask Him. Luke 11:13; John 7:38-39. See Acts 11:16....

"They who are baptized with the Holy Ghost, are baptized as 'with fire.' The 'seven Spirits of God' appear as 'seven lamps of fire' -- Revelation 4:5.

"Is fire enlightening? So, the Spirit is a Spirit of illumination! Is it warming? And do not their hearts burn within them? Is it consuming? And does not the Spirit of judgment -- as a "Spirit of burning' -- consume the dross of their corruptions?

"Does fire make all it seizes, like itself? And does it move upwards? So does the Spirit make the soul holy like itself -- and its tendency is heavenward! Christ says, 'I am come to send fire!' Luke 12:49."

Elsewhere, Henry adds:⁸⁸⁴ "Christ...is able to 'baptize with the Holy Ghost.' He can 'give' the Spirit of God, and by Him 'govern' the spirits of men.... They shall be 'baptized with' the Holy Ghost; shall be 'purified' by His graces; and 'refreshed' by His comforts....

"He [John] declares that the utmost he [John] could do, was to 'baptize' them 'with water.' He had not access 'to the Spirit.' Nor could he command that, or work upon that. He could only exhort them [his listeners] to repent....

"He consigns them and turns them over, as it were, to Jesus Christ -- for Whom he was sent to prepare the way.... Christ was a Prophet, more than John. For it was both by the Spirit of Christ and by the grace of Christ that all the Prophets prophesied, and John among the rest. First Peter 1:10-11....

"Christ can, and will, 'baptize with the Holy Ghost.' He can give the Spirit, to cleanse and purify the heart -- not only as water washes off the dirt on the outside, but as fire purges out the dross that is within.... He [Christ] will burn with fire unquenchable. John refers here to Malachi 3:18 & 4:1-2.... For the day comes, that shall burn as an oven."

Thus, repent now! Yes, repent now! Why? Because Christ Himself shall send all the impenitent into hell for ever!

140. Christ Himself was baptized with water and Spirit

Soon thereafter, John baptized Jesus -- and himself saw the **Spirit** descending like a dove from Heaven to abide upon Jesus. Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-33.

Comments Calvin:⁸⁸⁵ "The Evangelists say that John saw the Holy Spirit. It is probably that the opening of the Heavens, was chiefly for his sake. Yet I do not hesitate to admit that Christ also, so far as He was man, received from it additional certainty as to His heavenly calling.... As man, when He commenced a warfare of so arduous a description -- He needed to be armed with a remarkable power of the Spirit....

"But here, two questions arise. The first is, why did the Spirit -- Who had formerly dwelt in Christ -- descend upon Him at that time? This question is answered by a passage of the prophet Isaiah [41:1], 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because the Lord God hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek?....

"Though the grace of the Spirit had been bestowed on Christ in a remarkable and extraordinary manner (John 3:34), yet He had remained at home as a private person till He should be called to public life by the Father. Now that the full time had come for preparing to discharge

the office of Redeemer, He is clothed with a new power of the Spirit -- and that, not so much for His Own sake as for the sake of others....

"When Christ was preparing to preach the Gospel -- He was introduced by baptism into His Office, and at the same time was endued with the Holy Spirit. When John beholds the Holy Spirit descending upon Christ, it is to remind him...that He comes as a man filled with God...in Whom the power of the Holy Spirit reigns...

"The second question is -- why did the Holy Spirit appear in the shape of a dove rather than in that of fire?... We know what the Prophet Isaiah [42:2-3] ascribes to Christ. 'He shall not cry out nor lift up nor cause His voice to be heard in the street'....

"On account of this mildness of Christ, by which He kindly and gently called and every day invites sinners to the hope of salvation -- the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the appearance of a dove.... In this symbol there has been held out to us an eminent token of the sweetest consolation, so that we may not fear to approach to Christ -- Who meets us not in the formidable power of the [fiery] Spirit, but clothed with gentle and lovely grace....

"'He saw the Spirit of God.' That is, John saw. For it immediately follows, that the Spirit descended on Christ. There now arises a third question. How could John see the Holy Spirit?

"I reply -- as the Spirit of God is everywhere present and fills Heaven and Earth, He is not said in a literal sense to descend.... The same observation may be made as to His appearance.

"Though He is in Himself invisible -- yet He is spoken of as being beheld, when He exhibits any visible sign of His presence. John did not see the essence of the Spirit, which cannot be discerned by the senses of men. Nor did he see His power, which is not beheld by human senses but only by the understanding of faith. But he saw the appearance of a dove, under which God showed the presence of His Spirit....

"This is an unliteral and figurative expression. For with what eyes could He see the Spirit? But as the dove was a sure and infallible sign of the presence of the Spirit -- it [that dove] is called the Spirit, by metonymy. Not that it is really the Spirit. But it [the dove] shows Him in a way man can grasp.

"And this symbolism is usual in the Sacraments.... Yet you must not think that the Spirit Who fills Heaven and Earth was included under the dove!.... He was present by His power, so that John might know that such a sight was not put before his eyes in vain....

"Why did the Spirit appear under the form of a dove?... When the Spirit was given to the Apostles, they saw fiery and cloven tongues (Acts 2:3) -- because the preaching of the Gospel was to be spread abroad throughout all tongues, and was to have the power of fire. But in this verse [Johns 1:32], God wished to represent openly that gentleness of Christ which Isaiah 42:3 praises....

"This was the first time that the Spirit was seen descending upon Him. Not that before this He had been empty of the Spirit!

"But now He is, as it were, consecrated with a solemn ceremony. For we know that He remained hidden like a private individual for thirty years, because the time of His manifestation was not yet come....

"The Spirit descended visibly, so that we may know that in Christ dwells the abundance of all gifts of which we are destitute and empty. This may easily be gathered from the words of [John] the Baptizer.

"For when he says [to others that God said to John]: 'Upon Whom you [John] shall see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, He it is Who baptizes with the Spirit' [John 1:33] -- it is just as if he had said that the Spirit was seen under a visible form and rested on Christ, to the end that He might water all His people with His fullness.... Christ gives [our] baptism its effect, so that it shall not be vain and invalid. And this He does, by the power of His Spirit....

"He [John the Baptizer] says that the sight of the Holy Spirit was the mark of recognition. But he had not yet seen the Spirit, when he addressed Christ as the Son of God.... This sign was added for confirmation....

"It was not so much for John's sake, as for [the sake of] us all. Certainly, John alone saw it -- but [he saw it] for others, rather than for himself....

"It is noteworthy that he testified that Christ was the Son of God. For the Giver of the Holy Spirit [to us], must be the Christ -- since the honour and Office of reconciling men to God, belongs to no other."⁸⁸⁶

At that event, our heavenly Father sent down upon His incarnated Son -- the Holy Spirit. The *Westminster Confession* 2:1-3 cites this as a clear proof of God's Trinity. Thus: "In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and **God the Holy Ghost**. Matthew 3:16-17." Thus Calvin.

Matthew Henry explains:⁸⁸⁷ "'He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove'.... Christ saw it (Mark 1:10), and John saw it (John 1:33-34), and it is probably that [also] all the bystanders saw it.... 'The Spirit of God descended, and [a]lighted on Him.'

"In the beginning of the Old World, 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters' (Genesis 1:2) -- hovered as a bird upon the nest. So here, in the beginning of this New World, Christ as God needed not to receive the Holy Ghost.

"But it was foretold that 'the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon Him' (Isaiah 11:2 & 61:1). And here, He did so. For

"(1) He was to be a Prophet; and Prophets always spake by the Spirit of God Who came upon them. Christ was to execute the Prophetic Office -- not by His divine nature...but by the *afflatus* of the Holy Spirit. (2) He was to be the Head of the Church. And 'the Spirit descended upon Him' -- by Him to be derived to all believers in His gifts, graces, and comforts....

"The Spirit of Christ is a dove-like Spirit..., like an innocent dove without gall. 'The Spirit descended'...in the shape of a dove, than which no creature is more harmless and inoffensive. Such was the Spirit of Christ -- 'He shall not strive nor cry out.' Such must Christ-ians be -- 'harmless as doves'....

"We find that both the eyes of Christ (Canticles 5:12) and the eyes of the Church (Canticles 1:15) are compare to 'doves of the valleys'.... The dove was the only fowl that was offered in sacrifice (Leviticus 1:14). And Christ by the Spirit, 'the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God' [Hebrews 9:14]....

"The tidings of the decrease of Noah's flood were brought by a dove, with an olive-leaf in her mouth. Fittingly therefore are the glad tidings of peace with God brought by the Spirit as 'a dove'.... 'By the voice of the turtle[-dove] heard in our land' (Canticles 2:12), the Chaldee paraphrase understands 'the voice of the Holy Spirit'....

"See here how God owns [or acknowledges] our Lord Jesus! 'This is My beloved Son!'... Jesus Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation, as He was begotten by the Father before all Worlds (Colossians 1:15 & Hebrews 1:3) -- and by supernatural conception. He was therefore called the Son of God, because He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35)....

"'He saw the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him'.... Then we may see Heaven opened to **us** -- when we perceive the Spirit descending and **working upon us**....

"Justin Martyr says that when Christ was baptized, a fire was kindled.... It is an ancient tradition that a great light shone round the place. For the Spirit brings both light and heat....

"Lightfoot suggests that the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, [so] that He might be revealed to be a personal Substance and not merely an operation of the Godhead. And thus (saith he) was made a full, clear and sensible demonstration of the Trinity at the beginning of the Gospel. And very fittingly is this done at the baptism of Christ Who was to make the ordinance of baptism a badge of the profession of that faith in the doctrine of the Trinity -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost....

"'This was He [Christ] upon Whom the Spirit descended from Heaven like a dove'.... John Baptist saw it.... He made affidavit of it: 'I saw the Spirit descending' from Heaven. John could not see the Spirit, but he saw the dove which was a sign and representation of the Spirit. The Spirit came now upon Christ both to make Him fit for His work and to make Him known to the World...by the descent of the Spirit as a dove upon Him....

"Thus [too,] the first testimony given to the Apostles was by the descent of the Spirit upon them [Acts 2]. God's children [similarly] are made manifest by their graces....

"The Spirit descended 'from Heaven.' For every good and perfect gift is from above.... He descended like a dove, an emblem of meekness...which makes Him fit to teach. The dove brought the olive-branch of peace, Genesis 8:11.... The Spirit that descended upon Christ, 'abode upon Him' -- as was foretold, Isaiah 11:2.

"The Spirit did not move Him at [some] times, as Samson, Judges 13:25 -- but at all times. The Spirit was given to Him 'without measure' [John 3:34]. It was His prerogative to have the Spirit always upon Him, so that He could at no time be found either unqualified for His work Himself or unfurnished for the supply of those that seek to Him for His grace....

"It was not John's bare conjecture that...He on Whom he saw the Spirit descending, was the Son of God. But it was an instituted sign given him before, by which he might know it for certain.... This he insists much upon.... 'He Who sent me to baptize, gave me this sign -- "upon Whom you shall see the Spirit descending, the Same is He!"'.... For when he was sent to 'baptize with water' -- he was directed to One Who would 'baptize with the Holy Ghost'....

"The truth asserted is that 'This [One, Jesus,] is the Son of God.' The Voice from Heaven proclaimed...not only that He would baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that He has a divine nature." Thus Matthew Henry.

Rev. Dr. George Smeaton observes⁸⁸⁸ that "the second grade of the donation or unction of the Holy Spirit, was at His baptism...as the public inauguration of the Lord Jesus into His Office.... The Baptist [John] had a divine revelation that the Messiah should be pointed out to him by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit resting and abiding upon Him (John 1:33)....

"This descent of the Spirit was intended to confirm and encourage the Lord Jesus.... All the Persons of the Trinity were distinctly manifested....

"The abiding of the dove on Jesus...indicated that the Spirit of the Lord now rested upon Him (Isaiah 11:2).... Peter said: 'God anointed Jesus...with the Holy Ghost and with power' (Acts 10:38)....

"The unction..., the full supply of the Spirit with which the Son was replenished..., was shadowed forth by many anointings in...Israel -- especially in the appointment to the three principal functions [of] Prophet, Priest, and King.... The expression 'the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' unfolds to us the Source of all His actions....

"The Spirit descended upon Him and abode on Him in such fullness that He could communicate His miraculous power.... The Spirit...on the one hand would fit Him for the execution of His High Office; and, on the other hand, enable Him when His work was accomplished to dispense the Spirit to His people.... His human nature...had its activity only in personal union with the Son of God Who...acted on the human nature in every mediatorial act by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Also Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. insists⁸⁸⁹ that "the work of the Holy Spirit [is seen] in the consecration of Jesus to His Office.... The Scripture teaches us again and again that Christ performed His mediatorial work, controlled and impelled by the Holy Spirit....

"Already by the Spirit of the Prophets, Christ testified of this. He said, by the mouth of Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek.'

"But the great fact which could not be learned from Prophecy, is that of the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Jordan.... When Jesus went up out of the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove and a Voice was heard from Heaven saying 'This is My beloved Son' -- only then did the anointing become actual....

"It is only at His baptism that Jesus receives the actual consecration to His Office. This is proven...especially from the descent of the Holy Spirit -- which cannot be interpreted in any other way than as His consecration to His Holy Office.

"What we have said with reference to the communication of the Holy Spirit qualifying one for Office...in the case of Saul, David, and others -- is of direct application here. Although in His human nature Jesus [from His very conception onward] was personally in constant fellowship with the Holy Spirit -- yet the official communication was established only at the time of His baptism.... Hence the descriptive remark of John [1:32]: 'I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven, and it abode on Him'....

"Christ must be a true man, even in His Office. Therefore He must be installed, according to the human custom. He enters upon His public ministry at thirty; He is publicly installed; and He is anointed with the Holy Spirit."

141. The baptized Christ remained full of the Spirit

So at His baptism, it was not for Himself but for all His people that Jesus was Spirit-ually anointed -- as all Priests were, when thirty years old.⁸⁹⁰ Then, formally appointed as the anointed 'Christ' (to be our great High Priest)⁸⁹¹ -- He was led forth (and even driven by) the Spirit.⁸⁹² For He was full of the Spirit -- **without measure**.⁸⁹³

Accordingly, as the Son of man, He preached His first official sermon -- in the power of the Spirit.⁸⁹⁴ Indeed, He explained that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him [namely earlier at the time of His baptism] to preach the Gospel to the poor [as mankind's Great Prophet], to heal the brokenhearted [as mankind's Great Priest], and to set at liberty them that are bruised [as mankind's Great King].⁸⁹⁵

As the famous South African Expositor and Reformed Theologian Norval Geldenhuys here says in his celebrated *Commentary on Luke*: "When the Holy Spirit here descends upon Jesus in the shape of a dove, this symbolizes the nature of that holy and lovely Spirit and the everlastingness and completeness of His descent upon Him. This, of course, does not mean that the Lord Jesus was not previously full of the Holy Ghost or that He was not conceived by the Holy Ghost -- but merely indicates that He had now been equipped by the Holy Ghost with all official gifts, to appear only as Messiah and Redeemer.

"At the time of His conception by the Holy Ghost, it was a question of the forming and development of His human nature. But at the baptism, it is a question of the public declaration of His Messiahship and His equipment with the gifts necessary for this official and public fulfilling of His vocation as the Christ of God."

It is significant that God (by way of Matthew 12:15-18) applies Isaiah's famous prophecy directly to Jesus. "Behold, My Servant, Whom I have chosen -- My Beloved, in Whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles!"

As Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. argues⁸⁹⁶ at considerable length: "The work of the Holy Spirit with reference to the consecration, is conspicuous and clearly indicated.... The fact that the official influence of the Holy Spirit accompanied the Mediator throughout the entire administration of His Office, is not less clearly set forth in the Holy Scripture.

"This appears from the events immediately following the baptism. St. Luke relates that Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness....

"Of Elijah, Ezekiel and others -- it is said that the Spirit took them up and transferred them to some other place. This stands in evident connection with what we read here concerning Jesus. With this difference, however.... While the propelling power came to them from without -- Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, felt its pressure within the very depths of His soul.

"And yet, although operating in His soul, this action of the Holy Spirit was not identical to the impulses of Christ's human nature. Of Himself, Jesus would not have gone into the desert. His going there, was the result of the Holy Spirit's leading. Only in this way does this passage receive its full explanation.

"That this leading of the Holy Spirit was not limited to this one act, appears from St. Luke. He relates (chapter 4:14) that after the temptation [by Satan of Christ] -- He returned in the power of the Holy Spirit into Galilee, thus entering upon the public ministry of His prophetic office.

"It is evidently the purpose of the Scripture to emphasize the fact of the inability of the human nature which Christ had adopted -- to accomplish the work of the Messiah without the constant operation and powerful leading of the Holy Spirit. Thereby, it was so strengthened that it could be the instrument of the Son of God for the performance of His wonderful work.

"Jesus was conscious of this, and at the beginning of His ministry expressly indicated it. In their synagogue, He turned to Isaiah 61:1 and read to them: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me.' Then He added: 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears!'

"The Holy Spirit did not support His human nature only in the temptation and in the opening ministry -- but in all His mighty deeds.... Christ Himself testified: 'If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God -- then the Kingdom of God has come to you!' (Matthew 12:28).

"Moreover, St. Paul teaches that the gifts of healing and miracles proceed from the Holy Spirit.... This, in connection with the statement that these powers worked in Jesus (Mark 6:14) -- convinces us that these were the very powers of the Holy Spirit.

"Again, it is frequently said He rejoiced in the Spirit, or was troubled in the Spirit. This may be interpreted as a rejoicing or being troubled in His Own [human] spirit. But this is not a complete explanation.

"When it refers to His own [human] spirit, it reads: 'And He sighed deeply in His spirit' (Mark 8:12). But in the other cases, we interpret the expressions as pointing to those deeper and more glorious emotions of which our human nature is susceptible only when abiding in the Holy Spirit. For although St. John states that Jesus groaned in Himself (chapter 11:38) -- this is not contradictory, especially with reference to Jesus. If the Holy Spirit always abode in Him, the same emotion may be attributed both to Him and to the Holy Spirit.

"Apart, however, from these passages and their interpretations -- we have said enough to prove that that part of Christ's work of mediation beginning with His baptism and closing in the upper room -- was marked by the operation, influence, and support of the Holy Spirit. According to the divine Counsel, human nature is adapted in creation to the inworking of the Holy Spirit without which it cannot unfold itself any more than the rosebud without the light and influence of the sun. As the ear cannot hear without sound, and the eye cannot see without light -- so is our human nature incomplete without the light and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"Therefore, when the Son assumed human nature -- He took it just as it is. *I.e.*, incapable of any holy action without the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence He was conceived by the Holy Spirit -- so that, from the beginning, His human nature should richly be endowed with powers.

"The Holy Spirit developed these powers. And He [Jesus] was consecrated to His Office by the communication to His human nature of the Messianic gifts by which He still intercedes for us as our High Priest and rules us as our King. And for this reason He was guided, impelled, animated, and supported by the Holy Spirit -- at every step of His Messianic ministry.

"There are three differences between this communication of the Holy Spirit to the human nature of Jesus -- and that in us.

"First. The Holy Spirit always meets with the resistance of evil in our hearts. Jesus' heart was without sin and unrighteousness. Hence, in His human nature -- the Holy Spirit met no resistance.

"Secondly. The Holy Spirit's operation, influence, support and guidance in our human nature is always individual -- *i.e.*, in part, imperfect. In the human nature of Jesus -- it was central; perfect; leaving no void.

"Thirdly. In our nature, the Holy Spirit meets with an *ego* which, in union with that nature, opposes God.... The Person which He met in the human nature of Christ, partaking of the divine nature, was absolutely holy. For the Son, having adopted the human nature in union with His Person -- was cooperating with the Holy Spirit." Unquote Kuyper.

Thus the Word of God "was published throughout Judaea...after the baptism which John preached." For, at Christ's baptism, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" -- so that He then "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil. For God was with Him." Acts 10:37-38.

Jesus the Christ had stayed full of the Holy Ghost ever since His conception. So too did He stay full of the Spirit even after His further infilling with the Holy Ghost at His baptism.⁸⁹⁷

Indeed, it was by the Spirit of God that Christ then cast out demons. Furthermore, it was by the same Spirit of God that Christ also assured His Own Disciples that the Father would keep on giving His Holy Spirit to all of those Disciples who kept on asking for Him.⁸⁹⁸

Moreover, right before His crucifixion, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit as another Comforter to His Disciples (after His Own human death and resurrection and ascension).⁸⁹⁹ And, dying on the cross, Jesus "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" -- and then gave up "His spirit" when He "yielded up the ghost"⁹⁰⁰ -- without ever giving up or become separated from the Holy Spirit, even between Christ's death and resurrection.⁹⁰¹

142. The resurrected Christ stayed full of the Spirit

On the third day after His human death, Jesus was resurrected or "quickenened by the Spirit" and brought back to life. For He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."⁹⁰²

That same Easter Sunday, commanding His Apostles to go forth and remit sins, the Lord Jesus "ex-Spirit-ed" or exhaled the Breath or Spirit of God. That He did, when He breathed on them with His words: "Receive the Holy Ghost!"⁹⁰³

Even for the following forty days, "He through the Holy Ghost gave Commandments to the Apostles."⁹⁰⁴ And, right before His ascension into Heaven -- He promised that He would soon, from Heaven, baptize His earthly Apostles with the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰⁵ For the Holy Ghost would come and glorify Jesus, showing His Apostles the things of Christ.⁹⁰⁶

143. Christ received His Spirit-ual gifts for even rebellious mankind

Christ then "ascended on high." In so doing, He "received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also."⁹⁰⁷

So, then -- the gifts of God the Holy Spirit which Christ secured, are not limited to the believers alone. In addition to the latter -- all those other gifts are, to differing degrees, commonly found in all mankind as a whole.

Such were earned for fallen mankind only by the matchless merits of Jesus Christ. And they are generously donated to mankind from the Father and through the Spirit by Their Son as the Son of man alias our Second Adam -- the crucified and resurrected and ascended and now-reigning Jesus Christ the Lord.⁹⁰⁸

Now, all men everywhere are to be commanded to repent -- and also gratefully to utilize to the glory of God in Christ every gift the Divine Spirit has given them. Indeed, they are to be enjoined to do so not just in church work but also in all other areas of human endeavour.⁹⁰⁹

For every man **should**: speak the truth to his neighbour; work with his own hands; and be renewed and recreated in the image of God. Indeed, the Triune God righteously still commands all men everywhere to subdue the whole Earth to His glory.⁹¹⁰

144. God's baptizing of Christ with the Spirit was a historical milestone

Where does one see the true significance of Christ's baptizing His Church Visible with His Spirit on Pentecost Sunday? Only in the earlier light of His Own baptism by the Triune God through John the Baptizer!

For that earlier baptism of Jesus Christ was substitutionary. Indeed, our sinful Saviour was there baptized on behalf of His sin-stained Visible Church.

The Spirit had, of course, been driving the whole Universe forward -- ever since creation. A very important milestone in the history of the redemption of the World, however, was passed -- and, indeed, very dramatically -- with the advent of the Messiah and, thirty years later, at His coming to receive baptism at the hands of John the Baptizer.

In His assumed human nature, the Son was anointed by the Father with the Spirit -- as our great Prophet and Priest and King -- without measure, alias seven-foldedly.⁹¹¹ For the sinless Christ (Who in Himself needed neither regeneration nor Spirit-filling) was baptized on behalf of His sinful Church (which needs both Spirit-regeneration and Spirit-infilling).

So Christ was baptized for His Church. Thus, He was baptized with the Spirit of the Lord and the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of understanding and the Spirit of counsel and the Spirit of might and the Spirit of knowledge and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.⁹¹²

145. God baptizes both Christ and Christ-ians with His Spirit

Christ's Spirit-baptism took place at His substitutionary water-baptism as our sinless Saviour and in our place.⁹¹³ That water-and-Spirit baptism of Christ⁹¹⁴ would be consummated in His substitutionary blood-baptism on Calvary.⁹¹⁵

After Calvary and Christ's resurrection and heavenly session and His outpouring of the Holy Spirit -- rivers of living water would flow forth, and would even leap forth, out of each Spirit-filled Christian. Indeed, Christ Himself had promised this.

For before His death and resurrection and ascension, Christ had predicted that all those who believed in Him would soon have a well of water springing up within them. Nay more! That would then even burst forth unto others -- leaping up from them -- unto everlasting life.

146. The baptized Christ remained full of the Spirit throughout His temptations

After His baptism, the Spirit drove and led Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost, into the wilderness -- in order to be tested by the devil. Matthew 4:1 says that "Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit."

Mark 1:12 says this occurred "immediately" after His baptism. And Luke 4:1 states, more copiously: "Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, went back from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin comments:⁹¹⁶ "By the guidance of the Spirit, Christ withdrew from the crowd of men in order that He might come forth as the Highest Teacher of the Church -- as the Ambassador of God.... It was the will of God that His Son should be tempted. That He was brought into this contest [with Satan] by a fixed purpose of God -- is evident from the words of Matthew and Mark, who say that for this reason He was 'led by the Spirit into the wilderness'...."

"Christ was tempted, as the Public Representative of all believers.... The Spirit of God presides over our contests, as an exercise of our faith.... In the words of Luke..., 'Jesus -- full of the Holy Ghost -- withdrew from the Jordan.' They imply that He was then more abundantly endowed with the grace and power of the Spirit -- in order that He might be more fortified for the battles which He had to fight. For it was not without a good reason that 'the Holy Spirit had descended upon Him.'"

Adds Matthew Henry:⁹¹⁷ "Immediately after 'the Heavens were opened' to Him and 'the Spirit descended' on Him and He was declared to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the World -- the next news we hear of Him is, He is 'tempted' [or tested]. For then He is best able to grapple with the temptation...."

"If the good Spirit witness to our adoption -- that will furnish us with an answer to all the suggestions of the evil spirit designed either to debauch or disquiet us.... He 'was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil.' The Spirit that 'descended upon Him like a dove' made Him meek -- and yet made Him bold...."

"The good Spirit that descended upon Him, led Him into the wilderness.... He was 'full of the Holy Ghost' Who had descended on Him like a dove. He had now greater measures of the gifts, graces and comforts of the Holy Ghost than ever before.... Those are well armed against the strongest temptations, that are full of the Holy Ghost!" He was tempted or tested for us -- on our behalf, and in our place.

147. Christ returned full of the Spirit, and preached from a Spirit-filled text

Next, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." There, in a synagogue, He found in the Book of Isaiah "the place where it was written 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel'.... And He began to say.... 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears!'" Luke 4:14-21.

Comments Calvin here about Christ:⁹¹⁸ "He alone was endowed with the fullness of the Spirit (John 3:34).... He alone, by the power of His Spirit, performs and grants all the benefits that are here promised.... He does nothing by the suggestion or advice of men, but everything by the guidance of the Spirit of God...."

"Many make a false boast that they have the Spirit of God -- while they are destitute of His gifts. But Christ proves by the 'anointing' as the effect, that He is endued with the Spirit of God. He then states the purpose for which the graces of the Spirit were bestowed upon Him. It was so that He might preach the Gospel to the poor.

"Hence we conclude that those who are sent by God to preach the Gospel -- are previously furnished with necessary gifts, to qualify them for so important an Office. It is therefore very ridiculous that, under the pretence of a divine calling, men totally unfit for discharging the Office should take upon themselves the name of Pastors....

"We are informed expressly, that the Lord anoints His servants. Because the true and efficacious preaching of the Gospel...does not lie in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the heavenly power of the Spirit."

Matthew Henry adds⁹¹⁹ here, that Christ "was qualified for the work. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.' All the gifts and graces of the Spirit were conferred upon Him not by measure as upon other Prophets, but without measure. John 3:34. He now came 'in the power of the Spirit'....

"He was commissioned. 'Because He has anointed Me and sent Me.' His extraordinary qualification, amounted to a commission. His being 'anointed' -- signifies His being fitted for the undertaking, and called to it.

"Those whom God appoints to any service, He anoints for it. 'Because He has sent Me, He hath sent His Spirit along with Me'....

"He sets at liberty them that are bruised. He doth by His Spirit incline and enable them to make use of the liberty granted. As, [back] then, none did -- but those 'whose spirit God stirred up.' Ezra 1:5."

148. Christ urged His Disciples to keep on asking for the Holy Spirit

Jesus called His first disciples. The Holy Spirit moved them, so they started following Jesus. Then Christ taught them to keep on praying the **Spirit-filled Lord's Prayer**.

There, they were to keep on asking the Father to keep on giving them their daily bread. For, Jesus assured them: "If you, being evil, know how to keep on giving good gifts to your children -- how much more shall your heavenly Father keep on giving the Holy Spirit to them that keep on asking Him!" Luke 11:1-13.

In the Lord's Prayer to God the Father as taught to us by the Son and in Their Spirit, comments Calvin,⁹²⁰ "we ask that He may remove all hindrances and may bring all men under His dominion and may lead them to meditate on the heavenly life. This is done partly by the preaching of the Word, and partly by the secret power of the Spirit.

"It is His will to govern men by His Word. But as the bare Voice does not pierce the hearts of men if the inward power of the Spirit be not added -- both [Word and Spirit] must be joined together, in order that the Kingdom of God may be established. We therefore pray that God would exert His power, both by the Word and by the Spirit, so that the whole World may willingly submit to Him....

"The substance of this Prayer is, that God would enlighten the World by the light of His Word -- would form the hearts of men by the influences of His Spirit -- to obey His justice.... The Kingdom of God is continually growing and advancing, to the end of the World. We must pray every day that it may keep on coming!...

"As the kindness of God flows in uninterrupted succession to feed us -- the bread which He bestows is called...continual, 'coming day by day'.... 'And keep on forgiving us our debts!'... He keeps on offering to us a free reconciliation, by 'not imputing our sins' (Second Corinthians 5:19) -- and keeps on promising the Spirit, to engrave the righteousness of the Law on our hearts.

"We are commanded to keep on asking both [the Law and the Spirit].... Certainly, if the Spirit of God keeps on reigning in our hearts -- every description of ill-will and revenge ought to be banished. The Spirit is the Witness of our adoption (Romans 8:16)....

"Keep on asking, and it shall keep on being given to you!... What father among you, from whom if his son shall keep on asking bread, will give him a stone?.... If you, then, though you are evil, know how to keep on giving good gifts to your children -- how much more shall your heavenly Father keep on giving the Holy Spirit to those who keep on asking Him?....

"Luke says -- 'the Holy Spirit.' This does not exclude other benefits [such as our daily bread], but points out what we ought chiefly to ask for. For we ought never to forget the exhortation 'Keep on seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall keep on being added to you!'... It is the duty of the children of God when they engage in prayer...to rise to meditation on the Spirit-ual life."

Here, Calvin comments on God being more generous in giving His Spirit and gifts to His children than men are to theirs. Considering a human "father's love," remarks Calvin,⁹²¹ "men forget themselves and give to their children with overflowing liberality.

"Whence comes this -- but because God, 'from whom the whole family in Heaven and Earth is named' (Ephesians 3:15), drips into their hearts a portion of His goodness? But if the little drops produce such an amount of beneficence -- what ought we to expect from the inexhaustible ocean? Would God, Who thus opens the hearts of men -- shut His Own?" No!

"'Your Father will give good things!' This is expressly mentioned by Christ.... Instead of 'good things' (*agatha*) in the last clause, Luke says 'the Holy Spirit.' This does not exclude other benefits, but points out what we ought chiefly to ask!" Thus Calvin.

Christ, adds the Calvinist Rev Matthew Henry,⁹²² "gives us both instruction and encouragement in prayer -- from the consideration of our relation[ship] to God as a Father. Here is an appeal to the bowels of earthly fathers. 'Let any of you that is a father...tell me -- if his son ask bread for his breakfast, will he give him a stone to breakfast on?!... Ye then, being evil, give -- and know how to give -- good gifts to your children. Much more shall God give you [and keep on giving you] the Spirit!"

We have here the "directions He [Christ] give us what to 'pray for.' For we must ask for the 'Holy Spirit' not only as necessary in order to our 'praying well' -- but as inclusive of all the good things we are to pray for....

"The Spirit is the Worker of Spirit-ual life, and the Earnest [or Guarantor and Guarantee] of eternal life.... The gift of the Holy Ghost is a gift we are every one of us concerned earnestly and constantly to pray for....

"Your heavenly Father will give! It is in His power to give the Spirit. He has all good things to bestow, wrapped up in that One. But that is not all. It is in His promise. The gift of the Holy Ghost is in the Covenant. Acts 2:33,38.... When God's children [daily] ask for the Spirit -- they do, in effect, ask for [daily] Bread. For the Spirit is the Staff of life. Nay, He is the Author of the soul's life....

"If earthly parents be willing to lay out for the education of their children, to whom they design to leave their estates -- much more will your heavenly Father give the spirit of sons to all those whom He has predestinated to the inheritance of sons.... If our earthly parents...be yet so kind -- if they, though weak, be yet so knowing that they not only give but give...what is best, in the best manner and time -- much more shall your heavenly Father Who infinitely excels the fathers of our flesh both in wisdom and goodness, give you His Holy Spirit!"

The Calvinistic *Heidelberg Catechism* explains⁹²³ that the purpose of the petition 'Give us this day our daily bread!' is so "that we may thereby know that You are the only Fountain of all good, and that without Your blessing neither our care and labour nor Your gifts can profit us." Similarly, the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism*⁹²⁴ tells us that when "we not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth...by enabling us to understand both for whom and what and how prayer is to be made.... We pray from day to day...of His free Gift [the Holy Spirit]...., and have the Same continued and blessed unto us."

Hence, as the Calvinist commentator on the *Heidelberg Catechism* Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray never tired of urging -- the Holy Bible teaches Christians to keep on asking God to keep on giving them His Holy Spirit. The Divine Son directs His children to pray: "Our Father!.... Keep on giving us our Daily Bread" -- including especially the Holy Spirit! For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory -- for ever. Amen!"

Not just before Calvary, but even thirty years after Christ's death there -- through His (A.D. circa 66f) Spirit-inspired Gospel of Luke (11:13) -- Jesus still urged His Post-Pentecost Disciples to keep on being filled with the Holy Ghost. For that injunction was inscripturated for the Church of all ages at least three decades after Pentecost Sunday.

As Rev. Professor Dr. Harold J. Whitney has truly stated in his book *Power for Witnessing*:⁹²⁵ "The Gospel of Luke, for one thing, was not written [1:1-4] till some thirty years after Pentecost, when Paul and Peter had been filled with the Spirit over and over again.... We see not only that some were filled with the Spirit because of the prayers of others after Pentecost [Sunday]." Acts 4:3f; 9:17; 13:1-4; Ephesians 1:15-19 & 3:16-19 & 5:18. But we also see "that others were filled with the Spirit as the result of prayer -- prior to Pentecost [Sunday]."

So -- both before and after Pentecost Sunday -- Christ's Disciples were and are to keep on asking their heavenly Father to keep on giving them His Holy Spirit. Indeed, they were and are to keep on doing this -- even as they were and are to keep on asking Him to keep on giving them their daily bread! Luke 1:10 & 1:15 & 11:1-3 & 11:11-13.

149. You Pharisees too must be born again of water and of Spirit!

So Jesus the Spirit-anointed Christ called His first Disciples, and taught them to pray the Spirit-dictated Lord's Prayer. Later, from their midst, He chose twelve of them to be His Apostles. That, together with His Own Spirit-empowered miracles in particular, then upset the Judaistic Leadership in general and the Pharisees in particular.

For it was apparently shortly after Christ's public baptism by water and by Spirit, and very soon after His first public and Spirit-filled sermon and the calling of His Apostles and His other first Disciples, that the Pharisee Nicodemus came to Him by night. Then that Pharisee said to Him: "Rabbi, we know that you are a Teacher come from God! For no man can do these miracles that you are doing -- unless God is with him!"

But Jesus answered and said to him: "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.... Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.... You [Pharisees too] must be born again! The wind [or Spirit] keeps on blowing wherever it wishes, but you cannot tell whence it keeps on coming and whither it keeps on going. So is every one that is born of the Spirit!" John 3:1-8.

Here, comments Calvin,⁹²⁶ Christ "connects water with the Spirit. Because under that visible sign, He testifies and seals the newness of life which by His Spirit God alone effects in us.... To be the children of God, we must be born anew.... The Holy Spirit is the Author of this second birth.... It does not happen naturally that men are born a second time.... They do not have to put on a new body -- but are born [again] when they are renewed in mind and heart by the grace of the Spirit....

"The words 'Spirit' and 'water'...mean the same thing.... It is a frequent and common way of speaking in Scripture, when the Spirit is mentioned, to add the word 'water' or 'fire' -- to express His power.

"We sometimes hear of Christ baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire, where fire does not mean something different from the Spirit but only shows what is His power in us.... It is as if Christ had said that no one is a son of God, until he has been renewed by water -- and that this water is the [fiery] Spirit Who cleanses [and purges] us anew and Who, by His power poured upon us, imparts to us the energy of the heavenly life, when by nature we were utterly barren.

"By water, therefore, is meant simply the inward cleansing and quickening of the Holy Spirit.... When Christ at once adds the reason why we must be born again -- He shows without mentioning water, how the newness of life which He requires, comes from the Spirit alone. Thence it follows that 'water' must not be separated from 'the Spirit.'" Here, then, those two words are used interchangeably.

"'Flesh' is contrasted to the 'Spirit' -- as something corrupt [is contrasted] to what is sound.... The meaning of Christ's words is that, since a man is born from his mother's womb only carnally, he must be fashioned anew by the Spirit so he may begin to be Spirit-ual....

"The word 'Spirit' is used here in two senses -- for grace, and for the effect of grace. First, Christ is teaching us that the Spirit of God is the only Author of a pure and upright nature. And afterwards, He says that we are Spirit-ual -- because we are renewed by His power....

"Augustine's suggestion is that the Spirit of God works at His Own pleasure. Chrysostom and Cyril are better.... They say that the comparison is taken from the wind, and apply it to this passage thus -- though its power is felt, its origin and cause are hidden.... By the Spirit of God, we are re-fashioned and made new men -- though the way He does this, is hidden from us....

"Christ means that the movement and operation of God's Spirit is no less perceptible in the renewal of man, than the movement of the air [or wind] in this earthly and outward life -- but its mode is hidden.... We therefore are ungrateful and niggardly, if we do not adore the

incomprehensible power of God in the heavenly life.... Such is the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit in the renewed man!"

Elsewhere, Calvin adds against the Anabaptists⁹²⁷ (who denied the regenerability of those yet infants): "How, they ask, are infants regenerated -- when not possessing a knowledge of either good or evil? We answer...that some are saved at this age....

"They must be purified, **before** they can be admitted into the Kingdom of God.... The Judge Himself publicly declares that 'except one [*tis*] be regenerated -- one cannot see the Kingdom of God' (John 3:3)!" Thus, regeneration after generation or conception -- yet regeneration either before or after delivery out of one's mother's womb.

"God gave, in the case of John the Baptizer whom He sanctified from [and within] his mother's womb (Luke 1:15), a proof of what He might do [also] in others [*cf.* Psalm 22:9f & 139:7-17 and Jeremiah 1:5 and First Corinthians 7:14 *etc.*].... The angel...announced to Zacharias that the child [John] not yet born, would be filled with the Holy Spirit....

"Christ was sanctified from earliest infancy, so that He might sanctify His elect in Himself, at any age.... He was **conceived** by the Holy Spirit so that, completely pervaded with His holiness in the flesh which He had assumed, He might transfuse it into us.... We set down as incontrovertible that none of the elect is called away from the present life without being previously sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit of God....

"The Word of the Lord is the only seed of Spirit-ual regeneration -- but we deny the inference that, therefore, the power of God cannot regenerate infants.... Many He certainly has called and endued with the true knowledge of Himself...by the illumination of the Spirit without the intervention of preaching....

"Children are baptized for [yet further] future repentance and faith.... The **seed** of both lies hidden in them by the secret operation of the Spirit.... If those on whom the Lord has bestowed His election, after...regeneration depart this life before they become adults -- He, by the incomprehensible energy of His Spirit, renews them in the way which He alone sees to be expedient....

"Another passage which they [both Anabaptists and Romanists] adduce, is from the third chapter of John [3:5], where our Saviour's words seem to them to imply that a present regeneration is required in **baptism** -- 'except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God'.... They are in error, in imagining that there is any mention of baptism in this passage merely because the word 'water' is used....

"Our Saviour intimates the mode in which God regenerates us -- *viz.* by water and the Spirit. In other words, by the Spirit Who, in irrigating and cleansing the souls of believers, operates in the manner of water.

"By 'water and the Spirit' I therefore simply understand the Spirit Who is 'water.' Nor is the expression new. It perfectly accords with that which is used [by John the Baptizer] in the third chapter of Matthew -- 'He Who comes after me is mightier than I'; 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire'.... Therefore, as to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire is to confer the Holy Spirit Who in regeneration has the...nature of fire -- so to be born again of water and of the Spirit is nothing else than to receive that power of the [fiery] Spirit, which has the same effect on the soul that water has on the body ...

"Yet, were we disposed to imitate these men in their mode of cavilling -- we might easily...reply to them that baptism is prior to faith and repentance. Since in this passage, our Saviour mentions it before the Spirit.

"This certainly must be understood of Spirit-ual gifts -- and, if they follow baptism, I have gained all I contend for.... No man, until renewed by 'living water' -- that is, by the Spirit -- can enter the Kingdom of God."

Here, the Calvin-istic *Westminster Confession* 10:3 & 28:6 is helpful. This teaches: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit. John 3:3-5....

"The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that...time wherein it is administered (John 3:3-8). Yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto -- according to the counsel of God's Own will, in His appointed time."

Matthew Henry explains:⁹²⁸ "Christ tells him [the Pharisee Nicodemus] that he can have no benefit...unless there be a change of the Spirit...equivalent to a new birth.... To be born again, is to be 'born of the Spirit'....

"It is not wrought by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace. It is the sanctification of the Spirit (First Peter 1:2), and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

"The word He works by, is His in-Spir-ation; and the heart to be wrought on, He has access to.... The nature of this change, and what that is which is wrought..., is Spirit.... Those that are regenerated, are made Spirit-ual -- and refined from the dross and dregs of sensuality.... It would be a mighty change indeed with them -- no less than a new birth -- to become Spirit-ual.... We are flesh.... What communion can there be between God Who is a Spirit -- and a soul in this condition?... The new nature, which is Spirit, must take rise from a second birth.... He [Nicodemus]...must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become Spirit-ual....

"To be born again, is to be 'born of water' and of the Spirit -- that is, of the Spirit working like water. As, Matthew 3:11, 'with the Holy Ghost and with fire' means with the Holy Ghost as with fire.... That which is primarily intended here is to show that the Spirit in sanctifying a soul...purifies it as water.... It is the washing of regeneration, Titus 3:5.... The Spirit is compared to water -- Isaiah 44:3; [and John] 7:38-39....

"You must be born again of the Spirit! Which regeneration by the Spirit should be signified by washing with water, as the visible sign of that Spirit-ual grace. Not that all they, and they only, that are baptized -- are saved. But without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit and signified by baptism, none shall be looked upon as the protected...subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven....

"It is compared to wind.... 'The wind blows where it listeth; so is every man that is born by the Spirit!' The same word (*Pneuma*), signifies both the wind and Spirit. The Spirit came upon the Apostles in a rushing mighty wind. Acts 2:2. His strong influences on the hearts of sinners are compared to the breathing of the wind (Ezekiel 37:9). And His sweet influences on the souls of saints, to the north and south wind. Canticles 4:16....

"The Spirit in regeneration works arbitrarily and as a free Agent. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth' for us, and doth not attend our order, nor is subject to our command. The Spirit

dispenses His influences here and when, on whom and in what measure and degree, He pleases -- 'dividing [or distributing] to every man severally as He will.' First Corinthians 12:11....

"He works...with evident effects. 'Thou hearest the sound thereof' -- though its causes are hidden.... When the soul is brought to mourn for sin, to groan under the burthen of corruption, to breathe after Christ, to cry 'Abba' (Father)! -- then we hear the sound of the Spirit He works mysteriously, and in secret hidden ways. 'Thou canst not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes.' How it gathers and how its spreads its strength, is a riddle to us. So the manner and methods of the Spirit's working, are a mystery. 'Which way went the Spirit?' First Kings 22:24. See Ecclesiastes 11:5, and compare it with Psalm 139:14."

Also Rev. Professor Dr. George Smeaton observes:⁹²⁹ "The forfeited presence of the Spirit is restored by Christ's mediatorship and obedience to God's Law, in precept and penalty.... Man is no longer a Spirit-ual being.... The Spirit-filled humanity of Jesus was the true image.... If we delineate men's actual relation to God, they are described as having not the Spirit (Jude 19).... Their wisdom is earthly (James 4:15), and they themselves without God (Ephesians 2:12)." In one word, they all need to be born again!

150. God does not keep on giving the Spirit in a measured way to Jesus!

The Pharisees rightly connected baptisms by Christ and by Elijah with that by John. But they then rejected the counsel of God, against themselves -- not being baptized by John. John 1:25-34 *cf.* First Kings 18:31-45 with Luke 1:15-17 & 7:29-30 and John 3:22-26 & 4:1-2.

John baptized the rest of the covenant people and their families, after the heads of those families professed their faith in the coming Messiah whom John told them would baptize with the Spirit. John 1:31-33. After John baptized Jesus as a head of a covenantal family -- indeed, as The Head of The Covenantal Family of the Christian Church! -- some of John's Disciples left John, followed Jesus, and became His Apostles. John 1:32-37*f.*

Those Apostles of Jesus, having received baptism only by John but never by Jesus, then themselves baptized people on behalf of Jesus. In other words, Jesus accepted John's baptism of Himself and of Christ's Apostles -- as valid Christian Baptism.

Indeed, the thus-baptized Apostles of Jesus, themselves then started administering the same "Johannine" baptisms on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and as His agents. John 4:1-2. Later, those same Apostles would be commanded by Jesus to go forth into all the World and to baptize also all the nations. Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15*f.* and Luke 24:47-49 and Acts 1:5-8 & 2:38-39 *etc.*

Jesus Himself, however, baptized nobody. Why not? Probably because He foresaw that if He had done so, some would wrongly conclude that baptisms by Him Himself would be more valid than baptisms by His Own Apostles or than baptisms by John. *Cf.* Matthew 28:19 and First Corinthians 1:13-17.

Throughout, Christians were baptized not into John nor into Peter *etc.* but only into Christ. Thus Paul rightly knew that the heretics in Ephesus, who falsely claimed to have received "John's baptism" (*sic!*) -- but who unlike John and those baptized by John admitted they had never even "as much as heard whether there is a 'holy spirit'" (*sic!*) and apparently had also never even so much heard of "Christ Jesus" -- had never ever been baptized at all! Whereupon, "when they heard this, they were baptized" for the first time ever -- by Paul. Acts 19:1-5.

So then, after John's baptism of Jesus and after Christ's subsequent first public sermon and dialogue with Nicodemus, Christ's Apostles began to make more converts than did John. Hence the latter himself then said: "He [Jesus] must keep on increasing, but I [John] must keep on decreasing." John 3:30.

What is good, is that Jesus thereafter kept on increasing not only in His numerical following but especially in the manifestation of the power of the Spirit in His life. Sadly, however, the once Spirit-filled John the baptizer -- though still a believer -- then decreased especially by falling into doubt (yet never into disbelief).

Nevertheless, Christ kept on increasing in the power of the Spirit! Indeed, also John the Baptizer kept on proclaiming about Jesus that "He Whom God has sent -- **keeps on** speaking the words of God. For God does not keep on giving the Spirit measuredly to Him!" John 3:30-34.

Comments Calvin:⁹³⁰ "This passage is expounded in two ways. Some extend it to the ordinary dispensation -- in that God, the inexhaustible Fount of all good, does not at all exhaust Himself when He bountifully and plentifully pours out His gifts on men.... I would rather follow Augustine, however. He interprets it as said of Christ..... The verb ['keeps on giving' (the Spirit)], in the present tense, denotes a continued action. For although He was given the Spirit in the highest perfection once [and for all at His conception] -- yet, as He [the Spirit] continually flows from a Source [God the Father], so to speak -- it is not out of place to say that Christ now keeps on receiving Him [the Spirit] from the Father....

"The meaning is now clear. The Spirit was not given to Christ by measure, as if the resources of grace which He possesses were in some way limited -- just as Paul [*per contra*] teaches in First Corinthians 12:7 and Ephesians 4:7 that to everyone [but Christ] is distributed according to the measure of the gift -- so that none may possess the fullness on his own....

"Christ is different -- in that the Father has poured out [and keeps on pouring out] upon Him an unlimited wealth of His Spirit. And indeed, it is right that the Spirit should dwell in Him without measure -- so that we may all draw from His fullness."

Also elsewhere, Calvin adds⁹³¹ that "'the Spirit of the Lord rested [and **shall keep on resting**] upon Him; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord' (Isaiah 11:2).... 'He was not enriched privately for Himself, but so that He might refresh the parched and hungry with His abundance. For as the Father is said to have given the Spirit to the Son without measure (John 3:34) -- so the reason is expressed: so that we might all receive of His fullness, and grace for grace (John 1:16).

"From this Fountain [of the Spirit from the Father and indeed then through Christ], flows the copious supply (of which Paul makes mention, Ephesians 4:7, by which grace is variously distributed to believers according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Here we have ample confirmation...that the Kingdom of Christ consists in the Spirit, and not in earthy delights....

"A visible symbol of this grace, was exhibited at the baptism of Christ when the Spirit rested upon Him in the form of a dove. To designate the Spirit and His gifts by the term 'unction' is not new, and ought not to seem absurd (see First John 2:20-27) -- because this is the only 'Quarter' from which we derive life....

"Especially in what regards the heavenly life, there is not a drop of vigour in us, save what the Holy Spirit instils.... Because believers stand invincible in the strength of their King, and His Spirit-ual riches abound toward them -- they are not improperly called 'Christ-ians'....

"We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds and sealed on our hearts by the Holy Spirit.... The Holy Spirit was...the witness of our adoption -- by enlightening our hearts unto faith.... This, as John the Baptizer declares, is in a manner signed and sealed by believers (John 3:33).... Christ cannot be known, without the sanctification of His Spirit."

The Calvin-istic *Westminster Confession* concurs. It teaches⁹³² that "the Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the **Holy Spirit** above measure. Psalm 45:7 and John 3:34."

Adds Matthew Henry:⁹³³ "Those that speak as the Oracles of God and prophesy according to the proportion of faith, are to be received as sent of God.... He [Jesus] spake so, as no other Prophet did. For 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure to Him!'

"None can speak the words of God, without the Spirit of God. First Corinthians 2:10-11.... The Old Testament Prophets had the Spirit, and in different degrees. Second Kings 2:9-10. But whereas God gave them the Spirit by measure (First Corinthians 12:4), He gave Him (Christ) without measure. All fullness dwelt in Him -- the fullness of the Godhead, an unmeasurable fullness. The Spirit was not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a Fountain, as in a bottomless Ocean. The Prophets that had the Spirit in a limited manner, only with respect to some particular revelation, sometimes spake of [alias for and from] themselves. But He that had the Spirit always residing in Him without stint, always spake the words of God."

Observes Kuyper:⁹³⁴ "The Holy Spirit imparted these endowments to His human nature without measure. John 3:34. This has reference to a contrast between others whom the Holy Spirit endowed not without measure but in limited degree according to their individual calling or destiny -- and Christ, in Whom there is no such distinction.....

"Therefore gifts, powers and faculties are imparted in such a measure -- that He never could feel the lack of any gift of the Holy Spirit. He lacked nothing; possessed all -- not by virtue of His divine nature which cannot receive anything (being the eternal fullness itself), but by virtue of His human nature which was endowed with such glorious gifts by the Holy Spirit."

So, then, Jesus and all twelve of His original Apostles (and perhaps even Matthias as His thirteenth) were baptized only by John the Baptizer -- and were never rebaptized. Both before and after Christ's ascension, never Christ Himself but only His Apostles (and solely by His authority) baptized more and more -- even as John the Baptizer baptized less and less.

Never did those Apostles rebaptize anyone. Therefore 'Johannine' baptism is congruent or equal in every respect to Christ-ian baptism. Q.E.D. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

Also at Ephesus, Acts 19:1-5, there was but **one Baptism**. For, as Ephesians 4:4-6 insists: "There is [only] one Spirit...; one Lord [Jesus]; one Faith; **one Baptism**; one God and Father." For Circumcision was unrepeatable (Exodus 4:24-26); Baptism replaced Circumcision (Colossians 2:11-13); and all 'Rebaptisms' are sin (Hebrews 6:1-6).

-- Excerpted from Rev. Professor-Emeritus Dr. Francis Nigel Lee's forthcoming book
I Believe in the Holy Ghost! (footnotes omitted in this excerpt)