

The Centrality of the Holy Spirit in Reformed Theology: A Robust Pneumatology

By Shane Lems

In Reformed theology, there is a “practical subordination” of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.¹ “Creeds and confessions of the Reformed tradition do not do justice to the biblical emphasis of the Holy Spirit, and the result is that in reading what the Bible says about the Spirit we are blind and deaf.”² In addition, the Reformed tradition has ignored the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to some.³ ‘No one in Reformed churches looks as if he or she is full of the Holy Spirit,

since there are no healing sessions, prophets, or speaking in tongues.’ With these accusations leveled, I ask the question: does Reformed theology give the Holy Spirit a back seat role in theology?

The Heidelberg Catechism (hereafter HC) does indeed only have one Q/A that directly addresses the person of the Holy Spirit. “What do you believe about the Holy Spirit?” the catechism asks. Also, out of 738 pages, Louis Berkhof only gives eight to pneumatology.⁴ The Westminster Confession of Faith (hereafter WCF) has no chapter devoted exclusively to the Holy Spirit. Thus, at first glance, the above accusations ring true. However, they are not. Instead, as I argue in this essay, *the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Reformed theology supports and pervades every loci*. Stated differently, Reformed theology would make no sense if the Holy Spirit did not permeate every part of it.

Since there is not enough room to discuss fully every place where Reformed theology speaks of the Holy Spirit, I must summarize most of the material.⁵ One area on which I spend more time is the area of how the Spirit is manifest today. That is, the above accusations are leveled for the primary reason that the Spirit’s work supposedly cannot be *seen* in Reformed churches. These charges can be answered by demonstrating how one sees the Spirit at work today.

The orthodox doctrine of Trinity, namely that the three persons of the Godhead are consubstantial, coeternal, coequal, and coomnipotent must be presupposed because of space constraints and the fact that most critics of Reformed pneumatology acknowledge the orthodoxy of our position, even if they say it is lacking.⁶ Thus, I must unfortunately omit theology proper, where Reformed dogmatics discusses the Holy Trinity. Suffice it to say that Reformed theology robustly sings the tune of the Athanasian Creed.

The structure of this paper is quite simple. First, the

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1. Rodman Williams, *The Pentecostal Reality* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1972) 38.

2. Lewis Mudge, quoted in Myung Yong Kim, “Reformed Pneumatology and Pentecostal Pneumatology” in *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity*, ed. Wallace Alston Jr., and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 174.

3. John Walvoord, “The Augustinian-Dispensational Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 211.

4. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 423-431.

5. Of course one cannot interact with the whole chorus of Reformed theological voices in a single paper. I primarily use the Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Confession of Faith, Herman Bavinck, Abraham Kuyper, and Louis Berkhof because these encompass both historical and confessional Reformed theology. Also very notable is the excellent work on the Holy Spirit by John Owen, found primarily in the third and fourth volumes of his *Works* ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1862), which encompasses over 1,000 pages. Citations from the Westminster Standards are from *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 2001), and those from the Heidelberg Catechism are from the *Psalter Hymnal* (Grand Rapids: Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1976).

6. Williams did not fundamentally disagree with the doctrinal teaching of Reformed pneumatology; rather, he hinted that it is only a doctrinal truth and not a practical one. Rodman Williams, *The Era of the Spirit* (Plainfield, Logos International, 1971) 41-42.

general work of the Holy Spirit in Reformed orthodoxy is set forth. Second, the specific work of the Holy Spirit is described. Finally, I observe that Reformed theology teaches that one can see the Spirit at work, even today. Now, let us see if Myung Kim's critique is true: "Pneumatology plays only the role of an assistant to the doctrine of salvation" in Reformed theology.⁷

THE OPERATIO COMMUNIS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:
CREATION AND ANTHROPOLOGY

"The Triune God is the author of creation," Herman Bavinck stressed; God produces both creation and new creation by his Word and Spirit.⁸ The Spirit of God, he said, is the principle of creaturely being and life; he vivifies and anticipates the creation-words of God in such a way that all things were made *ex nihilo* in six days (Bavinck, 480). Even the Psalms praise the Spirit for his creative work. By Yahweh's word the heavens were made, by the breath (רוּחַ) of his mouth all the heavenly hosts (Ps. 33:6). Yahweh sends forth his Spirit (רוּחַ) and creatures receive life (Ps. 104:30). Eschatologically speaking, the Spirit will renew and re-create all things in a similar way (save *ex-nihilo*) as the first creation.⁹ The consummate state is a spiritual one—one in which the Holy Spirit is the encompassing life-source, the "all pervasive atmosphere" (Ferguson, 253).

The Lord breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living spirit (Gen. 2:7). Job confessed that the Spirit of God (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) made him (Job 33:4). Anthropologically, the Spirit has been active since the creation of the world. Bavinck noted that the image of God in humanity is the image of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: "The entire deity is the archetype of man" (Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 554–555).

Berkhof described the general work of the Spirit as the operations in which the Spirit "originates, maintains, strengthens, and guides all life, organic, intellectual, and moral" (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 426). "It is the Spirit who, everywhere diffused, sustains all things, causes them to grow, and quickens them in heaven and in earth."¹⁰ Not only does the Holy Spirit create and preserve life, he also restrains sin, grants people earthly virtues, and enlightens some to realize heavenly truths in a non-salvific way (1 Sam. 16:14, Exod. 31:3 Heb. 6:4).¹¹ Calvin's oft-quoted line is worth mentioning. He wrote about the gifts given to many humans in art and science, and admonished readers not to hold these "gifts of the Spirit in slight esteem" (Calvin, *Institutes*, II.II.15). Instead, one must recognize the truth of the Spirit wherever it shows up

and notice how many good gifts the Lord left to fallen humanity.¹²

THE OPERATIO PECULIARIS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:
CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE

Under the special, or peculiar operation of the Holy Spirit, I now discuss how he works in the elect of God. The Son of God, who was "conceived by the Holy Spirit," was full of the Spirit (πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου) in a very mysterious way (Luke 4:1; 1:35; Isa. 42:1).¹³ The Spirit was the author of the virgin conception of Christ; since the Spirit was the author, the guilt of Adam was not imputed to Christ (Kuyper, 82, 87; see also 88–92). Scripture clearly teaches that in both Christ's humility and exultation, the Spirit was powerfully active (Isa. 61:1, Matt. 3:16, Luke 4:18).¹⁴ Reformed theology explains that when Jesus lived on earth the Spirit of God dwelt in him and was the governing power of his life (Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 436). Along with the subjective emphasis on the Holy Spirit's work in Jesus' life, Reformed theology has highlighted the work of the Spirit in Jesus' objective work, to save his people.

Jesus was "sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond measure," so that he was perfectly furnished to be the mediator and surety of his people (WCF 8.3; see also

7. Kim, 174. Although beyond the scope of this paper, Kim also criticizes Reformed theology for being too individualistic or subjective regarding pneumatology. He suggests that Reformed theology has limited the Spirit's work to people, ignoring his renewing power of the "political and social world" (Ibid., 175). See also Richard Mouw, "Life in the Spirit in an Unjust World" in *The Holy Spirit: Renewing and Empowering Presence* ed. George Vandervelde (Winfield: Wood Lake Books, 1989) 132.

8. Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation* ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004) 420, and *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation* ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 33; see also Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900) 27–28.

9. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 737; see also Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 93.

10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* ed. John T. McNiell, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) I.XIII.14.

11. See also Edwin Palmer, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974) 29–39.

12. See also Calvin, *Institutes* II.II.16, where he clearly noted that the Spirit gives gifts to Christians and non-Christians alike.

13. HC Q/A 35. For more information on the Son and the Spirit, see Ferguson, chapter two.

14. "Though it [the activity of the Holy Spirit] began with the conception, it did not stop there. It continued throughout his [Christ's] entire life, even right into the state of exaltation" (Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006] 292).

HC Q/A 31). Christ also offered himself through the eternal Holy Spirit, resulting in a perfect and final sacrifice (Heb. 9:14).¹⁵ Calvin said that Christ would have come in vain had he not been furnished with the Holy Spirit's power (Calvin, *Institutes*, III.I.2). The Spirit's operation through and in the life of Christ is necessary for salvation itself. Kuyper is worth quoting at length on this.

“... The work of the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption did not begin only at Pentecost, but the same Holy Spirit who in creation animates all life, upholds and qualifies our human nature, and in Israel and the prophets wrought the work of revelation, also prepared the body of Christ, adorned his human nature with gracious gifts, put these gifts into operation, installed Him into his office, led Him into temptation, qualified Him to cast out devils, and finally enabled Him to finish that eternal work of satisfaction whereby our souls are redeemed” (Kuyper, 105-106).

15. Westminster Confession of Faith, 8.5.

16. Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 436. See also the insightful article by Geerhardus Vos, wherein he spoke in great detail about the risen Christ as the life-giving Spirit which he communicates to his people. Geerhardus Vos, “The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* ed. Richard B. Gaffin (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1980) 91-125.

17. Kevin Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005) 194. See also Ferguson, 54, where he calls the Spirit “alter Christus” and “allos parakletos.”

18. Quoted in Vanhoozer, 188, and Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 282.

19. Palmer divided the Spirit's work objectively and subjectively (Palmer, 77). Objectively, the Spirit works outside of sinful humanity in creation, common grace, revelation, and in Christ. Subjectively, the Spirit works in a person's life.

20. See Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 146-153 for a discussion of the Spirit's role in prophecy (spoken word) and Scripture (written word). See also Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 330-336, where he discusses prophecy and special revelation.

21. *Ibid.*, 76; Kuyper also discusses the Apostles and their testimony in several chapters of *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (139-157). He calls the Holy Spirit the *Auctor Primarius* of Scripture (*Ibid.*, 190).

22. Calvin, *Institutes*, III.I.4. See also WCF 14.1 and Kuyper, 78.

23. Calvin, *Institutes*, III.I.3; see also Kuyper, 492.

24. WCF 1.5-6; see also WLC Q/A 4.

25. Herman Bavinck, *Prolegomena* ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 506; Kuyper spends over 400 pages discussing the work of the Spirit in the individual (203-643).

26. Vanhoozer, 198. Vanhoozer also makes the excellent point (which I do not have the space to unpack) that the Spirit guides the church through doctrine—the drama is the doctrine, he argues. “Doctrine,” says Vanhoozer, “is one of the means the Spirit uses to direct the church to abide in the biblical word and to follow the Script into new situations” (*Ibid.*, 106). Furthermore, “the Spirit leads the church not away from but deeper into the biblical word. Indeed, the Spirit-led church is ‘the creature of the Word’” (*Ibid.*, 201).

In other words, the Spirit was active in creation, inscripturation, and the person and work of Christ; he is active in providence and the work of redemption.

After his resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ pours out his Spirit upon the church, which the WCF calls the “sanctifying Spirit of Christ” (WCF 13.3). As he sits at the right hand of the Father, the Spirit dwells in Christ so absolutely that through him Christ communicates himself to his people (Ezek. 39:29, John 3:34).¹⁶ Jesus is now a “life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). The Spirit ministered to Jesus during His earthly work; in his resurrection and ascension he is the one whom the Spirit ministers.¹⁷ “This our churches have always confessed in the Liturgy: ‘The same Spirit which dwelleth in Christ as the Head and in us as His members’” (Kuyper, 110).

“Where the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God,” Irenaeus said so long ago.¹⁸ The special operation of the Spirit is also how he works in God's people, in the church.¹⁹ The Holy Spirit not only gave us God's word (*principium cognoscendi externum*) as he inspired certain people to write it, he also leads us to see the beauty of that word (*principia cognoscendi internum*).²⁰ In Abraham Kuyper's massive volume on pneumatology, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, he starts out by clearly noting that “our sole source of knowledge [about the Holy Spirit] be the Word given us by the Holy Spirit rather than our experience” (Kuyper, 4).

Inspiration has everything to do with the Spirit: it is “the name of that all-comprehensive operation of the Holy Spirit whereby He has bestowed upon the church a complete and infallible Scripture.”²¹ John Calvin called the Holy Spirit the “inner teacher by whose effort the promise of salvation penetrates into our minds.”²² This is what Reformed theology labels the *testimonium Spiritus sancti internum*, how the Spirit is the “hand of God” who leads and enables the church in the truths of the gospel.²³ In the words of the WCF, the “inward work of the Holy Spirit” is “bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.”²⁴

The Holy Spirit has been poured out into the church (Acts 2:17). He speaks to her; he also regenerates her, gives her faith and repentance, and leads her to the truth – he is the internal source of knowledge (John 14:26, Rev. 2:7, 11, etc.).²⁵ In this role “the Spirit forgoes self-promotion in order to concentrate on the ministry of the living and written word,” as well as the incarnate Word.²⁶ “The Spirit is the witness-advocate who testifies to Christ” (Ferguson, 36). The application of redemption depends upon the work of the Holy Spirit. “The application of redemption by the Holy Spirit may in no

respect be turned into the acquisition of redemption, for while the Holy Spirit takes everything from Christ, the application in its field of operation is as necessary and of equally great importance as the acquisition” (Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 218).

“The Reformed conception is that Christ, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, unites men with Himself, endows them with true faith, and thus constitutes the Church as His body, the *communio fidelium* or *sanctorum*” (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 553). Reformed theology has often stressed that there is no church of Christ without the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit sets apart the church from the world (Berkhof, *ibid.*). This Spirit was at work even in the church in the Old Testament (Kuyper, 52–55). Reformed Christians confess that there is “one *holy* catholic church” because she is sanctified by the Spirit.²⁷ Jesus rules over his church with the Holy Spirit: he “governs ... hearts by his Word and Spirit;” this governance has to do with the officers in Christ’s church (WCF 8.8; cf. HC Q/A 51 & 54). The Spirit also “is the active presence of Christ, enabling and empowering performances that participate in the prior performance of the Word made flesh” (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 583; Vanhoozer, 189).

The word and sacraments have everything to do with the Holy Spirit. Reformed theologians and confessions emphasize the preached word because God has promised to use preaching to bring his elect to faith (See Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 610). In fact, “simply the preaching of the Word by itself is not sufficient;” the Spirit must accompany the Word.²⁸ The elect “are effectually called to faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season” (WCF 3.6; cf 7.3). The Spirit and Word have everything to do with calling and regeneration, as well as conversion, repentance, faith, justification, adoption.²⁹ In Bavinck’s terms, for example, justification by faith is not simply a “transcendent acquittal” of a sinner in the divine courtroom, but “is an act that passes from one sphere to another:” the Spirit carries it into the consciousness of believers (Bavinck, *Ibid.*, 205, 225).

Where does this justifying faith come from? “The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments,” the Heidelberg Catechism notes.³⁰ The efficacy of the sacraments depends upon the Holy Spirit (WCF 27.3). The Holy Spirit uses the sacraments to assure Christians that our salvation stands in Christ alone (HC Q/A 67).

Concerning eschatology, the Spirit works *generally*, as noted above. He also works *individually*. The Holy Spirit will one day raise our bodies in the same way

that Jesus was raised (1 Cor. 15:21–23).³¹ His resurrection in the Spirit is a sure pledge of our resurrection in the Spirit (HC Q/A 45). “The Holy Spirit shall raise us immediately by Himself,” Zacharius Ursinus stated succinctly (Ursinus, 317). *I believe in the resurrection of the body* is the confession that the Spirit will raise us up on the last day. In the language of the *ordo salutis*, the Spirit works our glorification.

So far, I have highlighted the Spirit’s work in creation, anthropology, Christology, Scripture, ecclesiology, and eschatology. I showed how the Spirit and his work are woven throughout Reformed dogmatics, as is evident with Berkhof, Bavinck, Kuyper, and others. Indeed, there may not be page after page written about the Holy Spirit, but it is evident that the Spirit is an integral part of every head of doctrine. Kim’s critique is simply incorrect; the Spirit does much more than play the part of a soteriological assistant. In examining Reformed theology’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit, I have noted how his person and work is also woven throughout both the HC and the WCF. So Hendrikus Berkhof’s accusation that “the Spirit is rarely mentioned in most of the confessions,” is inaccurate.³² The person and work of God the Holy Spirit is one of the golden threads that holds Reformed theology, the HC, and the WCF together.

In the economic roles of the Trinity, as Reformed theology has described, the Spirit’s primary role is sanctification.³³ Most certainly, he is also very active in calling, regeneration, conversion, faith, repentance, justification, adoption and glorification, as Bavinck

27. Zacharius Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, (Phillipsburg: P&R, n.d.) 289.

28. Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 43; see also his section subtitled “The Spirit, the Word, and Power” in *Ibid.*, 455–460.

29. See Kuyper, 315–321; 338–349. Bavinck shines here: “By the Spirit as pledge and guarantee, they [Christians] are sealed for the day of redemption and kept for their heavenly inheritance as this is kept for them. By that Spirit, they are continually led, assured of the love that God has for them and of their adoption, and are now already the beneficiaries of peace, joy, and eternal life” (*Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 227). Also notable is the fact that Bavinck briefly discussed the work of the Spirit in the perseverance of the saints (*Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 270).

30. HC Q/A 65; see also Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 223.

31. See also WLC 87.

32. “It is true, beyond a doubt, that pneumatology is a neglected field of systematic theology ... the Spirit is rarely mentioned in most of the confessions.” Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964) 10. However, even a quick count of the HC shows that the Holy Spirit is mentioned nearly 40 times, not including the places where his work is implied or the proof-texts. The WCF references the Holy Spirit nearly 50 times.

33. Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 320; see also Ferguson, 56.

pointed out.³⁴ Yet sanctification is an essential and proper work of the Spirit. Q/A 24 of the HC divides the Apostles' Creed into three parts: the Father and creation, the Son and redemption, and the Holy Spirit and sanctification.³⁵ Ursinus, after explaining the person of the Holy Spirit, described his work: "The office of the Holy Ghost is to produce sanctification in the people of God" (Ursinus, 277). 2 Thessalonians 2:13 speaks of sanctification "by the Spirit" (ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος). The genitive πνεύματος means that the Spirit is the *causa efficiens* of sanctification or the originating agent of our sanctification.³⁶ Kuyper summarized it so well: "Thus to lead the creature to its destiny, to cause it to develop according to its nature, to make it perfect, is the proper work of the Holy Spirit" (Kuyper, 21).

THE OPERATIO MANIFESTA OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: GOOD WORKS

I end up here at the very point at which Reformed theology is primarily critiqued, that it overemphasizes the Spirit's role in the application of salvation rather than in the *charismata*, the gifts of the Holy Spirit.³⁷ Kim describes Reformed pneumatology as being weak on "individual-spontaneous aspects" of the Spirit's work (Kim, 174). However, Kim and other critics have not fully understood Reformed pneumatology. Kuyper went so far as to say that the work of the Spirit is more

34. Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 595. Calvin called faith the "principle work of the Holy Spirit" (Calvin, *Institutes*, III.I.2).

35. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 424, and Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 15.

36. Charles Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians* (London: Roberts & Green, 1880) 10, 120. Ellicott wrote that sanctification is "wrought by, and effected by the Spirit" (Ibid., 120). He called the genitive in 2 Thessalonians 2.13 the *causa efficiens* (Ibid.). The genitive might alternatively be what Daniel Wallace labels a "genitive of production." Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, 104–105).

37. The Reformers did not sufficiently "grapple with the gifts (*charismata*) of the Holy Spirit" (Williams, 39). See also Donald Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 107.

38. "Good works, although imperfectly done by Christians, are only those which come from true faith, follow God's law and are for his glory" (HC Q/A 91; cf. WCF 16.3).

39. Ibid., and WCF, 16.3, 5. "No truly good and perfect human being is even conceivable apart from the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 558).

40. The focus in Pentecostalism is "not the Spirit's work in salvation, or even in sanctification, but in the much-needed empowerment of Christian life" (Williams, 50).

41. Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 504; Kuyper made the excellent point that the Triune God is the fountain of all love. "God is Love" means "The triune God is love" (Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 513; see also 522–542).

powerful and glorious in re-creation (read: sanctification) than in creation (Kuyper, 50). "... Sanctification is ethical: it is continued throughout the whole of life and, by the renewing activity of the Holy Spirit, gradually makes the righteousness of Christ our personal ethical possession" (Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 249).

Reformed theology teaches that the Spirit is the enabler of truly good works.³⁸ That is, "Good works are possible only by the grace and the assistance of the Holy Spirit," who perpetually and constantly influences and directs God's people, Ursinus wrote (Ursinus, 479). Ursinus continued: the gifts of the Spirit are daily increased and confirmed; insofar as our works are good they are from the Spirit.³⁹ The WCF says that as far as our works are indeed good, "they proceed from His Spirit;" actually, the Christian's ability to do good works is "not at all" of themselves, "but wholly from the Spirit of Christ" (WCF 16.3, 5). Or, as Kuyper put it, "... the content and entire form of every good work is not of man, but of the Holy Ghost, so that when it is finished we owe thanks to God, and not He to us" (Kuyper, 500).

The Holy Spirit who wrote and used the Scriptures as an "instrument" to work upon our hearts also uses those Scriptures to qualify and equip the Christian for every good work (Kuyper, 59, 489). We share in Christ's anointing of the Spirit to confess his name, present ourselves as living sacrifices, and to fight against sin, the HC teaches (HC Q/A 32).

The Spirit influences and works in God's people in such a way that they perform good works, works that are pleasing to God and beneficial to our neighbors. While some charismatics, such as Rodman Williams, separate sanctification and spiritual gifts, Reformed theology puts the latter under the former.⁴⁰ Spiritual gifts are part of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in the mortification of sin and the strengthening of the new man to practice true holiness more and more. Among all spiritual gifts, Bavinck said explaining Paul's words, love is the most excellent gift (1 Cor. 13).⁴¹ Hand in hand with the love of God shed in our hearts by the Spirit is the communion of the saints—both love and communion of the saints are gifts and benefits of the Spirit (Kuyper, 548–549).

What Reformed theology declares is that the Spirit's work is not exclusively or mainly restricted to the giving of extraordinary gifts or powers (Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 505). In fact, "the prayer for another outpouring or baptism of the Holy Spirit is incorrect and empty of real meaning. Such prayer actually denies the Pentecost miracle. For He that came and abides with us

can no more come to us” (Kuyper, 127). Kuyper gave a wonderful illustration how Pentecost was the initial rush of water into a city that just received running water for the first time. All subsequent work of the Spirit comes through that plumbing, so to speak, as when a new house is built in a city that already has running water—an entirely new plumbing system need not be laid.⁴²

The emphasis in Reformed theology lies on the day-by-day working of the Holy Spirit in the renewal—or in Kuyper’s term, re-creation—of God’s people. The Spirit’s work in the Christian life is sanctification; it is visible in the “ordinary” lives of “ordinary” Christians, including such a seemingly weak thing as prayer (Kuyper, 618–622). Reformed theology follows Luther by striving not after a theology of glory—healings, tongues, miracles—but a theology of the cross. The center of gravity for the Reformed understanding of gifts is the “regular activities of a spiritual and moral nature” (Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 504; emphasis mine).

Being filled with the Spirit is evident by a Christian’s actions. The Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to obey God freely and cheerfully (WCF 19.7). Paul describes someone who is Spirit filled as one who sings psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, one who gives thanks to God the Father in the name of Christ, and those who humbly submit to each other (Eph. 5: 18–19).⁴³ Christian prayer is “by the help of the Spirit” (WCF 21.3). The power (δύναμις) of the Holy Spirit results in the abundance of hope (Rom. 15:13).⁴⁴

Paul’s descriptions above in Ephesians and Romans are not spectacular displays of the Holy Spirit; they are quite insignificant to the eyes of the world—and at times, even to the church! The Spirit’s sanctifying work is seen primarily in a Christian humbly obeying the Lord rather than getting caught up in some supernatural trance-like state of ecstasy. While it may sound too ordinary or not spectacular enough, a Spirit-led life is a life patterned after that of our Savior’s obedience to God while suffering here on earth.⁴⁵

If one wants to see someone who is Spirit-filled, he or she need only look at the Christian who helps his neighbor move heavy furniture onto a moving van. If one wants to see someone who is baptized with the Spirit, he or she can look at a Christian mother and wife go from changing diapers to singing “The Lord’s My Shepherd” with her children. If someone wants to see a Spirit-slain church, he or she should look at a church who gathers at a needy Christian’s house to clean his or her yard. Precisely stated, to see the Holy Spirit mightily at work, consider the sanctification—the mortification and vivification—of God’s people.

CONCLUSION

I share one author’s sentiment: “My biggest difficulty with the Pentecostal-charismatic movement ... is not that it stresses the work of the Holy Spirit too much, but too little!”⁴⁶ Even Kim agrees: “Reformed pneumatology has a wider perspective on the work of the Holy Spirit [than does Pentecostal pneumatology]. It knows the work of the Holy Spirit not only in the spiritual life of individuals, but also in the church, sacraments, Scripture and preaching, human history, and creation” (Kim, 174). These statements are true; pneumatology is no subordinate part of Reformed theology.

Although Reformed theology is accused of putting the Holy Spirit in a box or reducing him to a sub-charismatic category, the charismatic types are the ones who actually have a deficient view of the Spirit. The charismatic conception of the Holy Spirit is reductionistic although it tries to highlight his work. For them, the Spirit is simply a supra-ordinary energizing power at work in the Christian life. For Reformed theology, however, the Spirit supports and pervades every head of doctrine. Reformed systematics would make no sense at any point without a robust pneumatology. The ordinary working of the Spirit in Christians is a part of doctrine and life over which one must not simply glance. In only glancing, one not only trivializes the Spirit’s continual work, he or she also demotes the good works of Christians into something much less desirable than some higher blessing. ■

42. Kuyper, 123–127. Kuyper also argued for cessationism by noting the fact that tongue speaking in the apostolic church first appeared perfect and later on in “a weaker measure” (Ibid., 135). At Pentecost, the languages were understood by a large number of different nationalities; however, subsequently tongues were understood by only a few and required an interpreter.

43. Though not all commentators agree, it is quite possible to view the five present participles in Eph. 5:19–21 as parallel (attendant circumstance) participles. They share the characteristic of the head verb πληροῦσθε (5:18b), namely, an imperatival force. Paul says, “Be filled with the Spirit, speak ... sing ... praise ... give thanks ... [and] submit.” Since the lead noun has to do with the Spirit, so do the participles. Simply put, speaking, singing, praising, giving thanks, and submitting are all characteristics of a Spirit-filled life.

44. The preposition ἐν which comes before the phrase δύναμις πνεύματος ἁγίου can be used to “designate a close personal relation in which the referent of the ἐν-term is viewed as the controlling influence” (BDAG, s.v. ἐν). This use is appropriate in the context of Romans 15:13.

45. Ferguson, 170. Donald Bloesch, however, questions the theology of the cross when it comes to the Spirit’s work in the Christian life (Bloesch, 340–1).

46. I. John Hesselink, “The Charismatic Movement and the Reformed Tradition” in *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 382.