

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. The Baptism of the Spirit in Charismatic Christianity	7
2. The Baptism of the Spirit Misunderstood	21
3. The Baptism of the Spirit in the Gospels	39
4. The Baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost and at Samaria	59
5. The Baptism of the Spirit at Caesarea and Ephesus	81
6. The Baptism of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians	95
7. The Baptism of the Spirit in Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Peter	117
8. The Baptism of the Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit	133
9. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Power	147
Notes	173
Bibliography	181

1

The Baptism of the Spirit in Charismatic Christianity

ONE OF THE MOST NOTEWORTHY features of twentieth-century Christianity is the rise of a strong charismatic movement within the church. Appearing in various forms, this species of revivalism has one common basic element. It highlights the baptism of the Spirit, which it construes as an experience of power subsequent to salvation and maintains the evidence of this experience is speaking in tongues.¹

By *tongues*, glossolalists usually mean genuine languages never learned but supernaturally spoken. Some, however, hold to the tenuous theory of an unknown tongue. This is imagined to be a special ecstatic utterance of the Spirit, not translatable and not understandable by men.² In any case, aside from the nature of the phenomenon, such a manifestation is called a charisma (from the Greek *charisma*, a gift), denoting an extraordinary power possessed by some of the early Christians.

Hence the term *charismatic* refers to such charismata as miracles of healing and supernatural utterance in languages. Such charismata, of course, took place in the apostolic church. Present-day charismatic revivalism holds that the same manifestations of the Spirit that appeared in the first century ought to be manifested today.³

Moreover, charismatic Christians contend that such manifestations do take place today when believers "receive the baptism of the Spirit" and the power it professedly brings with it.⁴

THE RISE OF CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY

1. *Pentecostalism has its roots in early Methodism of the eighteenth century and the revivalism of Charles G. Finney in the first half of the nineteenth century.*

“Eighteenth-century Methodism,” as Frederick Dale Bruner correctly points out, “is the mother of the nineteenth-century American holiness movement which, in turn, bore twentieth-century Pentecostalism.”⁵ John Wesley taught a definite second work of grace distinct from the remission of sins.⁶ By laying special emphasis upon such an instantaneous experience of sanctification subsequent to regeneration, Wesley preventively prepared the way for the Pentecostal concept of a crisis and conscious experience of “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” following conversion.

American revivalism of the nineteenth century, particularly as exemplified in the doctrine and methods of Charles G. Finney (1792-1876), exerted a wide influence in shaping American Christianity and in turn became the major historical bridge between early Methodism and modern Pentecostalism.

Finney’s theology embraced an experience subsequent to conversion which he styled “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”⁷ His one-volume systematic theology is widely used today in Pentecostal circles and considered standard by the average Pentecostal evangelist and pastor.

However, even more influential on American Christianity than Finney’s theology were his revival methods. These were purposely emotional and geared to high excitement. Finney justified his approach to bringing people to a spiritual crisis by the belief that “men are so sluggish.” “There are so many things to lead their minds off from religion and to oppose the influence of the gospel that it is necessary to raise an excitement among them till the tide rises so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles.”⁸

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Finney’s theology—which was essentially Methodism—his highly emotional revivalism had been transformed from a minority to a majority faith, to become, as McGloughlin points out, “the national re-

ligion of the United States.”⁹ This meant that Finney’s teaching of a spiritual baptism subsequent to conversion and his encouragement of high emotionalism in revival methodology had become prominent features of American Christianity. Both of these elements were later to find a permanent place in the Pentecostal movement of the twentieth century.

2. *Pentecostalism developed out of the holiness movement of the latter half of the nineteenth century.*

This second-blessing holiness phenomenon was largely Methodist—led by Methodists and appealing mainly to Methodists.¹⁰ It was the outgrowth of the dissatisfaction of many within Methodist churches with the worldliness of the church as a whole and the lack of adherence to the Wesleyan doctrine of perfection.

The holiness movement, in loyalty to its Wesleyan heritage, found its theological center in a second experience after conversion. This was often dubbed by different terms: a pure heart, sanctification, perfection, or perfect love. But by whatever terminology it was called, it assured the so-called subsequent experience an importance it was later to assume in Pentecostalism.

In the holiness movement the phrase *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*—which was destined to have such wide significance in Pentecostal teaching—as the Pentecostal historian Kendrick confesses, “was popularized as the name for the experience of sanctification or ‘second blessing.’ All who came under the Holiness ministry became familiar with ‘spiritual baptism.’”¹¹

One of the chief protagonists of the holiness movement, W. E. Boardman, succinctly epitomized broad holiness principles as they later came to undergird distinctive Pentecostal tenets, when he wrote, “There is a *second experience* distinct from the first—sometimes years after the first—a *second conversion*, as it is called.”¹² By the first experience Boardman meant justification before God. By the second, he meant sanctification before men through which the sinner is made “holy in heart and life.”¹³

Coming into existence in America, the second-blessing holi-

ness concept of Christianity spread to England and Germany in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It furnished the spiritual soil out of which the Pentecostal movement was born around the turn of the century. Charles Conn, the Pentecostal historian, calls the Pentecostal movement “an extension of the holiness revival” and declares that “most of those who received the Holy Ghost baptism during the earliest years were either those who were connected with the holiness revival or held holiness views.”¹⁴

3. Pentecostalism gained support and the cloak of doctrinal respectability as the result of the unprecise teaching concerning the Holy Spirit of a number of prominent Evangelicals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

These widely respected leaders, apparently influenced by the nineteenth-century holiness theology with its lack of doctrinal precision, taught the later distinctively Pentecostal tenet of the baptism of the Spirit as an experience subsequent to salvation. Foremost among these conservatives were F. B. Meyer, A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson, Andrew Murray, and most significant of all, R. A. Torrey.

Torrey may be said to be the one non-Pentecostal leader who, after Wesley and Finney, was the most influential in the prehistory of Pentecostalism. He gave the greatest impetus to the establishment of the movement as doctrinally respectable and experientially sound.

Although all of the evangelicals contemporary with the rise of Pentecostalism, who taught second-experience theology, constitute a kind of theological reservoir from which Pentecostals have drawn heavily to establish their central tenet of the baptism of the Spirit, none is quoted more frequently or more approvingly than R. A. Torrey, a non-Pentecostal.

The statement of Torrey most often quoted by Pentecostals to bolster their position on the baptism of the Spirit claims that regeneration by the Spirit and baptism with the Spirit do not occur at the same time. “The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an operation of the Holy Spirit distinct from and subsequent and additional to His regenerating work.”¹⁵

Torrey's contention, much quoted by Pentecostals, continues by declaring, "A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and still not be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . Every true believer has the Holy Spirit. But not every believer has the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, though every believer . . . may have."¹⁶

It is ironical, however, that what Pentecostal writers quote most frequently from Torrey represents an otherwise sound and incisive thinker and Bible teacher at his worst and not at his best—at his weakest and not at his strongest point. What is even more lamentable is that the halo of a great teacher's reputation for evangelical loyalty should be prostituted to invest a particular error he happened to fall into with the aura of truth and sound doctrine.

4. Pentecostalism enjoyed great growth and expansion in the first half of the twentieth century.

What came to be known as Pentecostalism arose among Christians, who according to Pentecostals were hungry for something more than they were getting in the average church. This "more" came in the form of speaking in tongues. When this phenomenon was connected with the conviction that speaking in another language was the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the germinal idea of Pentecostal conviction was born. This occurred around the beginning of the twentieth century.

An outburst of tongues took place in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, then sporadically around the world. In 1906 there was a startling manifestation of the charism at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. T. B. Barrett, a Norwegian Methodist pastor, who at the time was visiting America, received his "baptism" and returned to establish Pentecostalism in Norway, then in England, Germany, and Sweden.¹⁷

During the following years, Pentecostalism spread widely. Many groups came into being, some without the Pentecostal name, such as the Churches of God, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and the Catholic Apostolic Church. Others bore the Pentecostal name.

The largest and finest of Pentecostal groups that developed in the United States is the Assemblies of God. It was formed at Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914 by the merger of several Church of God congregations. In 1916 its headquarters was moved to Springfield, Missouri, where it has established a training school and a publishing house. "This is the only Pentecostal body," according to Elmer Clark, "which does not insist that sanctification is accomplished by a distinct work of grace subsequent to justification."¹⁸ By 1950 it had grown to a sizeable denomination with some five thousand churches and about a quarter-million adherents.

Another group is the Pentecostal Holiness Church. It was organized at Clinton, North Carolina, in 1899. In 1911 it merged with the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church and has its headquarters at Franklin Springs, Georgia. By the middle of the century it had grown to more than 780 congregations and 26,000 members.

The United Pentecostal Church was formed in 1945 as the result of a merger with two other Pentecostal bodies. By mid-century it had approximately 1,000 churches and about 20,000 members.

Other Pentecostal bodies include the International Pentecostal Assemblies, the Pentecostal Church of God in America, the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, Calvary Pentecostal Church, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

5. Neo-Pentecostalism since its appearance about the middle of the twentieth century has been gradually assuming the designation of "The Charismatic Movement."

In the early 1950's a new development began taking place in Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and tongues began to overleap the old-line Pentecostal denominations and to spread to non-Pentecostal churches, embracing practically all Protestant groups, and later invading even the Catholic church.¹⁹

These converts to Pentecostalism outside Pentecostal churches have been frequently called Neo-Pentecostals. The Neo-Pente-

costal movement, moreover, has gradually been assuming the designation *charismatic*.²⁰ The usage, although popular, is misleading. It seems to infer that non-Pentecostal churches which do not practice the extraordinary or spectacular gifts featured in Pentecostal meetings (like speaking in tongues and healing) are not charismatic.

New Testament charismata (gift manifestations of the Holy Spirit) embrace far more gifts than just the spectacular ones. As Anthony Hoekema aptly observes: "Every Christian has gifts which are important for the body of believers. The term *charismatic*, therefore, ought not to be applied only to the Pentecostal or Neo-Pentecostal movement; the entire church of Jesus Christ is charismatic."²¹

The term *charismatic*, moreover, is misleading also in that while it avoids the connotations of emotional excitement and sometimes even frenzy occasionally connected with old-line Pentecostalism, it still stands for the same experience of so-called Spirit baptism and evidential tongues-speaking.

The rise of Neo-Pentecostalism can be traced to a number of causes. Chief among these is the spiritual deadness of the churches. Appealing to the doctrinally and spiritually malnourished among both Protestant and Catholic clergy and laity, Neo-Pentecostalism has promised a way to joy and power in life and service. Neo-Pentecostal Christians, like their older Pentecostal brothers, contend that this renewal is found in the long-neglected but now discovered and experienced baptism of the Holy Spirit with charismatic evidence of glossolalia.²²

Where the church comprehends the glorious simplicity of the gospel and the completeness and fulness of the salvation it brings the moment faith is exercised in Christ Jesus the Saviour, the appeal of Neo-Pentecostalism will be nil. When the Word of God is given preeminence and sound Bible doctrine, especially in the sphere of the theology of the Holy Spirit, is stressed and made the test of experience, the claims of charismatic Christianity will be rejected.²³

But wherever a believer fails to see his position in Christ and loses sight of the complete adequacy of his resources in that position, Pentecostalism will appear on the scene with large

advantages. But when Christians see what they are in Christ and begin to claim the glory of that position in their daily experience, the appeal of Pentecostalism and its doctrine of a second experience will vanish.

In the place of a second experience will come an unbroken chain of thrilling experiences that will continue and grow in power and intensity as faith is reposed in the believer's position in Christ and step by step the blessing of that position is appropriated by faith. Then and *only then* will the Saviour's words be realized. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water'" (Jn 7:38, NASV).

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT IN CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY

1. *The belief that the baptism of the Spirit is subsequent to salvation is the basic tenet of charismatic Christianity.*

The Pentecostal concept of the baptism of the Spirit centers in the experience of the Holy Spirit. This is specifically a post-regeneration *filling* of the Spirit, evidenced initially by charismatic tongues-speaking and made possible by meeting the conditions of faith and complete obedience.

It is quite obvious to the careful Bible student that this view of the baptism of the Spirit is based upon experience rather than doctrine. This does not mean that Pentecostals do not have a doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit. It does mean, however, that their doctrine on this vital subject, although based upon the Bible, is not *soundly* biblical.

The reason is quite obvious. Pentecostals build their doctrine of Spirit-baptism only upon part of the relevant Biblical evidence rather than upon the full testimony of Scripture. Moreover, their interpretation of this partial evidence, almost exclusively the book of Acts, is faulty because it erects its teaching on these historical and experiential portions, at the same time construing them in a time vacuum and failing to reconcile their conclusions with the great doctrinal epistles of the New Testament.²⁴

Doctrinal ambiguity concerning the baptism of the Spirit, as has been noted in previous pages, has been inherited by charismatic Christianity from its forbears in early Wesleyan second-experience perfectionism, Finney's theology of revivalism, the second-blessing teaching of the holiness movement, and the Pentecostal movement itself, born from these preceding movements, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Pentecostals frequently use the ambiguous term *full gospel*.^{*} Under this designation they include a number of doctrines and experiences, such as conversion, sanctification, evangelism, healing, and the second advent. But no other doctrine or experience has the unanimous voice or cohesive power in Pentecostalism as the so-called baptism of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2:4.

Pentecostals themselves confess that the only area of theology in which Pentecostalism is distinctive is pneumatology, and that only in one particular phase of the Spirit's work. Pentecostals hold that subsequent to conversion there is a spiritual baptism of power, evidenced by glossolalia, as at Pentecost.²⁵ This is the criterion that differentiates Pentecostals from all other evangelical, fundamental, and holiness groups.²⁶

By the literature and testimony of Pentecostalism, it is patent that the baptism of the Spirit and the resultant charismata, notably tongues, constitute the Pentecostal distinctive. Doctrines and experiences outside this thematic center are peripheral and for all practical purposes undeveloped in Pentecostalism.

2. Charismatic Christianity's basic tenet of a post-conversion baptism of the Spirit requires subscribing to two spiritual baptisms.

This is inevitable because the clear teaching of the apostle Paul is that *every* believer, the moment he is saved, is baptized

^{*}This usage is unhappy inasmuch as there is only one true gospel. Any other gospel is a false gospel (Gal 1:6-9). The gospel does not admit of the epithet "full" or "non-full," but only true or false. Moreover, the true gospel brings salvation, which is always "full," never partial or piecemeal and identical in content for all believers. Hence it is a common salvation, based on what Christ has done for us and what we are in Him, not what we have done for God or are in ourselves.

into Christ—"in the sphere of" (locative *en*) or "by" the Spirit as instrument or agency (1 Co 12:13). Hence baptism *in the sphere* of the Spirit is Spirit-baptism, whether one construes the Greek preposition *en* as locative or instrumental.

In the face of this plain declaration concerning Spirit baptism, charismatic theology is forced to posit *two* spiritual baptisms. It declares that while every Christian has been baptized into Christ, not every Christian has yet been baptized *by Christ* (as agent) *in* the Spirit as an element.

In other words the charismatic belief is that while the Spirit has baptized every believer into Christ (conversion), Christ has not yet baptized every believer into the Spirit (Pentecost baptism).²⁷

In the Pentecostal position it is plain that two spiritual baptisms are subscribed to—one into Christ at regeneration, one into the Holy Spirit as a subsequent experience. This contention, however, must be made in contradiction of the apostle Paul's clear declaration that there is only *one spiritual* baptism for this age (Eph 4:5), and that this is the baptism that places *all* believers in Christ, and hence constitutes not a second experience for some believers, but an inseparable part of salvation enjoyed by *all* believers (1 Co 12:13)!

In addition, in construing the baptism of the Spirit as a second experience after salvation, Pentecostals must face not only the complete absence of any evidence in the New Testament epistles to support such a second spiritual baptism, but the overwhelming evidence of the doctrinal portions against it.

More serious still, the Pentecostal interpretation of the book of Acts, from which Pentecostals almost completely draw their second-experience view of Spirit-baptism, is strongly suspect for a number of reasons. In the first place it fails to take into account the nondoctrinal and purely historical and experiential nature of the book of Acts. Moreover, it interprets the pivotal passages allegedly teaching a second spiritual baptism (Ac 2:4; 8:14-16; 10:34-36; 19:1-7) in a *time vacuum*, failing to see the inaugural features of a new age being intro-

duced and to differentiate these from the noninaugural features once the age was established.

In the third place the Pentecostal interpretation of Acts is made also in a theological and doctrinal vacuum as well as a time vacuum. A second spiritual baptism after regeneration simply does not square with the rest of the Word of God, sound historical evangelical theology or the witness of Church history.

3. The belief that speaking in a supernatural language is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit is the unique emphasis of charismatic Christianity.

As the Pentecostalist Donald Gee declares, "The distinctive doctrine of the Pentecostal churches is that speaking with tongues is the 'initial evidence' of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This article of belief is now incorporated in the official doctrinal schedules of practically all Pentecostal denominations."²⁸

Pentecostalism inherited the idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a critically important spiritual experience beyond regeneration from classic Methodism, Finney revivalism, and the holiness movement. Moreover, this conviction it shares with many in conservative evangelicalism. The unique feature of Pentecostalism is the claim that speaking in tongues as at Pentecost is the initial evidence of this spiritual baptism. This distinguishes its proponents as Pentecostal. It is not far amiss to say that the idea of combining tongues with the holiness idea of the baptism of the Spirit was the catalyst that generated the Pentecostal movement.

In tongues-speaking, old-line Pentecostalism felt it had found an objective criterion to remove the ambiguity of feeling and the subjective evidence Wesley and his holiness followers had relied upon to give assurance they had received the second blessing or perfection experience they advocated.

But the question may be asked, What about the attitude of Neo-Pentecostals toward the old-line Pentecostal claim that tongues is the indispensable evidence of having received "the

baptism of the Spirit"? The answer is that some do continue to make the claim. Howard M. Ervin, a recent Neo-Pentecostal writer, makes tongues the "external and indubitable proof" of Spirit-baptism.²⁹

Other Neo-Pentecostals, however, do not insist that speaking in tongues is the indispensable sign and that one may receive this baptism apart from actual glossalalic manifestation.³⁰ Yet even those in the latter category regard speaking with tongues as highly desirable evidence of Spirit baptism, giving it "an objectivity" that has "a definite value for one's continued walk in the Spirit."³¹ Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan are "convinced that as far as the Charismatic movement is concerned, everyone touched by it is meant to pray in tongues, that in fact, the gift of tongues is always given by the Lord as he renews the life of the Spirit."³² These same writers declare tongues to be "a normal and usual result of the baptism in the Holy Spirit" from Pentecost onward and urge believers to pray for and expect the manifestation.³³

4. The belief prevails in charismatic Christianity that certain conditions must precede the baptism of the Spirit.

Conversion or regeneration is posited as the indispensable pre-condition for the Penecostal baptism, for it is considered a second experience after salvation. Obedience must also be exercised, to be followed by faith. The faith which Pentecostalism requires is apparently not identical with saving faith in Christ, but sanctifying faith directed toward the Holy Spirit.

The confusion that prevails in Pentecostalism concerning conditions for Spirit-baptism is the result of confounding the baptism of the Spirit with the filling of the Spirit. Actually the baptism of the Spirit is not a second experience after salvation at all but a vital and inseparable part of salvation—the result of simple faith in Christ's redemptive grace—a position before God rather than an experience. The experience of that position of being "in Christ" as a result of the Spirit's work in baptism is the filling of the Spirit.

It is the filling of the Spirit, based upon positional fullness

secured by our great salvation, that is to be a continuous and ever-expanding experience of the Christian life. This experience of the filling of the Spirit, moreover, is *on the same basis* of simple faith as salvation itself. It could not be otherwise because it is a vital and inseparable part of that salvation, *not* something in addition to it.

So-called conditions for the experience of the infilling (such as separation from sin, surrender to God's will, etc.) are not separate conditions at all. They are rather *manifestations* of enlightened faith, which reckons on what we are in Christ and what He had done for us. This contrasts with unenlightened faith which trusts rather in what we can do for Christ and what we are in ourselves.

It is the widespread confusion occasioned by the charismatic movements of our times that calls for clarification of what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is and does in the life of the believer. Only a careful study of the Scripture witness on this subject can remove the scales from men's eyes that are causing them to wander in the quagmire of experiences not really authenticated by the Word of God. Only a return to what the Bible teaches concerning the baptism of the Spirit can restore the vision of God's people to comprehend what they are in Christ and how big their salvation in Him is.

Only this vision will rescue believers from the snare of seeking some experience outside of and in addition to that "so great salvation" (Heb 2:3), purchased by our Saviour at Calvary and inwrought in the believer by the Holy Spirit the moment faith is reposed in Christ's completed redemptive work. To be safeguarded in doctrine as well as life, every believer must see that each infilling of the Spirit, the second as well as each succeeding infilling, is not something in addition to salvation, but a glorious realization and appropriation of the great gift of salvation itself.³⁴