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“THE BLESSED SPIRIT”: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PNEUMATOLOGY
OF BENJAMIN BEDDOME AS AN EARLY EVANGELICAL

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“THE BLESSED SPIRIT”: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PNEUMATOLOGY
OF BENJAMIN BEDDOME AS AN EARLY EVANGELICAL

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To Denise, my loving wife, life-long friend and companion, whose indispensable encouragement, prayers, willing sacrifice, and unceasing support over many months and long hours, has helped make this work a reality. Soli Deo gloria!

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PREFACE

The history and the formative theology of modern Britain were virtually uncharted territories for me at the outset of my doctoral studies, yet, over the past four years, they have become a rich and trustworthy well of truth from which I can draw. Giants of the faith, previously unknown to me, have become my friends and mentors. I have been particularly blessed by those who endured unbelievable hardship and suffering, yet trusted their God and faithfully persevered to the end.

Writing this dissertation has indeed been a family affair. From the outset, my wonderful wife, my three daughters, my two sons-in-law, and my grandchildren have faithfully backed me in prayer and provided moral support. Throughout, they constantly reminded me that I wasn't on this journey alone; we were all in it together. I could not have run the academic race nor had the endurance to cross the finish line without them.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to David Puckett, who first piqued my interest in modern British history. Much appreciation also goes to Shawn Wright, who introduced me to the delicacies of Puritan literature. With a grateful heart, I offer my thanks to my dear friend and pastor, David Palmer, whose many prayers and unfailing words of encouragement accompanied me through the writing process. Finally, I am deeply indebted to my doctoral supervisor, Michael Haykin, whose rich seminars were just as inspiring and edifying as they were historical.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Status Quaestionis

Although numerous authors have mentioned Benjamin Beddome¹ in passing, particularly in the area of hymnology, surprisingly few scholars have done extensive research into his life, his accomplishments, and his theology. Portraits exist for a number of Beddome's famous or even notorious contemporaries, but no one has any idea what he looked like, as there are no images of him available. Thus, despite his significant work, he has remained a rather obscure historical personality until recently.

Michael A. G. Haykin, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, has not only raised the interest and awareness of Beddome among his students, but has produced a plethora of articles and essays on Beddome's life and works. One very informative essay on his life and ministry is entitled "Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795)," found in volume 1 of the two-volume work *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, as well as a brief "British Particular Baptist Biography," which serves as an introduction to the same book.² Haykin's biographical information is helpful and includes an excellent summary of the

¹Born in 1717, Benjamin Beddome was a Particular Baptist pastor and hymn-writer, who faithfully served the Baptist congregation at Burton-on-the-Water for 55 years and provided able leadership in the Midland Baptist Association. A proponent of evangelical Calvinism, he personally experienced one of the many eighteenth-century revivals that were sweeping Great Britain at the outset of the Evangelical Revival. In addition to over 800 hymns and multiple volumes of sermons, which were published posthumously, Beddome crafted his own expanded version of the *Baptist Catechism* and impacted a number of significant Particular Baptist leaders before his death at the age of 78 in 1795.

²See Michael Haykin, "British Particular Baptist Biography" and "Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795)," in *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 15–19, 167–82.

content and nature of Beddome's *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism* (1752). The section "Further Reading" is most beneficial, as it includes an expanded bibliography of available authoritative sources.

Haykin has kindly made several other articles available to his students, including a biographical sketch entitled "Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795) of Bourton-on-the-Water," his written lecture "The Eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival," his essay entitled "Signs and Wonders: Some Evangelical Perspectives from the Eighteenth Century," an article entitled "Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795), His Life and Hymns," which was published in *Pulpit and People: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Baptist Life and Thought* by John H. Y. Briggs and published by Paternoster in 2009, an essay entitled "Benjamin Beddome and the Bible," a copy of the contents of Beddome's personal library, which was researched in 1999, and two essays on Beddome's Trinitarian beliefs.³ In both of the latter essays, there is a comprehensive list of sources available for further research and study.

Further back, Thomas Brooks' *Pictures of the Past: The History of the Baptist Church, Bourton-on-the-Water*, published in London in 1861, gives an overview of the history of Beddome's church from 1655 to 1860. It includes a biographical sketch of Beddome's life, some of his correspondence, as well as a few of his noteworthy hymns. There is also a "Memoir" included in a volume of sermons published in 1835 entitled *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome*, which has no listed author, but appears to be strikingly similar to Thomas Brooks in style and content.⁴

John Rippon (1751–1836), an alumnus of Bristol Baptist Academy and John

³These two unpublished essays are entitled "'The Memory of the Just is Blessed': Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795), His Life and Teaching on the Trinity" and "'Glory to the Three Eternal': Benjamin Beddome and the Teaching of Trinitarian Theology in the Eighteenth Century."

⁴Benjamin Beddome, *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome* (London: William Ball, 1835). See "Memoir," xix– xxviii.

Gill's moderate evangelical successor at Southwark, was the editor of the *Baptist Annual Register* from 1790 to 1802. Eight years of his *Baptist Annual Register* have been digitally reprinted in two large volumes. They include important records, events, and obituaries of Baptists ministering in the British Isles and North America between 1790 and 1797 and cover events occurring in Great Britain during the last six years of Beddome's life. There is also an excellent, informative biography/obituary about Beddome which was published in the year 1796.⁵

Roger Hayden has provided essential background information on the life and ministry of Bernard Foskett at the Bristol Baptist Academy in his essay "The Contribution of Bernard Foskett," published in 1999 in *Pilgrim Pathways: Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B. R. White*, and based on his Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Keele, which was later published in book form by Nigel Lynn Publishing.⁶ Foskett appears to have had a formative influence on Beddome and his philosophy of ministry, as Foskett's evangelistic Calvinism and strict adherence to the 1677 *Baptist Confession* are clearly reflected in Beddome's writings and hymns. Foskett had a special relationship with Benjamin's father and the Beddome family, and appears to be an important link between the earlier Welsh Revival and a high percentage of young men from Wales, who came to study at the Bristol Baptist Academy.

Derrick Holmes of Abbeymead, Gloucestershire, England, has done some important historical research in and around Bourton-on-the-Water. His findings have proven beneficial in understanding the historical context in which Beddome's ministry took place and the physical environment that influenced daily life there. Holmes has also

⁵John Rippon, ed., *The Baptist Annual Register for 1794, 1795, 1796–1797, including Sketches of the State of Religion among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad* (London:1797), 314.

⁶Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century Baptist Ministers Trained at Bristol Academy, 1690–1791* (Oxford: Nigel Lynn Publishing &Marketing, 2006). This is the published version of Hayden's Ph.D. thesis of the same title, University of Keele, 1991.

done research into the Bourton church records, which shed further light on Beddome's writings and conclusions.⁷ In addition, Kenneth Dix wrote an excellent article for the *Bulletin of the Strict Baptist Historical Society* in 1972 entitled "'Thy Will Be Done': A Study in the Life of Benjamin Beddome,"⁸ and J. R. Watson discussed his historical contributions in *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*.⁹

One of the most prolific students of Beddome today is Gary Brady of Childs Hill Baptist Church in London. Brady has written his own yet unpublished biography of Beddome, "The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome," which includes additional sources and a bibliography not readily available in the United States. He also maintains an extensive blog which includes the entry for Beddome in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, a history of his catechism, his hymns, his sermons, a list of his Baptist contemporaries, and an extensive chronology of his life.

Beddome himself has provided a virtual treasure trove of information that pertains to his pneumatology. Many of Beddome's writings are available today through reprints of works published in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Only two of Beddome's works were actually published in his lifetime. *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by Way of Question and Answer* was first published in 1752, and his *Circular Letter* to the Midland Association that was published in 1765.¹⁰ Both are available today. A reprint of an 1818 edition of Beddome's hymns entitled *Hymns*

⁷Derrick Holmes, "The Early Years (1655–1740) of Bourton-on-the-Water Dissenters Who Later Constituted the Baptist Church, with Special Reference to the Ministry of the Rev. Benjamin Beddome MA 1740–1795" (Cert Ed. diss, St. Paul's College, Cheltenham, 1969).

⁸Kenneth Dix, "'Thy Will Be Done': A Study in the Life of Benjamin Beddome," *The Bulletin of the Strict Baptist Historical Society* (1972), 9.

⁹J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 198–202.

¹⁰A second edition of Beddome's *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism* was published by W. Pine of Bristol in 1776. A digital scan of the 1776 edition is available in paperback from Ecco Print Editions in conjunction with the British Library.

Adapted to Public Worship, or Family Devotion: Now First Published from the Manuscripts of the Late B. Beddome is now in print, containing digital reproductions of 830 hymns that are categorized and listed by the first line for reference.¹¹

A large number of Beddome's sermons were published posthumously in the first half of the nineteenth century. The first three volumes of *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family* containing sixty sermons appeared between 1807 and 1809 and have recently been digitally reprinted by Kessinger Legacy Reprints.¹² In 2015, Forgotten Books reprinted the fourth edition of the fourth volume of *Twenty Short Discourses*, which was published in 1822,¹³ and Boyce Centennial Library of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has a hard copy of the fifth volume in its archives. The three remaining volumes (6–8) can be found in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College in Oxford. A volume of 67 sermons appeared in 1835, entitled *Sermons from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome*,¹⁴ which has been recently made available by Kessinger in a digital reprint.

Thesis

The unusual outpouring of God's Spirit, the unprecedented growth of the church, and the rapid expansion of Protestant missions associated with the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival in England and the First Great Awakening in North America, came on the heels of rampant social, moral, political, and doctrinal instability that was compounded by the Stuart Restoration of 1660. Due to legislation enacted by the

¹¹Benjamin Beddome, *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship, Or Family Devotion: Now First Published from the Manuscripts of the Late Benjamin Beddome* (London: Burton and Briggs, 1818).

¹²Benjamin Beddome, *Twenty Short Discourses VI–3 Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2010).

¹³Benjamin Beddome, *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vols. 3–4 (London: FB &c Ltd, 2015).

¹⁴Beddome, *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome*.

crown, the Calvinism of the Puritans appeared to be in full retreat, with only a few lone voices, such as Richard Baxter, Thomas Goodwin, and John Owen, who continued to represent the ideas and ideals of traditional Reformed Puritan theology in their writings.¹⁵ No longer in vogue in the Church of England, Calvinism now found its greatest acceptance among the Dissenters outside of the established church.¹⁶ Strict adherence to the Scriptures and belief in their authority gave way to the Latitudinarians on the one hand, with their bent for reason and “theological vagueness,” and the Quakers on the other, with their radical brand of enthusiasm.¹⁷

While immorality and clerical corruption were decimating the Church of England, an equally dangerous wave of Arianism and anti-Trinitarian sentiment was depleting the ranks of the General Baptists and the Presbyterians in England.¹⁸ By the time the House of Hanover had assumed the British throne in 1714, the Dissenters had finally attained a measure of freedom, but the overall state of Christianity in England was weak and unstable at best. This was especially true of the Baptists, who had long been sharply divided over the extent of the atonement. The insular General Baptists were

¹⁵The Conventicle Act (1660), which forbade the religious assembly of more than five people outside the Church of England, and the Act of Uniformity (1662), which demanded adherence to a prescribed form of public prayer, the handling of the sacraments and other rites of the Established Church in order to hold office, helped precipitate the decline of Puritanism. Only practicing members of the Church of England were allowed to study and receive degrees from Cambridge or Oxford, which had previously been popular Puritan educational centers. This ban on non-Anglican students remained in effect at Oxford until the University Reform Act of 1854. Because they could no longer receive theological training in the traditional centers, Dissenters were forced to complete a university education outside the country in places such as Leyden, Utrecht, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, but those schools were usually affordable only to the wealthy few. Out of necessity, Dissenters, such as the Baptists, established their own denominational academies and schools to train their own young men for the ministry.

¹⁶Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648–1789* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 66.

¹⁷Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648–1789*, 72.

¹⁸Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 43.

especially susceptible to Unitarian theology,¹⁹ while Particular Baptists, such as John Gill, embraced a form of Crispianism (Tobias Crisp: 1600–1643) with its Antinomianism and reticence to freely offer the gospel. John Skepp’s work *Divine Energy* further hindered cooperation among their churches during much of the eighteenth century.²⁰

By the time of Benjamin Beddome’s conversion in 1737, the effects of the Northampton Revival in North America were already beginning to make their presence felt. There was great anticipation as the Spirit of God swept over the British Isles and the North American colonies. A number of Particular Baptists identified with the preaching and theology of George Whitefield and his Calvinistic form of Methodism, but others were “openly critical of the awakening,” in part because John Wesley was an avowed Arminian, and because, in their opinion, Whitefield had not conducted himself as a proper Calvinist, having “taken every opportunity to ‘offer’ Christ to his contemporaries.”²¹ To make matters worse, Wesley had already alienated a host of Baptists by referring to them disparagingly as “Anabaptists.” In a sermon at Sevenoaks, in 1788, he is alleged to have remarked,

¹⁹Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the 18th Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 22–23. Brown documents the rising tension that existed among the Baptists, in which two opposing groups formed: one defended Trinitarianism and “orthodox Christology,” while the other was markedly Anti-Trinitarian. A compromise was agreed upon at the 1693 Assembly for the sake of unity, but by 1719 the Trinitarian group had become the minority. The major sticking point was their fear and refusal to subscribe to any written “creedal definitions or doctrinal articles.” “All but two of the Particular Baptists present were happy to subscribe to a Trinitarian affirmation whilst only one of the General Baptists was prepared to do so. In several instances, resistance to subscription became the prelude to heterodoxy. People who refused to sign the articles came eventually to deny them and those General Baptists who were theologically uncertain ultimately became committed Unitarians,” 23.

²⁰Brown, *The English Baptists of the 18th Century*, 72–73. Skepp’s book appeared in 1722. He and John Gill knew each other personally. In addition to being a mentor of sorts, Skepp was also one of the officiating pastors at Gill’s ordination. Skepp had been influenced by the Independent Cambridge preacher Joseph Hussey, who believed “it was improper to use any form of ‘moral persuasion’ in presenting the claims of the Christian Gospel.” To do so was to be a “half-hearted Calvinist” and was a “piece of robbery against the Holy Spirit.” While the strict Calvinists, such as Benjamin Keach, had “regularly pleaded with their congregation to put their trust in Christ,” both John Gill and John Brine took a harder line, insisting that it was not appropriate for any preacher to freely “offer” Christ. Instead of uniting Particular Baptists, their doctrine served to further divide and destabilize them.

²¹Brown, *The English Baptists of the 18th Century*, 77–78.

When a Sinner is just awakened to see his state as a Sinner, the people called Anabaptists, begin to trouble him about outward forms and modes of Worship, and that of Baptism; but they had better cut his throat, for it is sending of him to Hell and perdition.²²

Beddome's ministry spanned most of the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival in which evangelicalism found its beginning and saw its early development. The rationalism of the Enlightenment was in full bloom and had already infiltrated the areas of science, philosophy and theology. As a result, some long held truths of the Christian faith were viciously attacked, with the strongest assaults being directed against the doctrine of the Trinity. A general skepticism also arose toward the applied pneumatology found in the writings of Owen and other Puritans, which were considered by Anglican Latitudinarians to be nothing short of enthusiasm. Beddome, on the other hand, was a strict, evangelistic Calvinist, who had not only heard about the moving of the Spirit in Northampton (Massachusetts), Oxford, Wales, and nearby Bristol, where George Whitefield began preaching in earnest in 1737, but had himself experienced it in Bourton in the early 1740s. Not surprisingly, the references found with respect to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in his writings, sermons, and hymns are representative of an early evangelical pneumatology that existed between 1740 and 1800.

While David Bebbington's "quadrilateral" of evangelical emphases (conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism) has found widespread acceptance,²³ others have suggested that a fifth characteristic should also be added: great attention to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Michael A. G. Haykin argues this point in his essay "Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment: A Reassessment." Haykin posits that, it was, in fact, the pneumatology of the Puritans that was instrumental in defining and

²²W. Morgan Patterson, "The Evangelical Revival and the Baptists," in *Pilgrim Pathways: Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B. R. White*, ed. William H. Brackney, Paul S. Fiddes, and John H. Y. Briggs (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 252.

²³David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 5–17.

understanding the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit in the eighteenth century.²⁴ Thus, men like Beddome, who were already well-versed in Reformed pneumatology, naturally assumed that the unusual events in their day were the harbingers of a final latter-day outpouring of the Spirit. Adding further weight to Haykin's thesis, Thomas Kidd argues that the "new" evangelicals, who came to prominence during the eighteenth-century Great Awakening, can be characterized by their persistent desire for "revival, widespread individual conversions, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."²⁵

This work represents an analysis of Benjamin Beddome's pneumatology, gleaned from his catechism, sermons, hymns, and letters. It seeks to highlight the theological continuity that existed between the Puritans and the Particular Baptists, while at the same time uncovering the evidence of Thomas Kidd's three early evangelical emphases (Kidd's triad), which would squarely place Beddome in the evangelical camp. That Beddome was truly an early evangelical, as Kidd defines the term, can be convincingly demonstrated through a study of his pneumatological heritage and views.

Methodology

There are presently sufficient resources available in book form, printed manuscripts, and pdf documents on-line, to conduct a thorough investigation of Beddome's pneumatology and explore the historical context in which it was developed. There is no shortage of primary sources from Beddome himself with over 800 hymns²⁶ and at least 147 of his sermons available.²⁷ The only caveat is that at least four volumes,

²⁴Michael A. G. Haykin, "Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment: A Reassessment," in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 37–60.

²⁵Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xix.

²⁶See Beddome, *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship, or Family Devotion*. This volume represents all of his officially released sermons.

²⁷This number represents the contents of at least three published volumes with 127 sermons

which are a part of the eight leather-bound volumes of sermons at Regent's Park, Oxford are not readily accessible, although pictorial images of these volumes have been made available. The Oxford volumes represent a complete set of the *Twenty Short Discourses* series, with an additional 158 sermons. Volume 8 has only eighteen sermons. These volumes contain some of the same sermons that are currently found in recent reprints.

To demonstrate that Beddome's pneumatology shows continuity with the past, while at the same time providing sufficient evidence to classify him as an eighteenth-century early evangelical, this study necessarily begins with a detailed biographical sketch of Beddome's life and ministry at Bourton-on-the-Water. It affords the reader a clearer glimpse of his godly character, as well as the eighteenth-century context in which his ministry took place.

The study next explores the origins of Beddome's strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit, which had its roots in Puritanism. By tracing its historical progression, one can see how practical pneumatology became a significant mark of early evangelicalism. It not only portrays the continuity between the Puritans and the evangelicals, but also outlines an evolution of Reformed pneumatology, beginning with the early Puritans and later manifested among the Dissent and the Particular Baptists. It explains why evangelicals naturally equated the Evangelical Revival with the latter-day outpouring of the Spirit.

Beddome's pneumatological heritage as a Particular Baptist accounts for his obvious theological continuity with historic Reformed beliefs. After a brief history of these Calvinistic Baptists, a thorough analysis of their seventeenth-century pneumatology is provided, as outlined in the 1644, 1646, and 1677 *Confessions of Faith*, as well as the 1693 *Baptist Catechism*. Here the question must be asked, "How was Beddome's doctrine of the Holy Spirit presented in those three Baptist confessions?" The same question and investigative method are employed for the *Baptist Catechism*. There is also

from Beddome and a fourth volume of "Twenty Short Discourses" in the archives at Boyce Centennial Library of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

a discussion of the eighteenth-century pneumatology of Bernard Foskett, founder of the Bristol Baptist Academy, which shows the pivotal role that both he and the Bristol Academy may have played in Benjamin Beddome's theological development.

After exploring Beddome's Baptist heritage, the discussion moves to an in-depth look at Beddome's ontology of the Holy Spirit, followed by a detailed analysis of his general pneumatology as it is expressed in his writings, sermons, hymns, and letters. The study outlines his scriptural understandings of the work of the Holy Spirit, especially its implications for redemption and sanctification, and confirms that his emphases do indeed resemble those of other early, and mostly Reformed, evangelicals in his day.

The final section is a short summary of the findings gleaned from the analysis of Beddome's pneumatology, reaffirming the continuity between Puritanism and evangelicalism, as well as Beddome's place among the early pillars of the English Evangelical Revival.

CHAPTER 2

A BIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN BEDDOME

Benjamin Beddome was shaped at an early age by some of the most influential Baptists of the early eighteenth century. He was born in the town of Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire on January 23, 1717, into the home of John and Rachel Beddome; the oldest of five children: Benjamin, Joseph, Samuel, Mary, and Foskett.¹ John Beddome had grown up under the influence of Benjamin Keach in the church at Horsley Down, Southwark and was sent in 1697 to Warwickshire to minister in the church at Alcester. At the age of 40, John married Rachel Brandon from London in 1714, who had brought a sizable inheritance from her aunt into the marriage.²

From 1711 until 1720, Beddome was assisted in Alcester by his friend, the knowledgeable Bernard Foskett, after which Foskett received a call to co-pastor the Broadmead church in Bristol, where the “denomination’s only seminary” was located.³ Foskett’s main responsibility was the training of future pastors and leaders. Four years later, when Benjamin was 7 years old, John Beddome followed Foskett to Bristol, where he assumed the pastorate of the Pithay church, located a mere 200 yards from the Broadmead building.⁴ He remained there until his death in 1757 at the age of 83.⁵

¹Roger Hayden, “The Contribution of Bernard Foskett,” in *Pilgrim Pathways: Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B. R. White*, ed. William H. Brackney, Paul S. Fiddes, and John H. Y. Briggs (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 192.

²“Memoir,” in *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the late Rev. Benjamin Beddome* (London: William Ball, 1835), x.

³Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1771–1892* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), 18.

⁴Gary Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome” (unpublished ms., 2015; from the collection of Michael A. G. Haykin), 2. Brady notes that John Beddome and Bernard Foskett were life-

Beddome's Conversion

After completing his preparatory studies, young Benjamin Beddome became apprenticed to a surgeon-apothecary in Bristol in anticipation of a career in medicine. Despite his parent's godly example, he had, by his own admission, been "altogether unimpressed about religion" during the first twenty years of life.⁶ This would suddenly change on August 7, 1737, at the midweek service in the Pithay Chapel, when a visiting preacher from Chesham, "Mr. Ware," was invited to speak. His text was Luke 15:7: "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." In Beddome's own words, he was "for the first time deeply impressed" as the Holy Spirit caused him to see himself as that sinner in the text. Overcome with emotion, he retreated to a secluded corner of the church and wept.⁷ That Wednesday represented the turning point in his life. In the days that followed, he would spend much time in prayer and Bible reading. As he read, the Spirit of God directed his thoughts away from himself. He began to focus on the spiritual needs of people around him, something that would characterize his life until the very end.

The Influence of Bernard Foskett

After completing his apprenticeship, Beddome chose instead to enroll as a student at the Baptist Academy in Bristol under the leadership of Bernard Foskett, a man of great stature among the strict, evangelistic Particular Baptists of his day.⁸ Like

long friends. Their friendship began when both men lived in London and served together for nine years (1711–1720) as co-pastors in Warwickshire. They may have even shared the same house in Bristol. John Beddome named one of his sons Foskett, and he and Bernard were allegedly buried in the same grave.

⁵"Memoir," x.

⁶"Memoir," x. The unknown author of the "Memoir" cites Beddome's own personal account, but he does not indicate which source he consulted.

⁷"Memoir," x. The account continues, "Thus more than twenty years had been devoted to the service of Satan, notwithstanding the numerous and affectionate discourses of the pulpit, the prayers, instructions, and examples of his parents; but when he heard the character of the penitent described, it at once became his own."

⁸The term "moderate" is used advisedly. It refers to the evangelistic wing of the Particular

Beddome, Foskett had also been a surgeon before voluntarily laying aside his career to pastor at Broadmead and train young men for the ministry.⁹ In an age of tepid Latitudinarianism and a growing Unitarian influence in both the Church of England and among the Baptists,¹⁰ Foskett had been instrumental in establishing the 1677 *Baptist Confession of Faith* as the theological basis for the Western Association of the Particular Baptists. It provided a strong deterrent in the face of rising Socinian and Arian influences among Dissenters, preserving the Baptist's long-held orthodox beliefs in the full deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Around 1720, Broadmead had already experienced some of its own theological tensions from a small group of prophets and prophetesses of Huguenot origin. The Camisards had fled the region of the Cevennes in France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and eventually settled near Bristol.¹¹ They claimed they were able to receive direct revelations from the Holy Spirit, which could easily take precedence over the serious study of the Scriptures.¹²

Foskett also encouraged the practice of congregational hymn-singing in Particular Baptist churches, even contributing some of his own compositions to be sung

Baptists, who held to a "strict" form of Calvinism, upheld the importance of evangelism, and distanced themselves from the teaching of eternal justification, which was held by high or hyper-Calvinistic Baptists.

⁹"Memoir," xii. The memoir includes a brief separate sketch of Foskett's life. He had become a believer at age 17 and joined the church in Little Wild-street, London, under the leadership of John Piggott. There he practiced medicine for a time before entering the ministry in 1711. In 1724, he assumed the role of co-pastor at the Broadmead church, where he also took charge of training the young men at Bristol Academy. Sixty-five men studied under him, many of whom went on to serve as pastors in other parts of England and Wales. See "Memoir," xi-xii. For further insights on the life and impact of Foskett's ministry at the academy at Broadmead, see "Bernard Foskett – Pastor and Principal (1720–58)," in C. Sidney Hall and Harry Mowvley, *Tradition and Challenge: The Story of Broadmead Baptist Church, Bristol from 1685 to 1991* (Bristol: Broadmead Baptist Church, 1991), 9–23.

¹⁰Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648–1789* (London: Penguin Group, 1970), 137.

¹¹Sabine Baring-Gould, *A Book of the Cevennes* (London: John Long, 1907), 177. Baring-Gould chronicles the origins of this movement "in the spring of 1668, near Castres," when "a shepherdess, aged ten, had a vision of an angel, who forbade her to attend Mass." By the end of the seventeenth century, such manifestations had become commonplace, leading to great persecution and forced resettlement in other regions of Europe.

¹²Hall and Mowvley, *Tradition and Challenge*, 10.

during the worship at Broadmead. Benjamin Beddome profited much from Foskett's practice of hymn-writing, which he also readily adopted, along with two other men who had studied at the Bristol Academy, John Ash and Caleb Evans. Both collaborated in the creation of the first Baptist hymnbook in 1769.¹³

Few, if any, of the dissenting academies of the day had as much influence as Foskett's Bristol Academy, which was known for its "strict Calvinism" with an evangelistic emphasis and the free offer of the gospel to all, sometimes referred to as moderate or evangelical Calvinism. According to D. Bruce Hindmarsh, "strict Calvinism" held to unconditional election with "final perseverance" being its "corollary," limited atonement, and the "free offer of the gospel based upon general sufficiency of Christ's death for sinners whose duty it is to believe." In contrast, "high Calvinism," sometimes referred to as "hyper-Calvinism," was in many respects similar to "strict Calvinism," but was set apart by its controversial doctrine of eternal justification and the corresponding belief that "faith is not properly the duty of unbelievers." This led to the free offer of the gospel being either "constrained or even repudiated."¹⁴

Descriptive labels for the various strains of eighteenth-century Calvinism vary, sometimes with the terms "strict" and "high" being used interchangeably. Hindmarsh elsewhere refers to high Calvinism as "Gillism," as opposed to strict Calvinism or "Fullerism,"¹⁵ while Peter Toon designates the high Calvinists, John Gill and John Brine, as "hyper-Calvinists."¹⁶ Raymond Brown observes that the men who were trained at the Bristol Academy, Beddome among them, "helped to divert many churches from high

¹³Hayden, "The Contribution of Bernard Foskett," 189.

¹⁴D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition: Between the Conversions of Wesley and Wilberforce* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 125.

¹⁵Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition*, 144.

¹⁶Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689–1765* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 93–103.

Calvinism and introduced them to those influences which were powerfully at work in the Evangelical Revival.”¹⁷ Beddome was a strict Calvinist, who supported the free offer of the gospel, in contrast to John Gill’s restricted high or hyper-Calvinism.

After completing his studies at Bristol, Benjamin transferred to the Fund Academy at Tenter Alley, Moorfields,¹⁸ which at the time was under the leadership of Abraham Taylor and John Walker.¹⁹ Taylor appears to have had a formative influence on young Beddome. He had openly challenged John Gill’s teaching on eternal justification²⁰, and may well have been the reason why Benjamin chose the Baptist church in Little Prescott-street, Goodman’s Fields, pastored by Samuel Wilson, instead of his father’s old church in London, where Gill served.²¹ It was there, in the fall of 1739, that he submitted to baptism and eventually joined the church.²²

Beddome’s Early Ministry

Samuel Wilson quickly discovered Beddome’s acumen as a public speaker and gave him frequent opportunity to preach, ostensibly to prepare him for the ministry there.

¹⁷Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 84–85.

¹⁸Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome,” 3.

¹⁹Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 19.

²⁰R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen, Publishers, 1989), 40–41. Referencing Peter Toon, the author states, “It was in the doctrine of eternal justification that Gill and Brine evidently found theological justification for the ‘non-universal’ and restricted offer of the Gospel. This doctrine, emerging from seventeenth-century Calvinistic scholasticism, maintained that the elect of God for salvation were already, from and in eternity, justified even though in time and history they had not yet come to faith. Salvation for them was from the divine side already achieved and from the human side now needed only to be realized.” Toon’s designation for Gill’s high Calvinism was hyper-Calvinism which is instructive, since high Calvinism is often confused with traditional or strict Calvinism. For a thorough discussion of eternal justification in the context of hyper-Calvinism, see Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689–1765* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1967).

²¹Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 19.

²²Thomas Brooks, *Pictures of the Past: The History of the Baptist Church, Bourton-on-the-Water* (London: Judd & Glass, 1861), 22–23.

John Beddome was naturally elated that his son had become an active part of a church, but he also had concerns that he might not be mature enough for the challenges he would inevitably face. In a letter to Benjamin, dated May 21, 1740, he wrote,

I am sorry Mr. Wilson is in such a hurry to call you to the ministry. It would have been time enough just before you came away; but supposing it must be so, I think you should not preach in public above once or twice, at most, at your own place, and nowhere else, except Mr. Stennett, or his people, ask you, and if the latter, do it, you may serve them as oft as their necessities require.²³

In the spring of 1740, Beddome was invited to preach at the Baptist church at Bourton-on-the-Water. There was a favorable reaction and he was subsequently asked to fill the pulpit for “an extended period of probation.”²⁴ In early 1741, an “awakening” took place in Bourton, in which forty people were “brought to repentance.”²⁵ Three future leaders of the Particular Baptists were converted during that same 1741 revival: Richard Haynes, John Collett Ryland, and John Reynolds.²⁶ It is likely that George Whitefield took notice of this stirring in Bourton, commenting in a letter written from neighboring Gloucester in May 1741, “The Lord manifested himself in the great congregation there [Bristol], and doth likewise here.”²⁷

Despite the obvious signs of God’s blessing, John Beddome wrote to his son at least twice during the spring and summer months of 1742, suggesting ways in which he could improve his sermon delivery. Although Benjamin was a gifted preacher, “his

²³Brooks, *Pictures of the Past*, 23.

²⁴Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 20.

²⁵Peter Naylor, *Picking up a Pin for the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1992), 59. Naylor cites William Newman, the first president of the Stepney Baptist College. In his memoirs of John Collet, he records the 1741 awakening in Bourton and observes that Ryland was one of the new believers that came to Christ at that time.

²⁶Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 27. Ryland was the first of the three men to be called to serve in the Baptist ministry. His baptism took place in October 1741, and he eventually went on to study under Foskett in Bristol in 1744.

²⁷Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 20. Oliver cites ‘George Whitefield to Mr. S.’ in *Letters of George Whitefield, 1734-1742* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976), 261.

tongue ran away with him so that he could not be understood” and tended to be “abrasive and over long.”²⁸ His father urged him “not to strain your voice” and to “let two hours be the longest time you spend in the pulpit at any place.”²⁹ By “softening” his voice and reducing the length of his sermons, he assured his son that the great truths of the gospel would “drop as the gentle rain or dew.” “For the good of souls, then,” he urged, “and for your own good, be persuaded to strive after this.”³⁰

Young Beddome’s admirable zeal for ministry was a source of disquietude for his father. For some time, Benjamin had been preaching at both Warwick and Bourton on alternating weeks. Concerned about his son’s health, the older Beddome again counseled him, “Take notice of the feelings you are subject to, and the assistance you obtain at each place, and consider where the gospel is most needed and most likely to be received, for that place will yield most satisfaction to a gracious mind.”³¹ Heeding his father’s guidance, Benjamin wisely began to concentrate his efforts in Bourton-on-the-Water. He was ordained there on September 23, 1743, at the age of 26, with Bernard Foskett of Bristol giving the charge.

During his first six years at Bourton, Beddome met and fell in love with Elizabeth Boswell, the daughter of an influential deacon in the church. They were married on December 21, 1749, and took up residence in the spacious manse that had been recently built by the church.³² Their oldest son, John, was born in January of 1751. Two boys followed; both died in infancy, but after that, the couple had six more boys and

²⁸Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome,” 5.

²⁹Brooks, “Letter: August 6, 1742,” in *Pictures of the Past*, 24–25.

³⁰Brooks, “Letter: May 17, 1742,” in *Pictures of the Past*, 24.

³¹“Memoir,” xvi.

³²John Rippon, ed., *The Baptist Annual Register for 1794, 1795, 1796–1797, including Sketches of the State of Religion among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad* (London: 1797), 318.

one girl, whose name was also Elizabeth.³³

Beddome's first decade in Bourton may have been the most fulfilling time of his life, since much of what he had asked of God for his life and ministry was realized during those years. Even before he had reached the age of 30, he had written a revealing prayer/poem, expressing his deepest requests for his life and ministry to God. Among them was a desire for a wife with a heart for God. Beddome composed his prayer/poem, entitled "The Wish," in the year 1742:

Lord, in my soul implant thy fear,
Let faith and hope and love be there;
Preserve me from prevailing vice,
When Satan tempts or lusts entice.
Of friendship's sweets may I partake,
Nor be forsaken, or forsake.
Let moderate plenty crown my board,
And God for all be still adored:
Let the companion of my youth
Be one of innocence and truth
Let modest charm adorn her face
And give her thy superior grace
By heavenly art first make her thine
Then make her willing to be mine
My dwelling place let Bourton be
There let me live and live to thee.³⁴

However, the couple's early marital bliss nearly turned to tragedy when Benjamin suddenly became gravely ill and nearly died. Happily, he was able to make a full recovery six weeks later and eventually resumed his pastoral duties.

Beddome was greatly admired by his own congregation, but equally sought after by other churches as well. Even before he was married, his father's church at Pithay, "being ready to make extraordinary efforts for [his] comfortable support," had tried unsuccessfully to lure him away from Bourton.³⁵ In November of 1750, he was contacted

³³Brady, "The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome," 8.

³⁴Brady, "The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome," 8. Brady cites John Rippon, who claimed that the poem had been written in 1742. It was discovered posthumously in one of Beddome's notebooks preserved at the Angus Library, Regents College in Oxford.

³⁵Brooks, *Pictures of the Past*, 30. Thomas Brooks cites a letter dated October 28, 1748, in

by the London congregation where he had earlier served with Samuel Wilson. Wilson had since passed away and the church was determined to make Benjamin his successor. Despite the prestige and obvious financial advantages that a pastorate in the largest Particular Baptist church in London might have afforded, Beddome was committed to Bourton-on-the-Water and declined their offer.

In 1751, the London church in Goodman's-fields again renewed their appeal for his services. This time, Beddome turned to his Bourton congregation, asking what they thought he should do. As expected, the church at Bourton was unwilling to let him go. In his subsequent reply to the brethren in London, he wrote, "I am determined not to tear myself violently from them; but would rather glorify God in a station much inferior to that I am in, than obtrude myself into a higher without his direction."³⁶ He also appealed to John Owen, who had once posited that a pastor leaving his church "was only lawful" when it had "the free consent of the churches concerned, and with the advice of other churches or their elders with whom they walk in communion."³⁷

The Fruitful Years in Bourton-on-the-Water

The Bourton church prospered under Beddome's ministry. It was said that in his preaching "he laid Christ at the bottom of religion as the support of it, placed him at the top of it as its glory, and made him the center of it, to unite all parts, and to add the beauty and vigour of the whole."³⁸ When he first arrived in 1743, the church had 100 members. In 1751, the number had grown to 180, and by 1764, there were 183

which John Beddome offered Benjamin four reasons for which he should consider leaving Bourton to join his father at the Pithay church: (1) "It would save a large number of people from sinking"; (2) "My children would all be together"; (3) "It would be great comfort to your poor mother to sit under your ministry"; (4) "You would have less labor, an honest good-hearted man to be your partner."

³⁶"Memoir," xx.

³⁷Brooks, *Pictures of the Past*, 45.

³⁸Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register for 1794, 1795, 1796–1797*, 321.

members.³⁹ This, of course, did not include the many “hearers” or non-members that also attended each week. Michael Haykin observes that the size of the Bourton congregation “maintained its own, probably around five or six hundred, to the end of his life.”

However, Beddome was disheartened that “the vital step of believer’s baptism leading to full church membership” was taken by so few.⁴⁰ Perhaps the expected obligations that were conjoined with church membership or the considerable distances traveled by many of the attendees on Sunday morning were determining factors.

Beddome’s influence extended beyond the region of the Cotswolds.⁴¹ It spread, in particular, through the popularity of his catechism *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by Way of Question and Answer*. It was Beddome’s earnest hope to catechize every child and adult, thereby “matching head knowledge to heart-felt faith.”⁴² He had watched with alarm as some of his fellow Particular Baptist churches gradually succumbed to doctrinal error and abandoned the 1677 *Baptist Confession of Faith*. In the preface to his well-known catechism, written at Bourton in 1752, he wrote,

When we consider the melancholly [*sic*] state of those churches and families, where catechising is entirely thrown aside, how much many of them have degenerated from the faith, and others from the practice of the gospel, little need to be said in vindication of this exercise to those, in whom a zeal for both still remains, and I hope will ever be increasing.⁴³

³⁹Brooks, *Pictures of the Past*, 50.

⁴⁰Michael A. G. Haykin, “Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795),” in *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 174.

⁴¹Haykin, “Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795),” 168. Describing the location of the town of Bourton-on-the-Water, Haykin notes, “The Cotswolds [*is*] one of the most beautiful regions of England. Bourton itself, due to the River Windrush that flows through the town centre, is often described in tourist literature today as the ‘Venice of Cotswolds’.”

⁴²Haykin, “Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795),” 176. Haykin cites Roger Hayden, “Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century British Baptists with Particular Reference to Bernard Foskett, Hugh and Caleb Evans and the Bristol Baptist Academy, 1690–1791” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Keele, 1991), 259.

⁴³Benjamin Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by Way of Question and Answer* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1776), iii. See the preface to the 2nd ed. of the catechism.

Beddome was one of the most prolific hymn writers of his day. Throughout his ministry, he authored at least 830 hymns, many being unmistakably Trinitarian and reflecting his strict Calvinism and heart for the lost. Each week, he wrote a hymn to underscore the sermon topic of the day and to conclude the worship service. Since there were no printed copies available for the worshippers, each verse of the hymn would be alternately read aloud by a clerk and then sung by the congregation.⁴⁴ In 1769, the Ash-Evans collection of hymns was released, which not only included hymns from Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Philip Doddridge, and Anne Steele, but the hymns of Beddome and fellow Bristol student Benjamin Francis as well.⁴⁵ Roughly two decades after his death, a large volume of his hymns was published, entitled *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship, or Family Devotion: Now First Published, from the Manuscripts of the late Benjamin Beddome*. Around one hundred of Beddome's hymns continued to be printed in hymnals throughout the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

The Years of Testing and Adversity

The latter part of Beddome's life was filled with hardship: the deaths of loved ones, personal disappointments, and declining health. In 1757, John Beddome died, leaving Benjamin without his valuable mentor. In 1765, he lost his fifteen-year-old son John, and in 1778, his son Benjamin died in Edinburgh at the age of 25 of "putrid fever" or typhus. Benjamin Jr. had been a medical doctor and had mastered Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. Overwhelmed with grief, Beddome wrote, "Alas, how much easier it is to preach than to practice! I will complain to God; but not of God. This is

⁴⁴Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 24.

⁴⁵Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, 93. Brown notes that the abundance of hymns and new hymnbooks was evidence that "a newly liberated Calvinism had found expression in song." It also signaled a "change from high to moderate [strict] Calvinism."

⁴⁶Haykin, "Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795)," 181.

undoubtedly the most afflicting loss I have ever yet sustained in my family.”⁴⁷ Six years later, on January 21, 1784, he experienced his most painful loss when his beloved Elizabeth succumbed to the fever. Later that same year, still reeling from her death, he received word that his twenty-six-year-old son Foskett, also a doctor, had accidentally fallen into the Thames near Deptford and drowned.⁴⁸

By the mid-1770s, Beddome’s health was in serious decline. He suffered from the painful effects of gout, which also made it increasingly difficult for him to walk.⁴⁹ Soon the church thought it best to find an assistant or co-pastor who could help him with his duties. William Wilkins, a man who had also studied at the Bristol Academy and who the church believed would work well with the aging pastor, was hired. Wilkins served the church for the next fifteen years, but resigned angrily in 1791, perhaps justifiably so, believing that he was entitled to the same financial remuneration that Beddome received. Another man, whose family name was Reed, stepped in to help Beddome after Wilkins’s untimely exit.⁵⁰

Beddome’s Twilight Years

As the years passed, Beddome could no longer walk and was confined to his home. He still continued to preach regularly, allowing himself to be “carried to and from the chapel, where he preached sitting up.”⁵¹ With health issues continuing to mount, Beddome was apparently entertaining the thought of a successor to assume his

⁴⁷“Memoir,” xxiv.

⁴⁸“Memoir,” xxiv.

⁴⁹Haykin, “Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795),” 179.

⁵⁰Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome,” 13. Brady cites Peter Naylor, *Picking Up a Pin for the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1992), 60. Wilkins’s tenure at Bourton was filled with controversy. He was supposedly instrumental in introducing open communion to the Bourton church, departing from a stricter view that Beddome had previously held.

⁵¹“Memoir,” xxv.

responsibilities at Bourton, for when a viable candidate, William Carey, who had recently begun a pastoral ministry at the Harvey Lane Baptist Church of Leicester in 1789, chose India over ministry in England, the aging Beddome could hardly restrain his discouragement. Although he had always maintained a concern for the lost, his primary focus had long been revival in his own country. He believed the prospect of one of Britain's finest going overseas at a time when his services were so desperately needed in England would have a "very unfavourable aspect with respect to destitute churches."⁵² Writing to Andrew Fuller, Beddome expressed his fear that the "great and good man... will meet with a disappointment."⁵³ One can only imagine how well the Bourton church might have prospered under Carey's leadership.

In his remaining years, even though he had acquired considerable wealth, Beddome lived as inexpensively as possible and gave much of his money to charity. Sadly, the spirit of harmony that he had enjoyed in Bourton in his early years had given way to dissension within the ranks. This left him frustrated and embittered. In October 1792, he felt compelled to amend his will, which would have provided for the poor in the congregation and future ministers at the church. He later justified his actions, citing "the irritating Conduct I have met with after 52 years service."⁵⁴

The Death of Benjamin Beddome

Beddome continued to preach and write hymns until the very end. In fact, he

⁵²Brady, "The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome," 15. Brady cites George Smith, *The Life of William Carey, Shoemaker and Missionary*, www.ccel.org/s/smith_geo/carey/.

⁵³Gilbert Laws, *Andrew Fuller: Pastor, Theologian, Ropeholder* (London: The Carey Press, 1942), 66. Concerning William Carey's decision, Beddome wrote the following to Fuller, "I had the pleasure once to see and hear Mr. Carey; he struck me as the most suitable person in the kingdom, at least whom I knew, to supply my place, and make up my great deficiencies, when either disabled or removed. A different plan is formed, however, and pursued, and I fear that the great and good man, though influenced by the most excellent motives, will meet with a disappointment. However, God hath his ends, and whoever is disappointed, He cannot be so."

⁵⁴Brady, "The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome," 15. Brady cites Beddome's will, which is on file at the Angus Library, Regent's Park, Oxford.

composed his last hymn six hours before he died:

God of my life and my choice
Shall I no longer hear thy voice?
O let that source of joy divine
With raptures fill this heart of mine!

With various and malignant storms,
With ugly shaped and frightful forms
Thou openedst Jonah's prison door
Be pleased O Lord to open ours.

Then will we to the world proclaim
The various honours of thy name
And let both Jews and Gentile see
There is no other God but thee.⁵⁵

Those who were with him in his final hours reported that Beddome was “calm and resigned, in the full assurance, not only that the Almighty Father had a right to do as he pleased, but that his soul was secure in the hands of Jesus.”⁵⁶ He died at the respectable age of 78, on September 3, 1795, bringing fifty-five years of ministry at Bourton to a close. In the *Old Church Book*, these words of eulogy were recorded for posterity:

On Thursday morning about Three O Clock September the third 1795 departed this life after fifty five years faithfull labours and unblemisht carracter and useful Services both to saints and sinners, In the Seventy Ninth year of his age That Great and Worthy man of God and Minister and Pastor of the Baptist Church and Congregation of Dissenters at Bourton on the Water the Revd Benjamin Beddome of Blessed Memory... Some of his last words were In my Father's House are many mansions & Also Is not this a Brand pluckt out of the Burning; Then fell a Sleep Aged 79 years.⁵⁷

It was Beddome's expressed desire that there not be any “discourse” at his funeral, however the note conveying his last wishes was not discovered until a later date. Benjamin Francis of Horsley in Shortwood preached the funeral service, using “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21) as his text. Beddome's body was interred in

⁵⁵Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome,” 16.

⁵⁶“Memoir,” xxv.

⁵⁷Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome,” 17.

the church yard, where only a simple moss-covered grave marker indicates the approximate location of his earthly remains.⁵⁸ However, the real and lasting monument to his life, which also became his legacy, were the many hymns and written sermons that have been passed down to future generations. They display a “faithfulness to historic Particular Baptist theology” combined with the “evangelical zeal of the eighteenth-century Revival.”⁵⁹

As will be further demonstrated, Beddome’s catechism, hymns, and sermons reveal an undeniable continuity with the Puritans and the early Particular Baptists. This same continuity created a bond with other contemporaries of the Reformed tradition, who were also active in the nascent evangelical movement. Although Beddome’s strict Calvinism tied him theologically to his controversial contemporary John Gill, there was one major exception. Beddome’s enthusiasm for the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in the Evangelical Revival, first acquired during the Burton awakening of 1741, clearly set him apart from his skeptical and more restricted London colleague and definitively marked him as an early evangelical.

⁵⁸Brady, “The Life and Writings of Benjamin Beddome,” 16.

⁵⁹Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 29.

CHAPTER 3

EVANGELICAL CONTINUITY WITH PURITANISM

Since his seminal work *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* first appeared in 1989, David Bebbington's quintessential description of the "marks" of evangelicalism, his "quadrilateral of priorities" consisting of conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism, has been readily adopted as the marquee definition of evangelicalism.¹ While the work accurately pinpoints at least four of the most distinctive traits of the movement, it does not adequately account for the attention given by early evangelicals to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, nor does it give adequate justice to the continuity that existed between pre-revival Puritan theology and evangelicalism.²

An Analysis of Bebbington's Thesis

David Bebbington proposes that evangelical religion consisted of "the belief that lives need to be changed" (conversionism); "the expression of the gospel in effort" (activism); "a particular regard for the Bible" (biblicism); and "a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (crucicentrism).³ Three of them, he concedes, were characteristic of Puritanism as well as Methodism, with the exception of activism.⁴ He argues that the

¹David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2–3.

²David W. Bebbington, "Response," in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 427. Bebbington graciously concedes that "there was a higher degree of continuity with the Puritans than the book of 1988 recognized."

³Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 3.

⁴Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 35. Bebbington further states, "Even Methodism, the new growth on Evangelical soil, had its roots in Puritan tradition. Wesley's mother, Susanna, herself the daughter of one of the ejected divines of 1662, esteemed Baxter highly... The fifty-

strong evangelical emphasis on missions provides a striking contrast and obvious discontinuity with the pre-revival English Dissent, who were the “immediate inheritors of the Puritan legacy in England.”⁵ He points to the “remarkable absence” of Protestant missions among the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Puritans as a symptomatic example of their overall lack of evangelical action.⁶ This, however, appears to be a much “tighter definition” of activism than usual, as Bebbington seemingly ignores other forms of activism, such as “preaching, pastoring, evangelism, and social concern” which were all characteristic of Puritan ministries.⁷

Exploring Supposed Discontinuities

Mark Noll, who has written much on the subject of evangelicalism, generally concurs with Bebbington’s thesis of discontinuity, although, in his understanding, it is not as pronounced. For Noll, evangelicalism represents both a continuation and a revival of much of the previous heart-religion of Puritanism without the encumbrances of its state-church associations and its tendency toward precision. He sees evangelicalism as a “multi-faceted protest against ecclesiastical formalism and an urgent appeal for living religion of the heart.”⁸ In contrast to the Puritans, who worked for “purified state-church establishments” and held a well-educated clergy in the highest esteem, the evangelicals tended to be “independent-minded,” opting instead for a clear separation of church and state and placing greater responsibility in the hands of the laity due to a general distrust of

volume *Christian Library* published by Wesley for his followers contains far more literature of a Puritan stamp than any other ecclesiastical genre.” For further reading, see Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage: A Study of the Christian Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1966), 36–41.

⁵Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 21.

⁶Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 71.

⁷Garry J. Williams, “Enlightenment Epistemology and Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Doctrines of Assurance,” in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 373.

⁸Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 9.

an elite clergy and formal scholarship.⁹ Like Bebbington, Noll also cites the Puritan reticence to engage in missions as a prime argument for discontinuity between the two movements. He points to the case of the Nonconformist Philip Doddridge as evidence, who he suggests was instrumental in giving the precision-leaning Particular Baptists a necessary “push” to become engaged in evangelical activism.¹⁰

With his sweeping generalization, Noll does both the Puritans and the Particular Baptists a disservice. Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans, as well as prominent Restoration Puritans, were certainly not averse to evangelical activity and played an important role in preparing the soil for the harvest of the Evangelical Revival.¹¹ While it is true that certain London Particular Baptists, such as John Brine and John Gill, did wrestle with the ethics of “pressing men to repent and turn to Christ” who might be non-elect and unable to do so, other fellow Baptists of the Western Association of their denomination, and particularly those associated with the Bristol Baptist Academy, were strong and impressive advocates of evangelical preaching.¹² In fact, the late Roger Hayden observes that both the 1644 and 1677 *London Confessions* are indicative of “the

⁹Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction*, 13–14.

¹⁰Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 163. Noll adds that the Particular Baptists “had remained doctrinally orthodox, but often in an extreme Calvinist form that discouraged active evangelism and that placed more stress on correct doctrinal formulas than on active piety.” His description of their doctrine and piety does pertain in particular to a small number of London churches where hyper-Calvinism prevailed, but does not apply to the majority of Particular Baptists. Noll mentions later Baptists, who were associated with the Bristol Baptist Academy and more evangelistic in nature, but he overlooks the early evangelistic influence of Bernard Foskett on the Bristol Academy and the Western Association of the Particular Baptists, even before the outbreak of the Evangelical Revival.

¹¹The term “Restoration Puritan” will be used throughout this study to designate the Puritan pastors and theologians who were influential in the decades immediately following the Stuart Restoration of 1660. Correspondingly, the term “Elizabethan Puritan” refers to those who lived and wrote during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), and the term “Jacobean Puritan” to those living in England and Scotland during the reign of James VI in Scotland (1567–1603), later known as James I (1603–1625) as the King over both England and Scotland.

¹²Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689–1765*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1967), 87.

history of the Particular Baptists at this time,” which was “one of a conscious, even aggressive evangelism, which resulted in a widespread planting of new churches.”¹³ Furthermore, Noll’s example of discontinuity loses much of its force when one considers that Doddridge, with all his great evangelistic zeal, was a product of the same Calvinist Puritan tradition as the Particular Baptists. While both Noll and Bebbington would concur with Geoffrey Nuttall’s proposition that a clear continuity runs “from Richard Baxter in the mid-seventeenth century through Philip Doddridge in the early eighteenth to Evangelicals such as the Baptist, Andrew Fuller,” they are also inclined to look past the many similarities between the Puritans and the evangelicals, and concentrate instead on the differences.¹⁴

For Bebbington, the Evangelical Revival represents a clear and distinct “break with the past,” which found its expression in three major “symptoms of discontinuity.”¹⁵ For one, the Calvinism that had flourished in the Church of England for well over a century, with its doctrine of justification by faith, had been nearly eradicated by the time the Evangelical Revival finally broke forth. This opened the door to a more mystical faith than traditional Puritanism might have sanctioned. However, this largely Anglican phenomenon did not apply to the Church of Scotland or to the English Dissent, where “the tide of Reformed teaching continued to flow.”¹⁶ England had also experienced an influx of continental Protestant movements, such as Lutheran Pietism and the Moravians,

¹³Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century Baptist Ministers Trained at Bristol Academy, 1690–1791* (Oxfordshire: Nigel Lynn Publishing & Marketing, 2006), 8.

¹⁴Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 34n125. See G. F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge: A Study in a Tradition*, Friends of Dr. Williams’s Library Fifth Lecture (London, 1951), 19; Nuttall, *Richard Baxter* (London, 1965); Nuttall, ed., *Philip Doddridge, 1702–51: His Contribution to English Religion* (London, 1951); and Nuttall, *Correspondence of Philip Doddridge* (London, 1979).

¹⁵Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 36.

¹⁶Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 36.

which subsequently morphed into a new and unique religious movement that was far different from anything that had been experienced before.

Yet, the most conspicuous “symptom of discontinuity” for Bebbington is the unusual attention that evangelicals paid to missions. He finds their novel activism “striking,” for it was “rare” to have found any Protestant minister in the two previous centuries, with the possible exception of Richard Baxter or John Eliot, who actively encouraged the preaching of the Gospel outside the borders of established Christianity.¹⁷ In contrast to their Puritan progenitors, the evangelicals actively took the initiative to reach lost souls; being discontent to wait on God to providentially make the first move. He observes that this new sort of activism first evidenced itself among the early Methodists in England and Wales, and was energized by an emerging doctrine of assurance which had its roots in the experientialism of the Enlightenment.

Bebbington willingly concedes that the Puritans taught assurance in varying degrees, but he suggests that their particular version tended to be “rare, late and the fruit of struggle.” By contrast, he suggests, that evangelicals held assurance to be “normally given at conversion and the result of simple acceptance of the gift of God.”¹⁸ This new-found freedom from the fear of self-deception concerning salvation and from the extreme introspection of certain seventeenth-century Puritans gave men like Howell Harris the confidence he needed to confidently claim, “I *knew* that I was His child, and that he loved

¹⁷Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 40. Bebbington references Ernst Benz, “The Pietist and Puritan Sources of Early Protestant World Missions (Cotton Mather and A.H. Franke)” *Church History* 20, no. 2 (June 1951): 28–51. Benz describes the theological basis that discouraged early Protestants from pursuing missions as well as the later motivation of Mather and the Puritans to enter missions at the risk of being labeled “enthusiasts.” It was generally understood that Christ’s command to make disciples of all nations had already been fulfilled by the apostles. The Puritans also believed that “the devil had hidden a part of mankind in America... in order to withdraw them from the influence of the Gospel” (48). Believing they were in the last days and expecting the imminent outpouring of the Spirit, Mather and other Puritans believed they would now “have to make up what the apostles did not do, throw the devil out of the last reservation he saved for himself, and preach the gospel to the last heathen nation” (49). The Puritans were not opposed to evangelism as some might suggest. They were active in their own right, seeking to minister within English Christendom and reform (evangelize) it.

¹⁸Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 43.

me and heard me.”¹⁹

Despite Bebbington’s claim, it should be noted that Harris’s confidence was not equally shared among early evangelicals, as there was no standard view of assurance that was characteristically evangelical. D. Bruce Hindmarsh observes that “there was a spectrum of opinion on assurance among evangelicals as surely as there was among Puritans.”²⁰ Neither Jonathan Edwards nor John Wesley, for example, shared the same understanding, and neither held to an assurance based on a mere acceptance of God’s gift. Edwards allowed that one could experience an early “sense” of assurance at one’s conversion, noting, “Tis possible that a man may have a good assurance of a state of grace, at his first conversion, before he has had opportunity to gain assurance,” but he went on to stress the importance of self-examination and good works as the evidence of a genuine transformation of the heart.²¹ In contrast, Wesley emphasized the presence of good works as a sign of the indwelling Spirit. However, different from Edwards, he believed that a lack of good works could be indicative of a loss of the Spirit’s presence, since both must “testify conjointly” to provide any measure of assurance.²²

In addition to the doctrine of assurance, Bebbington suggests that Enlightenment-inspired empiricism also led to greater optimism, a more moderate form

¹⁹Hugh Joshua Hughes, *Life of Howell Harris, the Welsh Reformer* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1892), 12–13. His conversion took place on June 18, 1735. In his account, Harris writes, “Being in secret prayer, I felt suddenly my heart melting within me, like wax before the fire, with love to God my Saviour; and also felt, not only love and peace, but a longing to be dissolved and be with Christ, and there was a cry in my inmost soul which I was totally unacquainted with before, ‘Abba, Father! Abba, Father!’ I could not help calling God my Father; I *knew* that I was His child, and that He loved me and heard me. My soul being filled and satiated, cried, ‘It is enough; I am satisfied. Give me strength, and I will follow Thee through fire and water!’ I could say I was happy indeed! There was in me a well of water springing up to everlasting life; and the love of God was shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost” (12–13).

²⁰D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the Evangelical Tradition: Between the Conversions of Wesley and Wilberforce* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 66.

²¹Jonathan Edwards, “Religious Affections,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. J. E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 2:443.

²²John Wesley, “Thoughts on Christian Perfection,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. A. C. Outler (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 1:295.

of Calvinism, a pragmatic approach to evangelism (field preaching), the increased use of literature to get out the message, a greater interest in humanitarian enterprises, and political activism. He concludes that the Evangelical Revival was essentially driven by a novel doctrine of assurance, born out of the Enlightenment, which, in turn, spawned a radically different activism that would eventually set Evangelicalism apart from the torpid Puritanism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²³

Perceived Weaknesses in Bebbington's Thesis

While having great respect for both Bebbington and Noll as historians, a number of scholars have emerged in recent years, who have made a case for the traditional view of greater continuity between the two movements. Bebbington believes Evangelicalism was unique with its “new emphasis on the discernable moment of an individual's conversion,” yet he readily concedes that conversionism, biblicism, and crucicentrism are not uniquely evangelical, since they were emphasized by the Puritans as well. Thus, with the possible exception of activism, Bebbington does allow far more continuity between Restoration Puritans and eighteenth century evangelicals than his quadrilateral suggests.

This continuity is also corroborated by the research of scholars, who aver that evangelicalism actually arose in light of “recurring perennial factors” in much the same way that Puritanism did in “both its Tudor and Stuart phases.” In fact, both had the same goals of “national evangelization and personal revival.”²⁴ James I. Packer gives further credence to the “recurring” view, seeing Puritanism as essentially a “movement of revival.” As examples, he references “the Sixmilewater revival in Antrim in the 1620s,”

²³Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 60–73.

²⁴Kenneth J. Stewart, “Did Evangelicalism Predate the Eighteenth Century? An Examination of David Bebbington's Thesis,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 77 (2005):142–43.

the lecture at Dedham in the 1620s, and the Kirk o' Shotts awakening in 1631.²⁵ Even George Whitefield readily acknowledged the revivalist nature of the Puritans, noting that “the more true and vital religion hath revived either at home or abroad, the more the good old Puritanical writings have been called for.”²⁶

Although the term “evangelical” is generally descriptive of a movement fundamentally different from pre-revival Protestantism, it has also been coined to describe various persons and movements that arose before the eighteenth century. Diarmaid MacCulloch specifically uses it to describe the “religious reformism which developed in England during the 1520s and 1530s.” He defines evangelicalism as “the religious outlook which makes the primary point of Christian reference the Good News of the *Evangelion*, or the text of scripture generally,” adding that it has also become a “conveniently vague catch-all term which can be applied across the board.”²⁷ Kenneth Stewart concurs, observing,

Even when it is allowed that we are in certain cases dealing with texts in translation, we are still warranted in concluding that there is a proper use of the terminology ‘evangelical’ and evangelicalism prior to 1730, with reference to strident Protestant gospel advocates. On a linguistic basis alone, little distinction can be drawn between evangelical movements prior to and after 1730.²⁸

Instead of “sharp distinctions,” Puritanism actually exhibits very “clear points of cross-fertilization between eighteenth-century anglophone evangelicalism and its culture.”²⁹ Careful study demonstrates just how much their many sermons and the literature they wrote were strongly evangelistic in intent. This tendency grew

²⁵J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 46–47.

²⁶Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 46.

²⁷Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 3.

²⁸Stewart, “Did Evangelicalism Predate the Eighteenth Century?,” 151–52.

²⁹Michael A. G. Haykin, “Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment: A Reassessment,” in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 51–52.

exponentially among Restoration Puritans, who placed even more “emphasis on seeking the salvation of the lost” and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; a tendency which was continued and further enhanced by the evangelicals.³⁰ Dewey Wallace Jr. underscores their missionary zeal, noting,

With regard to soul winning, Puritan spirituality after 1660 placed emphasis on sermons, but also on the personal exhortations of faithful Christians, whether lay or clerical. Here one sees a gradual transition to the evangelicals of the eighteenth century. In biographies of devout persons, the theme of soul winning is prominent... Joseph Alleine even considered going to China to preach the gospel, since preaching was closed to him in England—a most unusual proposal for his time. Such soul winning directed at the young and at foreign lands was typical of later evangelicalism.³¹

Despite credible arguments to the contrary, the discontinuity view endures. This may be due in part to a general misunderstanding of the incredible diversity within Puritanism itself, making it extremely difficult to define who or even what is uniquely Puritan with any degree of certainty. There is also a widespread tendency to categorize the Puritans with broad generalizations. This classification of all things Puritan under one stereotypical brand can lead historians to make “questionable assumptions” or “hard and fast distinctions,” which can lead to an unwarranted thesis of discontinuity.³² While it is unmissable that the Puritans, who referred to themselves as “the godly,” were a “distinctive subculture” and well-known for their “Bible study, prayer, fasting, sermon consumption and strict Sabbatarianism,” there was far more disparity and much less homogeneity among them than typically assumed.³³ In fact, a variety of sects eventually

³⁰Haykin, “Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment,” 52.

³¹Dewey D. Wallace Jr., ed., introduction to *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), xv.

³²John Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 255.

³³Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” 257. Coffey cites Patrick Collinson, “Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism: 1560–1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 32–57.

emerged from within the Puritan ranks; each building upon distinctly Puritan convictions but ultimately taking them to the extreme. These groups are referred to as “radical” Puritans. The term was especially applicable to the Quakers, whose “undue emphasis on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit” was nothing less than an unhealthy exaggeration of what had once been wholesome Puritan dogma.³⁴

Because of these divisions, the face of Puritanism gradually evolved. In fact, “by the early 1650s, the community of the godly had splintered into a multitude of factions. Presbyterians and Congregationalists made up the respectable majority, but they had to compete with the Separatists, General Baptists, Particular Baptists, Seekers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchists, Quakers, Muggletonians, Socinians and (wildest of all) Ranters.”³⁵ The Ranters, for example, profaned the sacred nature of Puritan communion by singing “blasphemous songs to the well-known tunes of metrical psalms,” followed by a communal feast in which a piece of beef became the body of Christ and a cup of ale thrown into the fireplace was declared to be His blood.”³⁶ Yet, despite their theological perversions, men such as William Erbery, a Seeker, who was also rumored to be a Ranter, believed he was still firmly within the Puritan camp.³⁷

Clearly, the typical picture of the Puritans as a “solid, cohesive movement of impeccable Reformed orthodoxy” is not historically accurate. This stereotypical image may be attributable in part to modern-day publishers, who are very selective in the choice of Puritan authors they print and distribute. They offer a collection of Reformed works that appear to be mostly homogeneous in nature, yet a sizable number of other “Puritan”

³⁴Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, rev. ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 14.

³⁵Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” 259.

³⁶Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 200.

³⁷Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 197.

works are routinely omitted, which they esteem to be doctrinally heterodox. In the process, few actually read or are even aware of the works, for example, of the Arminian John Goodwin, who was very popular in his day, or the musings of the poet John Milton, who “defended divorce, freedom of the press and regicide.”³⁸ Even among Reformed divines there was evident disunity, for despite a general agreement on the basic tenants of their theology,

Puritan ‘Calvinism’ itself was profoundly variegated: high Calvinists like John Owen were deeply unhappy with the watered-down Calvinism of Baxter and the antinomian Calvinism of Crisp. Rather than speaking of a singular ‘Calvinism’, we should perhaps talk about rival Reformed theologies.³⁹

Bebbington thus appears to follow a “dated image of Puritanism as sober, stale, and doctrinally sound,” which leads him to draw stark contrasts with a more vibrant evangelicalism. He suggests that evangelicals differed from the Puritans because they had been strongly influenced by the Enlightenment, yet he seems to overlook the fact that the “doctrine and piety” of two of the most influential leaders of the Evangelical Revival, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, were distinctly Puritan in character and demonstrated a clear continuity with the theology of Elizabethan, Jacobean and Restoration Puritans.⁴⁰

Even more problematic for the discontinuity theorists is the absence of any typical Puritan view of assurance that is demonstrably dissimilar to that of the early evangelicals. Bebbington, for example, undermines his own thesis by the admission that assurance “had been an important theme of pre-Evangelical Protestant spirituality,” which would of course include the Puritan tradition.⁴¹ His single reference to the

³⁸Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” 261.

³⁹Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” 263. Coffey appears to use the term “high Calvinist” to describe the strict Calvinist position. John Owen encouraged the free offer of the gospel to the lost and would not have agreed with the high or hyper-Calvinists who did not.

⁴⁰Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” 263–65.

⁴¹Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 7.

Elizabethan Puritan William Perkins implicitly suggests that Perkins's doctrine of "temporary faith," with its "protracted self-examination," was somehow typically Puritan.⁴² Perkins proposed the idea that even one who was non-elect might be able to exercise faith for a time, but it would inevitably pass away. Such a prospect could drive the believer toward intense introspection and deep soul-searching, questioning whether his or her faith was genuine or merely the temporary variety of faith demonstrated by the non-elect, whose consciences had merely been stirred by the preaching of the Word.⁴³

Perkins's view, however, was only one of many that prevailed within Puritanism. Theodore Bozeman, for example, chronicles the rise of prominent English Puritans, such as John Eaton, whose strong convictions on assurance led to his trial in 1617 for "errors of antinomian tendency," while Peter Shaw was "suspended" by the High Commission early in 1629 for holding similar beliefs.⁴⁴ There were also the prominent English Puritans Thomas Hooker, John Cotton, and John Davenport, who had already "jostled with antinomian doctrines" even before they immigrated to New England and the Antinomian controversy had erupted in New England in the mid-1630s.⁴⁵ While it is obvious that some Puritans were overly introspective and did not

⁴²Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 43.

⁴³Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 43. In Perkin's doctrine of preparation, the stubborn nature of a sinner is both "tamed and subdued" and his conscience is filled with terror because of his sins before a holy God "by the Ministry of the Law" or the preaching of the Word. Perkins distinguished between "restraining Grace," which convicts and enlightens without a complete change of heart, and "renewing Grace," which ultimately leads a sinner to repentance and regeneration. This was his explanation for those who had been convicted of their sins and professed for a time to believe, only to fall away. Those who had merely responded to the "restraining Grace" of God experienced a conversion of sorts, along with a temporary change of behavior, but were unable to proceed any further and eventually fell away. True believers, in contrast, proceed to the final step of "renewing Grace," in which the Holy Spirit is infused into their souls. This leads to true and lasting spiritual regeneration as God's elect people and results in perseverance in the faith. For further study, see William Perkins, *A Grain of Mustard Seed* (Newcastle: John White, 1750), 5–14.

⁴⁴Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain: Disciplinary Religion & Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill, NC: the University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 187.

⁴⁵Bozeman, *Precisionist Strain*, 183.

enjoy the assurance of their salvation, there is also abundant evidence that the doctrine of assurance was not only debated, but expressly promulgated within Puritanism more than a century before the Evangelical Revival broke forth.

One might make a similar case for activism, which, like the doctrine of assurance, also had its antecedents in Puritanism. The early Puritans were “active” in their own right, but they faced a completely different set of givens in their day that ultimately shaped their approach. Their apparent lack of missionary zeal, as seen from a modern perspective, may have had less to do with a restrictive theology or reticence toward evangelical activism and far more with the driving forces that prevailed within the Tudor-Stuart state-church, which were unique to their seventeenth-century world.

As recent scholarship on ‘England’s long Reformation’ has emphasized, the English state became Protestant decades before the English people, and for generations Protestant energies were sunk into evangelizing their own populations. The fact that Protestants had no equivalents to the Catholic religious orders was another major hindrance to cross-cultural mission: Protestant clergy were expected to minister to existing congregations, and even John Eliot had to combine his mission to the Indians with his ordinary ministry. What changed the situation was not the injection of a hitherto absent activist zeal, but the expansion of empire and the rise of the voluntary society in the eighteenth century.⁴⁶

What is apparent throughout is a demonstrable continuity between the Puritans and evangelicals; so much so that it becomes nearly impossible to discern where Puritanism ends and evangelicalism begins. Rather than drawing an imaginary line between the two, it might be more consistent to view evangelicalism, not as a radically different movement, but as a further and later development of both the Reformation and Puritanism as “authentically evangelical movements.”⁴⁷ It explains, for example, the common theological vision and message of early evangelicals such as George Whitefield, Philip Doddridge, Isaac Watts, and Benjamin Beddome who were all of Puritan heritage.

⁴⁶Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” 267.

⁴⁷Williams, “Enlightenment Epistemology and Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Doctrines of Assurance,” 374.

On the other hand, the obvious discontinuities between Puritans and evangelicals might best be explained by what Kenneth Stewart calls “evangelical Successionism,” or the vibrant expressions of the Christian faith that are perennial and have striking similarities, yet differ in response to a unique set of factors in their particular era. Such perennial expressions of Christianity can be hidden away for centuries at a time, but then suddenly reemerge at different moments in history as “biblical, doctrinal and experiential Christianity in its most vital and hardy form— i.e. the faith once delivered to the saints.”⁴⁸ Evangelical Successionism was widely accepted among church historians before Bebbington introduced his thesis in 1989. In fact,

it was taken as an elementary truth that not only the evangelical Christianity we associate with the century of the Wesley brothers, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards but also—for that matter with the next century of George Mueller, D. L. Moody and R. C. Ryle, and the century just past—the Billy Graham era stood in an unbroken succession of vital Christianity extending backwards to at least the Reformation of the sixteenth century and perhaps beyond.⁴⁹

Thus, the continuity between Puritanism and evangelicalism is not accidental, since both are perennial expressions of the same robust living faith.

Thomas Kidd’s Triad and Early Evangelicalism

Although evangelicals were in many ways children of the Enlightenment, their reactions at the outset of the Evangelical Revival, along with their immediate inclination to associate it with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, were deeply rooted in seventeenth-century Puritanism.⁵⁰ While Bebbington mentions J. I. Packer’s list of six “evangelical fundamentals,” which includes the “lordship of the Holy Spirit,” that same emphasis as a mark of evangelicalism is inexplicably missing from his definition.⁵¹ This

⁴⁸Stewart, “Did Evangelicalism predate the eighteenth century?,” 136.

⁴⁹Stewart, “Did Evangelicalism predate the eighteenth century?,” 135.

⁵⁰Haykin, “Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment,” 60.

⁵¹Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 4. For further study, see J. I. Packer, *The Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem*, Latimer House Studies 1 (Oxford: Latimer House, 1978), 20–23.

critical omission is addressed by Thomas S. Kidd, who counters with his own triad of characteristics, hereafter referred to as “Kidd’s triad.” He proposes that there were actually three characteristics that “distinguished the new [early] evangelicals;” namely, the “persistent desires for revival, widespread individual conversions, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”⁵² He suggests that it was actually the “new expectations for seasons of revival, or outpourings of the Holy Spirit,” that set the early evangelicals apart from “earlier forms of Protestantism,” but as will be demonstrated, their emphases were actually built upon the despair and millennial expectations of seventeenth-century Restoration Puritans, who yearned and prayed for the revival of the church.⁵³

After the failure of the Commonwealth experiment and the Restoration of 1660, the Puritan call for spiritual reformation became even louder, but fell mostly on deaf ears. This led to frustration and feelings of despair; “a mood in which the New England Puritans specialized.”⁵⁴ The English-born Puritan leader Samuel Torrey, considered by some to be “the first evangelical in New England,” began to call for an “outpouring of the Holy Spirit to revive the languishing churches.”⁵⁵ This desire for an outpouring of the Spirit had gradually evolved into a common revival message among “Protestant ministers of every persuasion” in both Great Britain and British America, but it was especially pronounced among the Puritans and other Non-conformists during the post-1660 Great Persecution. Shocked by the spiritual apathy around them, “ministers felt

⁵²Thomas S. Kidd, introduction to *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xix.

⁵³Thomas S. Kidd, “‘Prayer for a Saving Issue’: Evangelical Development in New England before the Great Awakening,” in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 129–30. Kidd adds, “During those seasons, large numbers of sinners would experience the convicting presence of the Spirit and convert almost simultaneously. One begins to see signs of a new emphasis on mass conversions precipitated by an outpouring of the Spirit as early as the late seventeenth century in New England.”

⁵⁴Kidd, “‘Prayer for a saving issue’,” 130.

⁵⁵Kidd, “‘Prayer for a saving Issue’,” 130.

called upon to become Jeremiahs and preach reformation.” This was followed by an impressive array of methods and special efforts to bring revival, but it met with little success. Having finally reached a state of desperation, the ministers concluded that the reformation they sought “could come about only as consequence of a revival of religion through the outpouring of God’s grace” through the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶

It is no coincidence that Kidd’s “triad” was prominent within the ranks of the mostly Calvinistic eighteenth-century Dissent, which also produced many of the early evangelicals. Even before the arrival of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys, the call for an effusion of the Holy Spirit was common among prominent Puritan divines. In fact, this message had been so well assimilated that when Isaac Watts and John Guyse first learned with great surprise of the unusual events in Northampton, Massachusetts, they immediately had a ready explanation.⁵⁷ In their preface to the London edition of Jonathan Edwards’s *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton and the Neighboring Towns and Villages* they wrote about the “plentiful effusion of his Spirit where it is preached.”⁵⁸ Such amazement among the early evangelicals, combined with their immediate recognition that the Holy Spirit was finally being poured out, was part and parcel of a Restoration Puritan heritage.

The Continuity between Puritanism and Evangelicalism

From its inception, a strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit was basic to Puritan theology.⁵⁹ Beeke and Jones have noted that “while Martin Luther and Martin

⁵⁶Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England’s Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23.

⁵⁷Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 99.

⁵⁸Isaac Watts and John Guyse, preface to Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls In Northampton and the Neighboring Towns and Villages* (London: John Oswald, 1737), v.

⁵⁹Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1979), 120.

Bucer have been described as theologians of the Holy Spirit, that title eminently belongs to John Calvin.”⁶⁰ Calvin’s theology stressed the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation, as well as in “prayer, preaching, and interpreting Scripture.” These topics span the entirety of the third book of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.⁶¹

Not surprisingly, Puritanism gave more attention to pneumatology and produced more literature on it “than any movement in Christian history.”⁶² This may also be the reason for the eventual rise of “highly subjective and bizarre left-leaning movements within Puritanism itself” that centered on aberrant doctrines of the Holy Spirit.⁶³ B. B. Warfield proposed that Puritan thought was “almost entirely occupied with loving study of the work of the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁴ Richard Lovelace strikes a similar tone, noting that “the English Puritans (particularly John Owen and Richard Sibbes) have given us the most profound and extensive biblical-theological studies of the ministry of the Holy Spirit which exist in any language.”⁶⁵

While the Puritans held that the Spirit’s work in mankind was supernatural in nature, their natural tendency was to “associate the Holy Spirit in man with man’s reason.”⁶⁶ In other words, the Holy Spirit illumines man’s otherwise darkened thought processes so that he is able to discern God’s truth and direction. Richard Sibbes taught

⁶⁰Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 419.

⁶¹Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, 419.

⁶²Jerald C. Brauer, “Conversionism: From Puritanism to Revivalism,” *The Journal of Religion* 58, no. 3 (July 1978): 240.

⁶³Brauer, “Conversionism: From Puritanism to Revivalism,” 241.

⁶⁴B. B. Warfield. introduction to *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, by Abraham Kuyper, trans. Henri de Vries (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), xxviii.

⁶⁵Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Study of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1979), 120.

⁶⁶Nuttall, *Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 36.

that “the Spirit of God moveth according to our principles, it openeth our understandings to see that it is best to trust in God; it moveth so sweetly, as if it were an inbred principle, and all one with our own spirit.”⁶⁷ Elsewhere, he emphasized how the Holy Spirit influences a man’s judgment “by presenting greater reasons, and further light than it saw before.” He states that “when the Holy Spirit sets the will at liberty, a man doth that he doth with full advisement of reason; for though God work upon the will, it is with enlightening of the understanding at the same time.”⁶⁸

In his influential work, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, Geoffrey Nuttall identifies ten basic emphases that characterized Puritan pneumatology.⁶⁹ For the purposes of this study, however, only four will be highlighted, which pertain to the continuity and progression of Calvinistic pneumatology as it developed within Puritanism and eventually gave birth to evangelicalism.

Conversion and the Spirit

The strong emphasis on a person’s conversion “set the Puritan off against the Church of England.” In their understanding, a conversion amounted to a “profound, overwhelming, totally transforming experience in which a person believes that he has experienced death and rebirth through the powerful working of the Spirit of God.”⁷⁰ This had been the experience of Richard Mather, as related by Increase Mather in 1614, when “the Lord revived his broken heart, by sending the Holy Spirit to accompany the Ministry

⁶⁷Richard Sibbes, “The Soul’s Conflict with Itself and Victory over itself by Faith,” in *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 197.

⁶⁸Sibbes, “Excellency of the Gospel above the Law,” in *The Works of Richard Sibbes*, 4:225.

⁶⁹Nuttall discusses (1) The Spirit and the Word; (2) The Discerning of Spirits; (3) The Witness of the Spirit; (4) The Spirit and Prayer; (5) The Spirit and Prophesying; (6) The Spirit and the Ordinances; (7) the Liberty of the Spirit; (8) The Government of the Spirit; (9) The Life and Fellowship of the Spirit; and (10) The Spirit in Every Man.

⁷⁰Brauer, “Conversionism,” 230.

of the Word, and to enable him to apply the precious promises of the Gospel to his Soul.”⁷¹ John Owen states that this powerful work of the Holy Spirit is “by the use of means,” whereby He “worketh also on men suitably unto their natures, even as the faculties of their souls, their minds, wills, and affections, are meet to be affected and wrought upon,” and “doth not consist in enthusiastical raptures, ecstasies, voices, or any thing of the like kind.”⁷²

For the Puritans, conversion served two important purposes. It brought about a person’s salvation, which was often recorded for posterity by indicating on which day or at what hour the new birth had taken place. It was also recognized as God’s method of integrating the believer into “a covenantal community” for the purpose of “transforming an entire nation into a holy commonwealth.”⁷³ This strong emphasis on one’s need for conversion through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit was still present at the time of the Evangelical Revival, although the “centrality of the covenant community, the elite ministry, and the holy commonwealth” had gradually been replaced by an “unambiguous emphasis on the centrality of the converted individual.”⁷⁴

The Spirit and the Word

A second major emphasis concerned “the Spirit and the Word” or Calvin’s twofold connection of the Holy Spirit with the Scriptures. Just as the Holy Spirit had inspired the writers of the Scriptures, so also He illuminates what has been written so that the reader or hearer can understand and assimilate it. It is through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures that God’s truth is revealed, but this truth cannot be fully understood without

⁷¹Cited by Brauer in “Conversion,” 231. See Increase Mather, *The Life and Death of Richard Mather* (London, 1670), 127–28.

⁷²John Owen, “Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Creation by Regeneration,” in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 3:224–25.

⁷³Brauer, “Conversionism,” 241.

⁷⁴Brauer, “Conversionism,” 241.

the help or illumination of the same Spirit. Thus, the Puritans, following John Calvin, taught that neither Scripture nor the Spirit could ever contradict the other.⁷⁵

Calvin had also encouraged believers to “give diligent heed both to the reading and hearing of the Scriptures.”⁷⁶ The private reading of the written word, as well as the spoken word in the exercise of preaching, had the power to save both the reader and the hearer. When reading the Scriptures, it was assumed that something took place in a person’s heart as well as in his head, as the Spirit illumined what had been read.⁷⁷ Sibbes referred to this as “a double light,” reasoning that “there must be a Spirit in me, as there is a Spirit in the Scripture before I can see any thing. The breath of the Spirit is suitable to the Spirit’s breathing in the Scriptures; the same Spirit doth not breathe contrary motions.”⁷⁸

Richard Baxter offered a simple axiom which may well reflect the struggles he was having at the time with the Quakers: “Interpret Scripture well,” he wrote, “and you may interpret the Spirit’s motions easily. If any new duty be motioned to you, which Scripture commandeth not, take such motions as not from God.”⁷⁹ John Owen was even more direct, warning that “he that would utterly separate the Spirit from the Word had as good burn his Bible.”⁸⁰ Thus, the more orthodox strain of Puritans, the forebears of the early evangelicals, held that the Spirit spoke “in, by, or through the Word” and any

⁷⁵John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.10.1, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), 45.

⁷⁶Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.9.2 (44).

⁷⁷Nuttall, *Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 22.

⁷⁸Sibbes, “A Fountain Sealed,” in *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, 5:427.

⁷⁹Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of the Reverend Richard Baxter* (London: James Duncan, 1830), 2:198.

⁸⁰John Owen, “The General Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Creation,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 3:192.

dissociation of the two was to be condemned.⁸¹ It would serve as a protection against the growing influence of the radical Puritans, while laying a firm foundation for the powerful preaching that would later define the Evangelical Revival.

The Discerning of Spirits

A third emphasis was the role of the Holy Spirit in the discerning of spirits. This became increasingly pertinent as radical sects developed and Puritanism began to fracture. There was a tendency, especially among the Quakers in the 1650s, to dissociate the Holy Spirit from both reason and conscience and to elevate one's own spiritual perceptions and experiences above the Scriptures as credible sources of truth. This, they reasoned, was possible, since the same Holy Spirit, who had inspired the apostles, was also in them and "in every man, including the unconverted."⁸² The divine light, which they might refer to as "Christ, light, Holy Spirit, Spirit of Christ or Spirit of God," was supernaturally present in every person and was therefore "sufficient for authority and salvation."⁸³ This sufficiency was based on their understanding of a loving and merciful God, who was "unwilling that people should live or die in sin."⁸⁴ Every man was free to reject the light that was present at birth or to "turn to it and experience salvation."⁸⁵

The Quakers considered the Scriptures to be special revelation, but they did not regard them as supremely authoritative. While God did speak "mediately" through the Bible, the inner guidance of the Spirit, much like what the Apostles experienced, was

⁸¹Nuttall, *Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 33.

⁸²Nuttall, *Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, 38.

⁸³T. L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War: The Baptist-Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 102.

⁸⁴Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, 113.

⁸⁵Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, 111.

superior to biblical revelation.⁸⁶ Consequently, “Quakerism tended to exalt the Spirit at the expense of the Word.”⁸⁷ It was a dangerous departure from the Reformed view that Scripture itself, illumined by the Spirit, was sufficient to impart God’s truth. The subjective nature of such supposed revelation caused some to justifiably wonder “whether Satan, who often changed his appearance, might now have come as an angel of light.”⁸⁸ This ultimately led to doctrinal error among the Quakers, who according to John Bunyan, were allegedly teaching

1. That the holy Scriptures were not the Word of God. 2. That every man in the world had the spirit of Christ, grace, faith, etc. 3. That Christ Jesus, as crucified, and dying 1600 years ago, did not satisfy divine justice for the sins of the people. 4. That Christ's flesh and blood was within the saints. 5. That the bodies of the good and bad that are buried in the churchyard shall not arise again. 6. That the resurrection is past with good men already. 7. That that man Jesus, that was crucified between two thieves on Mount Calvary, in the land of Canaan, by Jerusalem, was not ascended up above the starry heavens. 8. That he should not, even the same Jesus that died by the hands of the Jews, come again at the last day, and as man judge all nations.⁸⁹

Years earlier, Richard Sibbes had expressed the classical Reformed position that a man’s perceptions should always be analyzed in the light of Scripture. “Nature,” he stated, “is but God’s candle. It is a light of the same light that grace is, but inferior.”⁹⁰ A man’s perceptions or feelings of conscience were not invalid, but they should be considered “an inferior light of the Spirit” when compared to the Scriptures.⁹¹ Initially, Richard Baxter willingly gave man’s perceptions a greater role in discerning the moving of the Spirit. He wrote, “Where is it that the Spirit giveth light, but into our own

⁸⁶Michael A. G. Haykin, “John Owen and the Challenge of the Quakers,” in *John Owen: The Man and His Theology*, ed. Robert W. Oliver (Phillipsburg, NJ: Evangelical Press, 2002), 139.

⁸⁷Haykin, “John Owen and the Challenge of the Quakers,” 140.

⁸⁸Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb’s War*, 115. Underwood cites John Pendarves, *Arrows Against Babylon* (London: J.C., 1656), 45.

⁸⁹John Bunyan, “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,” in *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1855), 1:21.

⁹⁰Sibbes, “Excellency of the Gospel above the Law,” in *The Works of Richard Sibbes*, 4:234.

⁹¹Sibbes, “A Fountain Sealed,” in *Works of Richard Sibbes*, 5:419.

understandings; and how perceive we that light, but by the rational apprehensions and discourses of those understandings?”⁹² However, by the end of his life, Baxter again emphasized “the necessity of well-grounding men in their religion” or teaching them the fundamental truth of Scripture.⁹³

John Owen took a more radical, cessationist stance toward the discerning of spirits, believing that such belonged to the “extraordinary gifts” that were present in the early church, but which had since ceased. For Owen,

[All that] was needful to preserve the church in truth and peace, was provided for in those primitive times, whilst there was a real communication of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit (and so more occasion given to the false pretence [*sic*] of them, and more danger in being deceived by them), by a peculiar gift of his discerning them, bestowed on some amongst them. 1Cor. xii.10, “Discerning of spirits” is reckoned among the gifts of the Spirit. So had the Lord graciously provided for his churches, that some among them should be enabled in an extraordinary manner to discern and judge of them who pretended unto extraordinary actings of the Spirit. And upon the ceasing of extraordinary gifts really given from God, the gift of discerning spirits ceased, and we are left unto the *word alone* for the trial of any that shall pretend to use them.⁹⁴

In apparent reference to the Quakers, who claimed to receive continued divine revelation, Owen continued,

Something, also, of this nature hath continued, and broken out in succeeding ages, and that in instances abominable and dreadful. And the more eminent in any season are the real effusions of the Holy Spirit upon the ministers of the gospel and disciples of Christ, the more diligence and watchfulness against these delusions are necessary; for on such opportunities it is, when the use and reputation of spiritual gifts is eminent, that Satan doth lay hold to intrude under the colour of them his own deceitful suggestions.⁹⁵

Despite his cessationist stance, Owen’s theology did allow for a reappearance of the extraordinary gifts in the latter days, when the long-awaited effusions of the Spirit

⁹²Baxter, “The Spirit’s Witness to the Truth of Christianity,” in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, 20:147.

⁹³Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. M. Sylvester (London: Matthew Sylvester, 1696), 213.

⁹⁴Owen, “General Principles Concerning the Holy Spirit and His Work,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 3:35.

⁹⁵Owen, “General Principles,” 3:35–36.

would finally come and the gift of discernment would again be needed. It was apparently with similar convictions that Jonathan Edwards wrote *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, believing that he had truly experienced “the commencement of that last and greatest outpouring of the Spirit of God that is to be in the latter ages of the world.”⁹⁶

Richard Baxter, in contrast, did allow for the possibility of new revelations, although, he noted that “there is no certainty of it in general, nor any probability of it to any one individual person, much less a promise.”⁹⁷ He further warned that

to expect it, or pray for it, is but a presumptuous testing of God. And all sober Christians should be the more cautious of being deceived by their own imaginations, because certain experience telleth us, that most in our age that have pretended to prophecy, or to inspiration, or revelations, have been melancholy, crack-brained persons, near to madness, who have proved deluded in the end.⁹⁸

Most prominent Restoration Puritans were not comfortable with the possibility of new revelations or gifts of the Spirit, but were content to judge all teachings, perceptions, and feelings of conscience in the light of Scripture. However, the more the conviction grew that the latter day effusions of the Spirit were imminent, the more the tendency grew among the early evangelicals of Puritan heritage, such as Jonathan Edwards, to embrace a gift of discernment which Owen believed was unnecessary and had ceased.

The Outpouring of the Spirit

The fourth and perhaps most significant emphasis was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Restoration Puritans often used the metaphor of an “outpouring” to describe the special work of God when He “pours out his Spirit from on high” to rescue His

⁹⁶Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, ed. C. C. Goen, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 4:230.

⁹⁷Baxter, “Christian Directory,” in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, 5:556.

⁹⁸Baxter, “Christian Directory,” 5:556.

people from their sins.⁹⁹ This was intimately tied to the growing conviction that the millennium, accompanied by unusual effusions of the Holy Spirit, would be very close at hand. It was the subject of frequent sermons during the time of adversity for Nonconformists after the Restoration and it became a popular topic after a series of smaller awakenings had occurred in both England and Scotland, beginning in 1620.

These messages were built upon two basic promises from Scripture that provided reassurance to the Reformed Dissent. First, they taught that the church was destined not only to survive, but to emerge victorious in the end. Second, God has always sent and will continue to send periodic outpourings of the Spirit at various times throughout history to strengthen and equip the Church.¹⁰⁰ Three of the major spokesmen for this millenarian message were Robert Fleming, John Howe, and John Owen.

Robert Fleming

Robert Fleming (1630–1694), a Scottish Presbyterian minister who had served as pastor in Cambuslang during the Commonwealth period, refused to accept the new conditions set down after the Restoration and suffered accordingly. He came to believe that the momentary troubles of the Dissent were, in fact, “the last and most remarkable assault, that the Church universal shall have from Antichrist, before that full stroke on the seat of the beast” in preparation for the millennium.¹⁰¹ That the dawning of the millennium was at hand was evidenced by two outpourings of the Spirit, which had earlier taken place in two Scottish towns. In 1625, an awakening took place in western Scotland in the town of Stewarton and began to spread in a contagious manner

⁹⁹Samuel Torrey, *A plea for the life of dying religion from the word of the Lord in a sermon preached to the General Assembly of the colony of Massachusetts at Boston in New-England, May 16, 1683, being the day of the election there /, by Mr. Samuel Torrey... (1683)* (Boston: Samuel Green for Samuel Sewall, 1683), 20.

¹⁰⁰Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 21–22.

¹⁰¹Robert Fleming, *The Fulfilling of the Scripture: For Confirming Believers and Convincing Unbelievers* (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1743), 176.

throughout the surrounding area. Accordingly, it was nicknamed the “Stewarton
Sickness.” Fleming observed that

for a considerable time, few Sabbaths did pass without some evidently converted,
and some convincing proofs of the power of God accompanying his word; yea, that
many were so choaked [*sic*] and taken by the heart, that through *terroure* (the *Spirit*
in such a measure convincing them of sin in hearing of the word []) they have been
made to *fall over* and thus *carried out of the church*, who have proved most solid
and lively Christians.¹⁰²

A second revival took place the following year in Shotts, located about
halfway between the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. On June 20, 1630, several
congregations had convened there for a yearly solemn Communion that would normally
last from three to five days. Following a night spent in prayer, 500 persons were
converted after hearing a moving sermon from a young itinerant Presbyterian minister
named John Livingston. The sermon lasted more than two hours while a light rain was
falling. It was reported that many of Livingston’s hearers fainted away due to an unusual
moving of the Spirit in their midst and were left lying on the ground.¹⁰³ Fleming noted
that “many of [the] most eminent Christians in that country, could date either their
conversion or some remarkable confirmation in their case, from that day.”¹⁰⁴

John Howe

John Howe, a Presbyterian, who was ejected from his pulpit in 1662 and
known as “a man of unalterable fidelity, whom nothing could move from the path of
duty,”¹⁰⁵ preached a series of fifteen sermons on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from

¹⁰²Fleming, *The Fulfilling of the Scripture*, 393.

¹⁰³Eric Leigh Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, 2nd ed.
(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 21.

¹⁰⁴Fleming, *The Fulfilling of the Scripture*, 394. See also Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 24–25.

¹⁰⁵David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters, from the Revolution to the Year
1838* (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2000), 1:309.

Ezekiel 39:29.¹⁰⁶ Howe was convinced that “a permanent serenity and happiness appointed for the universal church of Christ upon earth,” would be brought about by “a large and general effusion or pouring forth of the Spirit.”¹⁰⁷ He believed that an outpouring of the Spirit was “the only means for bringing about a revival of religion and producing the millennium.”¹⁰⁸

As Howe envisioned the unfolding of the millennium, there would at first be “surprise at the changes in men” in a particular town, area or region. This would then spread to an entire city, where the inhabitants would turn from their sinful ways. Eventually the glad tidings of the awakening would spread around the world, causing curious souls to look into the matter and give their approval, acknowledging it as the undeniable work of God. As a result, more and more people would become serious about their faith in God and the revival would continue to gather momentum.¹⁰⁹ Since the millennium, in his view, would not break forth at once, but spread incrementally across the face of the earth with small local revivals as its harbingers, Howe urged the faithful

to wait patiently and pray earnestly, that of so great a harvest of spiritual blessings to come upon the world in future time, we may have some first-fruits in the meantime. As it is not unusual, when some very great general shower is ready to fall, some precious scattering drops light here and there as forerunners.¹¹⁰

John Owen

Of the three millenarian preachers, John Owen was the most prolific. Owen, who had been Oliver Cromwell’s chaplain and had held the post of vice-chancellor of

¹⁰⁶“Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the House of Israel, saith the Lord God” (AV).

¹⁰⁷John Howe, *The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest Before the End of Time, By a Plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit* in the *Works of John Howe* (New York, 1835) 1:562–607.

¹⁰⁸Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 26.

¹⁰⁹Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 194. This is a summary of John Howe’s vision in *The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest*, 579–82.

¹¹⁰Howe, *The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest*, 1:579–82.

Oxford University, keenly sensed the need of revival and divine intervention after the Restoration. He had been expelled from Christ Church in Oxford and was later indicted under the Conventicle Act. Owen came to believe that the only way out of the darkness that had enveloped England was an outpouring of the Spirit.¹¹¹ At the conclusion of a most inspiring sermon entitled *The Use of Faith in a Time of General Declension in Religion*, Owen comforted and challenged his listeners with the hope of a future outpouring that would bring the necessary healing:

This, then is what we are called to, and it is required of us,—namely, faith in the faithfulness of Christ, who hath built his church upon the rock, [so] that, be things never so bad, it shall not be prevailed against;—faith in the fullness of the Spirit, and his promise to send him to renew the face of the church; faith in apprehending the truth of God, who hath foretold these things; and faith putting us upon those special duties that God requires at our hands in such a season.¹¹²

In Owen’s understanding, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in both the Old and New Testament had “direct respect unto the times of the gospel” that God had promised. God had already given his Spirit in some measure before, so the term “outpouring” reflected His intent to impart an even “larger measure of the Spirit to be now given than was before.”¹¹³ Thus, whenever the Spirit fell upon an individual, some unusual manifestations, which were evidence of His presence and power, were to be expected.¹¹⁴

Owen, along with Fleming and Howe, held to a “non-catastrophic” postmillennialism. He believed that “despite periodic setbacks, grace would eventually increase until the whole world would acknowledge God’s rule.”¹¹⁵ This also became the conviction of Jonathan Edwards, who believed the unusual blessings and outpouring of

¹¹¹Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 26–27.

¹¹²Owen, “The Use of Faith in a Time of General Declension in Religion,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 9:516.

¹¹³Owen, “Way and Manner of the Divine Dispensation of the Holy Spirit,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 3:114.

¹¹⁴Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 130.

¹¹⁵Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 130.

the Spirit in Northampton to be the “glorious work of God” that would begin first in America and then spread incrementally throughout the world.¹¹⁶

The postmillennialism of Owen, Fleming and Howe was adopted and further developed in the works of the Anglican theologian, Daniel Whitby (1638-1728), who believed that the millennium would commence with a powerful effusion of the Holy Spirit. This outpouring would first precipitate smaller local awakenings, and then be followed by the eventual conversion of the Jews and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, postmillennial thinking had become increasingly popular in Great Britain, as the church was believed to have entered a missionary millennium that would hasten Christ’s return.¹¹⁷ Missionary activity and the preaching of the Word were seen as the means by which the outpouring would be spread across the whole world. Not surprisingly, the Baptists Andrew Fuller and William Carey, who were strongly evangelistic, also embraced this postmillennial view.¹¹⁸

The gradual transformation of the Puritan jeremiads with their cries for the outpouring of the Spirit into the grand theme of the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival took place over the course of a century. Seeing that the country had sunken into a deep spiritual abyss, the clergy initially resorted to warnings against God’s judgment in order to bring the people to repentance and back to God. This met with little success. During the post-Restoration years, “a variety of techniques designed by the ministers” were employed to bring about a reformation, but they failed as well. Finally, at the dawn of the eighteenth century, most had come to believe that a revival was only possible

¹¹⁶Jonathan Edwards, *Thoughts on the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1743), 58–59.

¹¹⁷R. Philips Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1989), 137.

¹¹⁸Roberts, *Continuity and Change*, 138–39.

through an outpouring of the Spirit.¹¹⁹ This was the clarion call of the early evangelicals.

Antecedents of the Evangelical Revival

The earliest antecedents of the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival and its counterpart in the American colonies were the early seventeenth-century “sacramental revivals” in Scotland.¹²⁰ Long before the days of Knox and the Reformation, the Scots had energetically maintained the “holy fairs” or “the popular festivals of late medieval Catholicism.” These solemn yet festive occasions took place around the time of Easter and Corpus Christi, which the Council of Trent had strongly encouraged. Despite the attempts of the Reformed Scots to innovate and alter the long Catholic tradition, the desire for such sacramental festivals and their perpetuation remained, albeit in a modified form.¹²¹ The earlier Catholic festivals centered around the Mass, which had always drawn large crowds. This practice gradually transformed itself into several days of feasting, following the general concept of a traditional Puritan fast, although they did not abstain from food or sexual intercourse as the Catholics did.

A Puritan fast, which typically lasted an entire day, was “a shared participation in the ministry of the word, provided on an unusually lavish scale and intended to arouse a mood or state of shared repentance which might fend off God’s heavy judgments or obtain some special grace from the Lord.”¹²² In contrast, the “holy fairs” combined a festival atmosphere with a solemn celebration of the sacraments and the buying and

¹¹⁹Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 23.

¹²⁰Douglas A. Sweeney and Brandon G. Withrow, “Jonathan Edwards: Continuator or Pioneer of Evangelical History?” in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 295.

¹²¹Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, 19.

¹²²Patrick Collinson, “Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 51.

selling of crops and other goods.¹²³ Over time, summer and early fall gradually evolved “into one long sacramental season in which communions were openly hailed as the high days of the year.”¹²⁴ Such was the case of the Holy Fair at Shotts in 1630, which not only became a “high point in an extensive Presbyterian awakening,” but set the stage a century later for the large evangelical meetings that would take place in the open air.¹²⁵

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, a series of awakenings took place among New England Puritans that would become the harbingers of the first Great Awakening in colonial America and the Evangelical Revival in England. Around 1670, the Puritan leaders of New England began “calling for prayers for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to revive the languishing churches.”¹²⁶ This appeal slowly gathered momentum during the last decades of the seventeenth century and remained a major focus of the clergy in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Even the Premillennialist, Cotton Mather, after years of setting dates for the Second Coming and working tirelessly to bring reform to the church, acquiesced around 1710 to the prevailing sentiment, agreeing with fellow Puritans that “all that was left for Christians to do was to prepare and pray for the pouring out of God’s Spirit promised to the Church in the latter days.”¹²⁷

Some precursory indications of answered prayer came as early as 1676 as a covenant renewal took place in John Cotton Jr.’s church in Plymouth.¹²⁸ This was followed by a host of others over the next four years. A covenant renewal, patterned after

¹²³Sweeney and Withrow, “Jonathan Edwards,” 295.

¹²⁴Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 20.

¹²⁵Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 22.

¹²⁶Kidd, “Prayer for a Saving Issue,” 130.

¹²⁷Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596–1728* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 347–48.

¹²⁸Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 4.

the Old Testament, was a time in which believers would “gladly contract to adopt the full moral law as their guide for life.” After seeking God’s forgiveness, they would “agree to an elaborate set of promises as to how they should live.”¹²⁹ The renewals led to numerous conversions and a recommitment to faithfully fulfill the duties of membership. Two more renewals took place in 1680 in Boston, while two others followed in Salem and Haverhill before the end of the seventeenth century.¹³⁰ However, the most significant, if not the most publicized, renewal took place in 1705 in Taunton, Massachusetts under the leadership of the Puritan Samuel Danforth.

Inspired by the reports which he had read from the English Societies for the Reformation of Manners, Danforth began a series of monthly meetings with some of the most respected and influential citizens. These meetings ultimately led to a stirring revival in which more than 300 parishioners turned from their apathy and renewed their covenants.¹³¹ In fact, so many individuals felt the stirring of the Spirit that it became difficult for Danforth to attend to his duties, with so many people seeking his counsel concerning their spiritual concerns.¹³² The Taunton revival gained so much notoriety that it later received honorable mention in a publication printed in London in 1706 entitled *A Help to a National Reformation*. The account appeared as follows:

Omiting many other things that might be enumerated as to other Places, I shall sum up in short, an Account of what hath been done in a Town called Tanton, through the rich Mercy of God: The Reverend Mr.... Minister there, having seen some Printed Accounts of the Methods for Reformation in Old England, in imitation thereof (after earnest Prayers to God for Success) obtained of several Inhabitants of the [p]lace (that were noted for Sobriety and Zeal against Sin) to meet with him once in each Month, to consult what might be done to promote a Reformation of Disorders there. And after a Day improved in Fasting and Prayer together, they first attempted to reduce the Heads of Families to set up Family Worship; and God gave

¹²⁹George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 261.

¹³⁰Kidd, “Prayer for a Saving Issue,” 133–34.

¹³¹Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 106.

¹³²Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 46–47.

them great Success; So that most of the Families in the large Towns hearkened to their Exhortations and Reproofs; and set upon the Practice of Family Prayer Morning and Evening; every day having heard and read some Accounts of the Religious Societies of Young Men in London, they were encouraged to endeavour the like among them. And beyond their Expectation (God working with them) prevailed with the greatest part of the Youth to form themselves into Societies for Religious Exercises, signing some good Rules to be observed by them therein, much like the Orders of the Societies of young Men in London. The good Effect whereof was the putting an End to and utter Banishment of their former disorderly and profane Meetings to Drink, &c. and to the great Grief of Godly Minds.¹³³

Although the isolated covenant renewals were a great encouragement, they brought little or no change to the overall spiritual vitality of New England. Seeing that decades of strategies, new methods, and monthly meetings had all proven to be ineffective for the general population, Solomon Stoddard was inspired to take the idea of revival to a new level. Like John Owen, Stoddard and fellow Puritan divines were convinced that a general awakening among the population could not happen without an outpouring of the Spirit.¹³⁴ Stoddard, an orthodox Calvinist, held that it was God who ultimately drew the sinner to Himself, but He was frequently pleased to use the preaching of the Word to bring it about.

For Stoddard, effective preaching was to accomplish two objectives. It was to provide a warning about the horrors of hell, on the one hand, and the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ on the other.¹³⁵ Yet, even with a powerful and persuasive message, he recognized that few, if any, results could be expected without an outpouring of the Spirit and His resting upon those who delivered it. This, he averred, had always been God's means of reviving His church throughout its history. He noted that

there are some times of Degeneracy and Declension in the Church. Sometimes Commonwealths are in a languishing way. Sometimes the Estates of a People are under Decay. So, sometimes Religion is in a withering Condition; but there are means that are serviceable for the reviving of it: And this is one special means, when the Ministers have the Spirit of the Lord upon them. The Spirit of the Lord

¹³³[Joseph Downing?] *A Help to a National Reformation* (London: Joseph Downing, 1706), 15.

¹³⁴Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 108.

¹³⁵Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 137.

must be poured out upon the People, else Religion will not revive.¹³⁶

In his *Guide to Christ*, published in 1714, Stoddard laid out what Thomas Kidd believes was the “most extensive evangelical theology of conversion prior to Edwards.” It was also adopted and highly recommended by George Whitefield during the Evangelical Revival.¹³⁷ Stoddard’s approach was one of preparation; or a series of steps toward conversion. The objective was to bring those who were under the conviction of the Spirit to first seek after God and then lead them to find grace through Christ in their lives. His methodology was threefold: First, “to confirm and establish him [the sinner] in the apprehensions of the dangerousness of a natural condition” leading to damnation. Second, to “encourage him to be in the use of means in order to his conversion,” and third, “to direct him what course to take at present” or “daily to seek God in secret ...to reform his life,” and to “lay himself open to the convictions of the Spirit.”¹³⁸

Stoddard’s Puritan emphasis on preaching and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit proved to be very effective among the churches in the Connecticut Valley and in particular in the town of Northampton where he ministered. At the outset of the 1737 London edition of *A Faithful Narrative*, Jonathan Edwards related five “harvests” that had occurred there under Stoddard’s ministry; all of which had resulted in the ingathering of souls, with “the bigger part of the young people in the town... mainly concerned for their eternal salvation.”¹³⁹ Stoddard’s “preparationist” approach with its “emotional preaching of the terror of hell” was instrumental in the reaping of at least nine other “harvests,” between 1710 and 1733, in and around the region of the Connecticut

¹³⁶Solomon Stoddard, *The Efficacy of the Fear of Hell to Restrain Men from Sin: Showed in a Sermon before the Inferiour Court in Northampton, December 3d, 1712* (Boston: Thomas Fleet, 1713), 34.

¹³⁷Kidd, “Prayer for a Saving Issue,” 137.

¹³⁸Solomon Stoddard, *A Guide to Christ. Or, The Way of Directing Souls that are under the Work of Conversion* (Boston: Allen, 1714), 1–3.

¹³⁹Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton, and the Neighbouring Towns and Villages of New-Hampshire [Massachusetts] in New England* (London: John Oswald, 1737), 4–5.

Valley.¹⁴⁰ In addition, there was the “Earthquake Awakening” in the Merrimac Valley of Massachusetts (1727–1728), after the earthquake on October 29, 1727, and an earlier “Connecticut Thames River Valley Awakening,” which took place between 1721 and 1722. In the latter, forty-two new members were added to the church at Norwich and another eighty at Windham. In *A Sermon Preached at Windham* on July 12, 1721, Eliphalet Adams referenced the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost with its three thousand conversions to explain what had happened in that town. He noted that

since that day indeed Religion hath much decayed in many places, yet God hath not left himself without Witness at sundry times and diverse Places, when the Spirit hath been *poured out* more Plentifully from on high, then many have been wro’t upon by the Blessing of God the Means of Grace and bro’t over to the Acknowledgement of the Truth.¹⁴¹

The Rise of Reformed Evangelicalism

With Stoddard’s death in February of 1729 and the beginning of Jonathan Edward’s ministry at Northampton Church, the transition from Puritanism to evangelicalism was nearly complete, yet with few discernable differences. Beginning with the Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans, a living Reformed tradition with its vibrant, perennial expressions of faith had been passed down with observable continuity to the influential Puritans of the Restoration Period and finally to the proto-evangelical Puritans who witnessed the initial awakenings and renewals. In essence, it was the Puritanism of old with its emphasis on Scripture, the cross of Christ, the necessity of conversion, and the preaching of the message of grace that would also characterize the teaching of the Evangelicals. Above all, it was the Restoration Puritan emphasis upon the need for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would provide the foundation and revivalist character

¹⁴⁰Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 108. Crawford lists “harvests” duly noted by Stoddard’s contemporaries, which occurred in 1712, 1715–16, 1718, 1721, 1726–27, 1729, and 1731–32.

¹⁴¹Eliphalet Adams, *A Sermon Preached at Windham, July 12th, 1721 for the Late Remarkable Success of the Gospel among Them* (New London: T. Green, 1721), 9.

of the Evangelical movement, which first broke forth in Northampton in 1734.

Over the course of two centuries, Calvin's unique emphasis on the work of the Spirit would be articulated again and again in the theology of men such as Richard Sibbes, Richard Baxter, and John Owen, but would ultimately find its more modern evangelical expression in the ministries of men such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. Moreover, it was Owen's millennial emphasis on an outpouring of the Spirit to change hearts and bring about conversions that would eventually give birth to Kidd's triad or "persistent desires for revival, widespread individual conversions and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit," from the early evangelicals.¹⁴² Instead of a break with the past, there was solid continuity, as the vital emphases of Puritanism found new and vibrant expressions during the era of evangelicalism.

By the 1740s, the age of Puritanism had come to an end; "splintering into evangelicalism and rationalism."¹⁴³ Yet, the Reformed tradition as it had been embodied in the previous two centuries was still very much intact in the theology and practice of Jonathan Edwards. Solomon Stoddard, among others, had laid the foundation for the dawn of evangelicalism in New England through his preparationism, his expectations for revival, and his deep desire for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. However, what set Edwards and his contemporaries apart from his grandfather and previous generations was their "heightened emphasis on conversion as the *raison d'être* of the movement and the defining experience of a believer's life." The fading hope of reform with its accompanying despair that had burdened the Restoration Puritans, had now suddenly given way to the full expectation that "the Spirit would precipitate the conviction and conversion of many sinners at one time."¹⁴⁴ When the remarkable awakening and the

¹⁴²Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, xix.

¹⁴³Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 4.

¹⁴⁴Kidd, "Prayer for a Saving Issue," 145.

strange events took place in Northampton in 1734 and 1735, Edwards was already conditioned, not only to expect an outpouring of the Spirit, but to adequately explain it when it came. Thus, what Edwards described as a “*surprizing work of God* may not have been that surprising after all,” since it had already been the prayer of Puritan divines for nearly six decades.¹⁴⁵

Edwards’s concept of revivals differed somewhat from that of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, and his father Timothy Edwards. While they believed that God revived his church almost haphazardly wherever and whenever He chose, Edwards saw each revival as part of a grand, sovereign plan that would come to its fruition at the end of the millennium when Christ finally returned.¹⁴⁶ In this sense, Edwards “saw himself as simultaneously continuing the great Reformed tradition and standing at the dawn of a new age.”¹⁴⁷ He believed his place in history was foreshadowed in Revelation 16:10–11:

And the fifth angel poured his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. (AV)

The fifth vial was none other than the Roman Catholic Church and its stubbornness at the time of the Reformation as evidenced at the Council of Trent. Edwards believed that the sixth vial was the time in which he was living and was being “manifested” in the revivals of his day.¹⁴⁸ He was further convinced that this great latter day outpouring would begin in America and spread incrementally, stating,

It is exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth in the latter days; and I can’t think that anything else can be here intended but America.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵Kidd, “Prayer for a Saving Issue,” 145.

¹⁴⁶Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 134.

¹⁴⁷Sweeney and Withrow, “Jonathan Edwards: Continuator or Pioneer,” 281.

¹⁴⁸Sweeney and Withrow, “Jonathan Edwards: Continuator or Pioneer,” 282.

¹⁴⁹Edwards, “Some Thoughts Concerning Revival,” in the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:353.

Edwards divided the history of redemption into three main stages. The first spanned the time from the fall to the incarnation of Christ. The second stretched from incarnation to the resurrection, during which the redemption of the elect took place, and the third began at the resurrection and would continue until the end of the world, when all who would be saved have been accounted for.¹⁵⁰ According to Edwards, the first revival in recorded history was in the days of Enoch, in response to those who ‘called upon the name of the Lord.’ He observed that “a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God is always attended with... a great increase of the performance of the duty of prayer” and he believed that the Northampton revival was God’s answer to the many prayers of faithful men and women.¹⁵¹ Following the millennial conception of John Howe and Robert Fleming, Edwards believed that the outpouring in Northampton would initiate the spread of the Gospel incrementally across the face of the earth. He posited,

Some shall be converted and be the means of others’ conversion; God’s Spirit shall be poured out, first to raise up instruments, and then those instruments shall be improved and succeeded. And doubtless one nation shall be enlightened and converted after another, one false religion and false way of worship exploded after another.¹⁵²

In his evaluation of the Northampton awakening, Edwards borrowed from his Puritan heritage in evaluating the authenticity of the conversions, with the most formative influence coming from his father, Timothy Edwards. In fact, throughout his life, Jonathan “remained remarkably close to his father’s opinion on most issues.”¹⁵³ This would cause him to wrestle with the validity of his own conversion and would set the stage for his eventual dismissal from the ministry at Northampton. Timothy Edwards, a pastor in the

¹⁵⁰Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 135.

¹⁵¹Jonathan Edwards, “A History of the Work of Redemption,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 9:142.

¹⁵²Edwards, “A History of the Work of Redemption,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 9:459.

¹⁵³Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 352.

town of East Windsor, had been “an expert on the science of conversion,” emphasizing the preparatory steps toward conversion, which “some Puritans described as ‘legal terror.’” After recognizing his sinfulness, a prospective convert had to experience “the terror of total humiliation” before reaching out “in total dependence on God’s grace.”¹⁵⁴ Most important, the older Edwards insisted that evidences of a truly genuine conversion were always “substantial and lasting.”¹⁵⁵ This became Jonathan’s conviction as well.

In his *A Faithful Narrative*, Jonathan Edwards defined the act of conversion as “a great and glorious work of God’s power at once changing the heart and infusing life into the dead soul,” but he was hesitant to “fix” the precise time when it occurred.¹⁵⁶ It is possible that he was already in the process of modifying his understanding of conversion, which he had gleaned as a youth from his father. Timothy Edwards, following Puritan precedents, had emphasized three steps to conversion: conviction, humiliation, and repentance. Jonathan had thus grown to accept that God’s dealing with human beings at conversion always had a specific pattern: He “first convicts, wounds, distresses, and terrifies man by the contrast between his sin and the divine majesty, and then comforts him with glad tidings.”¹⁵⁷ Accordingly, Edwards observed,

And if it be indeed God’s manner (as I think the foregoing considerations shew that it undoubtedly is) before he gives men the comfort of deliverance from their sin and misery, to give them a considerable sense of the greatness and dreadfulness of those evils, and their extreme wretchedness by reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that persons, at least oftentimes, while under these views, should have great distress and terrible apprehensions of mind: especially it be considered what these evils are, that they have view of; which are no other than great and manifold sins, against the infinite majesty of the great Jehovah, and the suffering of the fierceness of his wrath to all eternity.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 40.

¹⁵⁵Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 26.

¹⁵⁶Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 4:177.

¹⁵⁷Smith, “Introduction to Religious Affections,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:19.

¹⁵⁸Edwards, “A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:155.

However, Edwards's own conversion experience did not fit the traditional Puritan mold. Instead of the typical experiences of fear and humiliation, he had "a new kind of apprehension and ideas of Christ... an inward, sweet sense of these things," and his "soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them."¹⁵⁹ This was not at all typical of what he had expected, forcing him to dig deeper into the true nature of a conversion to determine whether his had been genuine or not. On August 12, 1722, he wrote the following entry in his diary:

The chief thing that now makes me in any measure to question my good estate, is my not having experienced conversion in those particular steps, wherein the people of New England, and anciently the Dissenters of Old England, used to experience it. Wherefore, now resolved, never to leave searching, till I have satisfyingly found out the very bottom and foundation, the real reason, why they used to be converted in those steps.¹⁶⁰

Edwards's search for the true nature of conversion resulted in "an extensive study of the Reformed divines" and in particular their teachings on the believer's union with Christ. He reasoned that when a believer is indwelt by the Spirit at the moment of his conversion, as described in Romans 8:16, "There comes a new understanding of spiritual things, a new sense of holiness, and a new relationship to the natural world."¹⁶¹ Thus, Edwards's quest for the assurance of his salvation did not result from his readings of Locke or Newton or the influence of the Enlightenment as Bebbington seems to imply.¹⁶² Rather, it was an attempt to make sense of his unconventional conversion experience. Based solely on the testimony of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the reality of the believer's union with Christ, he concluded that true believers received "a new inward

¹⁵⁹Edwards, "Personal Narrative," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 16:793.

¹⁶⁰Edwards, "Diary: Monday, Aug. 12, 1722," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 16:779.

¹⁶¹Sweeney and Withrow, "Jonathan Edwards: Continuator or Pioneer," 291–92.

¹⁶²Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 48. Concerning assurance, Bebbington asserts, "Edwards's teaching in moral philosophy, logic and metaphysics differs from Locke's. Yet it remains true that the debt to Locke in certain specific fields was substantial. And there is a palpably Enlightenment tone about Edwards's form of expression.... Because philosophical discourse in his day was shaped so largely by Locke, Edwards inevitably speaks as his disciple."

perception or sensation of their minds entirely different in its nature and kind, from anything that ever minds were subject of before they were sanctified.”¹⁶³ This new perception or spiritual sense wrought by the believer’s union with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would ultimately result in lasting transformation in a believer’s life.

With the sheer number of people claiming conversion or who had experienced some unusual manifestation, it is not surprising that Edwards, following his father’s tutelage, was doubtful whether all the conversions he had witnessed were genuine. However, he reasoned that anyone who had truly encountered the living God, had seen His holiness, and had experienced a spiritual union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, would never be the same again. If the resulting fruit of the Spirit was clearly evident, along with an obvious and lasting transformation, one could reasonably assume that his or her conversion was real.

Edwards’s views of conversion and assurance were thoroughly Puritan in nature. His writings display obvious familiarity with the ideas of William Perkins, William Ames, Thomas Shepard, John Flavel, Richard Sibbes, and John Owen. Edwards, for example, quoted more from Thomas Shepard than from any other writer, although his doctrine of the Spirit, which is found in his *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, and his emphasis on the “conjunction of the Word and the Spirit” clearly resemble the views of Richard Sibbes.¹⁶⁴ Edwards was also known to hold John Owen in high regard, as is suggested by his entry in his *Catalogue #341*: “Dr. Owen recommended by Mr. Halyburton to the young students of divinity in the University of St. Andrews above all human writings for a true view of the mystery of the gospel.”¹⁶⁵ Instead of breaking with

¹⁶³Edwards, “Religious Affections,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:205.

¹⁶⁴Smith, “Introduction to Religious Affections,” 2:54, 69.

¹⁶⁵Smith, “Introduction to Religious Affections,” 2:68. See Jonathan Edwards, “Catalogues of Books,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 26:189.

the past, as Bebbington suggests, Edwards maintained clear continuity with his Puritan heritage. Evangelicalism then, in its earliest stages, was in many ways an eighteenth-century expression of what had always been part of earlier orthodox Reformed tradition.

Dissent and the English Eighteenth-Century Revival

By mid-1735, the revival fires of the outpouring at Northampton were beginning to die down. The first accounts of the revival written by William Williams, a pastor from nearby Hatfield, Massachusetts, had already reached Benjamin Colman, a pastor in Boston, and had been printed in May 1735 in the *New England Weekly Journal*. Colman asked Edwards for his own personal account and received an eight-page letter at the end of the month. Colman forwarded that same letter to some pastors in Boston as well as to John Guyse and Isaac Watts in London. Edwards then wrote a long account of the events in Northampton for Colman, who forwarded the abridged version to Watts and Guyse. They published the first London edition of *A Faithful Narrative* in 1737.¹⁶⁶

Expectations among those with Puritan roots were running high. The spiritual situation in England had worsened, and the great outpouring for which many in the Dissent had prayed had not yet come. The two great Calvinistic Welsh Evangelicals, Daniel Rowland and Howell Harris, had only recently come to faith in 1735 and the full impact of the Welsh Revival was still years away. Tragically, in the first half of the eighteenth century, much of the old Puritan Dissent in England had “turned within itself.”¹⁶⁷ Presbyterians and many General Baptists were moving toward Unitarianism, and Bristol Baptist Academy, which would later play a decisive role among the Particular Baptists, was still in its nascent years. Bernard Foskett, who “earnestly contended for the necessity of good works, preaching duty as well as privilege,” had only begun his thirty-

¹⁶⁶Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 21.

¹⁶⁷Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 101.

eight year tenure as director of the Academy in 1720.¹⁶⁸ Still, the sensational news from Northampton was already creating much excitement and anticipation among the Baptists in western England and Wales, who were in basic theological agreement with Jonathan Edwards and his defense of “historic evangelical Calvinism.”¹⁶⁹ The accounts of his personal experience and the missionary labors of David Brainerd “fired their imagination,” displaying “the true heart of the old Puritan Gospel of Christ.”¹⁷⁰

Edward’s *A Faithful Narrative* was “an instant classic... vouchsafed by the respected ministers, Watts and Guyse, who were living links to the pious Calvinism of previous generations.”¹⁷¹ In a letter to Benjamin Colman, Watts could hardly contain his excitement about the possibility of a similar type of outpouring in the British Isles:

These [revivals] are certainly little specimens of what Christ and his grace can do when he shall begin to revive his own work and to spread his Kingdom thro the earth; and if he begins in America, I adore his good pleasure and rejoice, but wait for the blessing in European countries... the same power can subdue all the opposition that is made by earth and hell, and can change heathens and papists as well as formal Protestants into lively Christians.¹⁷²

In the preface to *A Faithful Narrative*, Watts and Guyse professed great hope:

But never did we hear or read, since the first Ages of Christianity, any Event of this kind so surprising as the present Narrative hath set before us... But as the Gospel is the same divine Instrument of Grace still, as ever it was in the Days of the Apostles, so our ascended Saviour now and then takes a special Occasion to manifest the Divinity of this Gospel by a plentiful Effusion of his Spirit where it is preached: then Sinners are turned into Saints in numbers, and there is a new face of Things spread over a Town or a Country.¹⁷³

The reaction among Dissenters to Edwards’s account on both sides of the

¹⁶⁸Stephen Albert Swaine, *Faithful Men; or Memorials of Bristol Baptist College and Some of Its Most Distinguished Alumni* (London: Alexander & Shephard, 1884), 37.

¹⁶⁹Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 94.

¹⁷⁰Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 198.

¹⁷¹Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 91.

¹⁷²Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 21–22. Kidd cites Isaac Watts’s letter to Benjamin Coleman dated February 28, 1737.

¹⁷³Watts and Guyse, preface to a *Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God*, iii, v.

Atlantic was telling. First, there was the usual expression of amazement and surprise, but was quickly followed by a ready explanation. This had to be the outpouring that Puritans had been praying for since the early days of the Restoration. Secondly, both the North American Puritans and the English Dissent were equally quick to associate the awakening with the millennium which had been widely proclaimed by Puritan divines since the mid-seventeenth century. And finally, all admitted that although it was surprising, the awakening was “not unique,” since according to Puritan theology, the events conformed to the historical pattern of God’s dealings with human communities.¹⁷⁴

With respect to pneumatology, all of the above responses reflect an unbroken continuity with a Puritan past. Early evangelicals reacted toward the remarkable events like many of the Puritans would have. As defined in Kidd’s triad, they saw the desperate spiritual condition of their land and prayed for revival and widespread conversions which could only be brought about by a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By God’s grace, the outpouring had apparently begun. It was with these same longings and in this very unique climate that young Benjamin Beddome, an early evangelical and a contemporary of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, began his ministry in Bourton-on-the-Water. Beddome had secured his own copy of *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* and had most likely heard the reports of the outpouring of the Spirit and the response of the crowds to George Whitefield’s powerful preaching in nearby Bristol.¹⁷⁵ Holding to the same brand of evangelical Calvinism, Beddome would boldly and expectantly proclaim the Scriptures and experience a similar spiritual awakening in Bourton.

¹⁷⁴Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 99.

¹⁷⁵Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 88 .

CHAPTER 4

BEDDOME'S PNEUMATOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Although the General Baptists were already meeting in five English cities at the time of Charles I's ascension to the throne,¹ the London origins of the Calvinistic Particular Baptists are generally traced to the year 1633, when a group of believers who questioned the validity of paedobaptism, "desired that they might be dismissed" from an independent Congregational Church in Southwark (London). They had come to believe that "baptism was not rightly administered to infants" and formed a church of their own in Wapping on the north bank of the Thames, which eventually came under the leadership of John Spilsbury.² According to Thomas Crosby, "most or all of them received a new *baptism*," although it is doubtful that this would have been immersion.³ It was more likely a second sprinkling by someone other than a parish priest in the Church of England. J. H. Shakespeare lends credibility to the latter, suggesting that the practice of "dipping" had at that time not yet been introduced and was not practiced in England until the early years of the 1640s. He cites the Separatist, Praise-God Barbone, who confirmed its novel character in his remarks in 1642:

The way of new baptizing, lately begun to be practiced, but now very lately some are mightily taken as having found out a new defect in the baptism...so addressing themselves to be baptized the third time after the true way and manner they have found out, which they account a precious truth. The particular of their opinion and

¹Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, and Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 20. Michael Haykin observes, "By 1626, they had established congregations in London, Coventry, Lincoln, Salisbury, and Tiverton, with a total of roughly 150 members."

²Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists, from the Reformation to the Beginning of the Reign of King George I* (London, 1738), 1:148–49.

³Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 1:149.

practice is to dip.⁴

Stephen Wright observes that the General Baptists began practicing immersion at about the same time, leading to the conclusion that their previous mode of believer's baptism before 1640 was most likely sprinkling or pouring.⁵

The earliest Baptist historians, as B. R. White observes, "have not merely tried to give as adequate a narrative as their sources allow but have seen their task as that of defending their co-religionists and of influencing denominational policy."⁶ Both Thomas Crosby and Joseph Ivimey sought "to trace a continuity of Baptist teachings through various groups from New Testament times to the present through earlier dissenting groups."⁷ While Crosby includes some valuable source documents, H. Leon McBeth points to "his failure to distinguish between General and Particular Baptists, and his obvious garbling of some sources" as well as his tendency to explain Baptist origins by tracking the continuity of concepts, such as "believer's baptism back to the first century."⁸ Similarly, Joseph Ivimey believed there were men of Baptist convictions in England as far back as the reign of Edward VI, a view which admittedly is based on tradition, yet in his thinking was entirely plausible.⁹ However, further research over the

⁴J. H. Shakespeare, *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1906), 187–88. Shakespeare cites Barebone, who observed that "the mode of immersion seemed strange to the Separatists." Reputable Baptist historians trace the practice of immersion, as Baptists understand it, back to the years 1640–1641.

⁵Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 81.

⁶B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1893), 12.

⁷H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 1987), 56.

⁸McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 56–57.

⁹Peter Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists: A Study of English Calvinistic Baptists from the Late 1600s to the Early 1800s*, vol. 7 of *Studies in Baptist History and Thought* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 2003), 20. See Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, 1:139. Ivimey remarks, "There is nothing to justify the conclusion of Crosby, that this was the first Baptist church; as the account relates simply to the origin of that particular church, to state which it is probable was Mr. Kiffen's design, rather than to relate the origin of the Baptist churches in general, and which he must certainly have known

past century by historians such as William Whitsitt, George Lofton, and Champlin Burrage has “proved decisively” that Baptist churches did not exist before the seventeenth century and that the practice of baptism by immersion was first introduced by the London Particular Baptists in the early 1640s.¹⁰

The Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church of Southwark

Many salient facts about Particular Baptist origins can be gleaned from the *Jessey Memoranda* and *Kiffen Manuscript*, also referred to as the Stinton Papers.¹¹ Henry Jessey was the third pastor of the Independent Congregation in Southwark; a church first organized by the Puritan, Henry Jacob, in 1616. Jacob had spent years in exile in Leyden, Holland, along with the Separatist pastor John Robinson.¹² Upon his return to London, a small group of believers “covenanted together to walk in all God’s Ways as he had revealed or should make known to them,” after which Jacob was named their Pastor.¹³

Different than other Independent or Separatist churches, Jacob and his church believed it was essential to maintain fellowship with fellow Puritans who had chosen to remain within the Church of England, as long as it “did not involve countenancing what

were in existence previously to that period.”

¹⁰Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1613–1649*, 81.

¹¹Shakespeare, *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers*, 176. The designation “Stinton Papers” was accorded because “they were copied by [Benjamin] Stinton, to whom Richard Adams, the minister of Devonshire Square Baptist Church, had lent them.” Shakespeare lends further credibility to their accuracy by noting, “The genuineness of these papers, which has been much questioned, cannot, after the inquiries of Lofton and Burrage, be seriously open to doubt.”

¹²Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 3rd ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1991), 40–41.

¹³Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550–1641)* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1912), 1:314. Burrage cites an extant copy of the church’s covenant. He records that after a day of fasting and prayer, “it was decided to institute the church, and those who wished to have a share in the undertaking; joyning together joynd both hands each with other Brother and stood in a Ringwise: their intent being declared, H. Jacob and each of the Rest made some confession or Profession of their Faith & Repentance, some were longer some were briefer, Then they Covenanted together to walk in all Gods Ways as he had revealed or should make known to them.”

they regarded as definite error.”¹⁴ In fact, the composition of the church itself demanded a high degree of tolerance from its membership. It was home to both “Independent Puritans,” who were intent on remaining with and reforming the Church of England, as well as “radical Separatists,” who unequivocally rejected any connection with the Established Church.¹⁵ This openness to and tolerance of divergent theological viewpoints was instrumental in the gradual evolution of Baptist convictions and the church’s willingness to at first tolerate them, and later fully embrace them as valid.

After six years of serving as the pastor in Southwark, Jacob left England and traveled to Virginia in 1622, where he died two years later. John Lathrop, an independent Puritan preacher from Kent and “a Man of a tender heart and a humble and meek Spirit,” had already been a part of Jacob’s Church before his departure for Virginia, and was chosen to be his successor three years later.¹⁶ The inner-church peace which had prevailed in the Jacob years appears to have been sorely tested in 1630, as the issue of separation, and in particular the baptism of one of the congregant’s children in the Church of England, came to the fore. A small group of Separatists led by “a certain Mr. Dupper,” left peaceably, believing that all infant baptisms performed in the Anglican Church were invalid due to the nature of the church itself. In their case, the legitimacy of infant baptism was not in question; it had much more to do with the person and the place where it had been administered.¹⁷

¹⁴Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 21.

¹⁵William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 143. According to Lumpkin, “the church was ‘gathered’ on the basis of a confession of individual faith and of a covenant. It contained both Independent Puritans and radical Separatists. The former honored the National Church and sought its further reformation, although separated from it; the latter called the Established Church false and rejected all connection with it.”

¹⁶Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 1:320.

¹⁷A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1961), 57–58. Underwood observes, “There is nothing to show that they rejected infant-baptism, their objection being to any kind of baptism received in the Church of England from which they had separated as being no true Church.”

The ensuing years were difficult ones, yet an obvious time of growth for Lathrop's Southwark congregation. A number of the members had been imprisoned. Impatience with the Established Church was on the rise and the traditional non-Separatist position of the church was challenged by more than a few. In September of 1633, a second group under the leadership of Samuel Eaton departed on friendly terms, once again over the issue of baptism. Eaton, along with several others, is said to have received "a further Baptism," which was most likely baptism by sprinkling. Champlin Burrage notes that "this new church was a mixed separatist congregation composed partly of Paedobaptists and Antipaedobaptists," setting the stage for even further division.¹⁸ Although the exact date is uncertain, it appears that by 1638 John Spilsbury had become the pastor of Eaton's breakaway church, attracting many new members; one of which was William Kiffen.¹⁹

In 1633, William Laud began his campaign in earnest against the Puritans and the Dissent. John Lathrop was imprisoned, along with several other church members. Although most of the others were eventually freed, his own prospects for release as a non-conformist minister were rather dismal. After the death of his wife in 1634, Lathrop asked the Southwark church to release him from his duties as pastor. Soon after, he was granted permission in June of 1634 to emigrate to Massachusetts in exchange for his freedom and departed with a group of thirty church members.²⁰

Three years later, Henry Jessey became the third pastor of the Southwark church. Only a year into his pastorate, the question of infant baptism and its validity was again raised. A group of at least six people became "convinced that baptism was not for infants but for professed believers and were of the same judgment with Sam Eaton."

¹⁸Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 1:327.

¹⁹Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 42. "Also see A. C. Underwood," *A History of the English Baptists*, 58.

²⁰Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 1:325.

Upon leaving Jessey's church, they are reported to have joined with John Spilsbury, who was now pastoring the church in Wapping that Eaton had started in 1633.²¹ This is believed by some to be the very first Particular Baptist congregation or perhaps represented the forming of two separate churches in London. J. H. Shakespeare observes,

In the present state of the evidence, we may say with certainty that, in 1638, there was either the first Calvinistic Baptist Church, with John Spilsbury as its pastor, containing Samuel Eaton, Mark Lucar, and others, or that, in the same year, there were two Calvinistic Baptist Churches in London, the one under John Spilsbury and the other under Samuel Eaton.²²

Once the question concerning "the proper subjects of baptism" had been answered, the next two issues facing the early Particular Baptists were the "proper mode of baptism" and who "the proper administrator" was to be.²³ Believers continued to be baptized by sprinkling, as immersion had not yet been introduced. At this juncture, Richard Blunt, who had originally left with Samuel Eaton's 1633 group, now pastored by John Spilsbury, became convinced that immersion was not only the biblical mode of baptism, but also the historical mode of the New Testament church.²⁴ He believed that baptism "by dipping into the water" was intended to represent "burial and rising again."²⁵ Blunt's change of view apparently came in 1641,²⁶ after the Eaton church had grown to a considerable size and had undergone a friendly division in 1640, with William Kiffen

²¹Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 58. Underwood explains the apparent discrepancy by observing, "We naturally expect that the record will go on to say that these six joined Eaton, but instead 'joined with Mr. Spilsbury.' This is the first mention of Spilsbury whose name does not appear among the seceders of 1633. We can only assume that between 1633 and 1638, Spilsbury had become the pastor of an antipedobaptist church, or had risen to leadership in Eaton's congregation."

²²Shakespeare, *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers*, 183.

²³Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 58.

²⁴Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 22.

²⁵Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 59.

²⁶Shakespeare, *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers*, 187. Shakespeare's calculation, using the *Kiffen Manuscript*, suggests, "Mr. Blunt's change of view and baptism occurred later, in 1641. It fits in exactly with his return in January 1642, and the baptism of his fellow members."

assuming the leadership of a newly organized church in Devonshire Square.

Blunt's possibly sacramental understanding of baptism, however, first led to the question of succession. In order to rightfully baptize other believers by immersion, he initially assumed that the administrator of that baptism would have to have been baptized by immersion himself. Not all, however, were of his opinion. John Spilsbury believed it to be "far from any rule in the gospel to do so," and it appears that more than a few in London opposed it and likely convinced him otherwise.²⁷ Joseph Ivimey cites Crosby,

But the greatest number of the English Baptists, (says Crosby,) and the more judicious, esteemed all this but needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old popish doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession, which neither the church of Rome, nor the church of England, much less the modern dissenters, could prove to be with them. They affirmed therefore, and practised accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation.²⁸

Blunt, who spoke Dutch, had heard of a fringe group of Mennonites, called the Collegiants, who were located at Rhynsburg in the Netherlands and baptized by immersion. He traveled there in 1641 to meet them and to inquire about their practice of immersion. He was warmly received by their teacher, John Batten, observed a baptism there, and returned home in January of 1642.²⁹ Shortly after his arrival in England, he then baptized Samuel Blacklock, a teacher in the Wapping church, after which he and Blacklock each took turns baptizing forty one others. It was "the first evidence of believers being baptized by immersion in England."³⁰

Although Blunt's journey to the Netherlands and his contact there with the

²⁷Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 1:103. See also Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 59.

²⁸Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists: Including an Investigation of the History of Baptism in England* (London: Burditt, Button, Hamilton, Baynes, and Gale and Curtis, 1811), 1:143–44.

²⁹Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1613–1649*, 86–89. Wright agrees with Burrage that Blunt indeed consulted with the Collegiants about their particular practice of immersion, but that there is no conclusive evidence to support Crosby's suggestion that Blunt also received baptism from them.

³⁰Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 23.

Anabaptists may have provided clarity concerning the procedure for immersion, it lamentably created unwanted suspicion because of his association with Anabaptists in Holland. It would raise understandable fears in England that the Baptists were importing heretical and radical tendencies associated with continental Anabaptism, such as Arminianism, anarchy, and opposition to magistrates and the accepted social order.

The First London Particular Baptist Churches

What had begun as a series of friendly divisions over the issue of baptism in the mother church in Southwark was now growing into a group of cooperating London churches. A new congregation under the leadership of a “Mr. Green with Capt Spencer” had formed independent of Jessey’s Southwark assembly in 1639.³¹ It was located in “Crutched Fryers” (Crutched Friars), also known as Hart Street in London³² and would later provide at least one signatory to the 1644 *London Confession of Faith*.³³ Following the baptisms of 1642, the Wapping church peaceably divided into two groups. One formed under the leadership of Richard Blunt, while the remaining members stayed on with Samuel Blacklock. In 1643, a fourth group led by Hanserd Knollys, separated from the Southwark congregation, again over the issue of baptism. At first, the new church met next door to St. Helen’s Church in Bishopsgate, but later moved to Finsbury Fields.³⁴ In June of 1645, the mother congregation in Southwark finally joined the Baptist ranks after

³¹Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2:304.

³²Neil Adams, “Crutched Friars,” in *The Map of Early Modern London*. ed. Janelle Jenstad (Victoria: University of Victoria, n.d.) accessed September 17, 2016, <http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/CRUT1.html>.

³³Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2: 304. The *Kiffen Manuscript* documents the Crutched Friars church as one of the seven original churches, as well as the name of Paul Hobson as one of its members, who represented that church as one of the signees of the *1644 Baptist Confession of Faith*.

³⁴Barry H. Howson, “Hanserd Knollys (c. 1598–1691),” in *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 1:45.

Henry Jessey was baptized by Hanserd Knollys.³⁵ By the time of the signing of the *London Confession of Faith* in 1644, the number of Particular Baptist churches had grown to seven.³⁶

Though still few in number, these churches were no longer an obscure sect, but were now drawing the attention of friend and foe alike. Knollys's congregation, for example, saw "as many as a thousand attending his services." So many were gathering "next door to St. Helen's Church" that the landlord eventually "turned him out," necessitating a move to Finsbury Fields.³⁷ In addition, the newly rediscovered practice of immersion was drawing sharp criticism from the majority paedobaptists, who had likely heard about Blunt's visit with the Anabaptists in Holland and feared the worst. Few understood the differences between the seven Particular Baptist churches in London and the forty-seven General Baptist churches that were spread across England at that time, and could have easily assumed that the Particular Baptists had succumbed to Pelagianism and radical Anabaptism, thus departing from their Reformed roots.³⁸ It may also explain why none of the Particular Baptists, some being very capable theologians, were ever invited to be a part of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.³⁹

³⁵Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 60. Underwood cites an undocumented source as evidence: "In the same year [1645], Jessey himself 'was convinced also... and was baptized by Mr. Knollys, and then by degrees he baptized many of the Church, when convinced they desired it.'"

³⁶Burridge, *The Early English Dissenters*, 2:304. Burridge cites the *Kiffen Manuscript*, "Those that ware [*sic*] so minded had communion together were 1644 become Seven Churches in London."

³⁷Howson, "Hanserd Knollys (c. 1598–1691)," in *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, 45. According to Howson, "In 1645 Knollys's congregation was meeting next door to St. Helens Church where it was reported by some neighbours that as many as a thousand attended his services. He was eventually turned out of there by the landlord and moved to Finsbury Fields."

³⁸Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 85. Underwood states, "In 1644, there appears to have been seven congregations in London and forty-seven in the rest of England." He cites W. T. Whitley from 1911, who calculated that "by 1660 the General Baptists had one hundred and fifteen churches and the Particular Baptists one hundred and thirty-one."

³⁹Robert B. Hannen, "A Suggested Source of Some Expressions in the Baptist Confession of Faith, London 1644," *The Baptist Quarterly* 12 (1946-49): 389. Hannen notes, "It may be sufficient to remark that the Baptists were not allowed any place in the deliberations of the Westminster Assembly of

Peace, Resistance, and Expansion

The early Particular Baptist movement took root and experienced its initial growth during a unique time of freedom for the Dissent. The English Civil War (1642–1651) was raging, bringing with it an extended period of unexpected religious liberty. Between 1639 and 1640, King Charles I's attention had been distracted by the rebellion in Scotland and later became embroiled in a fight for survival with Parliamentary forces. The harsh censorship directed against the Dissent by the Anglican Church relaxed significantly after their chief antagonist, William Laud, was incarcerated in March of 1641 in the Tower of London.⁴⁰ During the next two decades, the Baptists grew rapidly, while the Presbyterians rose to national prominence. In a surprising turn of events, the once-persecuted Presbyterians now began to suppress the Baptists, replacing “one type of religious uniformity [Church of England] by another just as rigorous and infallible” type of their own.⁴¹

Resistance had been building since the early 1640s, when a series of debates were held between the Established Church and the Particular Baptists. The most notable disputation was held in Southwark between young William Kiffen and the elder Anglican scholar, Daniel Featley, who had Reformed leanings and was a respected member of the Westminster Assembly. During the debate, Featley conducted himself in a proud, condescending manner. He would later publish a scathing account of the debate in 1645, entitled *The Dippers Dipt*, which would provide the main stimulus behind the revised 1646 *Confession*. In his *Epistle Dedicatory* to Parliament, Featley claimed that Baptists

preach, and print, and practise their Hereticall impieties openly; they hold their

Divines (They were considered Anabaptists).”

⁴⁰Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud*, 2nd ed. (London: Phoenix Press, 1962), 405. Trevor-Roper records, “On Monday, March 1st, Laud made his journey to the Tower.”

⁴¹Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 64. The Baptists and Independents had assumed key roles in Cromwell's army, but once the tide had turned in favor of the Parliamentarians, they were no longer necessary to those who held power. Underwood remarks, “With incredible folly the Presbyterians, who had used them, proposed to suppress them now they were no longer needed to stem the tide of battle.”

conventicles weekly in our chief Cities, and Suburbs thereof, and there prophesie by turns... they flock in great multitudes to their Jordans, and both Sexes enter into the River and are dipt... And as they defile our Rivers with their impure washings, and our Pulpits with their false prophecies and phanaticall enthusiasmes, so the Presses sweat and groan under the load of their blasphemies.⁴²

A number of defamatory works appeared between 1642 and 1644, which may have provided the final incentive for the Baptists to publically articulate and defend their beliefs. One anonymous work appeared in 1642, entitled *A Short History of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany*, which linked the practice of immersion to the Münster Rebellion and other infamous uprisings in the Low Countries and Switzerland. It averred that, by nature, Anabaptist beliefs will lead to civil disobedience and anarchy. Anabaptism, according to the author, was the “canker of Religion, and the gangrene of the State,” which he predicted, “will eate [sic] us up to the heart.” It further warned,

The seditious Pamphlets, the tumultuous rising of rude multitudes threatening bloud and destruction; the preaching of the cobblers, feltmakers, taylors, groomes, and women, the chusing of any place for God’s service but the Church; the night meetings of naked men and women; the licentiousnesse of spirituall marriages without any legall forme; These things if they be not looked into, will bring us in time to community of wives, community of goods, and destruction of all.⁴³

The First London Confession of Faith (1644)

Accused of weighty doctrinal error, the seven churches acted quickly to “dispel this confusion, refute other charges against them, and demonstrate their fundamental solidarity with Calvinists throughout Western Europe.”⁴⁴ Thus, the *First London Confession of Faith* (1644) was primarily a reaction against malevolent rumors, the misguided tendency to associate the Calvinistic Baptists with the General Baptists, and the unjust comparison of Baptists with radical sixteenth-century Anabaptists. Above all, the Particular Baptists hoped to reassure other members of the Dissent who shared similar

⁴²Daniel Featley, *The Dippers dipt. OR, The Anabaptists Duck’d and Plung’d over Head and Ears, at a Disputation in Southwark* (London, 1645), iii.

⁴³*A Short History of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany* (London: Printed by T. Badger, for Samuel Brown, 1642), 56.

⁴⁴Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 25–26.

Reformed convictions. To accomplish these important objectives, it appears that the authors of the 1644 *First London Confession* borrowed from at least one well-known Reformed theologian and re-worked large segments of already existing *Confessions* with agreeable verbiage. At least four sources may have been consulted.

John Spilsbury had already published his own *Confession of Faith* a year earlier, consisting of ten articles. There are a number of similarities in the order and phrasing in the *First London Confession of Faith* to Spilsbury's *Confession*, leading some to suggest that Spilsbury may have been its leading author.⁴⁵ In addition, there may be "several formulations" that appear to "originate in William Ames's *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*."⁴⁶ A third source may have been the little-known 1616 *Aberdeen Confession*, which "shares a remarkable similarity of large sections" with the *First London Confession*. Robert B. Hannen suggests that the *Aberdeen Confession* may have proved especially valuable to the Baptists since it "did not specifically mention infant baptism," although it was certainly implied, and "it is the only Scottish confession to mention dipping as an acceptable mode of baptising." Hannen points to the presence of one Gilbert Gardin from Aberdeenshire, Scotland, who joined the London Baptists in the early 1640s and may well have been the person who provided the authors with a copy of the relatively unknown work.⁴⁷

Finally, B. R. White has convincingly shown that the authors of the 1644 *Confession* "borrowed considerably, although not uncritically, from the *Separatist Confession* (1596)" or *A True Confession*, which had been produced by English Separatists living in Amsterdam.⁴⁸ It was "far from a creation *ex nihilo*," since there are

⁴⁵Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith*, 145.

⁴⁶Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649*, 134.

⁴⁷Hannen, "A Suggested Source of Some Expressions in the Baptist Confession," 397–98.

⁴⁸B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 167.

obvious similarities between both documents. Evidence suggests that

twenty-six articles out of the fifty-three composing the 1644 *Confession* repeat the teaching often with only slight verbal modifications, given in the corresponding sections of 1596. The first twenty articles of 1644 embody the teaching given in the first sixteen articles of 1596: they speak of the Trinity, of the Divine Election, of Man as Sinner, of the Scriptures, and of Christ in his saving offices as Prophet, Priest, and King of the Elect. In all these matters there is substantial agreement with only minor variations of emphases.⁴⁹

The *First London Confession*, with its fifty Articles, was signed in 1644 by 15 ministers from the seven London churches. William Kiffen was the first signatory. It was subsequently presented to the House of Commons on January 29, 1645, being the first-ever Baptist *Confession* to explicitly reference immersion as the proper biblical mode and to biblically defend the practice of lay-preaching. Of special significance, according to Lumpkin, was its apparent softer Calvinism. He observes that its “doctrine of election is balanced by the statement that the Gospel is to be preached to all men” and in deference to others in the Reformed tradition, “largely anticipates the Westminster Confession.”⁵⁰ Perhaps most conspicuous, was the clear intent of the authors to repudiate all allegations of opposition to the magistracy. Stephen Wright notes that they were “scrupulous in denying all possible avenues for suspicion as their motives in this regard.” He references Article 49, which stated,

as conceiving ourselves bound to defend both the persons of those thus chosen, and all civil laws made by them, with our persons liberties and estates... although we should suffer never so much from them in not actively submitting to some ecclesiastical laws which might be conceived by them to be their duties to establish, which we for the present could not see, nor our consciences could submit unto; yet are we bound to submit our persons to their pleasures.⁵¹

Despite their attempts to convince their critics of their orthodoxy and non-revolutionary nature, the 1644 *London Confession* did help the Baptists to solidify their beliefs, even

⁴⁹B. R. White, “The Doctrine of the Church in the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 567–77.

⁵⁰Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith*, 146.

⁵¹Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649*, 135.

though it ultimately failed to bring them greater toleration among the populace or silence their critics.

The 1646 Revision of the *First London Confession*

Only months after the *First London Confession* had been submitted to the House of Commons, Daniel Featley published *The Dippers Dipt*, reawakening many of the fears and suspicions that the Baptists had hoped to quell. Featley, the vicar of St. Mary's Church and a loyal supporter of the King, had come under suspicion after his correspondence with Archbishop Ussher was discovered and was subsequently imprisoned in early 1645. Making matters worse, he was forced to share the same dwelling with the General Baptist Henry Denne, and was determined to vindicate his once sterling reputation. His work, written during his imprisonment, was dedicated to and eventually read by Parliament. In it, he again linked the Baptists to radical continental Anabaptism and alleged that at least six articles of their *First London Confession* were heretical. Even though Featley died only weeks after writing his contemptuous work, the Baptists were still determined to publish some kind of response to his deleterious assault.

Perhaps even more damaging was a second work published in 1646 by the Presbyterian Thomas Bakewell after an earlier debate with John Spilsbury. Bakewell accused him and his fellow Baptists of a plethora of false doctrines, such as Millenarianism, Antinomianism, sinless perfection, a rejection of formal theological education, and the selective baptism of professing believers only; not to mention the alleged Baptist opposition to magistrates and civil government.⁵² Presbyterian Robert Baillie, a Scottish member of the Westminster Assembly was equally condemnatory of the Baptists. While granting that “the late Confession of the seven churches seem[s] to reject clearly enough all the five Articles of the Arminians,” he was still deeply

⁵²Thomas Bakewell, *An Answer or Confutation of Divers Errors Broached and Maintained by the Seven Churches of Anabaptists* (London, 1646).

concerned about the possible “thousands” of Baptists, who “care not for that Confession.”⁵³ He warned that the “seven congregations cannot prescribe, and are no way Leaders to a great number of Anabaptistic Churches over all the Land.”⁵⁴ According to J. F. McGregor, the Baptists became “a convenient and credible scapegoat since these baptized believers were described by Baillie as Anabaptists, a name they consistently rejected, in order to emphasize that they were no new heresy but the re-emergence of a dangerous menace to authority and social order.”⁵⁵ With their reputation again at stake, the seven churches felt the need to respond.

The 1646 revision to the *First London Confession* was primarily in response to Featley’s objections. It was a concerted effort to correct any wording or inexact expressions that might have either been misunderstood or stated in such a way that had led their antagonist to suspect them of heresy. Changes were made, for example, with reference to “preaching disciples” (Art. 41), relations between ministers and their congregations (Art. 38), “the role of the law in the saints” (Art.31), and those to whom the message of salvation was to be preached (Art. 21).⁵⁶ William J. McGlothlin expressed his surprise at how meticulous the Baptists were in dealing with each of Featley’s accusations. He noted, in one case, that after making the revision, “Dr. Featley could have signed it without hesitation or reservation.”⁵⁷ William Lumpkin also observed that their initial revisions were “so thorough” that much of what was “distinctly Baptist”

⁵³Robert Baillie, *Anabaptism, The True Fountaine of Independency, Antinomy, Brownism, Familisme* (London: 1646), 93.

⁵⁴Baillie, *Anabaptism, The True Fountaine*, 18.

⁵⁵J. F. McGregor, “The Baptists: Fount of All Heresy,” in *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 24–25.

⁵⁶Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649*, 149.

⁵⁷William J. McGlothlin, “Dr. Daniel Featley and the First Calvinistic Baptist Confession,” *Review & Expositor* 6, no.4 (October 1909): 588.

could have been lost.⁵⁸

However, the Baptists' spirit of compromise was short-lived; especially after the Presbyterians tried to force them into uniformity. As a result, they doubled down and took a harder line in the revised 1646 *Confession*, reinforcing their statements on religious freedom, the magistracy, and the final judgment.⁵⁹ In addition, the Calvinism in the 1646 *Confession* was much more robust, particularly in "statements denying free will, communalism, and falling from grace, and a stronger declaration in favor of election." Lumpkin attributes this to the possible influence of Benjamin Cox and Hanserd Knollys; both former Anglican ministers.⁶⁰

Although the 1644 *First London Confession* had struck a much more conciliatory tone toward the General Baptists, the 1646 *Confession* distinctly set the Particular Baptists apart from their Arminian brothers. Most important, while celebrating the many similarities between the Calvinistic Baptists and the other members of the Reformed Dissent, it drew a vivid line of demarcation with respect to baptism and communion. One of its main thrusts, which proved controversial, was its defense of a strict or closed communion policy. It denied participation in the Lord's Table to paedobaptists by adding the final phrase "and after to partake of the Lord's Supper."⁶¹ Article XXXIX of the 1646 *Confession* expressly states,

Baptism is an ordinance of the new testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith, or that are made disciples; who upon profession of faith, ought to be baptized, and after to partake of the Lord's Supper.⁶²

⁵⁸Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith*, 147–48. Lumpkin states, "It was decided to work over the Confession, changing as far as possible the language to which Featley objected, and to submit the resulting document to the House of Commons. The revision was carefully and thoroughly made, so thoroughly indeed, that much of the distinctly Baptist emphasis was removed from some of the articles."

⁵⁹Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith*, 148.

⁶⁰Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith*, 148.

⁶¹Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists*, 22.

⁶²*A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, which are*

The Pneumatology of the 1644 *London Confession*

In general, the pneumatology of most seventeenth-century Reformed *Confessions* consisted of two principle areas; one concerned the ontology or the nature of the Holy Spirit, while the other dealt with His specific works or ministries. The work of the Spirit tended to fall under four broad categories. First, there was the Spirit's role in the creation of the heavens and the earth. Second, great emphasis was placed on the works of the Spirit that pertained to Christ's earthly and heavenly ministries. These included the incarnation, the sustaining power for Christ's ministry and miracles, as well as a special empowerment in His crucifixion and resurrection. There was also the continuation of Christ's ministry in heaven as Prophet, Priest, and King, which is also undergirded by the Spirit. The Puritans had paid special attention to the human nature of Christ, believing that "all blessings that believers receive are first and foremost true of Christ himself."⁶³ Thus the sanctification, the learning of obedience, and ultimate glorification of each believer was first true of the God-Man by means of the Holy Spirit.

Third, much attention was given to the various soteriological works of the Spirit that vouchsafe, from beginning to end, the accomplished redemption of the elect. This included the coming to faith of a believer, being made alive by the Spirit, his or her call, union with Christ, adoption, justification, sanctification, and perseverance which ensures final glorification of those chosen before the foundation of the world.

Finally, there were the Spirit's intercessory ministries in the life of believers through the various means of grace, prayer and the Spirit's role in the inspiration and illumination of the Scriptures. Following the example of John Calvin, "post-Reformation Reformed theologians... give a prominent place to the role of the Holy Spirit not only in the area of soteriology, but also in the whole of their theological discourse (e.g., prayer,

commonly (but unjustly) called Anabaptists (London: Matth. Simmons, 1646), 12.

⁶³Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 423.

preaching, interpreting Scripture).”⁶⁴ This was true of the Particular Baptists as well.

The 1644 *London Confession* references the Holy Spirit seven times. Article II mentions the Holy Spirit ontologically in the eternal God-head or Trinity. It also affirms His procession from both the Father and the Son, as stated in John 15:26 and the Nicene Creed. Articles IX and XI relate christologically to Christ’s incarnation. Article IX references the creative work of the Holy Spirit as well as the incarnation with the Holy Spirit “coming upon” the Virgin Mary, and “the power of the most High overshadowing her.”⁶⁵ Article XI further expands the discussion of Christ’s eternal office as Prophet, Priest and King in which “God poured the Spirit upon him without measure.”⁶⁶ Article XXII outlines the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit, describing faith as a “gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God.” It also references the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit by which the believer encounters “the power of the fulnesse of the Spirit.”⁶⁷ Article XXIII builds upon that truth, declaring that “those that have this pretious [*sic*] faith wrought in them by the Spirit can never finally nor totally fall away.”⁶⁸

The final references are soteriological in nature. Article XXVII discusses the believer’s union with Christ, declaring that “God the Father, and the Sonne, and Spirit, is one with all beleevers,”⁶⁹ while Article XXXIII describes the Spirit’s redemptive work of sanctification “by the word and Spirit of God” within the context of a “company of

⁶⁴Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, 419.

⁶⁵Lumpkin, “London Confession, 1644,” in *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 158–59.

⁶⁶Lumpkin, “London Confession, 1644,” 159.

⁶⁷Lumpkin, “London Confession, 1644,” 162–63.

⁶⁸Lumpkin, “London Confession, 1644,” 163.

⁶⁹Lumpkin, “London Confession, 1644,” 164.

visible Saints.”⁷⁰ This ministry of the Word and the Spirit is intercessory in nature and refers to the preaching of the Scriptures during corporate worship as well as in one’s personal reading. In both cases, truth is made plain through the illumination of the Spirit.

The Pneumatology of the 1646 *Confession*

The revised 1646 *Confession* does not differ in its pneumatology from that which was first presented in the 1644 *Confession*, although some of the articles are either condensed or expanded and there are some important additions. The Spirit’s procession from both the Father and the Son in Article II is excluded, presumably to make room for later statements that would enhance the 1646 *Confession*’s Calvinism and separate the Particular Baptists from the Arminian General Baptists and Anabaptists. The formulation pertaining to the Holy Spirit in the incarnation (Virgin Birth) in Article IX is nearly identical, although it has been condensed. However, Article XIX has a reference to the Spirit that is not present in the 1644 *Confession*. It speaks of the office of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. Article XIX states,

By this kingly power He applieth the benefits, virtue, and fruits of His prophecy and priesthood to His elect, subduing their sins, preserving and strengthening them in all their conflicts against Satan, the world, and the flesh, keeping their hearts in faith and filial fear by His Spirit.⁷¹

While this addition serves to buttress the Spirit’s role in the ministry of Christ and his kingly office, it also underscores the redemptive ministry of the Spirit, which pertains to the perseverance of the saints. It clearly identifies the Particular Baptists as Reformed in their theology, not Anabaptistic as was alleged.

Three more references to the soteriological work of the Spirit appear in Articles XXI, XXIII, and XXXIII. Article XXI declares that “Jesus Christ by His death did purchase salvation for the elect that God gave unto him” and that this redemption is

⁷⁰Lumpkin, “London Confession, 1644,” 165.

⁷¹*A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations* (1646), 6.

applied “by His Spirit.”⁷² Article XXIII speaks of the preservation of the elect by the Holy Spirit and is greatly expanded in the 1646 *Confession*. It speaks of the “graces” or fruits of the Spirit and the keeping of those who believe by the “power of God unto salvation.”⁷³ Article XXXIII underwent very slight changes in the revision. Like before, it highlights the Spirit’s redemptive work of sanctification in those who “have been called and separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God.”⁷⁴

Persecution and the 1677 *Second London Confession*

Two decades of religious liberty ended with the Restoration of the House of Stuart in 1660 and renewed persecution followed over the next twenty years through the Acts of the Clarendon Code. Already by the end of 1662, with the issuing of the Corporation Act (1661) and the Act of Uniformity (1662), a total of 289 Baptists had been incarcerated in Newgate Prison, with another 18 being held in the Tower of London.⁷⁵ Among the inmates was Henry Jessey, who was imprisoned on several occasions between 1660 and 1663.⁷⁶ As a result, he became seriously ill and eventually succumbed to his afflictions. Thomas Crosby records that Jessey died in prison on September 4th, 1663,⁷⁷ but other records indicate that he was released in February of that year, after which he was able to minister for “about five or six months” before he died.⁷⁸

Despite their hardships and suffering under the Clarendon Code, one

⁷²A *Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations* (1646), 7.

⁷³A *Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations* (1646), 7–8.

⁷⁴A *Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations* (1646), 10.

⁷⁵Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 97.

⁷⁶Jason G. Duesing, ed. *Counted Worthy: The Life and Work of Henry Jessey* (Mountain Home, AR: Borderstone Press, 2012), 3.

⁷⁷Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, 1:320.

⁷⁸Samuel Palmer, *The Nonconformist’s Memorial* (London: J. Cundee, 1802), 1:132.

unexpected benefit of the Baptist peril was their growing cooperation with the Old Dissent and their desire for doctrinal agreement wherever possible. The basis of their agreement was the *Westminster Confession*, which became the authoritative *Confession* of Scotland as well as that of the English Presbyterians. It also provided the general pattern for the *Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order*, which was formulated by a highly respected committee of divines that included both John Owen and Thomas Goodwin. It was published by the Congregationalists and Independents in 1658.

In 1677, William Collins and Nehemiah Cox, pastors of the Petty France Baptist Church in London, anonymously drew up an initial *Confession*, which would later be officially adopted after the enactment of the Toleration Act in 1689.⁷⁹ Concerns had arisen pertaining to the 1644 *London Confession*, along with doctrinal issues that were related to the Quakers and the unsettling drift toward Unitarianism that was decimating General Baptist ranks. As stated in the introductory letter to the 1677 *Second London Confession of Faith*, the authors had “no itch to clog religion with new words, but to readily acquiesce in that form of sound words which hath been, in consent with the holy scriptures used by others before.” They desired to show their “heartly agreement” with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in “that wholesome Protestant doctrine which, with so clear evidence of scriptures they have asserted.”⁸⁰

Their declared doctrinal agreement with Reformed orthodoxy would once again be tested in 1682 with the publication of Henry Maurice’s *A Vindication of the Primitive Church*, which linked the Baptists to the “Swenkfeldians, Mennonites, Family of Love, Quakers, Ranters, and the rest of Modern Sects.”⁸¹ In light of such unwarranted

⁷⁹Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 51.

⁸⁰*A Confession of Faith Put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregation of Christians (baptized upon Profession their Faith) in London and the Country* (London, 1677), iv–v.

⁸¹Henry Maurice, *A Vindication of the Primitive Church, and Diocesan Episcopacy: In Answer to Mr. Baxter’s Church History of Bishops, and their Councils Abridged* (London: Moses Pitt, 1682), 303.

accusations, the Particular Baptists determined, once and for all, to clearly define their identity as those “denying Arminianism” and underscore their doctrinal convictions, which were more closely aligned with the Independents and Presbyterians.⁸² In fact, Robert Oliver describes the 1677 *Second London Confession* as “a Baptist adaptation of the Savoy Declaration . . . , which in turn was a slightly edited revision of the *Westminster Confession* of 1647.”⁸³ In so doing, the Particular Baptists demonstrated their clear intention to “remain within the mainstream of the English Calvinistic tradition.”⁸⁴

The 1689 Convention and the 1677 *London Confession*

Holding to their stated purpose, invitations to a convention in London in 1689 were specifically sent to churches that had already expressed sympathy with the 1677 *Second London Confession*.⁸⁵ Underwood states that more than a hundred churches sent representatives,⁸⁶ although W. T. Whitley claims that ninety-four churches actually sent delegates, with another seven or eight churches sending letters.⁸⁷ A “General Assembly of Divers Pastors, Messengers, and ministering Brethren . . . from divers parts of England and Wales; owning the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance” met for ten days in London in September of 1689.⁸⁸ There they adopted the earlier *Second London Confession of Faith*, decided the criteria for membership into their association, agreed to establish a fund to help the smaller congregations pay ministers and send out evangelists,

⁸²Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of the Faith*, 238.

⁸³Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptist*, xviii.

⁸⁴Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists*, 38.

⁸⁵W. T. Whitley, *A History of British Baptists* (London: Charles Griffin & Company, 1923), 181.

⁸⁶Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 129.

⁸⁷Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, 175.

⁸⁸Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, 1:480–81.

and declared their willingness to help prospective ministerial candidates gain knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.⁸⁹ Seventy-one elders signed “the most influential of all Baptist confessions of faith,”⁹⁰ with William Kiffen and Hanserd Knollys being the only clergy to have signed both the *First London Confession*, as well as the *Second*.⁹¹

Different from the *First Confession*, the *Second Confession* had an extensive appendix, which dealt with believers’ baptism, as well as possible objections raised by the Paedobaptists. Perhaps most significant was the lifting of restrictions on communion, imposed by the *First Confession*, for believers who wished to take part but had not yet been baptized by immersion. In addition, other emphases were included, such as

the obligation to preach the Gospel in all ages and nations (new Chapter XX); the singing of ‘Hymns and Spiritual Songs’ (added to the Westminster’s injunction to sing Psalms, Chapter XXII); disuse of the term ‘Sacrament’ and of the Presbyterian definition of sacraments (Chapter XXVII); and provision for lay-preaching (Chapter XXVI:11).⁹²

The *Second London Confession* also excluded reprobation, which, in Lumpkin’s opinion, strengthened the Baptist emphasis on evangelism. However, this supposed exclusion, if so intended, could not have represented any significant mitigation of Particular Baptist theology, since reprobation did remain an integral part of their belief system for years to come, even among those who strongly emphasized evangelism. Perhaps the authors of the *Second London Confession* wanted nothing more than to leave sufficient space for the subjects of saving faith and justification or their very extensive discussion (fifteen sections) on the doctrine of the Church.⁹³

⁸⁹Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 129.

⁹⁰Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 51.

⁹¹Howson, “Hanserd Knollys” in *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, 50.

⁹²Lumpkin, “Second London Confession,” in *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 237–38.

⁹³Lumpkin, “Second London Confession,” 237.

The Pneumatology of the *Second London Confession*

Following the format of the *Westminster Confession* and the *Savoy Declaration*, the pneumatological references in the *Second London Confession* are more extensive, while still falling under the same five categories or emphases that were characteristic of other seventeenth-century Reformed confessions. Ontologically, the Baptists reaffirmed their belief in the deity of the Holy Spirit as one of three co-equal Persons of the Trinity. They also reaffirmed the Holy Spirit's procession from both the Father and the Son, which had been omitted from the *1646 Confession* (Chapter II). Later, in Chapter XXII, under "Worship and the Sabbath Day," it is unequivocally stated that the triune God alone is to be worshipped, excluding any wrongful veneration of "Angels, Saints, or any other Creatures."⁹⁴

The cooperative role of the Holy Spirit in the creation of the world, "in the space of six days," is referenced once in Chapter IV.⁹⁵ The Spirit also appears four times in Chapter VIII, which is entitled "Christ the Mediator." References are made to the incarnation of the God-Man, as well as to the Spirit's role in Christ's sanctification, the empowerment for His earthly ministry, and "His perfect obedience and sacrifice through the eternal Spirit" as was demonstrated in the crucifixion.⁹⁶

The soteriological works of the Spirit, which incrementally accomplish the benefits of redemption and the progressive sanctification of the elect, constitute the lion's share of references throughout the *Second Confession*. With respect to faith itself, there are four references to the Spirit's effectual call of the elect in Chapters III and X, as well as the Spirit's general call, in which even the non-elect "experience some common operations of the Spirit."⁹⁷ There are also two direct inferences to His work of quickening

⁹⁴Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," 280–81.

⁹⁵Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," 255.

⁹⁶Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," 262.

⁹⁷Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," 264–65.

and renewal in Chapters X and XX, as well as His role in affecting a person's conviction about sin in Chapter XV. In all three instances, the condition of the natural man is underscored, who, being dead in trespasses and sins, is unable to respond without the Spirit's quickening and conviction of sin. Further redemptive doctrines include the believer's union with Christ in Chapters VIII and XXVII, six references to the sanctifying work of the Spirit in Chapters XIII, XVI, XVII, and XIX, two statements concerning the perseverance of the Saints in Chapter XVII, and one reference respectively to the Spirit's role in justification (Chapter XI), in adoption (Chapter XII), and in the believer's final glorification, in which "the bodies of the just shall, by his spirit, be raised to honour and be made conformable to his own glorious body" (Chapter XXXI).⁹⁸

Aside from one single reference to Christian liberty (Chapter XXI), the last major pneumatological emphasis in the *Second Confession* is the Spirit's work within the believer. It follows the same general order found in other major Reformed confessions, delineating the means of grace, such as the sacraments, as well as the Spirit's ministry in prayer, His inspiration of the Scriptures, and His ministry of illumination in preaching and personal study. There are multiple references to the ministry of the Spirit in conjunction with the Scriptures (Chapters I, VIII, XIII, XIV, and XXVI), His ministry pertaining to assurance of salvation (Chapter XVIII), His ministry of intercession in prayer (Chapter XXII), His inner-workings within the called-out assembly of gathered believers (Chapter XXVI), and the invocation of the Spirit in the Trinitarian formula for baptism, along with the Father and the Son (Chapter XXIX).

Conceived in the midst of persecution and adversity, the *Second London Confession* soon became the most significant of all the Baptist confessions with at least six editions that followed in 1693, 1699, 1719, 1720, 1791, and 1809.⁹⁹ Recognizing its

⁹⁸Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," 294.

⁹⁹Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 239.

importance in defining eighteenth-century Particular Baptist theology, one is not surprised to find a high degree of conformity to its content among the Baptist divines who ministered in those days. Since the 1677 *Second London Confession of Faith* was the basis of unity to which Benjamin Beddome and other Baptist evangelicals ascribed, it thus provides the framework for their theology of the Holy Spirit.

The Development of Baptist Associations

Although well attended, the number of churches that actually sent delegates to the London convention was much lower than anticipated. It showed a long-held Baptist preference for associations within counties, as opposed to national meetings.¹⁰⁰

Associations had first originated among the General Baptists. W.T. Whitley notes their development “among various counties in the winter of 1642-1643,” primarily to provide a “defense against royalist plundering.” The London churches also began meeting in 1642, which very likely included a mixture of both General and Particular Baptists.¹⁰¹

By 1660, the Particular Baptists had grown to 130 churches, as opposed to 115 General Baptist churches in England, Wales, and Ireland. Surprisingly, in spite of their obvious theological differences, “the division” between them was “not as clear-cut as some later historians of the Baptist movement have imagined.”¹⁰² By 1650, a Western association was already in existence, with appointed Messengers meeting regularly for three to four days to discuss church business and deal with important issues that concerned the churches.¹⁰³ Other areas of the country had also organized by 1655, and

¹⁰⁰Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, 175.

¹⁰¹Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, 91.

¹⁰²Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 27.

¹⁰³Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century Baptist Minister Trained at Bristol Academy* (Oxfordshire, UK: Nigel Lynn Publishing & Marketing, 2006), 2. Hayden observes, “The gatherings usually lasted three or four days. After opening prayer together each Messenger read to all assembled the letter from his church. Queries from the churches would be received and answers propounded by the Association Messengers. The response would then be

“the title Association was well recognized.”¹⁰⁴

The Western Association was known from its inception for its strict Calvinism and its pronounced emphasis on evangelism. In fact, there had always been an inherent reluctance to present Christian doctrine without it. In the early years, between 1644 and 1677, doctrinal statements pertaining to election and double predestination were very carefully drafted so as not to offend the Arminians in the group.¹⁰⁵ Much energy was expended to preserve the unity of the faith in order to promote evangelism. Yet, even in the later years (1689–1731), “their meetings were found to be rather pernicious than useful; as there was scarcely a meeting of the kind, but some unhappy differences arose betwixt the Calvinistic and Arminian ministers.”¹⁰⁶

At the conclusion of the 1689 Convention, it was decided that a national assembly of Particular Baptists would be convened on a yearly basis. By 1692, the attendance had dwindled, in part because of doctrinal tensions, but primarily because of the expense and time involved in travel. Not surprisingly, most of the churches seemed content with fellowship on a local or regional level. Recognizing the obvious preference, the 1692 Assembly agreed to separate into two manageable groups; one meeting in

communicated in a written statement to all the Association’s churches.”

¹⁰⁴Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, 91. Concerning the gradual development of Associations, Whitley notes, “In many parts the churches had been communicating, even organizing for evangelistic purposes; this brought all into touch, and gave such information as to methods that before long the churches everywhere were fraternizing on similar lines, and adopting the term Association. It is not supposed that 1653 is the earliest date. London churches had been in touch from 1642... A large number of Western churches sent representatives to meet at Wells in November, 1653, and the record implies that they had been accustomed so to meet. The Berkshire churches did organize on 8th October, 1652, drawing up a formal constitution, as was now quite a fashion, thanks to the Baptists who had put out paper constitutions for the State.”

¹⁰⁵Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 8. According to Hayden, “It remains true from the approved Confessions of Faith, in 1644 and 1677, that there was a reluctance so to present Christian doctrine that evangelism was excluded. The history of the Particular Baptists at this time was one of a conscious, even aggressive evangelism, which resulted in a widespread planting of new churches. These churches were then linked in an Association life which not only dealt with matters of church polity but also specifically developed a mission strategy, beginning in London, and spreading over the whole of the British Isles.”

¹⁰⁶Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 30.

London at Whitsuntide or Pentecost, and the other meeting over Easter in Bristol. A. C. Underwood notes that the meetings in London “soon ceased,”¹⁰⁷ while the Bristol meetings eventually became associated with the Western Association, where the General and Particular Baptists continued to meet “without any regard to their different principles in other respects” such as the doctrine of election and the perseverance of the saints.¹⁰⁸

The Pneumatology of *Keach’s Catechism*

Following the ratification of the *Second London Confession* in 1689, Benjamin Keach, long-time pastor of the Particular Baptist congregation at Southwark, is believed to have joined in some type of cooperative effort with William Collins, an elder of the Petty France congregation, to compile a catechism along the order of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, yet with a distinctly Baptist orientation. The main differences were the Baptist convictions on congregational church order and believer’s baptism. According to Joseph Ivimey, “it is probable... that the *Baptist Catechism* was compiled by Mr. Collins, though it has by some means or other been called Keach’s Catechism.”¹⁰⁹ It was first published in 1693.

Keach’s first catechism, *The Child’s Instructor*, appeared in 1664, but was not sold until the 1670s due to heavy persecution. By 1723 it had already appeared in its fifteenth edition.¹¹⁰ Whether Collins was the sole author of the *Baptist Catechism* or not, Keach’s experience with his earlier catechism would have provided Collins with a valuable resource in its production. The *Baptist Catechism* of 1693 was later adopted by

¹⁰⁷Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 130.

¹⁰⁸Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 30.

¹⁰⁹Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, 2:397.

¹¹⁰Ian Green, *The Christian’s ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c. 1530–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 268.

the Baptist Association of Philadelphia in 1742.¹¹¹

The Baptist Catechism, commonly called *Keach's Catechism* aligns with the 1677 *Second London Confession*, and its pneumatology follows accordingly. Question and Answer 3 reflects the familiar Reformed emphasis of the Word and the Spirit, which together, “fully and effectually” declare the existence of God which leads to salvation.¹¹² The Word and Spirit appear a second time in Question and Answer 27, which centers on Christ’s prophetic office and states that it is “by his word and Spirit that the will of God for our salvation is revealed.”¹¹³ The ontology of the *Second Confession* finds its way into Question and Answer 9, which clearly delineates the Trinitarian nature of the Godhead and the person of the Holy Spirit. This is followed by the christological work of the Spirit in Question and Answer 25, in which, in his incarnation, the Son of God was “conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin Mary.”¹¹⁴

As is also true of the *Second London Confession*, the most frequent references to the Holy Spirit pertain to His soteriological or redemptive works. Questions and Answers 32 through 34 center on the effectual calling of the believer by the Spirit, leading to faith (32), uniting him or her to Christ (33), convicting the believer of sin, and renewing the will to be able to respond “to the gospel freely offered” (34).¹¹⁵ Finally, Question and Answer 39 mentions the “joy in the Holy Spirit” as one of many benefits derived from the believer’s justification, adoption and sanctification.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 214.

¹¹²Benjamin Keach, *The Baptist Catechism Commonly Called Keach's Catechism or a Brief Instruction in the Principles of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851), 3.

¹¹³Keach, *The Baptist Catechism*, 4.

¹¹⁴Keach, *The Baptist Catechism*, 8

¹¹⁵Keach, *The Baptist Catechism*, 10–11.

¹¹⁶Keach, *The Baptist Catechism*, 12.

Two final references to the Holy Spirit concern baptism and prayer. The distinctly Baptist emphases on believer's baptism and immersion is found in Question and Answer 99. In answer to the question, "How is baptism rightly administered," the catechism unequivocally states,

Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the Apostles, and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some parts of the body, after the tradition of men.¹¹⁷

Question and Answer 104 describes the Spirit's role in the believer's prayer life, with prayer being "an offering up of our desires to God by the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁸

In harmony with the *Second London Confession* (1677), the *Baptist Catechism* reflects a traditional Reformed pneumatology, which emphasizes the deity of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity, His christological and soteriological ministries, the work of the Spirit together with the Scriptures, His assistance with the prayers of believers, and the baptismal formula that includes the Holy Spirit in the practice of believer's baptism by immersion. These questions and answers, along with more than one hundred others, were readily used to teach the foundations of the faith and strengthen the lives of a growing number of churches, as well as their related associations that had existed in some regions for more than fifty years.

The Western Association

Due to its key role in the theological heritage of Benjamin Beddome and other figures behind the early evangelical movement, special attention must be given to the unique development of the Western Association of the Particular Baptists. In 1731, the Western Association's annual meeting was to be held in Tiverton, but a terrible fire in

¹¹⁷Keach, *The Baptist Catechism*, 28.

¹¹⁸Keach, *The Baptist Catechism*, 30.

June destroyed a good part of the town and prevented it from taking place. No meeting was planned for the following year. This timely pause provided Bernard Foskett and Hugh Evans of Broadmead the opportunity to institute a necessary change. They proposed to radically restructure the Western Association after the 1677 *Second London Confession*, thereby preserving their Reformed heritage, while, at the same time, undergirding the heart for evangelism that had characterized Baptists for over a century.

When Western Association meetings later reconvened in 1734, it was without the presence of the General Baptists, who were “courteously but firmly excluded.”¹¹⁹ Those who were in attendance had already agreed to reconvene on the basis of the 1677 *Confession*, hoping thereby to avoid the theological disunity between the Particular and General Baptists that had made past cooperative ministries unproductive. The Taunton and Trowbridge churches, for example, were slowly succumbing to Unitarianism like numerous other General Baptist churches before them, making a strong Trinitarian stance, as put forth in the *Second Confession*, imperative. Other churches merely claimed allegiance to the theology of the *Confession*, but actively denied it in practice.¹²⁰

Bernard Foskett believed there could be no room for divergence if the Particular Baptists were to be effective in reaching souls and in establishing healthy churches throughout the British Isles. In his *Association Letter of 1734*, he addressed the participating churches of the newly reorganized Western Association, underscoring his good will toward all former members who had entertained theological persuasions differing from his:

But previous to this brethren, and on the strictest examination of our own hearts, we solemnly declare that we have not decided on these measures from any prejudice or dislike of any of those persons who formerly associated with us; that party views, or a spirit of separation have been so far influencing us, that we are extremely afflicted to find ourselves obliged to part with some of our brethren, for the sake of the truth,

¹¹⁹Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 20.

¹²⁰Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 207.

with whom, upon other accounts, we could have been glad to walk.¹²¹

In seven clearly stated points, Foskett underscored his belief that “no Christian society can usefully and comfortably subsist without... fundamental agreement.” He believed that the blending together of the Particular and General Baptists, with their distinctly different views, was nothing but a “modern artifice by which error has insensibly spread itself, and done incredible mischief,” and he expressed his preference for the “larger” 1677 *Confession* “because by sad experience we have observed that some have artfully found means to evade those Shorter Declarations.”¹²²

Bernard Foskett’s Enduring Legacy

Foskett’s influence became a determining factor in the theology and future of the Particular Baptist movement. His insistence on the *Second London Confession* as the official doctrinal statement of Particular Baptist beliefs provided protection from the rampant Socinianism of the day, as well as the stifling Hyper-Calvinism of some of the London Baptists, while at the same time maintaining an unswerving continuum with their historic Reformed roots. The adoption of the *Second London Confession* also encouraged the universal acceptance of the 1693 *Baptist Catechism* in participating churches, such as the Broadmead Baptist church, where the Bristol Academy eventually took root in 1720. Since the *Baptist Catechism* had originally been created to amplify the theology of the *Second London Confession*, it soon became a standard text in teaching the fundamentals of the faith to the children at Broadmead and beyond. It is therefore not surprising that Benjamin Beddome would later publish an expanded version of the same work, in his desire to catechize the children in his own church in Bourton-on-the-Water.

In addition to the 1677 *Confession*, Bernard Foskett was also a strong

¹²¹Roger Hayden, “Appendix 2: Western Baptist Association Letter 1734,” in *Continuity and Change*, 219.

¹²²Hayden, “Appendix 2,” in *Continuity and Change*, 219–20.

proponent of Keach's *Covenant*, which had been written for Benjamin Keach's church at Horsleydown. Seeing its effectiveness, Foskett never lost his passion for such confessional statements, believing them to be "important for sustaining the unity of both the local church and churches in Association."¹²³ He was also fond of hymn-singing, which he had earlier learned first-hand from John Piggott in the Little Wild Church. His enthusiasm further inspired John Ash and Caleb Evans, who jointly produced the first Baptist hymnbook as an "alternative to Watts" in 1769.¹²⁴

Foskett's lasting legacy of a strict, evangelistic Calvinism would eventually play a pivotal role in the theological development of the ministerial students who were trained in Bristol. Along with Benjamin Beddome, former students, such as Benjamin Francis, John Ash, and John Sutcliff, would carry on and later promote most of Foskett's theological views for generations to come.¹²⁵

The Bristol Baptist Academy

In His providence, God first supplied the financial means for a school to train Baptist ministerial candidates and then called Bernard Foskett to bring it into fruition. As early as 1679, the visionary Edward Terrill had willed most of his estate to the Broadmead Church in Bristol. His expressed purpose was to hire a learned man, who was skilled in Greek and Hebrew, who could dedicate at least three half-days a week to instruct no more than twelve young men, who were Baptist, and who were willing to remain at the school for a maximum of two years.¹²⁶ Terrill's vision must have sounded outrageous to many of the Baptists in his day, who were often "openly hostile to formal

¹²³Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 66.

¹²⁴Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 103.

¹²⁵R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers, 1989), 127.

¹²⁶Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists*, 39.

theological education,” believing that it “dishonored the Holy Spirit.”¹²⁷ Even the Bristol Assembly of 1693 had expressed its doubts whether learning biblical languages should even be necessary for ministers of the Gospel.¹²⁸ Concerning this unsophisticated and almost homespun approach to the ministry, Geoffrey Nuttall gives needed perspective:

We should remember that almost all these Dissenting preachers, whether ordained or not, lacked a University education— through no fault of their own. The Presbyterians, who were the best educated among them, were the first to abandon Calvinism; the Baptists, who remained loyal Calvinists longest, were the least well-educated, and were the last to establish an Academy for training their ministers.¹²⁹

Despite the prevailing misconceptions, Bernard Foskett began his influential work in the Broadmead Church in 1720. In the words of John Rippon, he was “strenuous for what he apprehended to be the truth, yet was he fond of no extreme.”¹³⁰ At first, he worked alongside Peter Kitterell, then the pastor at Broadmead, but later succeeded him as pastor in 1724, all the while serving as the president and instructor at the Academy. The school’s close relationship with the Broadmead church not only contributed to its stability, but its longevity as well.¹³¹ Starting initially with four students, there were twenty-four students enrolled in the 1750s, the final decade of Foskett’s life.¹³² Moreover, a total of 188 ministers were trained there between 1720 and 1790 “for the West, for Wales and the Midlands,” as well as five for London.¹³³

¹²⁷Chute, Finn, and Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 83.

¹²⁸Naylor, *Calvinism, Communion and the Baptists*, 39.

¹²⁹Geoffrey Nuttall, “Calvinism in Free Church History,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 22 (1967–1968): 425.

¹³⁰John Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register, for 1794, 1795, 1796-1797, including sketches of the state of religion among different denominations of good men at home and abroad* ([London], [1797?]), 426.

¹³¹Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 207. Hayden observes that “the academy would neither have survived, nor developed as it did, was it not for the fact that control was solely in the hands of the Broadmead church, which had the Terrill legacy to use, and a long tradition of educated ministers.”

¹³²Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 70.

¹³³Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 21.

It is a tribute to Bernard Foskett that his Bristol-trained pastors “were not afraid of the Evangelical Revival,” especially the ministry of George Whitefield. When it broke forth, they readily embraced it and eagerly participated in it.¹³⁴ In essence, Foskett was instrumental in preparing an entire generation for a movement that would first invigorate the Western Association, then spread to other parts of the United Kingdom, and finally secure a meaningful place for Particular Baptists in the Evangelical Revival.

The Pneumatology of Bernard Foskett

Despite Foskett’s pivotal role in the growth and theological development of the Particular Baptists, there are few extant works that allow a more detailed analysis of his theological views and, in particular, his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. However, based on his staunch allegiance to the *Second London Confession*, one can safely assume his full agreement with its pneumatology, which appears to be the case in the writings that exist. In his Western Baptist “Association Letter” of 1734, Foskett makes reference to both the work of the Holy Spirit and the 1677 *Confession* in his fourth of seven reasons given for the Calvinistic Baptists’ break with their Arminian brothers in the Western Association:

It is well known that we separate ourselves from others on account of baptism, nor can we think the other great points, which concern the nature of God himself, his decrees, the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the work of his Holy Spirit, (which are so well attested in the confession¹³⁵), to be of no less concern than those that concern the proper subjects and mode of baptism.¹³⁶

Foskett references the Holy Spirit three more times in the same letter. After lamenting the paucity of spiritual gifts within the associating churches, he urges his recipients to “cry therefore to the Lord of the Harvest, for the residue of the Spirit’s with Him,” and adds,

¹³⁴Hayden, *Continuity and Change*, 209.

¹³⁵Hayden, “Appendix 2,” in *Continuity and Change*, 219. In the letter’s introductory paragraph, Foskett clearly delineates which confession he has in mind, namely “the spiritual and most excellent Confession of our pious ancestors, in the year 1689.”

¹³⁶Hayden, “Appendix 2,” 219.

We honour even the meanest attainment that we think may subserve the great Interest of religion but we fear a just regard to the savour of the Gospel and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit has been obliged to stoop to a superior respect to outward ornaments; which has provoked the Lord to withdraw from us.¹³⁷

His remarks on the “residue” or gifts of the Spirit align harmoniously with Chapters XIII and XVI in the *Second London Confession*. He draws a contrast with the “remnants of corruption” from man’s inherent sin nature in Chapter XIII, which leads to “irreconcilable war” between the Flesh and the Spirit.¹³⁸ Foskett refers to the “Spirit of Sanctification” in the final paragraph of his 1734 “Association Letter,” which appears to be one and the same with the “sanctifying Spirit of Christ” in Chapter XIII. It overcomes the old nature and causes the saints to “grow in peace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”¹³⁹

Perhaps the most definitive declaration of Foskett’s pneumatology can be found in the *Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant* of 1712, to which he, and four other men, one of them being John Beddome, affixed their signatures of agreement. Due to the severe doctrinal upheaval of those days, some of the churches felt compelled to draw up their own *Confession of Faith*, “followed by—and linked to—a Covenant, to which all members subscribed by signature when joining the church.”¹⁴⁰ Foskett and John Beddome, who joined together to restructure the church in Alcester, had both been impressed by the success of *Keach’s Covenant* at Horsleydown, and were determined to create a similar document.¹⁴¹ The resulting *Alcester Confession* was masterfully written with a strong emphasis on the deity, person, and ministry of Christ, and agrees

¹³⁷Hayden, “Appendix 2,” 220.

¹³⁸Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 268.

¹³⁹Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 268.

¹⁴⁰Roger Hayden, “The Contribution of Bernard Foskett,” in *Pilgrim Pathways: Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B. R. White*, ed. William H. Brackney, Paul S. Fiddes, and John H. Y. Briggs (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 191.

¹⁴¹Hayden, “The Contribution of Bernard Foskett,” 191.

wholeheartedly in theological content with the *Second London Confession*.

While there are only six direct references to the Holy Spirit in the *Alcester Confession*, the ministry of the Spirit is most certainly assumed and implied because of the prominence given to it in the 1677 *Confession*. That there is clear pneumatological agreement with the *Second London Confession* can be easily demonstrated. First, the *Alcester Confession*, with Foskett being a main signatory, shares the same ontology of the Spirit. It refers to the three Persons of the Godhead as “one undivided essence” that “have distinguished themselves by the names or titles of Fath, Son, & Spirit.”¹⁴² Second, Foskett clearly upholds the deity of the Holy Spirit with the unmistakable declaration, “We believe that the Father is God, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit is God,” a clear statement of opposition to the growing Unitarianism of the day.¹⁴³

Foskett also subscribed to the creative works of the Holy Spirit. The *Alcester Confession* states, “By his Spirit they [the Trinity] garnished the Heavens.”¹⁴⁴ This aligns with the introductory statement of Chapter IV in the *Second London Confession* entitled “Creation.” It states,

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom and goodness, to create or make the world and all things in it both visible and invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.¹⁴⁵

A fourth reference to the Holy Spirit is a part of the baptismal formula, in which “the whole body” of a believer is “immersed or dipped in the water in the Name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost,”¹⁴⁶ agreeing with Chapter XXIX in the *Second London Confession*.

¹⁴²Hayden, “Appendix 1: Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant,” in *Continuity and Change*, 212.

¹⁴³Hayden, “Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant,” 212.

¹⁴⁴Hayden, “Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant,” 212.

¹⁴⁵Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 255.

¹⁴⁶Hayden, “Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant,” 214.

Two final references are noteworthy, both of which deal with specific soteriological works of the Spirit involving the effectual call of believers, their adoption, and their sanctification “in the name of our Lord Jesus & by the Spirit of our God.”¹⁴⁷ The *Alcester Covenant*, which was inseparably connected to the *Alcester Confession*, also mentions the “sweetness of Spirit and saintlike love to each other,” which was to characterize the congregation.¹⁴⁸

In summary, Foskett’s writings do contain at least four of the five main emphases that are typically found in seventeenth-century Reformed pneumatology. The only exception might be the absence of the works of the Spirit in Christ’s earthly ministry, although the incarnation of Christ and His offices of Prophet, Priest and King are clearly stated in the *Alcester Confession*, whereby Foskett’s tacit inclusion of the ministry of the Spirit, as understood in the *Second London Confession*, could be assumed. Considering the growing Unitarian menace to the churches, it is likely that greater emphasis was laid upon the deity and person of Christ, not because the doctrine of the Spirit was of less importance or in doubt, but because the deity of Christ, and with it the doctrine of the Trinity, was under assault.

From all appearances, Bernard Foskett closely adhered to a traditional Puritan theology, acting as a strong proponent and defender of the historic Reformed pneumatology found in both the *Second London Confession* and the *Baptist Catechism* of 1693. This was also the Particular Baptist pneumatology, bequeathed to Benjamin Beddome, which would both shape and define his ministry in Bourton-on-the-Water at the dawn of the Evangelical Revival in England.

¹⁴⁷Hayden, “Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant,” 216.

¹⁴⁸Hayden, “Alcester Confession of Faith and Covenant,” 217.

CHAPTER 5
BEDDOME’S ONTOLOGY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by Way of Question and Answer, first published in 1752, was written to provide a much-needed doctrinal amplification of the *Baptist Catechism* (1693), which was originally based upon the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* and aligns harmoniously with the *Second London Confession of Faith* (1677). It provides the reader with an abridged and facile synopsis of Beddome’s personal theology and it sheds much light on his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Not surprisingly, it includes most of the same pneumatological emphases that are typically enumerated in the Reformed tradition.

In his preface to *A Scriptural Exposition*, Beddome credits Matthew Henry and presumably his *A Scripture-Catechism in the Method of the Assemblies* as the model by which he structured his own work.¹ Although Beddome does not mention this title, it was the only catechism of this nature that Henry authored, which was first published in 1703. Beddome’s order of topics and his 114 questions are conspicuously similar to those of *A Scripture-Catechism*. It consists of the identical 107 questions found in the 1647 *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, which was based upon the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the confession upon which most of the other English Reformed confessions were structured. All three range from the doctrine of God to a final examination of the Lord’s Prayer. Not surprisingly, the content of all three is similar and often nearly identical,

¹Benjamin Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by Way of Question and Answer* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1776), iii. In the preface, Beddome admits to following the general character of an earlier Reformed work. He writes, “I was at length induced by the pressing solicitations of many of my friends to compose the following in imitation of Mr. Henry’s, which was published with great acceptance several years ago.”

demonstrating the overall unity of the eighteenth-century Reformed Dissent.

To enhance discussion, Beddome also utilizes Henry's format of asking multiple questions under each main topical question in order to cover any related issues. The similarities are striking, with the main disparity being the two men's views on baptism, as Henry was a paedobaptist (Questions 94 and 95).² For the purposes of this study, both the analysis of Beddome's ontology of the Spirit and his general pneumatology will follow the basic chronological order of the questions and answers found in his *Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism*, which provides a natural outline of Beddome's theological thought. There are, of course, some exceptions. In addition, all biblical citations found in the following analyses of his ontology of the Holy Spirit and his pneumatology, are taken from the *Authorized King James Version* of 1611, the Bible translation which Beddome read and preached from.

The Doctrine of God

Following the infamous Salters Hall controversy of 1719 and the alarming influx of anti-Trinitarianism into English Baptist circles, it is not surprising that the lion's share of Beddome's ontology of the Holy Spirit found in *A Scriptural Exposition* is devoted in some way or another to a defense of the Trinity. In his preliminary remarks (Questions I to VI), he deals with the existence of God, followed by the complimentary roles of the Word and the Spirit in revealing Him to mankind. This is followed by Questions VII to IX, which are devoted to the doctrine of God, with careful attention being given to all three persons of the Trinity, their respective works, and their relationship to each other.

Beddome's principle authority of systematic biblical truth, the *Second London Confession of Faith* (1677), provides a litany of attributes pertaining to the one immortal

²Matthew Henry, *A Scripture-Catechism in the Method of the Assemblies* (London: R. J. for T. Parkhurst, 1703), 161–165.

God, who is

immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, Almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable, and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just...³

Being very much in agreement, the *Baptist Catechism's* answer to the question, "What is God?" also provides a complete, yet more precise list of divine traits. It states, "God is a Spirit infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."⁴

Through the typical catechetical format of questions and answers, Beddome's unmistakable conviction of God as Trinitarian unfolds in grand fashion, although a more detailed discussion of the distinctive attributes of the Holy Spirit is not fully articulated until Question IX (How many persons are there in the godhead?). The key aspects of Beddome's ontology of the Spirit are easily discernable. He unreservedly held that all divine attributes could be equally applied to each of the three Persons within the Trinity, although each could and did exercise His own distinct role.

Beddome understood God the Holy Spirit to be One, who, like the Father and the Son, was "perfect, active, self-sufficient, independent, immortal, infinite, omnipresent, eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, perfect, omnipotent, holy, just, good, and faithful."⁵ Of course, as an early evangelical from the Puritan-Reformed tradition, he gave much attention to the redemptive and renewing power of the Spirit, but especially to His outpouring. Like the Puritans, he appears to have already been enamored with the Holy Spirit, even before the Evangelical Revival had gained much momentum.

³William L. Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," in *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 252.

⁴Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 17.

⁵Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 17–22.

The Trinity

To Question IX (How many persons are there in the godhead?), the *Baptist Catechism* answers, “There are three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.”⁶ Not surprisingly, this formulation closely aligns with Section 3 of Chapter II of the *Second London Confession of Faith*, which upholds the ancient Trinitarian doctrine as defined at Chalcedon and recited in the Nicene Creed. It states,

In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father the Word (or Son) and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and Eternity, each having the whole Divine Essence, yet the Essence undivided, the Father is of none neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is Eternally begotten of the Father, the holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and Being; but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties, and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our Communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.⁷

In the discussion that follows, Beddome appears to preempt any attempt to interpret the *Catechism*'s brief formulation in any Unitarian or Monarchian fashion. He convincingly underscores his belief in a plurality within the Godhead, consisting of three distinct Persons rather than three modes or expressions of one individual person of God.⁸ Similarly, his volume *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship* includes a final section (XXV), featuring eight different doxologies, which incontrovertibly express Beddome's theological understanding of God. Each offers praise to the three co-equal Persons of the Godhead, often doing so by extoling the distinct roles played by each in the redemptive process. For example, in “Doxology 823,” Beddome declares,

To God the Father, glory be,
Ye saints, in him rejoice;
Ye are the objects of his love,
And his eternal choice.

⁶Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 23.

⁷Lumpkin, “Second London Confession,” 253.

⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 23.

Glory to his co-equal Son,
In feeble flesh arrayed;
That he might all our sins atone,
He suffered in our stead.

Glory to God the Spirit too,
Who by his mighty power,
Does our benighted souls renew,
Our wandering feet restore.⁹

Beddome's conspicuous Trinitarianism finds expression in two further doxologies. "Doxology 826" upholds the deity and honor due to all three Persons, proclaiming,

Glory to God most high,
The Father and the Son,
And Holy Ghost, in persons three,
In sacred essence one.¹⁰

Likewise, "Doxology 827" not only emphasizes the oneness, but also validates the equal worship of all three Persons of the Godhead. It declares,

All glory to the sacred three,
The sacred three in One;
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Be equal honours done.¹¹

Beddome distances himself from any modalist tendencies by providing commentary on the distinct characteristics belonging to each person within the Trinity. In his series of short questions and answers, he sets apart the Father as equal, although greater than the Son in his humanity, who is also God and equal with the Father, who sits at His right hand, and the Spirit as God and Comforter, who is sent out by the Father. While recognizing that each is clearly distinct in personage and role, Beddome also emphasizes that all three are "the same in essence, affection, and operation."¹² In his

⁹Benjamin Beddome, *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship, Or Family Devotion: Now First Published, from the Manuscripts of the Late Benjamin Beddome* (London: Burton and Briggs, 1818), 823.

¹⁰Beddome, "Doxologies," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 826.

¹¹Beddome, "Doxologies," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 827.

¹²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 23–24.

hymn “Renewing Influence,” he further demonstrates how this apparent paradox of Three in one looks in practice. There he directly addresses the Holy Spirit as “Lord” and he illuminates his particular ministry of grace within the context of the Trinity in the following manner:

Thus will we bless thy name, oh Lord,
And thine efficient grace record;
Thou with the Father and the Son,
Art One in three and Three in one.¹³

The Distinct Personhood of the Holy Spirit

Although Beddome’s ontology of the Holy Spirit demonstrates clear and even predictable continuity with his Reformed heritage, he also seems well informed and able to benefit from the theological contributions of his contemporaries. If need be, he can be eclectic and willing to borrow from the views of others, especially those that are complimentary or in agreement with his own. For example, in his sermon “Christ Manifested to the Soul,” he cites an address delivered on Mark 12:28 by a well-known evangelical Anglican contemporary, the Reverend William Romaine, who served as Rector of St. Andrew’s and later at St. Anne’s in London.¹⁴ Romaine postulated that the names “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” were, in reality, covenant names that belonged to particular offices. Beddome affirms that observation, but he also gives honor to others in his day, who believed that such titles, as given, were primarily intended to express “equality of essence,” as well as an intimate relationship with God the Father.¹⁵

Beddome suggests that both views are correct and actually complement one

¹³Beddome, “Renewing Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 143.

¹⁴Ryan Nicholas Danker, *Wesley and the Anglicans: Political Division in Early Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 39.

¹⁵Benjamin Beddome, “Christ Manifested to the Soul,” in *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome* (London: William Ball, 1835), 119.

another.¹⁶ In his sermon on Acts 8:29, he articulates the existing relationship between the distinctive titles given to each Person of the Trinity and the equality of essence that is enjoyed by each. Balancing both, he explains,

The Holy Spirit is a divine and a distinct person in the godhead, issuing his commands, and exercising supreme authority; for it was “the Spirit” that said to Philip, Go near, join thyself to this chariot. “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.” Here the three divine persons are mentioned in their distinguishing titles and characters; “and these three are one.” They are so distinct as that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father; and the Holy Spirit is considered distinct from both. Yet though distinct, they are not separate; for they are one in nature, power, and glory. The arguments which prove the supreme divinity of the Holy Spirit, are equally conclusive on the subject of his distinct personality. All the attributes of personality, and all the perfections of the deity, are in the scriptures as clearly and distinctly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as they are to the Father and the Son; God over all, and blessed for ever.¹⁷

Such a formulation is not only indicative of Beddome’s theological genius, but also demonstrates his ability to articulate a doctrine of great complexity with precision and convincing profundity at a time when fellow Baptists were questioning its validity. Filled with awe by the glory of the Trinity, he bursts forth in ejaculatory praise in one of the last doxologies in his volume of hymns:

Praise him who gave to all things birth,
Praise him, inhabitants of earth;
In lofty strains, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.¹⁸

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

As already demonstrated in his biblical defense of the Trinity, Beddome strongly advocates the full deity of the Holy Spirit. In the same discussion under Question IX, he later asks the related question, “Is the Spirit called God?” and answers with an unequivocal “Yes,” citing Acts 5:3-4 as his proof text. Beddome posits that the

¹⁶Beddome, “Christ Manifested to the Soul,” 119.

¹⁷Benjamin Beddome, “Acts 8.29,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 5 (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1833), 40.

¹⁸Beddome, “Doxologies,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 828.

Holy Spirit can also be referred to as Jehovah. To press his argument, he cites Exodus 17:7, where Israel tempted the LORD or Jehovah, and compares it with a statement made in Isaiah 63:10, where the children of Israel are said to have “vexed his Holy Spirit.” In so doing, he unmistakably claims that the Holy Spirit is, in reality, one and the same with Jehovah in the Old Testament.¹⁹

Beddome later expands this premise under Question XXXIV (What is effectual calling?). He describes the specific redemptive work of the Holy Spirit and His effectual calling of sinners as “the work of God,” confessing his deity.²⁰ In a related sermon, entitled “Christ a Glorious Resting-Place,” he reflects on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose mission it is, among others, to glorify Christ the Son. While some might be tempted to see this as evidence of the Spirit’s inferiority, Beddome instead gives Him full and equal status, in both power and glory, with the Son, noting,

[Rest] is glorious to the Spirit in the effectual application of it. Whilst the Lord the Spirit, agreeably to his peculiar engagements, glorifies Christ by taking of his things and showing them to us, he acquires glory to himself. As he is equally concerned with the Father and the Son in the work of salvation, so he has an equal right to the praises of the redeemed, He is expressly called “the Spirit of glory,” not only on account of the glory which he inherently possesses, but on account of that which accrues to him from his various gifts and gracious operations. As Christ is justified by the Spirit, so the Spirit is glorified in and by Christ.²¹

Not surprisingly, Beddome frequently and unashamedly addresses the Holy Spirit as Lord in a number of his hymns. One perspicuous example is found in “Quickening Influence,” where he pleads,

Descend, celestial Spirit, down...
With courage, Lord, our hearts inspire.²²

¹⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 24.

²⁰Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 66.

²¹Beddome, “Christ a Glorious Resting-Place,” in *Sermons*, 279.

²²Beddome, “Quickening Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 145.

In a similar testimony, he references the account of Elisha's servant, Gehazi, to further illustrate the divine nature of the Holy Spirit. He compares the account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, who lied to the Holy Spirit and thus to God, with Elisha's servant, Gehazi, who was "soon convinced that the spirit of prophecy was not to be deceived, and that it was in vain to lie unto the Holy Ghost."²³ Since Gehazi had lied to Elisha in the same manner that Ananias and Sapphira later lied to God's apostles, Beddome concludes that Gehazi, in reality, had also lied to the Holy Spirit. Beddome freely exchanges Old Testament references to God with the Holy Spirit, thereby tactfully and convincingly equating the Spirit with Jehovah Himself.

The Worship of the Holy Spirit

Beddome's belief in the deity of the Holy Spirit naturally and logically leads him to offer worship to Him. In his sermon "The Christian's Prayer," he not only provides theological justification for prayers being offered to the Holy Spirit, but advocates His worship along with the Father and the Son. In a short treatise on the prayers of believers, he underscores both the Spirit's divine nature and His equality with the Father and the Son, even though the Holy Spirit is often described in terms that appear to give Him an inferior role. Beddome notes that

the petition may be considered as addressed with equal propriety to each of the Persons in the Godhead, who are the joint objects of worship, possessed of the same adorable perfections, and conveying the blessing of salvation. The titles, *Oh God, the Lord*, are equally applicable, and are actually applied, to all the Divine Persons. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the holy Spirit is God; not the first properly and supremely so, and the two latter in an inferior sense, by office or delegation; but they are one in nature and essence, one JEHOVAH, which is a name expressive of the incommunicable properties of Deity.²⁴

Beddome often mixes expressions of worship with heartfelt petitions for a

²³Beddome, "Proverbs 28:13," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:25.

²⁴Benjamin Beddome, "The Christian's Prayer," in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 2 (Dunstable: J. W. Morris, 1807), 55.

special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon individuals, churches, or upon various regions throughout the world. Perhaps most indicative of such petitions are the very personal applications in the hymn “Invocation.” Confessing his own apathy, Beddome prays,

Come, holy Spirit, come!
With energy divine;
And on this poor benighted soul,
With beams of mercy shine.

From the celestial hills,
Light, life, and joy dispense;
And may I daily, hourly feel
Thy quickening influence.

Oh, melt this frozen heart,
This stubborn will subdue;
Each evil passion overcome,
And form me all anew.

The profit will be mine,
But thine shall be the praise;
Cheerful to thee will I devote,
The remnant of my days.²⁵

Along with praise and worship, Beddome also accords endearing devotion to the Spirit by submitting to His leading, recognizing His hand in God’s work among men, and admitting his need for the Spirit’s enablement in order to be a productive part of it. Examples of this practice are found in two other hymns. In “Leadings of the Spirit,” he writes,

’Tis he that works to will,
’Tis he that works to do;
His is the power by which we act,
His be the glory too.²⁶

Similarly, in “Renewing Influences,” he requests,

Let all our power to thee submit,
And bow adoring at thy feet.²⁷

²⁵Beddome, “Invocation,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 132.

²⁶Beddome, “Leadings of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 138.

²⁷Beddome, “Renewing Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 143.

Divine Attributes of the Holy Spirit

Having established the fact of the Holy Spirit's deity, Beddome further builds upon this truth by listing several divine attributes that apply to the Spirit, but which are applicable to the entire Trinity as well. To begin with, the Spirit is eternal. Just as the Son existed "before Abraham was" (Jn 8:58), he affirms the eternity of the Spirit, citing Hebrews 9:14, where the Spirit is referred to as "the eternal Spirit."²⁸ Like the Son, the Spirit is also omnipresent. Beddome references the words of Psalm 139:7. There David asks, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" With this, he underscores his conviction that God's Spirit will always be present no matter where one is found.

The eternal and omnipresent Spirit is also omniscient and omnipotent. According to 1 Corinthians 2:10, the Spirit "searcheth all things" and demonstrates his unlimited power throughout all creation and in the lives of men (Job 33:4).²⁹ Beddome praises His awesome power in a hymn entitled "Teachings of the Spirit." In his customary manner, he appeals for a special work of the Spirit, "whose power and grace are unconfined."³⁰

Finally, Beddome reiterates that the Spirit is truly an object of prayer. Among his final remarks on the person and nature of the Spirit, Beddome mentions the practice of prayer, which one can offer to the Holy Spirit in the same manner that it is directed to both the Father and Son. Moreover, he bases his argumentation on the traditional interpretation of the expression "seven spirits" in Revelation 1:4. There the text reads, "Grace and peace be unto you from the seven spirits which are before the throne." Beddome posits that the expression "seven spirits" might well refer to the "one holy and eternal Spirit," with the number seven having special significance and pointing to "the

²⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 24.

²⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 24–25.

³⁰Beddome, "Teachings of the Spirit," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 136.

variety and perfection of his gifts and graces.” He also adds an explanatory footnote at the bottom of the page to support his remarks.³¹ Modern commentators generally concur. From the standpoint of a robust trinitarian understanding, for example, Robert Mounce readily concedes that it is “tempting to interpret the seven spirits as the one Holy Spirit,” since this particular interpretation dates back to the third century and “is still widely accepted.”³² Thus, Beddome’s interpretation of the “seven spirits” offers further evidence of his belief in the Holy Spirit’s absolute holiness and perfection.

Beddome’s ontology of the Holy Spirit, as displayed in *A Scriptural Exposition*, shows little or no deviation from the pneumatology found in Matthew Henry’s *A Scripture-Catechism in the Method of the Assemblies*, which, in turn, follows the order and wording of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. This nearly perfect symmetry of thought demonstrates a remarkable continuity with historical Puritan and Reformed pneumatology, and acts as a verifiable link between the Reformed tradition of old and many of the earliest evangelicals.

³¹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 25. In his footnote, Beddome adds, “The one holy and eternal Spirit, who is so called either in allusion to the seven churches, or to shew forth the variety and perfection of his gifts and graces, Dan ix 19 seems to be an instance of prayer put up to all three persons.”

³²Robert H. Mounce, “The Book of Revelation,” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 46.

CHAPTER 6
BEDDOME’S PNEUMATOLOGY: PART 1

The Word and the Spirit

Fully embracing the principle emphases of other Reformed confessions in his day, Beddome follows in the footsteps of earlier Baptists, who framed the *Second London Confession of Faith* (1677), and who, like John Calvin, “were careful not to separate the Spirit from the Word.”¹ Similar to Calvin, who believed the writers of Scripture to be “the sure and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit,” and whose writings were “to be regarded as the oracles of God,”² the first consideration in Beddome’s pneumatology is the doctrine of Scripture, and in particular the role of the Spirit in the inspiration, illumination, discernment, and preaching of revealed truth, along with a love for Christ.

Inspiration

Particular Baptists held to a form of verbal-plenary inspiration of “the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit.”³ More specifically, in answer to Question IV (What is the word of God?), Beddome articulates what he sees as the dual nature of biblical inspiration, noting that the human writers of Scripture were first “moved to speak what they did by the Holy Spirit,” so that their very words expressed divine truth. After this,

¹Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, rev. ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 24.

²John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.8.9, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), 765.

³William L. Lumpkin, “Second London Confession” in *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 252.

God was then pleased, in response, to “own what men have thus written as his.”⁴ Succinctly stated, Beddome believes the Scriptures to be “a divine testimony given by inspiration of God; and holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”⁵ He believes that the Bible remains the primary source for inspired truth, but also concedes that on rare occasions, the Holy Spirit may choose to reveal truth apart from the Scriptures, such as the outcome of future events, as He did with the apostle Paul, who “went up to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that should befall him there, save that in every place, the holy Spirit testified, that bonds and afflictions awaited him.”⁶

Illumination

While Beddome holds that God’s existence can be innately perceived through His creation and “works of providence,” he also affirms man’s inability to decipher that evidence without the direct intervention of the Spirit.⁷ Even the special revelation of Scriptures would not be “sufficient to afford us the living knowledge of God” without the spiritual regeneration and illumination that is exclusively and graciously provided by the Holy Spirit.⁸ Consequently, God makes this known “by enlightening our understanding, awakening our conscience, by the instrumentality of his word, and the agency of his Spirit.”⁹

Beddome’s conception of the Spirit’s role in special revelation transcends the

⁴Benjamin Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by way of Question and Answer* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1776), 10.

⁵Benjamin Beddome, “Psalm 119:129,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol.7 (London: Samuel Burton, 1825), 106.

⁶Benjamin Beddome, “Ecclesiastes 4:12,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 6, 5th ed. (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1834), 133.

⁷Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 9.

⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 9.

⁹Benjamin Beddome, “Self-Examination,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Dunstable: J. W. Morris, 1807), 1.

written Word itself to the revelatory awareness of its subjective concepts. This is something which the Spirit alone brings to light as the Scriptures are read, meditated upon, or verbally taught. This might include

the nature of God and his infinite and adorable perfections... the original corruption and depravity of mankind... the vanity of all sublunary objects, and their utter insufficiency to satisfy the cravings of an immortal, or yield relief to a distressed, soul... the extent and spirituality of the Divine law, and consequently the utter impossibility of obtaining salvation by the works of it... that there is salvation in no other but the Lord Jesus Christ... that faith is absolutely necessary to a comfortable sense of interest in Christ.¹⁰

As a result of the ongoing effects of the fall, even a true believer will struggle to grasp and apply the most basic principles of Scripture without divine assistance. This predicament is further delineated in the short answer given to Question III in the *Baptist Catechism*. It states, “The light of nature in man and the works of God, plainly declare there is a God, but his word and Spirit only do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.”¹¹ Beddome laments this natural handicap of the believer in his hymn “Nearness Desired.” There he pleads,

With pitying eye regard,
The sorrows I endure;
And let thy Spirit and thy word,
Create my nature pure.¹²

Yet, at the same time, he appears to be fully persuaded that the Holy Spirit, who initiated the work of salvation, cannot and will not forsake any believer in his or her journey through life. He confidently embraces this fact in yet another hymn, urging on the faithful,

Now let us run the christian race,
With persevering speed;

¹⁰Benjamin Beddome, “Importance of Scripture Knowledge,” in *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome* (London: William Ball, 1835), 1–3.

¹¹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 8.

¹²Benjamin Beddome, “Nearness Desired,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship, Or Family Devotion: Now First Published from the Manuscripts of the Late Benjamin Beddome* (London: Burton and Briggs, 1818), 205.

God's word, his Spirit, and his grace,
To active duty lead.¹³

Discernment

Beddome's works provide few direct references to the doctrine of inspiration, yet his precision in those instances reveals not only a depth of conviction, but an apparent belief in its self-evident nature, which requires little or no defense. Far more attention is given to the role of the Spirit in the illumination of revealed truth to the believer, "both eternal, by the holy Scripture, which was given by inspiration of God; and internal by the divine Spirit."¹⁴ The natural man is able to recognize or perhaps even differentiate between spiritual concepts, but he can neither understand them in depth nor practically apply them without the direct aid of the Holy Spirit:

Hence he is called 'the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Christ;' and those are joined together in the great mystery of godliness;—'justified in the Spirit, believed on in the world.' A mere notional acquaintance with spiritual things is all that any man can rise to without the help of the Spirit. It is his internal arguments alone, in behalf of Christ, that can prevail upon the soul to receive him; and though it is the peculiar honour of gospel ministers to be instructors in Christ, yet it is not in opposition to, but in connexion with, the Spirit, upon whom they depend for assistance, and to whom they ascribe their success. If ever we have learned Christ, it must be in the school of the Spirit. It is he that reveals him at conversion, and more largely in the subsequent periods of the christian life.¹⁵

Not only does the Spirit enlighten the believer's understanding as he or she reads the Scriptures, but also opens the mind to incomprehensible truths, provides necessary wisdom and discernment, enhances his or her love for Christ, and offers certain protection against the constant mental warfare of the enemy. Due to the prevailing effects of the fall, Beddome suggests that "there are many things concerning God," which the human mind "neither doth nor can discover."¹⁶ More specifically,

¹³Beddome, "Race" in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 216.

¹⁴Beddome, "Nature and Spring of the Christian's Life," in *Sermons*, 105.

¹⁵Beddome, "Christ Manifested to the Soul," in *Sermons*, 121.

¹⁶Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 8.

The secrets of God's word, the wonders of his law, its wonderful extent, purity, spirituality; the wonders of his gospel—its doctrines, promises, and consolations, which are a secret to carnal men; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, but they are made known to the saints.¹⁷

Not surprisingly, the Spirit's ministry in providing discernment and enlightenment is prevalent in many of Beddome's sermons and hymns. One example is found in the hymn "Improvement of Time," where he expounds,

Life is the only time for man,
To seek the Lord and wisdom gain;
The Spirit and the word invite,¹⁸
To make this duty our delight.

Spiritual wisdom is "not a natural, but a divine, attainment." While personal and individual effort is most certainly involved, the Holy Spirit remains "the supreme author and agent" throughout.¹⁹ Gaining spiritual wisdom, which Beddome describes as being in "the school of Christ," represents a gradual process akin to the progressive development in sanctification. As such, the Spirit leads the believer to discover, understand, and finally appreciate the blessed truths that are hidden to the natural mind. Accordingly, the Spirit

impresses divine truths upon the mind at first, in conversion, and opens them more fully after; shows their importance, harmony, consistency, and removes all jealousies and suspicions concerning them. One beam of light breaking in from the Spirit of God does more towards confirming and establishing the mind in the truths of religion than a thousand arguments of the most subtle disputers... This is not an instantaneous, but gradual work. That illumination that takes place at a sinner's conversion, dispelling the mists of ignorance and error from his understanding, and making him who was once darkness, light in the Lord, was instantaneous... but many fresh unctions must be received from above before he becomes a thorough proficient in the school of Christ, or attains to that certainty of knowledge.²⁰

Spiritual wisdom is on a completely different plane than human or earthly wisdom, which is primarily gained through learning or life experience, whereas spiritual

¹⁷Beddome, "On the Fear of God," in *Sermons*, 212.

¹⁸Beddome, "Improvement of Time," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 715.

¹⁹Beddome, "Importance of Scripture Knowledge," in *Sermons*, 3.

²⁰Beddome, "Importance of Scripture Knowledge," 3–4.

wisdom might be properly understood as “wisdom from above.” While it can be discovered and read by all in the Scriptures, it must necessarily be “infused” by the Spirit, for such wisdom, as Beddome describes it, is the “offspring of Deity.”²¹

In *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, under the section entitled “Influences of the Holy Spirit,” which contains fifteen hymns, Beddome repeatedly calls upon the Spirit to provide clarity and enlightenment. In the hymn “Sanctifier and Comforter,” he pleads with the Spirit,

Open my eyes,
And make me wise,
My interest to discern;
From every sin,
Without, within,
Incline my heart to turn.²²

In “Teachings of the Spirit,” he makes a similar appeal for wisdom and discernment. First admitting his natural inability to understand and his desperate need for enlightenment, Beddome entreats the Holy Spirit to open his eyes and guide him:

Come, blessed Spirit, source of light,
Whose power and grace are unconfined,
Dispel the gloomy shades of night,
The thicker darkness of the mind.

To mine illumined eyes display
The glorious truths thy word reveals,
Cause me to run the heavenly way,
The book unfold, and loose the seals.

Thine inward teachings make me know
The mysteries of redeeming love,
The emptiness of things below,
And excellence of things above.

While through this dubious maze I stray,
Spread, like the sun, thy beams abroad,
To show the dangers of the way,

²¹Beddome, “The Value of True Wisdom,” in *Sermons*, 92.

²²Beddome, “Sanctifier and Comforter,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 135.

And guide my feeble steps to God.²³

The knowledge provided by the Holy Spirit is both inward and experiential. It “entereth into the heart” and is “attended with great certainty.” Yet, the inner knowledge of the Spirit is also “operative and effectual,” and “bringeth forth fruit.”²⁴ It is not enough to passively understand the deeper things of the Spirit. In God’s economy, such comprehension will always lead to action, spontaneous worship, and transformation of character. “The operations of the holy Spirit,” Beddome writes, “though real and effectual, are generally not to be distinguished from the operations of our own minds, and are to be known only by their effects.”²⁵ The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is absolutely essential, not only for necessary spiritual enlightenment, but even more so to stimulate the child of God to effectual action, which produces godly fruit. Just as “the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the great deep... so in the moral system, he is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”²⁶

The cooperative relationship between the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit is indispensable, as each plays a complementary role in the growth and spiritual development of the believer. In *A Scriptural Exposition*, Beddome argues that the word of God alone is not “sufficient to afford us the saving knowledge of God,” for such can only “be attained by the Spirit.”²⁷ Similarly, in a sermon on Acts 14:3, he states,

The gospel is an admirable means, but it is only a means: God performs the work, and to him we must ascribe the glory. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The motion of Ezekiel’s wheels when they went straight forward, as by an irresistible force, was owing to the Spirit in the wheels, by which they were guided

²³Beddome, “Teachings of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 136.

²⁴Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 66.

²⁵Beddome, “Job 36:9,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:89.

²⁶Benjamin Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 4, 4th ed. (London: R. Clay, 1822), 62.

²⁷Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 9.

and impelled.²⁸

Although it is indeed the Word of God that leads to salvation, Scripture and its truth remains incomprehensible to the natural man, and clouded to the believer, without the Spirit's enlightenment. In this way, the Spirit always works in tandem with the Word.

Beddome likens the Word of God to a reed or rod that can be used as a tool. Following this analogy, he suggests that the Bible without the Holy Spirit is merely “an instrument, and though suitable and necessary,” is “only an instrument.” He reasons, “As a reed or rod can do nothing without a hand to guide and manage it, so neither can the word, if unattended with the energy of the Divine Spirit.” Admittedly, “it is powerful and mighty for the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification and edification of saints; but it is only so through God.”²⁹

Without the Spirit's indispensable intervention, doctrines such as “human depravity, the Holy Spirit's efficacy, the mediation of Christ, and eternal life through his death, are new and strange to the carnal mind and difficult to be believed.”³⁰ While the believer, for his or her part, should study the Scriptures “attentively, comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” Beddome urges his listeners to “pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit,” for “He alone can teach us to profit, and lead us in the way that we should go.”³¹ Only with His teaching is personal study effectual and applicable.

Preaching

Although preaching often falls under the ordinary means of grace in Reformed theology, along with the sacraments, its significance as a means used by the Spirit to

²⁸Beddome, “Acts 14:3,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol.5 (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1833), 75.

²⁹Beddome, “The Rule of the Sacred Word,” in *Sermons*, 53.

³⁰Benjamin Beddome, “Mark 10:26,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 3 (London: J. W. Morris, 1809), 110.

³¹Beddome, “Prove All Things,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:87.

convey truth makes its consideration at this point in the analysis very fitting. Under Question V in the *Baptist Catechism* (May all men make use of the holy Scriptures?), Beddome defends the practice of preaching as a biblical tool, which the Spirit uses to teach and communicate the truth of Scripture. He cites Revelation 11:29: “Let him that hath an ear to hear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” and explains that it is “the duty of ministers as well as people, young and old, to give attendance unto reading,” which he understands to include both the private and public reading of the Scriptures.³² This emphasis aligns closely with Puritan tradition.

The “divine testimony” or preaching is “the means of producing faith.” It is “the incorruptible seed, which being sown in the heart, is quickened by the Holy Spirit and brings forth fruit unto eternal life.”³³ Preaching is far more than a religious exercise. When the word is read aloud or preached, “a sacred energy” goes forth that is both “quick and powerful” and “puts life into our souls.” Beddome clarifies that it is “not the word without the Spirit, but the Spirit by the word; the one as the instrument, the other as the agent. Hence they are joined together.”³⁴ This accounts for the effectual nature of some sermons, but not of others, for “ministers call externally by the preaching of the word; and they often call in vain.” God, however, “calls internally, by application of the word and influence of his Spirit; and his calls are always effectual.”³⁵ In that case, the Spirit works simultaneously in the preacher and in the hearer, thereby opening

a door of utterance to the minister, and a door of entrance to the people: the efficacy of the word preached not depending on the power of moral suasion [*sic*], or the energy of the word itself, but the irresistible influence of the Spirit of Christ.³⁶

³²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 15.

³³Beddome, “Acts 26:31,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:109.

³⁴Benjamin Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 2 (Dunstable: J. W. Morris, 1807), 4–5.

³⁵Beddome, “The Heavenly Calling,” in *Sermons*, 111.

³⁶Beddome, “The Nature and Authority of the Christian Ministry,” in *Sermons*, 308.

Conversely, well-crafted and skillfully-delivered messages may be able to stir the external senses, but without the Spirit they will have little or no effect on the soul.

By virtue of the unique character of God’s truth revealed through the Scriptures, the essence of preaching, according to Beddome, is to communicate the word “with spiritual power and authority,” for “when God speaks, he speaks with authority; and so should ministers, when they speak in his name.”³⁷ This is the substance of being a good steward of the Gospel:

The principal business of a gospel minister is to preach Christ, to open the way of pardon and reconciliation in and through him, to propose him to afflicted consciences as a complete and all-sufficient Saviour, and to reveal the Spirit in all his operations.³⁸

Furthermore, the duty of a preacher is “to teach others what he has experienced, to live under the influence of the Spirit, and apply to him for assistance upon every occasion.”³⁹

Due to the authority and divine character of the message itself, the one called to communicate it must necessarily exhibit a godly character commensurate with his message. For this reason, it is not man, but the Holy Spirit, who ultimately commissions the messenger. Thus, discerning specifically who He has chosen to carry out this important ministry is of utmost importance. Beddome reiterates that a commission apart from the direct leading of the Spirit is “good for nothing,” since such a messenger is “not stamped with his authority.”⁴⁰ Moreover,

the Scripture calls them thieves and robbers who thrust themselves into this office when Christ hath neither qualified them for it, nor by his church called them to do it; hence the apostle thanks Christ for putting him into the ministry. He was chosen to it by God, fitted for it by the Spirit, and Christ, as the great Head of the church, placed him in it.⁴¹

³⁷Beddome, “Reconciliation with God,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:124.

³⁸Beddome, “On the Duty of Ministers to Promote People’s Joy,” in *Sermons*, 360.

³⁹Beddome, “On the Duty of Ministers,” 360.

⁴⁰Beddome, “The Nature and Authority of the Christian Ministry,” in *Sermons*, 307.

⁴¹Beddome, “The Nature and Authority of the Christian Ministry,” 307–8.

As a result of the divine character and authority associated with preaching itself, Beddome believes “it is a great mercy for any, especially ministers of the gospel, to act under the influence and direction of the Spirit of God.” Although “ministers stand at the door and knock,” he stresses that it is ultimately the Spirit who “comes with his key, and opens the door,” making an otherwise powerless message both efficacious and life-transforming.⁴²

Love for Christ

The special teaching of the Spirit, as Beddome understands it, is also instrumental in kindling the believer’s love for Christ. This love is foundational to the spiritual health and stability of the child of God. Without it, “there can be no solid comfort here, no happiness hereafter; no blessing, but a dreadful curse: an ‘anathema maranatha’ both in this world and the next.”⁴³ Sadly, the natural man is inclined to self-love, not the love of God, and is thus unable to fully appreciate the depth and the intricate nature of God’s sovereign intervention and providential care. Such knowledge alone, when finally grasped, stimulates love for the Creator. This is the role of the Spirit of God, who “helps us in the consideration of it.”⁴⁴ Such love, generated by the Holy Spirit, becomes the driving force that propels the believer to accomplish great things in this life for the Savior. But as Beddome also makes clear, it should equally stimulate the believer’s longing for the hereafter, where he or she will live eternally in the presence of the one who first loved and epitomized the true nature of love on the cross.

The Holy Spirit in Creation

Little is mentioned in Beddome’s writings concerning the role of the Holy

⁴²Beddome, “The Heavenly Calling,” in *Sermons*, 116.

⁴³Beddome, “On the Love of God,” in *Sermons*, 20.

⁴⁴Beddome, “On the Love of God,” 20.

Spirit in creation, but it seems apparent from *A Scriptural Exposition* that he, like other Reformed theologians, credits the Holy Spirit with a pivotal role in both the first or old creation, as well as in the new creation, which occurs through regeneration. Under Question XIII (How did God create man?), Beddome references both, wherein Adam, and subsequently all mankind, “was made after the image of God” in the first creation, but later became a new creation “in righteousness and true holiness” through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:24).⁴⁵ Beddome’s discussion of redemption and regeneration under Question XXXIII (How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?) makes clear that this new creation, also called the new birth, can only take place through the ministry and direct intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Beddome specifically recognizes the Spirit’s role in the first creation under Question IX (How many persons are there in the godhead?) of the *Baptist Catechism*. He accomplishes this through a series of three questions. After establishing that the work of creation can be ascribed to Christ the Son, he then asks whether the work of creation might also be ascribed to the Spirit, and he answers affirmatively. As his proof text, he cites the testimony of Elihu in Job 33:4, who declared, “The Spirit of God has made me,” and he concludes his argumentation by reaffirming that creation is truly “a work peculiar to God,” implying that the entire Trinity was involved.⁴⁶ This conviction is further underscored in “Doxology 830,” the last of eight doxologies in Beddome’s volume of hymns. He gives honor to the entire Trinity:

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who made the earth and heaven,
Of equal dignity possessed,
Be equal honours given.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 29.

⁴⁶Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 24–25.

⁴⁷Beddome, “Doxologies,” in *Hymns*, 830.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Only two explicit references are made in Beddome's writings to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. One concerns Moses's tragic confrontation with the people of Israel at Meribah in Numbers 20. There he failed to obey the Lord by angrily striking the rock twice instead of speaking to it. Beddome comments on this event under Question LXXXVII (Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?), which directly follows his examination of the Ten Commandments in Questions XLVII to LXXXVI. He builds upon the *Catechism's* stated answer, "No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God,"⁴⁸ by pointing to several well-known Old Testament saints, such as Moses, Job, and Solomon, who succumbed to sin and fell short of God's standards.

Highlighting Moses's offense against God at Meribah, Beddome affirms that "the meekest man [Moses] did offend by passion," but applies the words of Psalm 106:33 as his proof text, where it explicitly states that the people of Israel "provoked his Spirit."⁴⁹ The Holy Spirit is not specifically mentioned by name in Numbers 20, yet in Beddome's Trinitarian understanding, he does not find it at all surprising that Moses's sin against the LORD, referenced in Psalm 106, was, in reality, grievous and offensive to the Spirit of Jehovah God.

One further Old Testament reference to the Spirit's work appears in Beddome's sermon "The Aged Sinner." In his protracted explanation of the unusually long lives of men on the antediluvian earth and his comparison to the much shorter life spans that have been typical since the Genesis flood, Beddome notes in Genesis 6:3,

As men's wickedness increased, however, their days decreased; for when the Lord saw the aboundings of sin he said, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for*

⁴⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 141.

⁴⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 141.

*that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.*⁵⁰

Thus, he seems to emphasize what Keil and Delitzsch would later note, namely that God's "striving with man" was the Old Testament ministry of the Spirit. It not only provided "physical, ethical, natural and spiritual life," but kept man's inherent bent toward evil from spiraling out of control.⁵¹

As previously indicated, Beddome considers wisdom to be the "offspring of deity," being directly and graciously imparted by the Holy Spirit.⁵² Thus, in his consideration of antediluvian life, Beddome makes reference to the Spirit as "the wisdom of God," who

in this infant state of the world... conspicuously appears in thus prolonging the days of man, as it tended not only more speedily to replenish the earth, but also to preserve the knowledge of the true religion, which previous to the use of letters, could only be handed down by tradition.⁵³

Since "the way of a sinner is such as naturally tends to shorten his days, and provoke God to destroy him,"⁵⁴ and since "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen 6:5)," the striving of God to preserve a semblance of godliness and longevity of life in man, sheds great light on the unfathomable loving kindness, patience, and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit and Christ's Ministry

Like Puritan divines before him, Beddome dedicates a significant portion of his writings to the role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ. Following the general outline of Chapter VIII in the *Second London Confession of Faith*, Beddome expounds

⁵⁰Beddome, "The Aged Sinner," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:102.

⁵¹C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "The Pentateuch," in *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 135.

⁵²Beddome, "The Value of True Wisdom," in *Sermons*, 92.

⁵³Beddome, "The Aged Sinner," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:102.

⁵⁴Beddome, "The Aged Sinner," 102.

upon the Virgin Birth, along with other aspects and events that pertain to the earthly ministry of Christ. Consequently, he is also careful to include a thorough and insightful presentation of the three offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, in which, even today, the Holy Spirit continues to play a pivotal and vital role.

The Holy Spirit in the Virgin Birth

The *Baptist Catechism* answers Question XXV (How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?) in the following manner,

Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.⁵⁵

Beddome expounds on the *Catechism's* doctrinal summary by detailing some of the specifics of this supernatural act. This was no ordinary birth, since the child was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. In Luke 1:35, the angelic messenger told Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.” At that same time, according to Matthew 1:28, she was espoused to Joseph, yet still a virgin, when she was suddenly “found with child by the Holy Ghost.” Beddome affirms that Christ did not “come into the world in an ordinary way.”⁵⁶ Instead, he believes it to be a miraculous conception brought about by the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, without the aid of Joseph or any other human father.

Beddome offers a more detailed explanation of the Virgin Birth in his sermon on Luke 22:48:

And though he is called the Son of Man, he was not properly so; he was the Seed of the woman; but not the Son of man; being conceived in a miraculous manner, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. Thus it was foretold by the prophet, and also by an angel previous to his birth. ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and

⁵⁵Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 45.

⁵⁶Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 46.

shall call his name Immanuel.’ Isa. vii. 14. Matt. i 18–23.⁵⁷

Looming large in this and in other expositions by Beddome on the Virgin Birth is the unmitigated influence and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. While this miraculous event primarily concerns the incarnation of Christ and His means of entry into the world as the Savior, the Holy Spirit is no mere ancillary force, but the very source and origin of the God-Man, who was conceived and born to the Virgin Mary.

The Holy Spirit and the Baptism of Christ

In *A Scriptural Exposition*, Beddome has much to say about the Holy Spirit at Christ’s baptism, giving it great attention in his discourses on the offices of Christ. He observes that Christ was “suitably qualified for the discharge of it [his work]” because “God gave not the Spirit by measure to him” (John 3:34).⁵⁸ As his observations continue under Question XXVI (What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?), Beddome posits that Christ’s ability to carry out his earthly ministry and offices, as well as the Father’s approval of Him as a choice servant, was inseparably related to the empowerment accorded to Him when the Spirit descended at His baptism. This is evident in Matthew 3:17, where the heavenly voice unequivocally states, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”⁵⁹ Beddome believes this to be the very moment when the Father “put the finishing hand” to Christ’s “appointed work” as High Priest, for it was this particular appointment that Jesus confidently referenced in his High Priestly Prayer, declaring, “I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do” (Jn 17:4).⁶⁰

Beddome pays special tribute to both the descent of the Holy Spirit at Christ’s baptism and the Father’s words of approval in two different hymns. In “Baptism of

⁵⁷Beddome, “Luke 22:48,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:118.

⁵⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 47.

⁵⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 47.

⁶⁰Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 47.

Christ,” he writes,

The Spirit, like a dove,
Honours the mystic rite;
And God proclaims him from above,
The Son of his delight.⁶¹

In another related hymn, entitled “Christ’s Example,” Beddome provides insightful commentary on the Trinitarian interaction between the Father and the object of His love (Christ the Son), as well as the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the God-Man Jesus. He writes,

The Father sees and owns
The object of his love;
The Spirit on his head descends,
In likeness of a dove.⁶²

The Holy Spirit in Christ’s Earthly Ministry

The wellspring of the strength and holiness displayed by Christ throughout His earthly ministry was none other than the Holy Spirit. Beddome observes that Christ

was so intent upon his work, and so armed with the Spirit, that let whoever would tempt him, Satan or his agents, and these either good men or bad men, friends or enemies, strangers or his nearest relations, it was alike to him; he could say as that blessed servant of his afterwards said, ‘None of these things move me.’⁶³

The Savior’s resolve and staying power to resist temptation and to perseveringly accomplish his redemptive mission was also the direct result of the Spirit’s ministry in his life. In his sermon on John 14:30, Beddome emphasizes the Holy Spirit’s essential role:

The unspotted purity of Christ’s nature was owing to the following things, all of which were peculiar to himself... He was filled with the Spirit, and all the graces were in full maturity. Holiness prevails in us according to the degrees in which we are influenced by the Spirit of God; but it was given to him without measure, and he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.⁶⁴

⁶¹Beddome, “Baptism of Christ,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 600.

⁶²Beddome, “Christ’s Example,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 602.

⁶³Beddome, “On Rightly Seeking the Saviour,” in *Sermons*, 70.

⁶⁴Beddome, “John 14:30,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:67.

This profound truth has practical implications for believers, since they also receive an anointing of the Holy Spirit to empower and equip them for service. Beddome holds that the believer's anointing resembles Christ's anointing, for "the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon them, as it did upon him." To this he adds,

They partake of the same anointing, though not in the same measure; for he was 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;' and they possess the same grace, though not in the same degree; as he was, so are they, resembling the children of a king.⁶⁵

Due to the Spirit's anointing, which is common to both, Beddome sees a direct correlation between Christ's earthy life and the way believers are to live theirs. A prescribed pattern of living by the power of the Holy Spirit emerges, which is intended to lead God's children to a holy and abundant life. For Beddome, the necessary source of all true spirituality in the believer is the anointing and subsequent enablement afforded by the Holy Spirit. It is through Him alone, not through human effort, that the child of God is capable of living a godly and fruitful life. The Spirit's power, as modeled by Christ, is most efficacious when coupled with the believer's love and submission to the will of the Father. Beddome understands this to be one of the "glorious privileges" of believers to be

interested in the everlasting and unchangeable love of a glorious God; redeemed by the precious blood of a glorious Saviour; and are quickened by, and possessed of, a glorious Spirit, who dwelleth and remaineth in them.⁶⁶

The Spirit in the Crucifixion and Resurrection

Without the mediation of the Holy Spirit, Christ's offering on the cross for the sins of the world would "otherwise have been ineffectual."⁶⁷ Beddome cites Hebrews 9:14, where the work of Christ is said to have been done "through the eternal Spirit." He praises the Spirit's ministry in the crucifixion, whose power enabled Jesus's human

⁶⁵Beddome, "The Mutual Glory of Christ and His People," in *Sermons*, 84.

⁶⁶Beddome, "The Mutual Glory of Christ and His People," in *Sermons*, 85.

⁶⁷Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 47.

nature to obey and persevere, and he further reminds his listeners that “the blood of Jesus is the price of our redemption, and his grace prepares us for it; there is no justification but by his obedience, no satisfaction but by his Spirit.”⁶⁸

Just as He was the source of power that enabled Christ to obey and die for the sins of the world, the Holy Spirit was also the quickening agent in Christ’s resurrection. Under Question XXXI (Wherein consisteth Christ’s exaltation?) in the *Catechism*, Beddome affirms that Christ truly rose “by his own power,” for Jesus Himself challenged his naysayers, saying, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.’⁶⁹ Yet, at the same time, Beddome clearly states in a sermon on Colossians 1:18 that it was “the same Spirit that revived and quickened him [Christ]” and became “the pattern and the pledge of the resurrection of all the saints, manifesting both its nature and its certainty.”⁷⁰

Beddome distinguishes between the Holy Spirit’s work of quickening, or bringing Christ back to life, and the physical act of the resurrection itself, which Christ performed as He had promised. This same dynamic prevails in Beddome’s understanding of the effectual call of the believer to salvation, where the Holy Spirit first quickens the natural man, who was once dead in his trespasses and sins, and then enables him to believe by imparting the gift of faith, after which the believer himself desires and personally chooses to follow Christ.

The Spirit and Christ’s Prophetic Office

Questions XXVI through XXIX in *A Scriptural Exposition* offer a rich discourse on Christ’s offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, however the only explicit

⁶⁸Benjamin Beddome, “Matthew 5:25,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 8 (London: Samuel Burton, 1825), 125.

⁶⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 59.

⁷⁰Beddome, “Colossians 1:18,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:9.

reference to the Holy Spirit's role in their fulfillment is found in the answer to Question XXVII (How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?). There the *Baptist Catechism* states, "Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us by his word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation."⁷¹ Beddome further clarifies that while Christ, as the Prophet, "reveals the will of God objectively by his word," the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with Him, revealing and applying the subjective aspects of the Scriptures to the human heart. He suggests that both ministries are "necessary to our salvation," for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his (Rom 8:9)."⁷²

The prophetic office, which was exercised by Christ during his earthly ministry and which continues to this very day, is fully dependent upon the work of the Spirit. Beddome provides an excellent summary and description of the cooperative work of Christ and the Spirit in his sermon "On the Manifestation of God." He writes,

Thus to reveal the Father is the work of Christ, and this he did personally when upon the earth, and now does in the use of means, and by the agency of his Spirit. 1. He did it personally when upon earth... 2. He does this now in the use of means, and by the instrumentality of his Spirit. Various are the means to be adopted for this purpose, such as prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, and Christian conversation. These are all rendered effectual by the Spirit; he rouses us to inquiry, removes our prejudices, and enlightens our minds. These operations harmonize with those of the Father and of the Son. The Father witnesses to the Son, and the Son to the Father, and the Spirit to both, who is therefore said to 'search all things, even the deep things of God,' not for his own information, but our edification: he helps our ignorance and infirmity; and whereas others teach ministerially, he does it powerfully and effectually.⁷³

The Holy Spirit and Human Redemption

The vast number of references to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Beddome's hymns, sermons, and catechetical remarks center on soteriology, and, in particular, the interrelated doctrines associated with redemption and sanctification. His emphases

⁷¹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 48.

⁷²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 50.

⁷³Beddome, "On the Manifestation of God," in *Sermons*, 11–12.

naturally align with those of John Owen, Matthew Henry, and other earlier divines of the Reformed tradition, and yet, taken together, they also reflect the specific theology of an eighteenth-century evangelical, with great attention being given to the manifestations that were particularly evident in his day, such as “revival, widespread individual conversions, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴

The Effectual Call

Beddome shows both approval and familiarity with the *Baptist Catechism* by citing its answer verbatim to Question XXXIV (What is effectual calling?) in his sermon on Romans 1:6:

‘Effectual calling,’ says the catechism, ‘is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.’⁷⁵

This special work of the Holy Spirit is also noted under Questions XXXII (How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?) and XCIV (How is the word made effectual to salvation?). The *Catechism* states that all believers “are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his holy Spirit.”⁷⁶ It further emphasizes the importance of reading and preaching the Scriptures in its answer to Question XCIV,

The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, thro’ faith unto salvation.⁷⁷

Beddome is especially careful to differentiate between the effectual call, which always results in salvation, and the “outward” or general call, which, unless the Spirit

⁷⁴Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xix.

⁷⁵Beddome, “Romans 1:6,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:67.

⁷⁶Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 61.

⁷⁷Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 154.

intervenes, will tragically, but inevitably, fall on deaf ears. The “outward call,” according to Beddome, is “given to all men” through God’s “works of creation, works of providence, and by his word.”⁷⁸ These are the “common motions of the Spirit,” wherein God is not silent, “for there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard” (Psalm 19:3).⁷⁹ However, due to the hardness of men’s hearts, this call will ultimately be rejected unless the Spirit effectually intervenes. It is a graphic picture of the desperate spiritual condition of mankind:

Wicked men may give their assent to this or the other evangelical doctrine, and have some confused notions about the work of the Spirit upon the heart of a Christian; but having no spiritual perception of these things, they are ever fluctuating and wavering, and will sooner renounce the truth than suffer for their adherence to it.⁸⁰

Even though it will be inevitably rejected by those who remain spiritually dead, Beddome makes clear that the general call of the Spirit is never altogether without effect, as it does accomplish other purposes of God apart from salvation. He observes in his sermon “The Heavenly Stranger” that along with the gospel, the Holy Spirit brings

frequent convictions and painful impressions that are made upon their minds by it. They are not from themselves, for men naturally seek their ease; nor from Satan, for it is his interest that the goods should be in peace; but from the holy Spirit of God; and whether they end in salvation or not, they will be made to answer some important end.⁸¹

In contrast, “the motions of the Spirit” in the effectual calling are twofold. First, the Holy Spirit “quickeneth both at first conversion and ever after; both the dead sinner and the slumbering saint.”⁸² God’s first act is to bring about spiritual life, so that he who was previously spiritually-dead is able to hear and respond to His gracious call. This, according to Beddome, is the “opening of the heart,” which happens without

⁷⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 64.

⁷⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 64.

⁸⁰Beddome, “The Nature and Spring of the Christian’s Life,” in *Sermons*, 106–7.

⁸¹Beddome, “The Heavenly Stranger,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:43.

⁸²Beddome, “The Heavenly Stranger,” 38.

overpowering the will of the individual and which takes place in such a manner that the person readily and happily responds. He further describes the appealing nature of the effectual call in a successive sermon, entitled “The Stranger Received,” explaining how the Spirit works to make the gospel so attractive in the now spiritually awakened person that he or she willingly and voluntarily responds to the call:

If the heart be opened, it is the Lord’s doing. He alone who made the heart can find his way into it. All the human faculties lie open to the stroke of his Spirit: he can wound and heal, break down and build up, and make what impressions he pleases upon them... Though the Lord opens the heart, yet it is in a way perfectly agreeable to the party himself. We are not the less willing, because we are made so in the day of his power. That which is an act of power with regard to the holy Spirit, is a voluntary act with regard to the human will. That work which was greatly opposed by the sinner before it was wrought, is greatly approved by him when wrought.⁸³

Anticipating that some might still object to what seems like a violation of personal freedom, Beddome again reassures his hearers in “Self-Examination” that the influence of the Spirit

offers no violence to the human will: God does not drive, as a man does his beast; but leads, as a parent does his child, or a teacher his scholar... The Lord acts so upon the soul, that there shall always be room and place for our acting by and under him; the power is his, the duty ours.⁸⁴

Not only does the Spirit quicken and spiritually renew the sinner in the context of the effectual call, but also imparts the ability to produce lasting spiritual fruit unto salvation through His indwelling presence. Through the Spirit’s indwelling, the believer becomes the actual dwelling place of the Holy Spirit or His temple:

The spiritual temple has been built as the material one was—without the noise of axes or hammers. Grace has been implanted, and the fruits of it made apparent, but the motions of the Spirit upon the soul have been like those of a shadow upon the dial, real but imperceptible.⁸⁵

The effectual call is intimately connected to the doctrine of election, in which

⁸³Beddome, “The Stranger Received,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:49–50.

⁸⁴Beddome, “Self-Examination,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:12.

⁸⁵Beddome, “The Heavenly Calling,” in *Sermons*, 115.

God, being “no respecter of persons” chooses “a certain number of the fallen race of mankind to grace here and glory hereafter, to holiness in this world, and happiness in the next.”⁸⁶ Contrary to human reason, this gracious act is “afforded,” without apparent reason, “to one nation or people, and denied to another possessed of the same merit.” Even more mysterious is the Holy Spirit’s “distribution of spiritual gifts” in the effectual call, which Beddome compares to the wind, showing God’s “sovereign freeness.”⁸⁷

Quickening or Spiritual Regeneration

One of the doctrines most frequently mentioned in Beddome’s sermons and hymns is the quickening of the Holy Spirit. It not only accounts for the initial miracle of regeneration, but for the ongoing, life-long, spiritual refreshment of the redeemed as well. The latter applies to the Spirit’s work of progressive sanctification, which begins after the moment of salvation, while the former is directly related to the salvation experience itself. Since regenerative quickening is intimately tied to other works of the Spirit that occur near the outset of the redemptive process, it will be considered first.

Contrasting regeneration with sanctification, Beddome defines regeneration as

an instantaneous change; and herein it differs from sanctification, which is a progressive work. The former is a ‘passing from death unto life:’ the latter a ‘changing from glory to glory:’ and both are by the Spirit of God.⁸⁸

He is quick to emphasize the role of the Spirit in either performing a ministry himself or applying it for another Person of the Trinity. In a sermon on Revelation 19:1, for

⁸⁶Beddome, “God No Respector of Persons,” in *Sermons*, 24.

⁸⁷Beddome, “God No Respector of Persons,” 24–27. Beddome provides one of his finest expositions of election and its relationship to the effectual call. He lays out six instances which show that “God is no respecter of persons”: (1). “In his eternal choice of a certain number of the fallen race of mankind.” (2). “In the external privileges of the gospel afforded to one nation or people, and denied to another...” (3). “In the distribution of spiritual gifts.” (4). “In our effectual calling.” (5). “In God’s providential government of the world success does not always attend the most probable means...” (6). This will appear to the conviction of all the world in the judgment of the great day; for God will then, without respect of persons, judge according to every man’s work.”

⁸⁸Beddome, “John 3:7,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:35.

example, he highlights the Spirit's ministry of regeneration and renewal along with justification and forgiveness:

This great and wonderful salvation includes our free justification, the full remission of all our sins, and acceptance with God through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour; the sanctification of our nature by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost...⁸⁹

Under his discussion of the effectual call in *A Scriptural Exposition*, Beddome portrays the critical role of the Holy Spirit in applying the redemption furnished by Christ to the believer. He affirms that “the great and effectual work” of redemption is “wrought only upon the elect” by the Holy Spirit, who “quickens” the elect (Jn 6:63), and thereby effectually makes them to be partakers of the redemption through belief in the Son of God (Jn 3:36).⁹⁰ In addition, Beddome differentiates between the first birth into this natural world and the new birth generated by the Holy Spirit, which takes place at the moment of regeneration:

It is sometimes called, a being born again, to distinguish it from our first birth, or coming into the world. By that we become the children of wrath, and heirs of destruction; by this the children of God, and heirs of eternal life. By that we possessed a corrupt and depraved nature; by this a nature that is divine. It is also called being born of the water and of the Spirit, intimating, that as water washes the body, so the Spirit purifies and cleanses the soul.⁹¹

Although Scripture explicitly teaches that it is the Spirit who “quickeneth,” Beddome rightly gives to each person in the Trinity his due in his sermon “Influence of the Spirit.” In his distinct Trinitarian fashion, he explains that regeneration

is not to be understood of the holy Spirit *exclusively*: for the work of quickening is also ascribed to the Father and the Son; and they all co-operate in this as well as in other parts of our salvation. Thus in the foregoing chapter it is said, *The Son quickeneth whom he will*; he restores life to dead bodies, and puts life into dead souls. Thanks are to be given to the Father also, who *maketh us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*.⁹²

⁸⁹Beddome, “Revelation 19:1,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 8:186.

⁹⁰Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 62.

⁹¹Beddome, “1 John 2:29,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:20.

⁹²Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:2.

However, he is also not demure in highlighting the predominant role of the Spirit as he moves sovereignly among men and works in whomever He pleases:

The Spirit does not quicken *universally* and in a spiritual sense, all who need to be quickened. He does not, like the sun, enliven things by a kind of natural necessity; but, as a perfectly free agent, is guided only by his own sovereign pleasure. He is under no influence, and subject to no controul.... It is true, there is variety in the Spirit's operations; and no other reason can be rendered for it, but that he wills it should be so. As he is possessed of sovereignty, so he loves to display it. *He divides to every man severally as he will*; that is, in what manner, and measure, and to what person he pleases. We read of some that were *full of the holy Ghost, and of faith*, whilst it is said of others that they are *sensual, not having the Spirit*.⁹³

For Beddome, regeneration is to “be born of God, and changed by his grace into a child-like disposition, before we can be followers of Christ.” The internal operation of the Spirit is “absolutely necessary to qualify us for, and excite us to, this and every other good work,”⁹⁴ and the resulting changes afforded to the believer are liberating. Of great significance is the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” which liberates the Christian from “the law of sin and death.”⁹⁵ It comes from a “divine and supernatural change, effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit,”⁹⁶ when God’s “moral commands, formerly inscribed on tables of stone, and now written by his Spirit on the fleshy tables of the heart, are full of righteousness.”⁹⁷

Beddome believes that spiritual quickening always brings a pronounced change of values. For example, when the renewed soul has been “clothed with righteousness” and “adorned with the graces of [the] Spirit—those substantial and undecaying ornaments, in comparison of which, gold, silver, and precious stones are

⁹³Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 2–3.

⁹⁴Beddome, “The Duty of Imitating God,” in *Sermons*, 144.

⁹⁵Beddome, “Colossians 1:18,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:8.

⁹⁶Beddome, “John 3:7,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:34.

⁹⁷Beddome, “1 John 2:29,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:22.

worthless things,” and the treasures of this world lose their allure.⁹⁸ Interests and impressions change as well. Holiness becomes desirable, while sin grows increasingly abhorrent. In his sermon on John 21:17, Beddome gives further credence to this remarkable transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit:

The most eminent saints we anywhere read of in the scriptures, were the most affectionate ones. The change wrought in a sinner by the holy Spirit is expressed by taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh; taking away the obdurate and unfeeling heart, and giving a spirit of tenderness and love, a spirit that is quickly susceptible of the evil of sin, of the beauty of holiness, and of all that is interesting and affecting in true religion.⁹⁹

With so much awe for the work and ministry of the Spirit, one is not surprised to find numerous celebrations of regeneration in Beddome’s hymns. In his hymn “Regenerating Grace,” he exalts the Holy Spirit, who not only “displays his sovereign power,” but “softens and renews the mind, averse to God before.”¹⁰⁰ His finest presentation of this subject, however, is a selection entitled “Sovereignty of the Spirit.” It not only illumines the Holy Spirit’s role in election, but details some of the changes that occur and the benefits that accrue throughout the process of the Spirit’s quickening. At the same time, it is a prayer that God might enlighten the darkened minds of men with his life-giving Spirit. This is just one of many examples of Beddome’s ever present passion for lost souls. He concludes:

Lord, fill each dead benighted soul
With light, and life, and joy;
None can thy mighty power controul
Or shall thy work destroy.¹⁰¹

The Gift of Faith

The act of faith at salvation represents man’s grateful response to God’s

⁹⁸Beddome, “On the Destruction of the Temple,” in *Sermons*, 75.

⁹⁹Beddome, “John 21:17,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 8:107.

¹⁰⁰Beddome, “Regenerating Grace,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 490.

¹⁰¹Beddome, “Sovereignty of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 133.

antecedent gift of the Spirit, who not only renews and quickens, but also acts as the ultimate source of a person's faith. According to the answer given to Question XXXIII in the *Baptist Catechism* (How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?), faith is listed along with the effectual call and the believer's union with Christ as principle ways in which redemption is initially and sovereignly applied:

The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.¹⁰²

Accordingly, Beddome refers to this faith, under Question XCI (What is faith in Jesus Christ?), as a benefit of the Spirit, which is "a free gift and therefore a grace," which "distinguishes the elect of God from all others."¹⁰³ The fact that man's faith is a gift of God is also acclaimed in a hymn entitled "Faith the Gift of God." There Beddome describes faith in the following manner:

Faith, 'tis a precious grace,
Where'er it is bestowed;
It boasts of a celestial birth,
And is the gift of God.¹⁰⁴

Beddome posits that Christian faith is inherently different from other religions, for it goes beyond mere "show and appearance." It "lies inward and deep, and is that circumcision, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit."¹⁰⁵ Indeed, "the ornament of true religion" is the "fear of the Lord," which is wrought in the soul by the holy Spirit, and consists in a reverential regard for divine authority and glory.¹⁰⁶ He notes that it is the Holy Spirit or the "Spirit of faith" which affects inward change, for

it is under his influence that we believe, and that all its fruits are brought forth. He is it that reveals the object, gives us eyes to discern it, and a heart to embrace it. Faith

¹⁰²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 62.

¹⁰³Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 147–48.

¹⁰⁴Beddome, "Faith the Gift of God," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 165.

¹⁰⁵Beddome, "On Christian Fruitfulness," in *Sermons*, 248.

¹⁰⁶Beddome, "Isaiah 33:6," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 8:63.

is so eminently ascribed to God, that Christians are said to possess it, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.¹⁰⁷

This faith, according to Beddome, is bestowed as a gift and is not something that can be earned or merited, for “we can do nothing towards effecting our own salvation.” Instead,

it is alone procured by the obedience and death of Christ. The work was finished on the cross, as to its meritorious or procuring cause, and can admit of no addition. Its application is through the influence of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to reveal the Saviour, and fix our faith on him.¹⁰⁸

Adding to the manner in which the gift of faith is imparted, Beddome has much to say about the true essence of faith and, in particular, the role of the Holy Spirit in its application. Left to their own devices, natural men experience distress:

When we are the victims of distress, we are still gadding about to choose our way, trying new methods of relief, and roving from creature to creature; but when, by the teachings of the Divine Spirit, we are once brought to Christ, there we find all that we sought,—pardon and peace, righteousness and strength, joy and comfort, grace and glory.¹⁰⁹

The nature of the gift is immediately evident, as the benefits and the inner peace that accompany it are overwhelmingly attractive and irresistible so that they are heartily embraced and received. From a human perspective, Beddome suggests that the act of faith is the result of having new spiritual eyes, along with a new awareness and a radically different mindset. Because of the Spirit’s impartation of faith, there is not

only a conviction of the evil of sin, but of the emptiness and vanity of the creature, together with the want and worth of a Saviour, his complete fullness, and condescending grace, that he is able to save, and willing to receive, all that come unto God by him; which conviction, in all the parts of it, is wrought by the Divine Spirit, being the fruit of an enlightened understanding and awakened conscience.¹¹⁰

Confronted with one’s emptiness and utter sinfulness, the need of a Savior becomes overwhelming and the response is inexorable. The “heart touched by the Spirit of God

¹⁰⁷Beddome, “Acts 26:31,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:109.

¹⁰⁸Beddome, “Acts 26:29–30,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:103.

¹⁰⁹Beddome, “Christ a Glorious Resting-Place,” in *Sermons*, 277–78.

¹¹⁰Beddome, “The Heavenly Calling,” in *Sermons*, 112.

(like the needle touched by the loadstone), turns directly to Christ, and though there may be vibrations backward and forwards, there it fixes.”¹¹¹

Such a view of faith as a gift and the work of the Holy Spirit will naturally lead to the believer’s perseverance and assurance. This is not because of one’s own efforts or tenacity, but because of an irreversible work within the heart and a divine transformation of the mind, which, according to Beddome, distinguishes “disciples in name” from “disciples indeed.” The former “may leave Christ, for they have received the gospel only in letter of it,” but the latter remain firmly in the faith because “they have received the truth in love, and felt its efficacy upon their hearts.” This has been impressed upon them “not in word, but in power, and in the holy Spirit, and in much assurance.”¹¹²

Conviction of Sin

Coupled with and resulting from the effectual call is a new sense and conviction of one’s own sinfulness. Beddome believes that this awareness is directly attributable to the ministry of the Spirit, which occurs in close conjunction with the effectual calling and initial regeneration. He does not specifically delineate in his writings in what order these acts of the Spirit occur. In his discussion of the effectual call in Question XXXIV of the *Catechism* (What is effectual calling?), he states that being “convinced of sin” is unequivocally the “fruit of the Spirit.” Through this work, those who are effectually called become “especially convinced of gross or leading sins,” as well as many secret sins residing “in the heart.”¹¹³ Those who are effectually called will gratefully “embrace” God’s grace and “answer” the call as outlined in the *Second London Confession of Faith*:

¹¹¹Beddome, “Christ a Glorious Resting Place,” in *Sermons*, 276.

¹¹²Beddome, “The Beloved Disciple,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:94.

¹¹³Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 65.

the Creature being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened & renewed by the holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the Grace offered and conveyed in it; and that by no less power, than that which raised up Christ from the dead.¹¹⁴

Beddome describes the conviction of sin as the Spirit's work on the human conscience, whereby "he who heareth conscience, heareth God." No longer clouded by sin, the awakened conscience sees sin from God's perspective and there is no question that God's Spirit is speaking. He cites the words of Romans 9:1, where the apostle Paul speaks of "his conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost." In fact, Paul's conscience was so

influenced and directed by the Holy Ghost: so that if the same question were put concerning the checks and restraints, the reproofs or approbations of conscience, which was put concerning John's baptism, 'Are they from heaven or of men;' the same answer must be returned: They are from heaven.¹¹⁵

Beddome mentions several salvific consequences of the Spirit's conviction in his sermon "Peter's Confession." Like Peter, the sinner sees the gravity and depth of his or her transgressions along with the overwhelming need of a Savior. The reaction is one of self-loathing and remorse, where he or she accordingly responds,

The more sinful I am, the more need I stand in of a Saviour. I am laden with guilt, oh come to me with discoveries of thy pardoning grace! I am all over polluted, come to me in the cleansing operations of thy Spirit!¹¹⁶

This overwhelming feeling of self-loathing not only leads people to hate sin, but to hate most the sin they see in themselves. Like Peter's "self-abhorrence" in Luke 5:8, the awakened sinner is overwhelmed by his or her own wretchedness. This leads to the realization that he or she truly deserves God's wrath and judgment and is consequently moved to seek His mercy and compassion. The sinner thus admits,

I am a sinful man! After all that mercy has done for me, and the divine Spirit has wrought in me; amidst all the light and knowledge I have received, and the helps

¹¹⁴Lumpkin, "Second London Confession," 265.

¹¹⁵Beddome, "Power of Conscience," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:34.

¹¹⁶Beddome, "Peter's Confession," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:107

and assistances which I have enjoyed; though a professor, a preacher, an apostle, yet am I a sinner: and as such would implore God's compassion, and tremble at his judgment!¹¹⁷

The Spirit begins His work by revealing sin. This, in turn, leads to self-loathing. Yet the Spirit's purpose at this point is not to bring the believer to complete despair, but rather to repentance, after which the Spirit begins the gradual process of sanctification.

Repentance

Under Question XCII in *A Scriptural Exposition* (What is repentance unto life?), true repentance “implies conviction of sin,” flowing from the “painful” awareness of “the filth of sin as well as the guilt of it.” This conviction is accompanied by “sorrow” and a “hatred of sin,” which, in turn, leads to “holy shame,” mercy toward others, and a reticence to entertain a judgmental spirit.¹¹⁸ Beddome considers “true repentance unto life” to be “a grace,” with “the word as an instrument” and the Holy Spirit as “an agent,” both working together to lead the sinner to salvation.¹¹⁹

The essence of true repentance in the new believer is twofold. First, there is a “turning from sin,” which has suddenly become both abhorrent and unbearable. This is accompanied by the firm resolve “never fully to return to it again.”¹²⁰ Just as it is important to turn away from one's past sins, it is also imperative for the sinner to consciously turn back to God, yet, not out of coercion, but out of a love for Christ that “constraineth” them (2 Cor 5:14).¹²¹

While repentance is most often viewed as a purely human response to the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, Beddome suggests that the act of turning to God is

¹¹⁷Beddome, “Peter's Confession,” 104.

¹¹⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 149–152.

¹¹⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 149–150.

¹²⁰Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 152.

¹²¹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 152.

completely impossible in one's own power, since the desire, as well as the subsequent enablement, is the work of the same Spirit. He cites Jeremiah 31:19 as his proof text. There the prophet was first "turned" by the hand of God, but then enabled by Him to both repent and receive further instruction unto righteousness.¹²² This, according to Beddome, is the general pattern of the Spirit's work in the believer today.

Union with Christ

As previously indicated, Beddome believes the effectual call and the gift of faith are intimately related to the believer's union with Christ. The believer, he declares, is "vitaly united to Christ by the Spirit," in which "we are an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph 2:22). While the union with Christ officially begins at the moment of the effectual call and the gift of faith, Beddome believes it was already a fact in God's eternal plan, even prior to the Spirit's call, noting, "We read of the grace given us in Christ before the world began."¹²³ Here he espouses a theological view which was first made popular by seventeenth-century Puritan theologians. They suggested that the salvation of the elect, and in this case their union with Christ, was first "rooted in the eternal unchangeable decree of God," but then gradually unfolded in three stages, representing the "imminent, transient, and applicatory works of God."¹²⁴

Peter Bulkeley sheds greater light on the exact nature of these stages in Puritan theology, particularly as they pertained to the work of justification. He notes that it was first "purposed and determined in the mind and will of God," then "impetrated and obtained for us by the obedience of Christ," and finally "applied unto us."¹²⁵ While

¹²²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 152.

¹²³Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 63.

¹²⁴Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, "The Puritans on Union with Christ, Justification, and Regeneration," in *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 482.

¹²⁵Peter Bulkeley, *The Gospel-Covenant* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1674), 358.

Bulkeley tacitly accepted a threefold implementation of justification, he explicitly rejected any notion that anyone is “actually justified before faith.”¹²⁶ This appears to be Beddome’s perspective as well. He refers to the “imminent” stage of the believer’s eventual union with Christ, while at the same time accepting the notion that it had already been firmly established in the mind of God long before its actual application in redemptive history.

Far more critical than its historical unfolding, however, are the immediate benefits of the union. At the moment of faith, all believers

are really one in Christ Jesus. They are so by virtue of their union with him, being thereby incorporated into one body, and animated by one spirit; they are so also by virtue of their participation of him, for thus the phrase to be in Christ is frequently understood in Scripture.¹²⁷

Not only is there “no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1), but all believers become henceforth “the objects of the Divine love and favour.” Beddome concedes that this love differs among individual Christians as “one saint may love God more than another,” but he is also quick to reassure his hearers that although “believers are not all alike holy or alike happy... they are all alike beloved” as a result of the Spirit’s gracious work.¹²⁸

Justification

Beddome lists the benefits of the Spirit’s effectual call, which are also tallied under Question XXXV in the *Baptist Catechism* (What benefits do they that are affectually [*sic*]called, partake in this life?). These are “justification, adoption and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow

¹²⁶Bulkeley, *The Gospel-Covenant*, 358.

¹²⁷Beddome, “The Unity of True Believers,” in *Sermons*, 331.

¹²⁸Beddome, “The Unity of True Believers,” in *Sermons*, 331.

from them.”¹²⁹ Because justification is designated as a benefit of the Spirit’s effectual working, it can also be understood as a work of the Spirit, even though Beddome makes no direct mention of the Holy Spirit in his discussion of justification in the following section. While it is clearly christological in nature, being directly accomplished by Christ on the cross, Beddome insists that its application for the believer is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.

That justification is directly attributable to the work of the Spirit is strongly implied at least twice in Beddome’s hymnody. In his Doxology 825, Beddome praises all three persons of the Trinity, applying to each their appropriate ascription in the work of salvation and attributing the application of the Father’s plan and the Son’s atonement on the cross to the Holy Spirit:

The Father chose the saints in Christ,
Their surety and their head;
To make atonement for their sins,
His blood the Saviour shed.

That blood, to purify their souls,
The Spirit now applies;
Then to the sacred Three in One,
Let grateful songs arise.¹³⁰

In yet another hymn entitled “Repentance,” Beddome laments his own sin, extols the sanctifying blood of Christ, and praises the Spirit’s work of authenticating and assuring the believer of his or her justification:

My guilt appears of crimson dye,
And has a voice that pierces heaven;
But, Jesus’ blood can sanctify,
His Spirit show my sins forgiven.¹³¹

Beddome further expounds upon the Spirit’s role in justification in his sermon

¹²⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 67.

¹³⁰Beddome, “Doxologies,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 825.

¹³¹Beddome, “Repentance,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 218.

on Ezekiel 11:19. He revisits the former condition of all believers, including the apostles, who “were not only estranged, but alienated from the life God,” after which he moves to the dramatic transformation that took place through Christ’s work on the cross and its application by the Holy Spirit.¹³² He applies the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, noting that sanctification and justification are both acts of the Spirit in the name of Jesus:

For we ourselves, not only we believers, but we apostles, were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers wants and pleasures, hateful and hating one another. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.¹³³

While it was Christ’s blood that actually washed away the stain of sin and made possible the sanctifying process which transforms the believer into His image, his atoning work would be unavailing without the Holy Spirit:

He sheds abroad the Father’s love,
Applies redeeming blood;
Bids both our guilt and fear remove,
And brings us home to God.¹³⁴

Reconciliation

Since reconciliation is intimately tied to the doctrines of justification, adoption, and sanctification, it is also essential to examine its place in Beddome’s pneumatology. Few references exist in his writings concerning the Holy Spirit in reconciliation, but he does provide an excellent summary of his views in a sermon entitled “Reconciliation with God.” Drawing again upon the Puritan concept of “imminent, transient, and applicatory stages” in God’s salvific enterprise,¹³⁵ Beddome asserts that “the ground-work of our reconciliation was laid in the eternal counsels of God,” but was first “brought about in

¹³²Beddome, “Ezekiel 11:19,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:33.

¹³³Beddome, “Ezekiel 11:19,” 33.

¹³⁴Beddome, “Sovereignty of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 133.

¹³⁵Beeke and Jones, “The Puritans on Union with Christ, Justification, and Regeneration,” 482.

time by the effectual operation of the divine Spirit.”¹³⁶ In this work, the Holy Spirit is the agent, applying the benefits of the cross of Christ to the pardoned sinner, so that “this reconciliation on God’s part, without which there could have been none on ours, is effected in a way of complete satisfaction.”¹³⁷ The Spirit both initiates and then brings this divine work of grace in the believer to fruition.

In order to bring about reconciliation between God and man, the Holy Spirit “slays the enmity of the heart, subdues the obstinacy of the will, and sanctifies the carnal affections; gives a spiritual sense of the glory and excellence, unparalleled beauty and loveliness, of the divine Being.”¹³⁸ Beddome stresses that it is only through the Spirit’s intervention that “we are made to resign ourselves up to him as our lawful Sovereign; and at the same time choose and cleave to him as our supreme good and everlasting portion.”¹³⁹ In this regard, the Spirit’s work of reconciliation is clearly related to His role in sanctification, as He works to transform the believer’s thinking, as well as his or her behavior to be more and more like Christ.

Adoption

The Holy Spirit’s adoption of the believer into the family of God is beautifully articulated in Beddome’s hymn, entitled “Christ’s Example.” In the final verse, he celebrates the Spirit’s work of adoption, and encourages the faithful to take full advantage of the great privilege:

With holy zeal and love,
Come all ye ransomed ones;
The Spirit too will rest on you,

¹³⁶Beddome, “Reconciliation with God,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:119.

¹³⁷Beddome, “Reconciliation with God,” 119.

¹³⁸Beddome, “Reconciliation with God,” 119.

¹³⁹Beddome, “Reconciliation with God,” 119.

And God pronounce you sons.¹⁴⁰

He alludes to the baptism of Christ and God's declaration of his approval of the Son, which is also true of believers as applied to them through the Holy Spirit.

Under Question XXXVII in the *Baptist Catechism* (What is adoption?), Beddome references the Spirit's role in adoption and illuminates His twofold ministry in making it a reality.¹⁴¹ While Christ is clearly "the medium of our adoption," it is the Spirit who applies it by causing the believer to receive the "Spirit of sons" and thereby partake of the divine nature.¹⁴² It is the Spirit's indwelling presence that lends credence to the believer's adopted status and future inheritance. This accomplished fact is referenced by the apostle Paul in Galatians 4:6, who writes: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." Beddome believes the indwelling of the Spirit to be the actual "first fruits" of an adoption that had already been eternally established, yet which, after much hardship and anticipation, will someday be reality and the source of the believer's joy at the resurrection and the final redemption of God's creation.¹⁴³

Perseverance

The perseverance of the saints is yet another benefit, discussed under Question XXXIX in the *Baptist Catechism*, which "accompanies or flows from justification, adoption, and sanctification."¹⁴⁴ The "Spirit of sons," imparted to the believer in the work of adoption is at the same time the "earnest" or initial down payment, guaranteeing that the redemptive transaction will surely be paid in full. The Spirit's presence is sufficient to

¹⁴⁰Beddome, "Christ's Example," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 602.

¹⁴¹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 71.

¹⁴²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 72.

¹⁴³Beddome, "Romans 7:21," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:31.

¹⁴⁴Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 75.

keep true believers “from fundamental errors” and “retain the vital principle of grace implanted in their souls.”¹⁴⁵ The Spirit also offers comfort and assurance, as He bears “witness with our spirits that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:16). Beddome notes reassuringly, that a believer

may be a loser *for* Christ, but he shall not be a loser *by* Christ. He shall receive an hundredfold in this world, in the pardon of his sins, peace of conscience, the earnest of His Spirit, and the smiles of a reconciled God; and in the world to come, life everlasting.¹⁴⁶

This rich truth is also acclaimed in the texts of two of Beddome’s hymns. In “Dependence on the Spirit,” he emphatically states,

The soul he’ll ne’er forsake
That’s moulded by his hand;
Without his aid the strongest fall,
By him the weakest stand.¹⁴⁷

Similarly, in “The Trinity,” Beddome celebrates the sealing of the Spirit, along with the roles of the other two persons of the Trinity in guaranteeing the redemption of the elect:

Ye children of the Father’s choice,
And purchase of the Saviour’s blood,
Sealed by the Spirit, now rejoice,
And bless and praise the triune God.¹⁴⁸

Sanctification

Although Beddome’s discussion of sanctification precedes his remarks on perseverance in *A Scriptural Exposition*, it is considered last in this analysis, due to its relation and proximity to the Spirit’s ongoing work in the believer in Chapter Seven. Similar to the regenerative quickening of the Spirit, which gives life to the spiritually dead, His ministry of sanctification is initially necessitated by the raw condition of the

¹⁴⁵Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 77.

¹⁴⁶Beddome, “On the Folly of Profession without Forethought,” in *Sermons*, 133.

¹⁴⁷Beddome, “Dependence on the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 140.

¹⁴⁸Beddome, “The Trinity,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 257.

natural man at the moment of faith and his great need for spiritual transformation both at the moment of faith and throughout his entire life. Truly,

it is the character of all wicked men that they are lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. They had rather be at a card table than in their closets, in a play-house than the house of prayer, and such are described as being sensual, not having the Spirit.¹⁴⁹

Living without the Spirit leaves the natural man in a desperate condition. In fact, Beddome notes that before the effectual call, “all that we do or can do, is to fit ourselves for destruction.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, “the fear of the Creator, the love of the Redeemer, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, were all lacking.”¹⁵¹ He suggests that “a great part of our salvation consists in our being saved from sin as well as its consequences.” Hence, “the gift of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of making us holy and restoring us to the image of God which was lost.”¹⁵² In the same way,

being wholly defiled with a moral leprosy, are we as sinners shut out from the camp of God, excluded from the society of holy and happy beings, and rendered unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Nothing that is defiled can enter therein; and unless we are washed and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, we must ever be excluded from the city and the temple of the new Jerusalem.¹⁵³

With these factors in mind, the Holy Spirit, as the agent of sanctification, first sets apart the believer positionally, continues the process progressively, and finally completes the gradual, life-long work of transforming the believer into the very image of Christ.

Beddome asserts that “the same Spirit... that has begun the work” [of sanctification] will also “carry it on,” by “enlightening our minds” and giving “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” and revealing “the

¹⁴⁹Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:65–66.

¹⁵⁰Beddome, “Zechariah 3:2,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:165.

¹⁵¹Beddome, “Matthew 19:20,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:173.

¹⁵²Beddome, “James 2:18,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:83.

¹⁵³Beddome, “Luke 17:17,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:17.

things of Christ.”¹⁵⁴ That the Spirit is “the efficient cause” of this sanctification¹⁵⁵ is acclaimed in a variety of Beddome’s hymns. In “The Comforter,” Beddome celebrates the regenerative working of the Spirit sent by the Lord:

He sends his Spirit from above,
Our nature to renew;
Displays his power, his love reveals,
Imparts his comforts too.¹⁵⁶

In “Quickening Influence,” the Spirit is also said to “subdue the stubborn will, humble, and renew,” as well as “comfort, sanctify and seal,”¹⁵⁷ while in another related hymn, entitled “Indwelling of the Spirit,” the Spirit is praised for working “light, life and holiness,” and enabling believers to display the works and fruits of the Spirit.¹⁵⁸ God not only “brings [believers] under the renovating and sanctifying operations of His Spirit,” but also “makes them partakers of divine grace.”¹⁵⁹

Like other Reformed theologians of his day, Beddome believes that the transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit is best accomplished in conjunction with the word of God. While the Scriptures are to function as “a mirror in which we behold our own deformity and the glory of the Saviour,” it is “by the Spirit of the Lord”, says Beddome, “that we are changed into his image and likeness.”¹⁶⁰ Out of this grows a Christ-likeness or holiness, which is “the fruit of sovereign and effectual grace,” produced by “the agency of His blessed Spirit.”¹⁶¹ Beddome notes that this divine work is

¹⁵⁴Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 66.

¹⁵⁵Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 73.

¹⁵⁶Beddome, “The Comforter,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 134.

¹⁵⁷Beddome, “Quickening Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 145.

¹⁵⁸Beddome, “Indwelling of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 141.

¹⁵⁹Beddome, “The Nature and Authority of the Christian Ministry,” in *Sermons*, 306.

¹⁶⁰Beddome, “Acts 26:31,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:109.

¹⁶¹Beddome, “Hebrews 12:14,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:152.

not instantaneous, like justification or adoption, since “the communications of the Spirit, and our growth in grace, are both gradual.”¹⁶² He refers to this as a type of cleansing or “the renovation of the heart,”¹⁶³ so “that we might walk with God.”¹⁶⁴ It is with this new heart, with transformed motives, and a growing desire to please God, that the believer is enabled to work along with the Spirit to grow in godliness and bring glory to God.

For Beddome, sanctification always presupposes a true knowledge of Christ, which is both “vital and efficacious, and has a transforming influence.”¹⁶⁵ In contrast,

other knowledge is barren and unprofitable; it neither purifies the heart nor reforms the life; but every truth opened and applied by the divine Spirit promotes holiness, excites watchfulness and circumspection, and issues in an upright and godly conversation.¹⁶⁶

Beddome expects the believer’s growth in holiness to be directly proportional to the depth of his or her knowledge of Christ. He explains,

We begin to be holy, when we begin to know Christ; and we grow in holiness as we increase in the knowledge of him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.¹⁶⁷

Conversely, the Christian’s growth in godliness will incrementally heighten his or her abhorrence of sin. This prepares the believer for eternal life in God’s presence. The soul of the believer is “deeply humbled” by the remembrance of the wicked ways of the past, and is thus “inclined to forsake them,” gradually growing day by day in holiness.¹⁶⁸ Beddome is confident that this twofold work of sanctification, once begun, will be

¹⁶²Beddome, “On the Folly of Profession without Forethought,” in *Sermons*, 130.

¹⁶³Beddome, “Necessity of Holiness,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:48.

¹⁶⁴Beddome, “Leadings of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 138.

¹⁶⁵Beddome, “Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know Thee,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:166.

¹⁶⁶Beddome, “On Christian Fruitfulness,” in *Sermons*, 247.

¹⁶⁷Beddome, “Hebrews 12:14,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:154.

¹⁶⁸Beddome, “God No Respector of Persons,” in *Sermons*, 27.

“carried on to perfection, so that those who have begun in the Spirit, shall not end in the flesh, but will hold their way, waxing stronger and stronger.”¹⁶⁹ Indeed,

it is the office of the Holy Spirit to assimilate us into his own likeness, render us more and more like God and the Saviour, for whose blessed presence we are gradually prepared.¹⁷⁰

Beddome is clearly enamored with the Spirit’s work of sanctification, as it assumes a primary emphasis in his pneumatology. He also dedicates much attention to Spirit-transformation in his hymnody. In “Sovereignty of the Spirit,” he declares,

He [the Spirit] moulds the carnal mind afresh,
Subdues the power of sin,
Transforms the heart of stone to flesh,
And plants his grace within.¹⁷¹

In the hymn “Invocation,” Beddome sees his own need and pleads with the Spirit,

Oh melt this frozen heart,
This stubborn will subdue;
Each evil passion overcome,
And form me all anew.¹⁷²

Similarly, in “Renewing Influence,” he bids the Spirit,

Form every faculty anew,
Our lusts restrain, our hearts subdue;
Our fears suppress, our guilt remove,
Inspire with zeal, enflame with love.¹⁷³

Finally, Beddome exuberantly celebrates the Spirit’s awesome power over sin.

In “Dependence on the Spirit,” he exclaims,

Where’er the Spirit works
With energy divine,
There sin will lose its reigning power,

¹⁶⁹Beddome, “Hebrews 12:14,” *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:155.

¹⁷⁰Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:62.

¹⁷¹Beddome, “Sovereignty of the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 133

¹⁷²Beddome, “Invocation,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 132.

¹⁷³Beddome, “Renewing Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 143.

And every virtue shine.¹⁷⁴

Elsewhere, in “Quickening Influence,” he pleads,

Rebellious lusts do thou controul,
Dissolve our chains and set us free,
From Satan’s arbitrary rule,
And sin’s destructive tyranny.¹⁷⁵

With such petitions, Beddome expresses both a conviction and an expectation, knowing that sanctification is not only significant, but absolutely indispensable for the Christian’s growth, development, relationships, and ultimate transformation into the image of Christ:

It is only when the Spirit, that heavenly wind, blows upon the garden of the soul, that its sweet spices will send forth a fragrant odour delightful to him, refreshing to ourselves, and grateful to all around.¹⁷⁶

Following the traditional spectrum of Reformed pneumatological emphases, such as the Word and the Spirit, the Spirit’s work in creation and the Old Testament, the Spirit’s work in the life and ministry of Christ, and His work of redemption, Beddome’s writings and hymns show definite symmetry and continuity with his Puritan heritage.¹⁷⁷ One could reasonably assume that most any Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Restoration Puritan could have easily related to his pneumatology, which displays few if any deviations from classic Puritan theology. In addition, his strong emphasis on quickening and renewal is conspicuously representative of early evangelical thought and practice.

¹⁷⁴Beddome, “Dependence on the Spirit,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 140.

¹⁷⁵ Beddome, “Quickening Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 145.

¹⁷⁶Beddome, “The Rejection of the Wicked,” in *Sermons*, 328.

¹⁷⁷Beeke and Jones, “The Puritans on the Holy Spirit,” 419–41.

CHAPTER 7
BEDDOME'S PNEUMATOLOGY: PART 2

The Holy Spirit and the Believer

The Baptism/Indwelling of the Spirit

Benjamin Beddome's *A Scriptural Exposition*, along with his many sermons and hymns, are replete with references to the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer, a grace made possible by Spirit baptism and His indwelling at the moment of belief. Beddome does not differentiate between Spirit baptism and His indwelling, although it is clear that he at least recognizes both, perhaps as two different aspects of one divine action at the moment of faith. Under Question XCVII in the *Baptist Catechism* (What is baptism?), he makes a clear distinction between the spiritual baptisms with the Spirit and of suffering and the physical ordinance of water baptism. To the question "Doth the Scripture speak of a baptism?" He answers affirmatively, referencing Matthew 3:11 and Acts 2:4, where the apostles "were filled with the Holy Ghost."¹

Beddome appears to see Spirit baptism, the Spirit's indwelling, and the filling of the Spirit as separate motions of the same work of grace. Spirit baptism is the initiatory act that both introduces the Spirit into the believer's life and establishes his union with Christ, so that he is henceforth "in Christ." The Spirit's indwelling remains a constant throughout life, while the Spirit's filling can vary quantitatively according to the spiritual condition of the believer at any given time. That the Holy Spirit has taken up permanent spiritual residence in the believer is evidenced by the biblical metaphor of the believer's

¹Benjamin Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptist Catechism by Way of Question and Answer* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1776), 159.

body being His temple. In one sermon, Beddome reminds his hearers that their bodies, “though the temple of the Holy Ghost, yet being defined by sin, must be dissolved,” a reference to death.² Elsewhere, he observes that the Christian “becomes a habitation of God through the Spirit,” for “those who make the most high their refuge and their dwelling place, shall be themselves his dwelling place in all generations.”³ The Spirit’s indwelling in this life is also indicative of a permanent future condition. Beddome is convinced that “the saints who in this world partake of the spirit of Christ, shall also partake of his glory in the next.”⁴

The Graces of the Spirit

When speaking of the Spirit’s work of grace, Beddome does “not mean faith, hope, love, or any other particular grace of the Spirit, but that internal vital principle of holiness, which is the root and foundation of all practical religion.”⁵ Simply put, “grace is like a fountain; and various graces of the Spirit—faith, hope, love, fear, joy, and the like, are the streams flowing from that fountain.”⁶ More specifically, Beddome divides the graces of the Spirit into two categories: the gifts of the Spirit, “which are from him, and those fruits of righteousness which are by him.”⁷ Accordingly, “there is a diversity of gifts and operations, but the same Spirit; all are possessed of grace, but not in the same

²Benjamin Beddome, “On the Destruction of the Temple,” in *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome* (London: William Ball, 1835), 79.

³Benjamin Beddome, “Isaiah 54:11,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol.5 (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1833), 18.

⁴Benjamin Beddome, “Revelation 4:4,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 8 (London: Samuel Burton, 1825), 37.

⁵Beddome, “On the Obedience of the Heart,” in *Sermons*, 432.

⁶Beddome, “Importance of the Grace of Christ,” in *Sermons*, 217.

⁷Benjamin Beddome, “The Stranger Received,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 2 (Dunstable: J. W. Morris, 1807), 53.

degree.”⁸ Once imparted, the Spirit’s work of grace in the believer is

a permanent and abiding principle, yet it is subject to many ebbings and flowings. Though it cannot be lost, yet it is liable to decays; and as this is true of grace in general, so also of particular graces.⁹

The gifts of the Spirit. At Pentecost, the disciples were “endowed with extraordinary gifts... not for the purpose of destroying men’s lives, but to save them.”¹⁰

Using the fear of the Lord as an example, which leads to holiness and greater effectiveness, Beddome notes that like the other gifts of the Spirit, it is

not a natural, but an implanted principle. We neither originate it in ourselves, nor can any creature impart it to us; we neither find it by chance, nor obtain it by industry; but it is such a fear as proceeds from the Spirit of Grace...¹¹

Since spiritual gifts are divinely bestowed and not earned by any merit or effort of our own, we “dishonour the Holy Spirit” when we become “puffed up with knowledge, elated with our gifts, and filled with a high opinion of our own sanctity and holiness,” for the gifts of the Spirit are meant for the benefit of others and the glory of Christ.¹² This truth, to be practiced and exemplified in the church, is beautifully expressed in Beddome’s hymn “Peace and Love.” There he writes,

The Spirit there his gift imparts,
Both various and divine;
And God is pleased when pious hearts
In peaceful union join.¹³

⁸Beddome, “The Unity of True Believers,” *Sermons*, 330.

⁹Beddome, “On the Stability of the Gracious Character,” *Sermons*, 158.

¹⁰Benjamin Beddome, “Luke 9:54–55,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family* (London: Samuel Burton, 1825), 7:88.

¹¹Beddome, “On the Fear of God,” in *Sermons*, 209.

¹²Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 4, 4th ed. (London: R. Clay, 1822), 67.

¹³Benjamin Beddome, “Peace and Love,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship or Family Devotion: Now First Published, from the Manuscripts of the Late Benjamin Beddome* (London: Burton and Briggs, 1818), 636.

Similarly, Beddome pleads for the graces of the Spirit in the related hymn “Renewing Influence,” crying,

Eternal Spirit, source of good,
Too little known or understood,
Thy saving gifts to us dispense,
And bless us with thine influence.¹⁴

The fruits of the Spirit. The washing by the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 6:11 is far from a “ceremonial ablution” or a “baptismal purification.” Instead, it describes a transforming force in which

the power of sin is broken, and a spiritual principle implanted. It also includes a universal conformity to the divine nature, and a willing subjection to the divine law; a heart possessed of faith, hope, and love, and all the graces of the holy Spirit.¹⁵

In his sermon, “On Christian Fruitfulness,” Beddome further expounds on the graces of the Spirit and lists, in particular, some of their fruits or dispositions, such as “faith, hope, love, meekness, humility, sincerity, and the like.”¹⁶

Such qualities or dispositions are not merely decorative or superficial, but absolutely essential to the spiritual and emotional well-being of the believer. According to Beddome, the indwelling Spirit becomes the “only efficient cause of peace and joy,” for the Holy Spirit

is truly and eminently styled the Comforter; it is he alone who can raise us above our fears and shed abroad the love of God in our hearts. His it is to discover to us the freeness, fullness, and all sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, and to draw forth those dispositions which shall fill us with all joy and peace in believing. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness and faith.¹⁷

¹⁴Beddome, “Renewing Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 143.

¹⁵Benjamin Beddome, “Proverbs 20:9,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 6, 5th ed. (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1834), 143.

¹⁶Beddome, “On Christian Fruitfulness,” in *Sermons*, 250.

¹⁷Beddome, “1 Thessalonians 5:16,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:41.

The comforts of the Spirit. Joy, peace, and hope are referred to in Beddome's writings as "the comforts of the Holy Ghost."¹⁸ In fact, all three, and in particular the calm that is derived from them, were frequently on his lips, perhaps in response to the hardships of life that were typical in the eighteenth century. One example is his hymn "Following the Lord fully," in which the Spirit is implored to "condescend" and "afford inward peace and joy."¹⁹ Such inner tranquility leads to praise, which, in turn, has a wholesome effect on the believers' sense of well-being. As a result, believers are "better capacitated for this heavenly employment," because "they have the Spirit to teach them, grace to assist them, and the most enlarged expectations to excite unceasing praise."²⁰ Beddome assures his hearers that the very sources of these comforts remain

unchangeably the same: the love, the purpose, and the promises of God are without variableness, or the least shadow of turning. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son never loses its virtue, and the efficacy of his Holy Spirit is evermore the same.²¹

The believer's ever-present need for the "comforts of the Holy Ghost" stems from his chronic unbelief. Even after experiencing God's faithfulness, it invariably returns and robs the believer of his or her emotional security and confidence in God. Recognizing that believers are "naturally shut up in unbelief," Beddome extols the reassuring presence of the Holy Spirit,

[who]fills us with peace and joy in believing, by revealing Christ to us in all his excellency and glory, and leading us to rest on him alone for eternal life. It is the Spirit that helps us to fly for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us: and without his direction and influence, we should either take up with some presumptuous confidence, or sink into utter despair.²²

¹⁸Beddome, "On the Fear of God," in *Sermons*, 210.

¹⁹Beddome, "Following the Lord fully," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 606.

²⁰Beddome, "In every thing give thanks," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:54–55.

²¹Beddome, "Rejoice evermore," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:42.

²²Beddome, "Colossians 1:27," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:57.

In fact, he posits that any “withdrawment of divine influences either leaves us in a state of stupidity, or overwhelms us with distress; and we have neither help nor hope.”²³

Joy. Under Question XXXIX in the *Baptist Catechism*, which deals with the benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification, Beddome asks: “Have the saints joy in the Holy Ghost?” He answers with a resounding, “Yes!” The Christian’s joy is based upon God’s “precious promises,” an accomplished redemption, and the “hope of glory.”²⁴ He further defines joy as “a holy joy in God; not a noisy and tumultuous transport, but a calm and inward delight, a dwelling on the perfections of the divine nature with the most entire satisfaction.”²⁵

“Joy in the Holy Ghost,” says Beddome, is one of “the fruits that the root of righteousness produceth; for the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever.”²⁶ To accomplish this, God speaks to believers “by his Spirit in the word.” As they review His promises and are reminded of the certainty of His provision and salvation, the Spirit “quickens their inactive powers, calms their anxious and disquieting fears, and fills them with joy and peace in believing.”²⁷ This can be acquired through the personal reading of the Scriptures or through the exposition of the Scriptures by the clergy. However, Beddome is quick to warn his hearers that “ministers are not the authors of joy.” They are merely the “helpers of it,” for joy is alone “a fruit of the Spirit.”²⁸

Peace. With a fitting analogy, Beddome compares the Christian’s need of the

²³Beddome, “I Thessalonians 5:16,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:41.

²⁴Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 77.

²⁵Beddome, “Isaiah 58:14,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:70.

²⁶Beddome, “On Christian Faithfulness,” in *Sermons*, 251.

²⁷Beddome, “John 18:37,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:111.

²⁸Beddome, “On the Duty of Ministers to Promote Their People’s Joy,” in *Sermons*, 358.

Spirit to that of a vegetable garden's dependence on the sun for life:

The vegetable world does not more need the reviving and refreshing beams of the sun, than the dull and torpid Christian needs the Spirit's influence, to render him cheerful, active, and fruitful.²⁹

This comforting ministry of the Holy Spirit, according to Beddome, is built upon the knowledge of truth, such as the surety of redemption or the believer's eternal hope. Yet, as amazing and inspiring as those truths can be, they tend to become theoretical, and perhaps even a bit trite, unless they are vitally energized and reemphasized in the mind of the believer through the agency of the Spirit.

Beddome is convinced that "sinners owe their conversion, and saints their edification, to the influence of the gospel." It "gives comfort to mourners, relief to the oppressed," and it "triumphs over all opposition," because it represents "both the wisdom of God and the power of God."³⁰ He also emphasizes how the gospel "derives all its influence and all its energy from the grace of the Holy Spirit; when it becomes mighty, to the pulling down of strong holds, and the casting down of imaginations."³¹ In this way, the Spirit "restores to us divine comfort forfeited by sin."³² Similarly, the believer's "hope of glory" through Christ is made real by the Spirit in the heart through the continual reminder of its foundational truths. Thus, in His work of grace,

a well-grounded hope of eternal life is wrought in us by the agency of the Holy Spirit, rendering the word effectual, first for our conviction, discovering our disease and the need of a remedy; and then for our consolation, opening the wound, and applying the healing balm.³³

As in all the wondrous workings of God, the Holy Spirit's ministry of comfort, bestowing inner peace, is disparate and inexplicably diverse:

²⁹Beddome, "Quench Not the Spirit," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:62.

³⁰Beddome, "Acts 14:3," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:75.

³¹Beddome, "Acts 14:3," 75.

³²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 186.

³³Beddome, "Colossians 1:27," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:57.

If Christ made a difference between one disciple and another in his treatment of them, it is no more that what he continues to do. One is kept, as it were, at a distance, while another is laid in the bosom. All are alike justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his grace, but not equally comforted by his Spirit. He loves all alike, but does not reveal himself to all alike in this world; none perhaps in the other.³⁴

This principle is demonstrated in the dissimilar ways in which two different believers might experience the Spirit's peace. For example,

there may be pious individuals, who have walked in the light of God's countenance, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, who have not been the subjects of any remarkable or powerful impression, but who have enjoyed almost uninterrupted tranquility and peace; yet it cannot be doubted that there are instances in which the Spirit of God has so strongly impressed a promise on the mind of a believer, and that promise so suited to his case and circumstances, as at once to dispel his doubts and fears, and fill him with joy and peace in believing.³⁵

The consequences of the Spirit's comforting peace are both effectual and convicting, albeit disparate and at times seemingly unrelated. Beddome observes, for example, that when the primitive churches "walked, not only in the fear of the Lord, but in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, they were both edified and multiplied."³⁶

Furthermore, those who "walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the holy Spirit," are assuredly less likely to "indulge secret sins," or to "neglect secret duties."³⁷

Hope. Inseparably coupled with joy and peace is the believer's hope.

Throughout Beddome's writings, the source of this comforting hope is threefold. First, it is "grounded on the promises of God." Beddome understands the believer's hope to be both "rational and scriptural." It is "produced by the Holy Spirit, strengthened by experience, and grounded on the promises."³⁸ More specifically, he reassures his congregation that their hope, "founded upon the covenant and the promises of God, will

³⁴Beddome, "The Beloved Disciple," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:96.

³⁵Beddome, "Heirs of Promise: Hebrews 6:17," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:136.

³⁶Beddome, "Isaiah 58:14," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:76.

³⁷Beddome, "Isaiah 33:6," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 8:72.

³⁸Beddome, "Jeremiah 17:17," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:58.

not make ashamed, but all other hope will.”³⁹

Second, the more the believer understands and embraces the richness and depth of his salvation, a work initiated and wrought by God, the greater his or her hope will be. Thus, “by enlightening the understanding in the great mysteries of redemption, and applying them with power to the heart, we are made to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”⁴⁰ What soon becomes evident is God’s far-reaching plan of redemption, which goes beyond forgiveness of sins on the cross and extends to the future, when God’s ultimate objective in the redemptive process is finally completed and the believer is fully and eternally transformed into the very image of Christ.

The third source of hope is the believers’ future resurrection and the prospect of spending eternity in the glorious presence of God. It is a hope “wrought in them by the Holy Spirit,” and “begotten by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.”⁴¹ Beddome suggests that it is “God,” not the splendors of heaven, which is the true “object of his people’s hope.” He observes,

There are many things which the Christian hopes for, but they shall all centre in one object. The holy Spirit is the author and preserver of this hope, Christ is the medium of it, as well as of every other grace, and God is the object of it.⁴²

Empowerment

The means and strength to live the victorious Christian life flow directly from the Holy Spirit. True fruitfulness is only possible when there is total dependence on God. This flies in the face of the independent spirit that epitomizes the sinful inclination of the human heart. In this respect, Beddome exhorts the believer to “take into account: not only

³⁹Beddome, “The Confession of True Penitence,” in *Sermons*, 298.

⁴⁰Beddome, “Colossians 1:27,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:59–60.

⁴¹Beddome, “Colossians 1:27,” 54.

⁴²Benjamin Beddome, “Jeremiah 17:17,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 3 (London: J. W. Morris, 1809), 59.

what it will cost him, but what... it must cost God, before he can do his work.”⁴³ In this,

his own finances are not sufficient; he must have help from abroad, help from ministers and Christian friends, but, above all, help from heaven. The Spirit of God must afford him his continual aid, and Christ’s strength must be made perfect in his weakness.⁴⁴

According to Beddome, the strength by which believers are to walk in the Spirit and persevere in godliness is “not natural, but moral strength... not bodily or mental, but that which is communicated by the holy Spirit.”⁴⁵ It is spiritual enablement, which “consists in our being strengthened with all might by God’s Spirit in the inner man.”⁴⁶ Failure and unfruitfulness come when the believer attempts to live the Christian life or fight spiritual battles in his or her own strength. Thus, in Christian warfare, believers “overcome not by their own strength, but by the strength of another.”⁴⁷

Guidance

In a verse written to complement a sermon on Hebrews 12:14 and which also appears as Hymn 138 in his volume of hymns, entitled “Leadings of the Spirit,” Beddome adroitly describes the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the following manner:

He by his Spirit leads,
In paths before unknown;
The work to be performed is ours,
The strength is all his own.⁴⁸

The work of the believer, simply stated although often difficult in practice, is his or her response in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit, in which “the soul is brought to an absolute resignation of itself to him” in full dependence upon Him for the path or the task

⁴³Beddome, “On the Folly of Profession without Forethought,” in *Sermons*, 132.

⁴⁴Beddome, “On the Folly of Profession,” 132.

⁴⁵Beddome, “1 Corinthians 16:13,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:5.

⁴⁶Beddome, “1 Corinthians 16:13,” 6.

⁴⁷Beddome, “Romans 8:37,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:132.

⁴⁸Beddome, “Hebrews 12:14,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:159.

ahead.⁴⁹ Beddome might quickly add that complete dependence upon God for strength and guidance is actually a blessing for those who are “the objects of his love, partakers of his grace, and under the guidance and influence of his holy Spirit.”⁵⁰ He further extols the graciousness of God, by whom those who are otherwise “spiritually lame” are made to walk by grace:

They walk with God, and before him. They walk honestly and uprightly in the footsteps of the flock, and in newness of life; in the light, in the truth, in the ways of God, and at liberty. The Spirit is their guide, the word their rule, the excellent of the earth their companions, glory their end, and Christ their way.⁵¹

Beddome accordingly underscores the specifics of the Spirit’s guidance of true believers, who being the children of God are necessarily led by His Spirit. He explains,

Where the word is silent, the Holy Spirit speaks, or is as a word behind us, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. It is he that illuminates the understanding, renews the affections, and guides our feet into the way of peace. If he withholds his light, we walk in darkness, and grope even at noon day. The first light that breaks in upon the soul is from his influence, enabling us to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ...⁵²

Similar to that of the builder of the tower in Luke 14:28, such light fosters a calculated course of action, which is always a given whenever the “prudent Christian enters upon a religious course of life under the influence of the Divine Spirit.”⁵³

The guidance of the believer by the Holy Spirit is carried out in a multifaceted manner. In some cases, it can present itself through a “powerful impression” on the mind.⁵⁴ Beddome describes this operation of the Spirit on the heart as “attractive and not compulsive,” adding that “in a variety of instances” it is “scarcely distinguishable from

⁴⁹Beddome, “John 3:7,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:39.

⁵⁰Beddome, “On the Security of the Humble,” in *Sermons*, 153.

⁵¹Benjamin Beddome, “The Impotent Man,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Dunstable: J. W. Morris, 1807), 86.

⁵²Beddome, “Exodus 13:21,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:49–50.

⁵³Beddome, “Profession without Forethought,” in *Sermons*, 233–4.

⁵⁴Beddome, “Christ the Physician of Souls,” in *Sermons*, 445.

the workings of our mind.”⁵⁵ In special cases, however, the Spirit can choose to influence the believer by some form of immediate inspiration, whereby he or she is given absolute certainty from God about a particular truth or the path ahead. Not surprisingly, with so much at stake, Beddome challenges the believer, “Arise and call upon thy God! Pray for the teachings and influences of his Spirit, to shew thee the way of life, and to guide thee in it.”⁵⁶

Beddome prayerfully pleads in several hymns for divine guidance and direction throughout life which will lead to and finally culminate in glory. In his hymn “Divine Direction and Support,” he petitions,

Lord, by thy Spirit and thy word,
Guide us in that delightful way,
In which thy saints have ever trod,
Which leads to realms of endless day.⁵⁷

While in yet another hymn, “Guidance of the Spirit,” Beddome enjoins the Lord in a similar manner:

Show us the path that we should tread,
That leads direct to thine abode;
And let thy blessed Spirit be
Our constant guide along the road.

Each moment fresh instructions give;
For till we reach the blissful shore,
A thousand lessons we shall need,
And those obtained, a thousand more.⁵⁸

The Conviction of Sin

The Spirit’s work of convicting the believer of sin takes on an even greater dimension as his or her spiritual transformation unfolds. What began through an initial

⁵⁵Beddome, “Acts 16:14,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:149.

⁵⁶Beddome, “John 3:7,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:44.

⁵⁷Beddome, “Divine Direction and Support,” *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 308.

⁵⁸Beddome, “Guidance of the Spirit,” *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 139.

conviction of sin, leading to repentance and eventual salvation, will subsequently continue in an ongoing process of sanctification, as residual sins and imperfections are illuminated and subsequently eliminated, and the believer is gradually conformed to the image of Christ. Simply stated, it is the “office” of the Holy Spirit “to convince the world of sin, both as to its direful effects and evil nature.”⁵⁹ For the believer, the Spirit’s role is first that of a prosecutor, and later as the Comforter. As Beddome explains,

All will acknowledge that they are sinners; but before they can know the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the scales must fall from their eyes, and the veil be taken from their hearts, or the most diligent enquiries will be vain and ineffectual. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and it is thus he becomes the Comforter of those who labour to bring sinners to the knowledge of the truth, seeing that without his influence they could do nothing.⁶⁰

The Spirit’s work is one of first revealing and then refining the defects that would otherwise go undetected. Beddome remarks, “We may see much evil in ourselves and others, sufficient to convince us we are sinners; but shall never see sin in its true light, till it is discovered to us by the Spirit of God.”⁶¹ This is true of the natural man as well as the believer. According to Beddome, even the unregenerate have certain natural convictions concerning sin, but they pale in comparison to spiritual convictions or those specifically revealed through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. He suggests that

spiritual convictions may, generally speaking, be distinguished from those that are merely natural; or the influences of the Spirit in conviction from the workings of a man’s own conscience....Natural convictions respect only the guilt of sin; spiritual convictions are attended with a deep and painful sense of inherent filth and pollution.⁶²

Beddome observes that “natural convictions extend only to some sins, and those generally of a more gross and heinous nature.”⁶³ But the Spirit-engendered

⁵⁹Beddome, “The Danger of Self-Deception,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:152.

⁶⁰Beddome, “Job 36:9,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:84.

⁶¹Beddome, “Job 36:9,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:87.

⁶²Beddome, “Spiritual Convictions,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:139.

⁶³Beddome, “Spiritual Convictions,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:141.

convictions experienced by believers are of a much more sensitive nature, in which case

the Spirit of God oftentimes fixes upon some particular sin, and fastens that upon the conscience; but he does not stop there. He leads to the corrupt fountain of sin in the heart; opens the secret chambers of imagery, and discovers still greater and greater abominations. —Spiritual convictions especially extend to spiritual sins; such as, pride, covetousness, ambition, carnality, fretfulness, discontent, distrust, and unbelief.⁶⁴

Furthermore, natural and spiritual convictions are different in nature with dissimilar incentives. With “natural convictions, the soul is actuated by slavish fear—fear of temporal judgments, and eternal punishment; of God’s justice, and the flames of hell.” In contrast, “those convictions which proceed from the divine Spirit have more or less a respect of the honour of God, and the love of God.”⁶⁵ Thus, those who truly love God will be attentive to the Spirit’s promptings and desire to walk with Him in holiness.

Walking in the Spirit. The normal Christian life is to be lived in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit, who points to areas of temptation and fleshly desires that lead to sin. Beddome reminds his hearers of Paul’s exhortation, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh,” warning them that “even innocent amusements, if too eagerly coveted and too frequently pursued, become a snare to the soul.”⁶⁶ Since it is the work of the Spirit to guide the believer in the way of righteousness, careful examination of one’s life and motives is essential in determining whether he or she is truly following the Spirit’s leading or not. He further observes that

our actions require to be proved, as well as the articles of our faith. Enquiry should be made whether we walk in the Spirit, or after the flesh; whether we live in any known sin or whether we have thought on our ways, and turned our feet to God’s testimonies.⁶⁷

The reason for such close attention to thought, motive, and conduct is the

⁶⁴Beddome, “Spiritual Convictions,” 141–2.

⁶⁵Beddome, “Spiritual Convictions,” 140.

⁶⁶Beddome, “Quench not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:66.

⁶⁷Beddome, “Prove All Things,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:83–84.

danger of fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and disobeying the Spirit's clear direction and conviction. Such actions grieve the Spirit, which stifles or quenches His power and influence, leading to even greater temptation and increasing fruitlessness.

Grieving and Quenching the Spirit. When the believer no longer walks in the Spirit, and instead ignores His leading or rebels against His admonitions, he or she not only grieves the Spirit through neglect and disobedience, but “impedes” or quenches “his sanctifying operations.”⁶⁸ The causes, dangers, and consequences of grieving the Spirit are carefully outlined in Beddome's sermon “Quench not the Spirit.” It provides an exhaustive and insightful exposition of 1 Thessalonians 5:19, and represents his most definitive discourse on the topic. Even though the Holy Spirit is “in his own nature unchangeable and his designs and purposes cannot be frustrated,” it is possible for the believer to hamper or stand in the way of the work of the Spirit, in his own life and within the body of Christ.⁶⁹

Although grieving the Spirit is a serious offense, it does not result in a loss of salvation or the Spirit's complete withdrawal from the offending believer. Because the Spirit already “dwells in all saints, he will not leave nor forsake them, yet the enjoyment of his presence may be greatly interrupted” or quenched.⁷⁰ This differs from the experience of Saul, from whom the Spirit departed entirely, but like Saul, “evil qualities will take place” in the believer, “where good ones are wanting; and if grace be not prevalent, sin will be predominant.”⁷¹ Since the believer's sanctification is the will of God (1 Thess 4:3), Beddome warns that in impeding the sanctifying work of the Spirit, and thus quenching Him, “we shall sin greatly against God, as well as our own souls,” for

⁶⁸Beddome, “Quench not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:62.

⁶⁹Beddome, “Quench not the Spirit,” 62.

⁷⁰Beddome, “Quench not the Spirit,” 63.

⁷¹Beddome, “Hold Fast That Which is Good,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:94.

“the Divine Father, who sends the Comforter, will be offended.”⁷² This is the grievous character of the offense.

Individually and corporately, believers most often grieve the Spirit through various forms of rebellion. Beddome laments this fact, commenting that “the sins of a people professing godliness are so frequently branded with the odious character of the rebellious.”⁷³ Most often it is expressed by an independent spirit when believers “depend too much on their own strength, and too little on the Spirit of God.”⁷⁴ It can also be the result of “resisting [the Spirit’s] operations on our mind, when we pray, but not in the Spirit.”⁷⁵ As a result, “real Christians generally make so little proficiency, bring so little honour to religion, and enjoy so little comfort in their own souls.”⁷⁶

Equally grievous are sins that quench the work of the Spirit among believers, in which the “gifts and graces” of the Spirit “be damped by neglect, and by a contempt of their ministrations.”⁷⁷ Similarly, “the heat of passion extinguishes the fire of love; and it is not likely that the Spirit of God should dwell with those who cannot dwell together in unity, but who are perpetually disagreeing among themselves.”⁷⁸ Beddome’s hymn “Grieve not the Spirit” expresses the heart cry that should characterize every believer who is cognizant of his or her own sins and how they quench the Spirit’s work. Realizing one’s sad condition and the sin which has crept in to stifle the Spirit’s influence, the Christian cries out, confessing that sin and pleading for the Spirit to again take control:

⁷²Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” 4:69.

⁷³Beddome, “On the Character and Results of Sin,” in *Sermons*, 311–12.

⁷⁴Beddome, “1 Corinthians 16:13,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:15.

⁷⁵Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” 65.

⁷⁶Beddome, “1 Corinthians 16:13,” 15.

⁷⁷Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” 64.

⁷⁸Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” 64.

My faith is weak, my foes are strong,
My wandering heart with anguish pained;
Celestial Dove, where art thou fled,
Since I thine influence restrained!
Oh come again and ease my heart,
There dwell, and never thence depart.

Teach me thy sovereign will to know,
From paths of folly to return;
Oh let me never grieve thee more,
Nor ever hence thine absence mourn:
Come then, celestial Dove, impart
Thy sacred peace to soothe my heart.⁷⁹

Renewal

After the Holy Spirit's initial work of regeneration, a residual sin nature remains, necessitating an ongoing work of renewal, whereby the Holy Spirit works continuously to "inspire" the believer's "languid" heart "with zeal" and "enflames [it] with love."⁸⁰ Beddome believes that this operation is absolutely imperative due to several lingering spiritual maladies. First and foremost is the believer's natural tendency toward apathy. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit "quickens slothful and slumbering saints," who "falter and tire in the good ways of God," so that "not only our life, but liveliness is owing to him." In this way, He "strengthens our graces, revives our experiences, removes our discouragements, and restoreth our souls."⁸¹

Due to his "benighted" condition, the believer is also predisposed to "wander."⁸² Because of the enemy's ever present cunning and the Christian's ongoing struggle with discernment, the Holy Spirit "leads thus to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, removing the natural darkness of the mind, and suitably

⁷⁹Beddome, in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 146.

⁸⁰Beddome, in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 137.

⁸¹Beddome, "The Influence of the Spirit," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:3.

⁸²Beddome, in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 823.

affecting it with its own concerns.”⁸³ He may choose various means to do so. Sometimes the Spirit “makes use of alarming providences, which have a tendency both to discover sin and promote the exercise of grace.” At other times, He may “use the conversation and edifying discourse of Christian friends,” or even the “recollection of past experiences,” in order to “rekindle the dying coals of divine love,” but “the principle means,” according to Beddome, is “the word of truth.”⁸⁴ To this Beddome would also add the avenue of prayer as a way of attaining guidance, discernment and wisdom, as well as any other legitimate means:

Finally: To prayer let us join the use of means. Quickening grace is so precious a thing, that we cannot be too earnest in the pursuit of it. The Spirit uses a variety of means, and therefore if one mean does not do we should try another.⁸⁵

Yet, regardless of the means, providence, Christian friends, recollection, the Scriptures, or prayer, God may choose to use any and all of them to “form the Christian character.”⁸⁶

The ongoing renewal of the believer occurs at the time of God’s own choosing. As is also true of the special outpourings of the Spirit, it may not necessarily come “when we look for and most passionately desire it.” Beddome avers that “in dispensing his gifts and performing his operations” the Holy Spirit “acts as a Sovereign; and whilst he fulfils his own gracious purposes, frustrates our sanguine expectations.”⁸⁷ Yet, in His perfect sense of time, He does graciously intervene in order to quicken our attention, judgment, will, conscience, memory, and the gifts of the Spirit.⁸⁸

The Holy Spirit not only enables the believer to better read, hear, and meditate

⁸³Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 2:5.

⁸⁴Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 4.

⁸⁵Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 10.

⁸⁶Beddome, “Israel shall cry to me, My God, we know Thee,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:171.

⁸⁷Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 1.

⁸⁸Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 5–8.

on the Scriptures, but according to Beddome, He also assists the believer to

choose, embrace and cleave to that which is good. He first forms, and then fixes the mind for God. He first leads us to approve of that which is excellent, and then makes us active in its pursuit, and tenacious in keeping it: the former being an act of the understanding and will together, but the latter of the will only. He first secretly bends and inclines the soul, and then makes it zealously affected to every good work.⁸⁹

The Spirit also “stirs” the conscience to “instruct, reprove, applaud, and condemn as the case requires,” and where “good things in the heart lie as embers under the ashes,” He stirs them up and revives the dulled memory to “put liveliness and vigour into our affections.”⁹⁰ This, Beddome reflects, is but one of many ways that God “mercifully” cares for the soul of a child of God by “sending his holy Spirit to renew and sanctify; to rescue it out of the hands of its enemies, and prepare it for his heavenly kingdom.”⁹¹

The Sin against the Holy Spirit

Beddome’s understanding of the sin against the Holy Spirit begins with the “outward call” or the “common motions” of the Spirit that are “given to all men.”⁹² Thus, this general call is extended to those who will also hear the effectual call of the Spirit, experience regeneration, and willingly receive the gift of faith as a result. This is “a truth,” Beddome states, “which enters into the very essence of religion; so that if a man renounce it, whatever he may be, he is not a christian,”⁹³ for once the Spirit has begun his effectual work of salvation in the heart of the believer, it is impossible for him to fall away, nor will he ever desire to leave the arms of the Savior. The question of a sin against

⁸⁹Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 2:6.

⁹⁰Beddome, “The Influence of the Spirit,” 6–8.

⁹¹Beddome, “The Christian’s Complaint,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:78.

⁹²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 64.

⁹³Beddome, “Hebrews 10:26,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:77.

the Holy Spirit becomes relevant when professed believers willfully turn their backs on the truth, and leave the faith, or when hardened sinners refuse to accept the general call, and are subsequently left by God to persist in and ultimately die in their sins.

For Beddome, the general call is never without effect. Even a basic understanding of the holiness of God among the unregenerate, or their elementary sense of moral failure, can be the cause of “frequent convictions and painful impressions that are made upon their minds by it.” Such convictions are neither human in origin, since “men naturally seek their ease,” nor can they be from Satan, for “it is his interest that the goods should be in peace, but from the holy Spirit of God.”⁹⁴ He suggests that despite the painful truths evident to them,

wicked men may give their assent to this or the other evangelical doctrine, and have some confused notions about the work of the Spirit upon the heart of a Christian; but having no spiritual perception of these things, they are ever fluctuating and wavering, and will sooner renounce the truth than suffer for their adherence to it.⁹⁵

Those who choose to ignore the outward call and follow their sinful ways also incur divine reprobation. However, in Beddome’s view, this is not the sin against the Holy Spirit, even though the final judgment for both is similar. Those who persist in their indifference are left alone to continue in their path without further intervention:

When conscience becomes seared, and the Spirit of God ceases to strive with the sinner, then also may he be said to be given up... When a sinner is thus let alone, the most awful threatenings of the word of God produce no effect, and alarming providences have lost the power of conviction. A wretched stupor seizes upon the faculties; the mind becomes callous, insensible of its burden, and secure in the midst of danger.⁹⁶

The end result is judgment, both in this life and the next, as God allows the sinner to remain on his sinful course, and the gracious offer is rescinded. From this point on, declares Beddome, the “door of opportunity” goes shut. There are

⁹⁴Beddome, “The Heavenly Stranger,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:43.

⁹⁵Beddome, “The Nature and Spring of the Christian’s Life,” in *Sermons*, 106–7.

⁹⁶Beddome, “Hosea 4:17,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:78.

no more Sabbaths, no more sacraments; parents will no more weep and pray, ministers no more beseech and entreat, godly friends no more admonish and reprove. The golden sceptre that was stretched out will be drawn back, providence will no more warn, God's Spirit no longer strive, and those who had Moses and the prophets, but did not regard them, will be without forever.⁹⁷

For Beddome, the sin against the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the unpardonable sin, is the sin of apostasy. It is committed by a pseudo-believer, who has at some point in time professed faith in Christ and may have even submitted to baptism. Yet, despite the outward piety or pretense, this person remains “a perfect stranger to the cleansing influences of the Holy Ghost, remaining in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity.”⁹⁸ The sin of apostasy goes beyond a willful rejection of the gospel, for turning away from the only truth that can save is clearly done “with contempt.”⁹⁹ Thus, “doing despite unto the Spirit of grace: and under this load of aggravated guilt, the sinner is left without any hope of mercy and consigned to eternal punishment.”¹⁰⁰

The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments

In his discussion of baptism and the Eucharist in *A Scriptural Exposition*, Beddome deals with basic sacramental teachings, as well as some common misunderstandings that are associated with them. In his introductory comments under Question XCVI (How do baptism and the Lord's supper become effectual means of salvation?), his primary objective is to eliminate all vestiges of Roman sacramentalism or any misguided notions concerning the efficacy of the ordinances. In this respect, the *Catechism's* answer to the question is to the point:

Baptism and the Lord's supper become effectual means of salvation, not for any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of

⁹⁷Beddome, “The Final Rejection of the Wicked,” in *Sermons*, 350–51.

⁹⁸Beddome, “Practical Religion More Important than Ceremonies,” in *Sermons*, 230.

⁹⁹Beddome, “Hebrews 10:26,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:71.

¹⁰⁰Beddome, “Quench Not the Spirit,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:68.

Christ, and the working of the Spirit in those that by faith receive them.¹⁰¹

Beddome definitively states that the sacraments in themselves are not “effectual means of salvation to all who partake of them,” and he summarily dismisses any lingering conceptions of *ex opere operato* and *ex opere operantis* properties in their administration. Any efficacy inherent in the sacraments “depends upon the blessing and presence of Christ,” as well as “the cooperating influences of the Spirit,” which are intimately related to the believer’s union with Christ.¹⁰² While Beddome believes that the sacraments are primarily “outward signs of spiritual and invisible blessings,” he also understands Christ to be present through the Holy Spirit.

Whereas baptism and the Lord’s Supper are not efficacious in themselves, he suggests that they are “useful to stir up inward affections,” which, in turn, lead to deeper commitment in the believer and the subsequent blessings of God.¹⁰³ Beddome insists, “We must be born of the Spirit, and circumcised in heart, before we can participate in the benefits,” for any efficacy derived from the sacraments is dependent upon the presence of the Holy Spirit, both in the local church and within the individual believer.¹⁰⁴

The Holy Spirit and Baptism

Under Question XCVIII (To whom is baptism to be administered?), Beddome insists that baptismal candidates should have a “credible profession of faith” and “appear to be partakers of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰⁵ He references Acts 10:47, where water baptism was first permissible after it was clear that the Gentile believers had received the Holy Spirit like the Jewish Christians before them. These two components of faith and the

¹⁰¹Beddome, “*A Scriptural Exposition*,” 157.

¹⁰²Beddome, “*A Scriptural Exposition*,” 158.

¹⁰³Beddome, “*A Scriptural Exposition*,” 158.

¹⁰⁴Beddome, “1 Corinthians 7:7,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:107

¹⁰⁵Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 161.

work of the Holy Spirit are also extolled in Beddome's hymn entitled "Obedience Crowned with Joy." There Beddome asks,

Can water be withheld,
From those who have believed;
Who through the holy Spirit's aid,
Have Christ the Lord received?¹⁰⁶

The work of the entire Trinity in salvation is to be celebrated in water baptism. The *Baptist Catechism* unequivocally states that "baptism is rightly administered by immersion or dipping in the whole body of the party in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰⁷ Beddome suggests that the physical act of water baptism is "a sign of our fellowship with [Christ] in his death," as depicted in Romans 6.¹⁰⁸ In his general discussion of baptism, he references Christian water baptism and Spirit baptism, along with the baptism of sufferings, Christ's baptism, and John's baptism. He cites Matthew 3:11, where John the Baptist speaks of Christ, who "shall baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire," as well as its fulfillment in Acts 2:4, where "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," but he does not directly connect Paul's remarks in Romans 6:3–4 to Spirit baptism, apparently seeing only water baptism there.¹⁰⁹ Yet water baptism, as Beddome understands it, is clearly intended to be a sign, depicting not only Spirit baptism, but all the rich benefits derived from the believer's union with Christ through the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰

Beddome's profound respect for the holiness of baptism and its symbolic imagery of the work done by the Spirit can be seen in a plethora of references in his

¹⁰⁶Beddome, "Obedience Crowned with Joy," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 609.

¹⁰⁷Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 164.

¹⁰⁸Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 160.

¹⁰⁹Know ye not that, as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (AV).

¹¹⁰Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 159.

hymnody. In his baptismal hymn “Following the Lord,” he seems to allude to Romans 6:

Laid in a watery grave,
He quickly rose again;
Buried with him, we shall arise,
And endless life obtain.

Then may the Spirit crown,
With tokens of his grace,
The solemn service of this day,
and bid us go in peace.¹¹¹

That the presence of the Holy Spirit at water baptism is both evident and greatly desired can also be gleaned from three other hymns. In “Before the Administration,” he pleads,

Descend, celestial Spirit, down,
Vouchsafe this ordinance to crown;
And let it, Lord, from hence appear,
That we thy sons and daughters are.¹¹²

Elsewhere, in the hymn entitled “Baptising Day,” Beddome petitions,

Sacred Spirit, heavenly dove,
Grant the substance with the sign,
While the outward rite we prove,
Deign within our souls to shine:
May we now with one accord,
Own subjection to the Lord.¹¹³

Yet, his most astute summary of baptism can be found in his hymn “Baptism a Test of Obedience.” There he refutes errant sacramentalism by declaring that baptism is merely a sign, but he also attributes great significance to the spiritual imagery conveyed, for it points to Christ’s atonement as it is applied by the Holy Spirit:

But we can only wash the flesh,
’Tis grace that forms the heart afresh,
This rite is but the sign;
Whilst water makes the body clean,
His Spirit purifies from sin,
and makes our graces shine.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹Beddome, “Following the Lord,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 605.

¹¹²Beddome, “Before the Administration,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 617.

¹¹³Beddome, “Baptising Day,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 610.

¹¹⁴Beddome, “Baptism a Test of Obedience,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 608.

The Holy Spirit and the Eucharist

Beddome makes relatively few references in his writings to the Holy Spirit and the Lord's Supper. However, like baptism, any efficacy or spiritual benefits derived from it are dependent upon the presence of the Holy Spirit, both in the believer and in the ceremonial observance itself. Beddome limits participation in this celebration to those who are baptized believers,¹¹⁵ for he is convinced that "without a holy temper and disposition, Christ, with respect to us, died in vain, and his sacrifice can profit us nothing."¹¹⁶

Beddome further reminds his hearers of the sacred nature of the Lord's Supper. He observes that, "this Passover was so desirable to Christ, and ought to be gratefully remembered by us, because in it he instituted that solemn feast which is to be considered as a standing memorial of his dying love..."¹¹⁷ In addition, Beddome urges "a proper attendance," for through a conscientious observance of Christ's ordinance "the benefits of his death are applied to us, and the gift and graces of his Spirit increased in us, in order to our complete blessedness in the world to come."¹¹⁸

The Holy Spirit and Prayer

The *Baptist Catechism* under Question CV (What is prayer?) defines prayer as "an offering up of our desires to God, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁹ Beddome's hymn "Sanctifier and Comforter" echoes back this truth. There he bids the Holy Spirit,

Celestial Dove,
Come from above,

¹¹⁵Beddome maintained this strict view for most of his life, but modified it in his later years. See Peter Naylor, *Picking up a Pin for the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1992), 60.

¹¹⁶Beddome, "1 Corinthians 7:7," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:107.

¹¹⁷Beddome, "The Last Passover," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 1:100.

¹¹⁸Beddome, "The Last Passover," 100.

¹¹⁹Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 172.

And guide me in thy ways;
My heart prepare
For solemn prayer,
And tune my lips to praise.¹²⁰

As already established, Beddome firmly believes in the permanent indwelling of the Spirit, a condition which has prevailed since Pentecost, when a mighty outpouring of the Spirit took place in Acts 2. His appeals for the Spirit to come or to descend are prayers for an additional moving of the Spirit, usually to energize or awaken apathetic believers, as portrayed in the hymn “Quickening Influence.” There he pleads,

Descend, celestial Spirit, down,
To quicken these inactive powers...¹²¹

In his sermon “Christ the Subject of Prayer,” Beddome highlights the Holy Spirit, “jointly with the Father and Spirit” as an “object of prayer,”¹²² but he also emphasizes that

the Christian altar [has] been appointed and prepared, by the sprinkling of sacrificial blood, and the unction of the Holy Spirit, that believers may draw near, and present their offerings with acceptance before the throne.¹²³

Thus, the special ministry of the Holy Spirit in prayer is to both assist in “the acceptable performance of this and every other duty” and to “make intercession in us, as Christ should make intercession for us.”¹²⁴

Beddome’s view of prayer follows closely in the footsteps of John Owen. Owen suggested that the Holy Spirit not only stirred the believer’s soul to pray, but also assisted him or her in the avenue of prayer, even by direct intercession in times of distress or when the believer simply does not know how to pray.¹²⁵ Owen also spoke of the Spirit

¹²⁰Beddome, “Sanctifier and Comforter,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 135.

¹²¹Beddome, “Quickening Influence,” *Hymns*, 145.

¹²²Beddome, “Christ the Subject of Prayer,” *Sermons*, 237.

¹²³Beddome, “Hebrews 13:10,” *Twenty Short Discourses*, 7:34.

¹²⁴Beddome, “The Nature and Importance of Prayer,” *Sermons*, 364.

¹²⁵Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, “The Puritans on the Holy Spirit,” in *A Puritan Theology*:

working “gracious inclinations and dispositions in us unto this duty,”¹²⁶ as well as His giving the believer “an ability for prayer, or communicating a gift unto the minds of men, enabling them profitably unto themselves and others to exercise all his graces in that especial way of prayer.”¹²⁷ Formed by his Puritan heritage, Beddome yearns for the same assistance of the Spirit to both awaken and energize his soul to pray, but he also pleads for a special anointing or outpouring of the Spirit to awaken the hearts of believers in a great renewal and to stir the unregenerate en masse to seek Christ.

For the sake of simplicity, the following discussion of Beddome’s pneumatology pertaining to prayer falls under two categories: first, the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s prayer life, and second, the outpouring of the Spirit on a particular person or within a local body of believers. A further aspect of the outpouring of the Spirit in its more global dimension follows in Chapter Eight.

The Assistance of the Holy Spirit

Two of Beddome’s hymns express his need and subsequent longing for the Spirit’s aid and intervention in prayer. In “Teaching and Learning,” he bids the Spirit,

Oh teach me how to pray and praise,
Or my attempt is vain...¹²⁸

Similarly, in his hymn “Indwelling” he pleads,

Teach me in times of deep distress,
To pray in faith, and wait in hope!¹²⁹

The Holy Spirit’s assistance is necessary in two distinct ways. First, it is

Doctrine for Life (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 426.

¹²⁶John Owen, “The Works of the Holy Spirit in Prayer as the Spirit of Grace and Supplication,” in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Gould (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 4:259.

¹²⁷John Owen, “The Works of the Holy Spirit in Prayer,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 4:260.

¹²⁸Beddome, “Teaching and Leading,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 137.

¹²⁹Beddome, “Indwelling,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 142.

needed to awaken, energize, and enable the believer to pray. In fact, Beddome insinuates that the state of prayerlessness is actually a default behavior of the natural man. It is a recurring habit against which the believer must constantly do battle and prevail. In a sermon on Hosea 4:17, he laments man's tragic inability and reticence to pray, observing that

if God let us alone, we shall be sure to let him alone; no place will be found for repentance, and no heart to seek Him. All acceptable and effectual prayer is the effect of his gracious influence; but if this be withheld, we become prayerless, unfeeling, and incorrigible.... If the Spirit of God does not move upon the face of the deep, there will be no creation, no light or life springing up in the soul.¹³⁰

In the sermon "Pray without Ceasing," perhaps his finest work on the subject of prayer, Beddome references the *Baptist Catechism* in his introductory remarks, stating at the outset that "prayer is offered up 'by the assistance of the Holy Spirit.'" The Spirit

is the great agent in the world of grace, and his influence is especially necessary in the duty of prayer. It is he that excites the disposition, and that furnishes both matter and manner.¹³¹

Prayer is a sign of spiritual life, for it is the indwelling Holy Spirit who generates it before further assisting the believer in its practice. Similarly, Beddome observes that it is through the work of the Spirit that the believer's eyes are opened and is first made aware of new opportunities, as well as his or her own shortcomings and needs:

The Spirit of God not only excites praying graces, but also furnishes with praying expression; not only inclines to prayer, but gives liberty in prayer; and when that is enjoyed, the mouth may be said not only to be opened, but opened wide.¹³²

Beddome also expresses this same work of the Spirit in the introduction to his *Circular Letter* (1765) to the churches of the Midland Baptist Association. He writes that the assembly of delegates, who had attended their annual convention, had

been attended with fervent Cries to the Almighty on your behalf, and We hope,

¹³⁰Beddome, "Hosea 4:17," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 6:80.

¹³¹Beddome, "Pray without Ceasing," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:45–46.

¹³²Beddome, "Motives to Enlarged Prayer," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 2:13.

productive of some real Advantage to our own Souls. The Spirit of prayer has, We trust, in some Degree been poured forth, accompanied with a humble Sense of our Sins and Infirmities, our Wants and Necessities, and a thankful Remembrance of the divine Mercies.¹³³

The Holy Spirit also lends assistance through His ministry of intercession. Referencing Romans 8:26–27, Beddome reminds his flock, “We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Thus, the Holy Spirit “is called the Spirit of grace and of supplications; for he it is that enables us to draw near to God, filling our mouth with arguments, and teaching us to order our cause before him.”¹³⁴

Such gracious mercy is God’s answer to the believer’s inability to pray, particularly in situations of great despair or emotional turmoil. During trying times, the believer finds it hard to formulate requests or to pray according to the will of God, and it is then when the Holy Spirit prays in the believer’s stead. The Spirit “never ceases to help the infirmities of his praying people,” for “his grace is still the same and all-sufficient.”¹³⁵ Thankfully, although the believer may at times find it hard to pray, “it is easy to pray when the Spirit helps our infirmities.”¹³⁶

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

In a baptismal hymn, “Divine Presence Implored,” Beddome bids the Lord,

Lord, pour thy holy Spirit down,
And this thine institution own;
By gracious signs, oh may we know,
That thou art with us here below.¹³⁷

¹³³Benjamin Beddome, “The Circular Letter from the Elders and Messengers of the Several Baptist Churches” *Midland Association* (Worcester: R. Lewis, 1765), 2.

¹³⁴Beddome, “Pray without Ceasing,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:46.

¹³⁵Beddome, “Pray without Ceasing,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 4:52.

¹³⁶Beddome, “Matthew 11:30,” in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:55.

¹³⁷Beddome, “Divine Presence Implored,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 615.

Such references to an outpouring, where the Holy Spirit is to be poured down from heaven and bring some desired blessing, are frequently found in Beddome's hymnody. It is, in essence, a figurative expression, since, as has earlier been noted, Beddome clearly recognizes that the Spirit has already come and indwells every believer, being present also in every local assembly of believers that gathers together in Christ's name.

Yet, despite the Spirit's presence, Beddome recognizes how quickly these same churches can become spiritual deserts in desperate need of the rains of heaven. Much human energy can be expended for supposed godly causes, but often with very little spiritual fruit. So it is that

parents, friends, and ministers labour but in vain, unless the Lord rears the plant and waters it. When the Spirit is poured out from on high, the desert blossoms as the rose, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field.¹³⁸

The effect of this heavenly blessing can be observed in the behavior of Jesus's disciples after the outpouring at Pentecost in which fearful and apprehensive disciples suddenly became bold ambassadors of the gospel. Beddome recounts that

such persons, amidst all the advantages they enjoyed, were even the immediate disciples of Christ, till the Spirit was poured down from above, and then they made an amazing improvement in but a short space of time.¹³⁹

One can well understand Beddome's passion and compulsive desire for new outpourings and revivals in the church. He reminds believers that God's "grace will make our conversation serious and savory, spiritual and affectionate, tending to godly edifying, and ministering instructions to hearers." Reflecting on Pentecost, when "the disciples began to speak with other tongues," he adds, "and so shall we, if we partake in any measure of the same anointing."¹⁴⁰ This was also figuratively meant, as Beddome nowhere advocates the gift of tongues in any of his sermons or hymns, nor is there any

¹³⁸Beddome, "Luke 13:7," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 5:168.

¹³⁹Beddome, "On the Security of the Humble," in *Sermons*, 153.

¹⁴⁰Beddome, "Acts 11:23," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:121.

recorded instance of this phenomenon in the Burton-on-the-Water church. Instead, Beddome refers to a new and sanctified atmosphere within the church, where

we shall be redeemed from our conversation, and shall put away foolish jesting, filthy communication out of our mouth, which is not convenient. Our speech will be seasoned with grace, and others will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.¹⁴¹

Even with healthy theology and sound preaching, which was certainly true of the Burton-on-the-Water congregation, there is always the bothersome human tendency toward dullness and apathy. Similar to the Spirit's periodic renewal of the believer to bring him or her back on course, the outpouring or special renewal is also needed from time to time in the local church. As a result, that particular body of believers is able to maintain its effectiveness and its God-given mission, as it welcomes, baptizes, teaches, and catechizes all new believers who enter the church as a result.

The Holy Spirit and the Sabbath

The Holy Spirit is mentioned twice in Beddome's writings with respect to the Christian Sabbath. Both references appear under Question LXIV (Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?) in the midst of an extensive examination of the Ten Commandments. Beddome seeks to highlight what he sees as the Spirit's approbation of Sunday as the Christian Sabbath. He posits that the Holy Spirit not only showed his approval of that day by "bestowing his extraordinary gifts" on Pentecost (Acts 2:1), a day which always fell "on the morrow after the sabbath" (Leviticus 23:16), but likewise "conferred his special grace" on the Lord's day, when John the Apostle was "in the Spirit" and penned the Book of Revelation.¹⁴²

Like his contemporary John Gill,¹⁴³ Beddome believes that no specific

¹⁴¹Beddome, "Acts 11:23," in *Twenty Short Discourses*, 3:121.

¹⁴²Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 113.

¹⁴³Concerning the observance of the Sabbath before the law, John Gill argued, "(1.) No mention is made of a Sabbath, and of the sanctification of that, as in the fourth command, *Exod. xx 11*. only

ordinance was given at creation to specify on which day of the week the Sabbath was to be observed. This did not take place until the time of the Israelites. However, like Gill, he suggests that a Sabbath observance of sorts, for worship, rest, and personal reflection, was always intended by God, and further shows his historical acumen by demonstrating how the first day of the week was especially chosen and blessed by God.¹⁴⁴

Noteworthy in the concluding argument to his treatise on Sabbath observance is Beddome's invocation of the Holy Spirit, who "conferred his special grace" on Sunday. In addition to Christ's resurrection taking place on a Sunday, His appearance to Thomas and the disciples one Sunday later, and the "gifts" at Pentecost being likewise poured out on the first day of the week, Beddome also notes that the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle John on "the Lord's day," which he understands to be Sunday as well.¹⁴⁵ He concludes that God's choice of Sunday for significant events in the ancient Church, along with the Spirit's clear direction, provide overwhelming evidence of the Holy Spirit's special blessing on that day as the Christian Sabbath.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women was foundational to the Evangelical Revival, but it was the Puritan expectation of reoccurring renewals through the Spirit to both refresh the church and draw a sinful world to Christ that gave birth to evangelicalism and ultimately defined Beddome's focus. The salvific work of the Spirit in the life of a sinner, an enterprise which had always fascinated the Puritans, gradually gave way to the millennial hope for a final outpouring of the Spirit upon the nations. It was to this vision that Beddome, as an evangelical, was fully committed.

of the seventh-day; and not of that as a Sabbath.— (2.) The words are a narrative of what God did himself; but do not contain a precept of what *Adam* should do; they only declare what God did, that he blessed and sanctified the seventh-day; but do not enjoin *Adam* to keep it holy, as a Sabbath." See John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or A System of Practical Truths Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures*, vol.3 (London: George Keith, 1770), 421.

¹⁴⁴Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 112–13.

¹⁴⁵ Beddome, *A Scriptural Exposition*, 112–13.

CHAPTER 8

BEDDOME AS AN EARLY EVANGELICAL

While David Bebbington’s “quadrilateral of priorities,” consisting of conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism, is applicable to evangelicals in general,¹ it might better define a later and more diverse stage of evangelicalism, with its evangelical Calvinism and Wesleyan-Arminianism, as it matured in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is likely for this reason, along with the persistent stereotypical perception of an insular, non-missional Puritanism, that certain historians see a distinct break between the fervent evangelicals and their introspective Puritan forbearers. Yet, as has already been established, the earliest evangelicals, who played pivotal roles in both the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival in the United Kingdom and in the Great Awakening in her North American colonies, actually demonstrated amazing continuity with their Puritan heritage, both in their pneumatology as well as in their eschatological expectations of an outpouring of the Spirit, which generated great evangelistic zeal.

As defined by Thomas Kidd’s triad, the “new” evangelicals, to whom Beddome belonged, placed great emphasis on “revival, widespread individual conversions, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”² They believed that the unusual stirrings in their day were the beginning of a long-awaited effusion of the Spirit, after which the Kingdom of God would spread incrementally across the entire earth and ultimately encompass every tongue and tribe. Their obvious zeal for winning souls did

¹David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2–3.

²Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xix.

not represent a radical discontinuity with the past, but was in full harmony with their traditional Reformed theology and their seventeenth-century Puritan eschatology.

A Desire for the Outpouring of the Spirit

Early evangelicalism's continuity with Puritanism is especially evident in Beddome's theology of prayer and, in particular, his views on the Holy Spirit's assistance in prayer and His special periodic outpourings. Aligning himself with the core premises of post-Restoration, post-millennial eschatology, it is not surprising that Beddome fully expected regular periodic outpourings of the Spirit to fortify the Church and to secure her ultimate victory over the Kingdom of Darkness. This, he believed, had always been part of God's care and provision for His chosen people throughout redemptive history. Yet Beddome's sermons and hymns also reflect an overwhelming expectation, much like his contemporary Jonathan Edwards, that a grand effusion of the Spirit with millennial implications was imminent, and indeed, was already making its presence felt.

Beginning with the Northampton Revival (1734–1735) and the London printing of Edward's *A Faithful Narrative* in 1737, more events followed which gave evidence of special motions of the Spirit and the birth of a movement with significant implications. A sampling of only a few of these events displays the unusual nature of the revival which began to break forth in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century.

Newly ordained on Trinity Sunday in 1736, George Whitefield began his early preaching ministry a week later in Gloucester. There he experienced an unusual unction of the Spirit as he spoke with “marvelous powers of public address.”³ This same phenomenon repeated itself again in August at the Bishopsgate Church in London, where he, by his own admission, was “enabled to preach with power,” noting in his journal,

The effect was immediate and visible to all; for as I went up the stairs almost all

³Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revival*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh/Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), 97.

seemed to sneer at me on account of my youth; but they soon grew serious and exceedingly attentive, and, after I came down, showed me great tokens of respect, blessed me as I passed along, and made great enquiry who I was.⁴

This same unction of the Spirit accompanied Whitefield's ministry in North America, as well as in his open air meetings in Bristol, which began in 1739. The movement grew further in dimension following John Wesley's Aldersgate experience in 1738, after which Wesley joined forces with the Calvinistic Methodists, Whitefield and Howell Harris, to fan the flames of a growing revival in Great Britain.

In 1741, Beddome himself witnessed an unusual stirring with forty conversions in little Burton-on-the-Water, located in relative close proximity to Bristol, where revival fires were already burning. It was also the same year that George Frederick Handel composed his famous oratorio *The Messiah*, inspiring large crowds with its biblical message of hope and a future messianic reign of Christ on earth. After years of religious persecution and at a time when Deism was on the rise, an obvious outpouring of the Spirit was finally being felt in Britain. Not surprisingly, Beddome earnestly yearned to experience its blessings of conversions and renewal in his own ministry.

Beddome's conception of the outpouring of the Spirit mirrors that of other Reformed divines, who passionately longed for the grand, culminating work of the "Spirit of Supplication" (Zechariah 12:10), in which multitudes, both Jew and Gentile, would finally "look upon me whom they have pierced and... mourn for him." As John Owen had earlier emphasized, the dilemma of the natural man was being

averse from any converse and intercourse with God, as being alienated from living unto him by the ignorance and vanity of our minds. And there is a secret alienation still working in us from all the duties of immediate communion with him.⁵

Owen posited that man's dilemma prompts the Holy Spirit to take action and impart

⁴George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 77.

⁵John Owen, "The Works of the Holy Spirit in Prayer as the Spirit of Grace and Supplication," in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Gould (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 4:259.

a gift or ability unto persons to exercise all his graces in the way and duty of prayer. This is that which he is here promised for, and promised to be poured out for; that is, to be given in an abundant and plentiful manner. Wherever he is bestowed in the accomplishment of this promise... he disposeth the hearts of men to pray and enableth them so to do.⁶

Having the same view, Beddome also references Zechariah 12, believing repentance to be

a fruit of the effusion of the Divine Spirit, upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that they look to Christ; and by looking to him, are made to mourn that they pierced him,—to mourn after him whom they have pierced; and it is an evidence of grace, so it is the pledge and forerunner of glory. This sorrowful seed-time shall be followed by a joyful harvest.⁷

This future hope was based upon a long-held conviction, shared by many in the Reformed tradition, that God had always sent, and will continue to send, periodic outpourings of His Spirit at various times throughout history, both to gather a people unto Himself and to strengthen and equip the faithful. Since Christ will never abandon His Church nor reverse His sovereign plan to redeem the remaining lost souls of men, Beddome is supremely confident that future outpourings of the Spirit will occur, regardless of how evil the days might become. He reassures his fellow believers that “since the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, there has ever been, and will be, even in times of the grossest darkness and corruption, a remnant according to the election of grace.”⁸ Thus, until the culmination of the age and the earthly reign of Christ the King, the church must be steadfast and remain on mission, as long as God continues to convict sinners and draw the remaining elect to Himself.

Beddome believes that God’s special outpourings often follow intense periods of preparation, such as what Dissent had experienced in Britain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, he seems to believe that those trying years of persecution, accompanied by many Puritan jeremiads against apathy in the churches, had finally come

⁶Owen, “The Works of the Holy Spirit in Prayer,” 4:260.

⁷Benjamin Beddome, “The Happy Results of Repentance,” in *Sermons Printed from the Manuscripts of the Late Rev. Benjamin Beddome* (London: William Ball, 1835), 141–142.

⁸Benjamin Beddome, “Romans 9:27,” in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 8 (London: Samuel Burton, 1825), 17.

to fruition and had accomplished their intended purpose. This was in keeping with an observable pattern, whereby God had always used similar trials in the past to first soften the hearts of a rebellious or apathetic people and make them ready for His special anointing and renewal. In his sermon on Micah 2:7, Beddome reminds his hearers that God acted in much the same way with Israel. Through Micah the prophet,

the Lord appeals to them that the messages sent by his servants were intended for their good, that even the threatenings were designed to correct and to reclaim; that he was ready to pour out of his Spirit upon them, but for their impenitence and unbelief, and rejection of his testimony...⁹

Such words of comfort offer a plausible explanation for the persecution that the Baptists and Dissent in general had long endured. It was part of God's preparation for a future outpouring of grand proportions, in which Beddome clearly yearned to play a small, yet perhaps significant role.

The longing for continued outpourings is most pronounced in Beddome's hymnody, where he extols the Holy Spirit as "a source of light, whose power and grace are unconfined."¹⁰ As an enthusiastic observer of the Evangelical Revival, he equates the Holy Spirit's work with a wind or a refreshing breeze which rejuvenates the souls of men. In "The Sovereignty of the Spirit," he declares,

The blessed Spirit, like the wind,
Blows when and where he please;
How happy are the men who feel
The soul-enlivening breeze.¹¹

Similarly, in "Want of Success Lamented," he bemoans the apathy that had befallen the church and cries out for revival:

Lord, these careless souls to waken,
Send thy holy Spirit down;

⁹Beddome, "Micah 2:7," *Twenty Short Discourses*, 8:133.

¹⁰Benjamin Beddome, "Teachings of the Spirit," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship or Family Devotion: Now First Published from the Manuscripts of the Late Benjamin Beddome* (London: Burton and Briggs, 1818), 136.

¹¹Beddome, "Sovereignty of the Spirit," *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 133.

Now the labours of thy servants,
With thy special blessing crown:
To the wanderers,
Be thy grace and mercy shown.¹²

Yet, going beyond the need for spiritual refreshment, the outpourings of the Spirit were to have an immediate effect on the decorum and overall fruitfulness of believers. In his *Circular Letter* (1765), Beddome expresses his hope that God would “pour down in abundant measure his holy Spirit” upon his brethren and colleagues of the Midlands Association,¹³ believing that without this heaven-sent anointing, an effective and fruitful ministry would be fruitless, if not impossible.

In recognition of his own spiritual poverty, Beddome puts his thoughts into the first person in a number of his hymns, expressing what he believes should be the earnest prayer of every believer, beginning with himself. He also uses familiar expressions in characterizing the outpourings as special blessings that come down afresh from heaven. In “Teaching and Leading,” he humbly pleads,

Descend, descend, celestial Dove,
Display thy power divine;
Inspire with zeal, enflame with love,
This languid heart of mine.¹⁴

Similarly, in “Quickening Influence,” he makes the urgent appeal,

Come, holy Spirit, now descend,
With ardent zeal my soul inspire...¹⁵

However, he also recognizes the limits of his abilities. In “Faith the Gift of God,” Beddome declares his complete dependence on the Holy Spirit, praying,

Lord, ‘tis thy work alone,
and that divinely free;
Send down the Spirit of thy Son,

¹²Beddome, “Want of Success Lamented,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 699.

¹³Benjamin Beddome, “The Circular Letter from the Elders and Messengers of the Several Baptist Churches” *Midland Association* (Worcester: R. Lewis, 1765), 6.

¹⁴Beddome, “Teaching and Leading,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 137.

¹⁵Beddome, “Quickening Influence,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 144.

To work this faith in me.¹⁶

A Desire for Widespread Conversions

Seeing the unusual moving of the Spirit in his day, Beddome's desire for even more conversions became a driving force, which would ultimately shape the character of his ministry. In the prayerful words of a sermon written on Acts 8:29, Beddome expresses his heart-felt desire that the Holy Spirit might work powerfully where the gospel is being proclaimed and bring a harvest of souls, just as the Holy Spirit had done in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. Filled with emotion and expectation, he exclaims, "Oh that the Holy Spirit may join himself to the chariot of the gospel in direction soever [*sic*] it may be found, as Philip did to the chariot of the Eunuch!"¹⁷

While extoling the primary role of the Spirit in the conversion of souls, Beddome recognizes and stresses the responsibility of the church, and in particular of each believer, to become actively involved in reaching the lost for Christ. In his sermon "The Duty of Imitating God," he enjoins his flock to look past the consuming concerns of daily life within the church and see the spiritual needs of the world around them. He exhorts them,

We should be concerned for the increase of the church, and, consequently, for the conversion of souls; God gave his Son to redeem them, and sends his Spirit to sanctify them. They are not only valuable in themselves, but in his sight; and herein we should be followers of him. The sins of men, and the danger to which they are exposed, should excite our compassion, so that we should use our utmost endeavours to reclaim them from their evil courses, and prevent their final destruction.¹⁸

In his humble and customary manner, Beddome does not expect more from his flock than he does of himself. Speaking of his own office, he assures the faithful,

He that increases the faith of particular believers, must also increase their number.

¹⁶Beddome, "Faith the Gift of God," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 165.

¹⁷Beddome, "Acts 8:29," in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol.5 (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1833), 47.

¹⁸Beddome, "The Duty of Imitating God," in *Sermons*, 146–47.

The bowls of the candlesticks have no oil but what drops from the olive branches. But the ministers are not partners with God in his work, yet they are sharers in his joy. They rejoice to see the lost sheep found, and the dead son made alive. It is a heart-cheering sight to them to behold souls flying to Jesus Christ...¹⁹

Such self-admonishment in the presence of his hearers appears to have less to do with a guilt-ridden sense of duty, and far more with a strong confidence that the gospel is powerful and able to reach the most hardened sinners in the most difficult circumstances. In fact, he triumphantly remarks,

Nothing is too hard for omnipotence. He who created man at first can new create him; and he who raised dead bodies can quicken dead souls. Though the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, yet God can change them. There are no habits so rooted, but he can alter them; no corruptions [*sic*] so strong, and prevalent, but he can mortify them; no difficulties so great, but he can surmount them; and no disease so inveterate, but he can cure it.²⁰

Beddome's passion for reaching lost souls is prolifically displayed in a plethora of hymns that depict his heart for evangelism. Even after preaching sermons which were characteristically replete with doctrinal instruction, his final applications often include some specific call to practically live out the gospel and to be a light in a dark world. One such example is found in his hymn "Sovereignty of the Spirit," where he passionately pleads,

Lord, fill each dead benighted soul
With light, and life, and joy.²¹

Such expressions bear witness that Beddome, along with more than a few Particular Baptists, took the Great Commission mandate seriously.

Several other hymns take up the same theme, but with greatly widened horizons that move beyond Burton-on-the-Water and the Midlands to encompass the entire world. Beddome continues the legacy laid down by early Baptists and later enhanced by Bernard Foskett, who were convinced that the mission of the church was

¹⁹Beddome, "On the Sources of Ministerial Delight," in *Sermons*, 262–63.

²⁰Beddome, "Regeneration," in *Twenty Short Discourses Adapted to Village Worship or the Devotions of the Family*, vol. 3 (London: J. W. Morris, 1809), 42.

²¹Beddome, "Sovereignty of the Spirit," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 133.

global in scope and should encompass all peoples and nations of the world. In his hymn, “The Promulgation of the Gospel,” he proclaims,

Zion, from thee is sounded forth,
The word of an almighty God,
To tell the riches of his grace,
And spread his glories all abroad.²²

Similarly, in “Tidings of Salvation,” Beddome promotes the idea of worldwide missions and bringing the gospel to distant lands. There he exclaims,

Then let the gospel trumpet blow,
Till distant lands the Saviour know,
And own his power divine;
Nations unborn learn to adore,
His sovereign grace and conquering power,
And in one concert join.²³

Furthermore, in “Want of Success Lamented,” he includes a stanza that expresses both his heart for missions as well as his millennial hope for the salvation of the nations:

Let fair Zion’s sons be gathered,
Own thee as their sovereign head;
In remotest lands and nations,
May thy glorious gospel spread:
Power celestial,
Raise to life the numerous dead.²⁴

Millennial Expectations

Like John Owen, as well as his eighteenth-century contemporary Jonathan Edwards, Beddome’s missional inspiration is driven by a “non-catastrophic” postmillennial vision, in which the gospel is to spread gradually and incrementally across the face of the earth until every tribe and nation has been drawn to the cross of Christ.²⁵ Believing that the final, millennial outpouring of the Spirit had commenced, Beddome

²²Beddome, “Promulgation of the Gospel,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 694.

²³Beddome, “Tidings of Salvation,” in *Hymns*, 695.

²⁴Beddome, “Want of Success Lamented,” in *Hymns*, 699.

²⁵Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England’s Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 130.

years for the completion of this great work of God which he expects to culminate in the glorious reign of Christ as King.

In *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, the entire Section XVIII, entitled “Spread of the Gospel,” consists of fourteen hymns, of which seven are clearly millennial in tone. In the hymn “Triumph of the Saviour,” Beddome exhorts the faithful,

Go forth, ye saints, behold your Lord,
With radiant glory crowned;
The wondrous progress of his word
Shall spread his fame around.

Where'er the sun begins its race,
Or stops its swift career,
Both east and west shall own his grace,
And Christ be honoured there.

Ten thousand crowns, encircling show
The victories he has won;
Oh may his conquests ever grow,
While time its course shall run.

Ride forth, thou mighty conqueror, ride,
And millions more subdue;
Destroy our unbelief and pride,
And we will crown thee too.²⁶

In yet another example of millennial enthusiasm, entitled “Rapid Spread of the Gospel” and composed in dramatic poetic verse, Beddome describes the future glories that he expected to come:

See the vivid lightnings flashing,
Turning darksome night to day,
Swift the motion, great the power,
Nothing can obstruct the way;
All creation
Pay their homage and obey.

Thus shall spread the glorious gospel,
To the earth's remotest bound,
Distant empires, lands and nations,
Soon shall hear the solemn sound;
Darkness fleeing,
Light shall every where abound.

²⁶Beddome, “Triumphs of the Saviour,” in *Hymns*, 702.

Grace and mercy then descending,
Shall the stubborn heart subdue,
Christ reveal his great salvation,
To the gentile and the Jew;
Numerous converts
Shall appear like morning dew.

Lo, he comes in state and glory,
Bands celestial line the way,
Saints go forth, and meet your Saviour,
And the deepest reverence pay;
Join your triumphs,
Hail the joyful happy day.²⁷

Beddome's hope for the nations is similarly expressed in the hymn "Converts Flocking to Zion." There he expectantly proclaims,

Lo, who are these that soar on high,
Above the reach of grief and woe;
See with what haste to Christ they fly
And sing his praises as they go.

Once they pursued the downward road,
Sinful and vile as well as we;
Were strangers to themselves and God,
Enslaved, unwilling to be free.

Jesus, 'tis thine almighty grace
That brings the wandering sinners home;
'Tis that which bids them seek thy face,
'Tis that constrains their souls to come.

The beams of truth direct their flight,
Thy goodness guards the dangerous way:
Thus they ascend to realms of light,
And regions of eternal day.²⁸

A Desire for Revival and Renewal

Renewal and spiritual refreshment are among Beddome's deepest desires, as he never wishes to become stale or ineffective in his service for Christ. However, he also realizes that spiritual refreshment is two-pronged. There is the regeneration and salvation of the lost, that "those who never felt before" should "feel the gospel's vital power." Yet,

²⁷Beddome, "Rapid Spread of the Gospel," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 707.

²⁸Beddome, "Converts Flocking to Zion," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 703.

equally important, was that “languid souls who own thy love, receive fresh visits from above.”²⁹ In pleading for renewal, he petitions the Spirit to energize and equip existing believers, so that they, in turn, are able to embrace, edify, and disciple the new souls who God will sovereignly and providentially add to the Church.

Confident that a massive, worldwide renewal is finally unfolding, Beddome is emboldened with millennial enthusiasm. He longs for an awakened church and the coming reign of Christ on earth. It was this vision that ultimately shaped his ministry, along with other early evangelicals, and provided the foundation for a movement that would transform the church in Great Britain and in her North American colonies.

²⁹Beddome, “Efficacy of the Gospel,” in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship*, 697.

CHAPTER 9

A SUMMARY

Recent scholarship has made a case for a marked discontinuity between pre-revival Puritanism and evangelicalism, a conclusion based on a “one-dimensional” and “static image of Puritanism,” which runs contrary to historical evidence.¹ While it is true that most Puritans, like the evangelicals, also emphasized conversionism, biblicism, and crucicentrism, it is also true that certain Puritan sects or groups did not share the same zeal for activism and missions that the early evangelicals displayed. However, these extreme cases are not indicative of Puritanism as a whole.

On the surface, Bebbington’s thesis of a striking discontinuity between evangelicals and the pre-revival English Dissent is compelling, as is Mark Noll’s characterization of the Puritans’ immediate descendants, the Particular Baptists, as those who “discouraged active evangelism,” presumably following in the Puritans’ footsteps.² However, the high or hyper-Calvinism of a small group of predominately London-based churches was not at all indicative of Particular Baptists in general, since Baptists from the very outset of their existence, with few exceptions, were always focused on evangelism.³

The early evangelical emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as well as the immediate identification of the early revivals as the outpouring of the Spirit was

¹John Coffey, “Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition,” in *The Advent of Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 263–65.

²Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 163.

³Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century Baptist Ministers Trained at Bristol Academy, 1690–1791* (Oxfordshire: Nigel Lynn Publishing & Marketing, 2006), 8.

neither new nor was it coincidental. It represented the continuation of a long-standing Puritan emphasis, which had been amplified and popularized by the likes of Richard Sibbes and John Owen, and which also had deep roots in traditional Reformed theology.

What is often overlooked in the attempt to characterize evangelicalism are both the driving force that energized its initial stages and the evangelistic Reformed character of much of early evangelicalism. Indeed, the vast majority of early evangelicals were not a new breed of revivalists, but the offspring of a similar and long-standing heritage that was very much alive and well. Their obvious preoccupation with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, their evangelistic preaching, and their desire to see more revivals, was not a new trend peculiar to evangelicalism, but was deeply rooted in Puritanism.

Similarly, the expectant, postmillennial eschatology of the early evangelicals, with the hope of a coming age of millenarian blessings and the salvation of the world, had its origins in Post-Restoration Puritanism. Even Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest fathers of evangelicalism, produced some of the finest examples of orthodox Puritan theology, and the early evangelical emphasis on conversions, renewal, and preaching God's truth had Puritan antecedents as well. Such evidence points to an amazing continuity, rather than disjunction with the past.

Benjamin Beddome's philosophy of ministry and his hunger for souls were both attributable to his evangelical Calvinism, a legacy bequeathed to him by early Baptists, and further reinforced by his contemporaries. He followed in a strong Reformed tradition, which in addition to emphasizing the Puritan doctrines of grace, also promoted the preaching of the gospel with the same expectation of spiritual fruit that they had. The only real difference between Beddome and the Puritans was baptism.

The seminal Baptist assembly, which ultimately birthed the Calvinistic Particular Baptist movement in London-Southwark, passed on a Reformed theology, which easily aligned with the other churches of the Reformed Dissent. This allowed them

to unite under one main eschatological vision of worldwide salvation and the coming of the King. As a product of that continuum, Beddome's pneumatology naturally took on the same emphases as his Puritan forefathers, stressing, as they did, the necessity of the Holy Spirit in effecting salvation and His indispensable agency in sanctification and ongoing renewal. Consequently, Beddome's frequent references to the work of the Spirit are also not coincidental.

Like the Puritans of previous centuries, Beddome and his contemporaries were energized by the same prospects of a future millennial Kingdom. They saw each new conversion and every awakening, not as something radically new, but as further evidence of an incremental movement of the gospel across the face of the earth and the fulfillment of a long-standing Puritan vision. For more than a century, similar prayers with similar purpose, using many of the very same expressions, were offered by the earliest Puritans, later by Restoration Puritans and the Dissent, and finally by the early evangelicals, when all of their prayers finally began to bear the desired fruit of revival.

The historical record and Benjamin Beddome's pneumatology provide clear evidence of an undeniable continuity between the Puritans and the early evangelicals. In fact, there were no discontinuities to speak of, aside, perhaps, from the later element of Wesleyan Arminianism that would serve to broaden and even complicate cooperation within the evangelical movement. At the outset of the Evangelical Revival, perhaps the only discontinuity between the Puritans and the early evangelicals was the way in which each group uniquely reacted to God's Spirit, as He manifested Himself in their respective days. Seeing God at work, Beddome, as an early evangelical, excitedly responded in his characteristic fashion and with the same expectation: "Come, blessed Spirit!"⁴

⁴Benjamin Beddome, "Teachings of the Spirit," in *Hymns Adapted to Public Worship or Family Devotion: Now First Published from the Manuscripts of the Late Benjamin Beddome* (London: Burton and Briggs, 1818), 136.

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ABSTRACT

“THE BLESSED SPIRIT”: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PNEUMATOLOGY OF BENJAMIN BEDDOME AS AN EARLY EVANGELICAL

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
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The pneumatology of Benjamin Beddome, a Particular Baptist and early evangelical, provides the historian with a verifiable continuum between the theology of the Puritans and the early evangelicals with their common emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and a latter-day outpouring of the Spirit with millennial implications. Serving over five decades as pastor in the town of Burton-on-the-Water, Beddome was a prolific writer, producing hundreds of sermons and hymns. While he held many of the same views as his contemporaries, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, his pneumatology bears the influence of earlier Puritans, and especially those of his Baptist forefathers. The typical Reformed emphases, such as preaching, the Word and the Spirit, and an expectation of periodic outpourings of the Holy Ghost, were carried over by early Baptists in London, after their birth from an independent Puritan church in Southwark. The seven original congregations multiplied rapidly, producing several confessions that aligned with other churches of the Reformed tradition. Beddome's ontology of the Spirit reflects his strong Trinitarian views upholding His deity, along with His distinct personhood. His pneumatology bears all the imprints of classic Reformed theology, but along with other early evangelicals, gives special emphasis to its teaching on periodic outpourings, renewal, and conversions. These similarities show amazing continuity as Puritan pneumatology came to full fruition with Beddome and the early evangelicals.

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