A Theological Understanding of the Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Yong Wha Na
(Reformed Theological Seminary, Korea)

Introduction

The Pentecostal movement, which emphasizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit subsequent to regeneration, has developed rapidly since the early days of the twentieth century\(^1\) and the 1950s.\(^2\) This is due to the influences of the doctrine of entire sanctification of the founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley (1703-1791), and his follower Charles Finney (1792-1875), who was a Presbyterian. It is also due to the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit advocated by Finney's successor, Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), and Moody's fellow-worker, Reuben A. Torrey.

Since the late 1970s the baptism of the Holy Spirit has also been frequently discussed\(^3\) by many Korean theologians, especially those belonging to

---

2) Ibid., 30.
the Presbyterian Church. They have advocated a somewhat different interpretation of this phenomena. Their discussions focus on answering the following questions: is the baptism of the Holy Spirit a second spiritual experience subsequent to regeneration, or is regeneration (or conversion) the baptism of the Holy Spirit? How can the baptism of the Holy Spirit be related to Christ and his church? Are there any necessary conditions in order to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? What are concrete evidences of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit in its character once-for-all, or repeatable or permanent? Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit a redemptive-historical event, or a part of the salvation order? Furthermore, are the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the Holy Spirit distinguishable, or separable? How can the baptism and fullness be distinguished? Are there any distinctive aspects with respect to the fullness of the Holy Spirit? 4)

Some theologians have granted, on the one hand, many strong points to the Pentecostal charismatic movement such as vital worship services, a dynamic spiritual life empowered with the Holy Spirit, fervent emotion, earnest repentance, practical faith, unspeakable glorious joy, love to Christ, intercessory prayers for others, devotional commitment to Christ and his church, eagerness for missionary work, and sympathetic fellowships. 5) But on the other hand, some theologians have criticized negative aspects of the movement which emphasize private personal experience rather than the authority of the Scripture: relative lack of concern about a need for

3) See, Gab-Jong Choi, Jesus, Church, and Holy Spirit (Seoul: CLC, 1992), 12, note 1.


5) Sung-Soo Kwon, Eschatology and Holy Spirit (Seoul: Torch, 1995), 221-225.