

# John Flavel's Theology of the Holy Spirit

*Adam Embry*

THE PEOPLE QUIETLY gathered on the shore at midnight, watching as a man waded in the water toward the large rock in the middle of the Kingsbridge estuary. The low water during spring tides provided an unlikely, but necessary, pulpit on the rock for the English minister in exile. At another beach the minister swam away from civil authorities seeking his arrest, but most often he

secretly met with his church in the woods. Such scenes were all too familiar for English nonconformists living after the ejection of Puritan ministers from the Church of England in 1662.

The words from the preacher standing on the rock arrested the hearers' attention. On this particular evening, urgency filled John Flavel's voice, as he pleaded on behalf of the Holy Spirit for professing believers not to grieve the Spirit.

I plead now on his behalf, who hath so many times helped you to plead for yourselves with God.... O grieve not the holy Spirit of God by which you are sealed, to the day of redemption.

There is nothing grieves him more than impure practices, for he is a holy Spirit.... He ... saith, as it were, to the unkind and disingenuous soul, "Hath thou thus requited me, for all the favours and kindness thou hast received from me? Have I quickened thee, when thou wast dead in transgressions? Did I descend upon thee in the preaching of the gospel, and communicate life, even the life of God, to thee; leaving others in the state of the dead? Have I shed forth such rich influences of grace and comfort upon thee? Comforting thee in all thy troubles, helping thee in all thy duties; satisfying thee in all thy doubts and perplexities of soul; saving thee, and pulling thee back from so many destructive temptations and dangers? What had been thy condition, if I had not come unto thee? Could the word have converted thee without me? Could ministers, could angels, have done that for thee which I did? And when I had quickened thee, and made thee a living soul, what couldst thou have done, without my exciting and assisting grace."<sup>1</sup>

## THE SPIRIT AND THE PURITANS

John Flavel's preaching and theology of the

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ADAM EMBRY serves as Assistant Pastor of Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

He received his Th.M. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Holy Spirit were representative of English Puritans during his lifetime (1627-91), but Puritanism's view of the Spirit was exceptional.<sup>2</sup> Puritan scholar J. I. Packer believes, "The work of the Holy Spirit is the field in which the Puritans' most valuable contributions to the church's theological heritage were made."<sup>3</sup> Historian Geoffrey Nuttall considers there to be "pioneer thinking about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit" in the writings and ministry of the seventeenth-century English Puritans.<sup>4</sup> However much pioneering work was done by England's Reformed ministers, they followed a path already trail-blazed by Continental Reformers such as John Calvin (1509-63).

Rich theological and devotional material on the Holy Spirit flowed from Calvin's ink well. In Calvin's theology it is through "the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits."<sup>5</sup> The Spirit is "the root and seed of heavenly life in us.... By his secret watering the Spirit makes us fruitful to bring forth the buds of righteousness."<sup>6</sup> In the early twentieth century B. B. Warfield argued that "Calvin's greatest contribution to [theology] lies in the rich development which he gives—and which he was the first to give—to the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit." Warfield went on to state that Calvin is best characterized "pre-eminently [as] the theologian of the Holy Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

In the 1600s Calvinist ministers in the Church of England like Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) pastorally developed Calvin's doctrine of the Spirit and applied it to the Christian conscience. Sibbes' popular work from 1630, *The Bruised Reed*, captured this piety:

A broken hearted sinner ought to embrace mercy so strongly enforced [in Scripture]: yet there is no truth that the heart shutteth itselfe more against, than this, especially in sense of misery, when the soule is fittest for mercy, until the Holy Spirit sprinkleth the conscience with the blood of Christ, and sheddeth his love into the heart, that so the blood of Christ, in the conscience

may cry lowder than the guilt of sinne; for onely Gods Spirit can raise the conscience with comfort above guilt; because he only is greater than the conscience. Men may speake comfort, but it is Christs Spirit that can onely comfort.<sup>8</sup>

In the middle 1640s, Presbyterians codified their doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), a document that carried on the theological and pastoral Calvinist tradition within the framework of covenant theology. The Confession referenced the Spirit in the articles on the Trinity, God's eternal decree, creation, the covenant of grace, the effectual call, adoption, sanctification, saving faith, good works, assurance, the church, the communion of saints, the Lord's Supper, and baptism.<sup>9</sup>

In general, Flavel's theology derived from the Calvinism of the WCF as seen in his sermons and books.<sup>10</sup> His is a choice Puritan pneumatology to examine since he mentions the Spirit in most of his writings. He was an influential minister during his time, as one author wrote that he had "more disciples than ever John Owen the Independent, or Rich. Baxter the Presbyterian did."<sup>11</sup> He was also a well-liked author by laypeople in England and New England, and the revivalists of the First and Second Great Awakenings read him and reprinted his works.<sup>12</sup> He is now beginning to receive the attention he deserves from students of Puritanism.<sup>13</sup>

John Flavel's theology of the Holy Spirit is not unique but representative of how Puritans maintained and developed covenant theology in two main areas, the Spirit's relationship to Christ and the Spirit's relationship to the believer. This article will explore both relationships and demonstrate how Flavel applied these doctrines in his ministry.

## THE SPIRIT AND CHRIST

### *THE COVENANT THEOLOGY OF JOHN FLAVEL*

Flavel's theology of the Spirit developed within the framework of covenant theology and derived from his Christology. He had three covenants in

view when interpreting Scripture: the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. The starting point in his theology was the covenant of redemption, which was “the foundation for the covenant of Grace.”<sup>14</sup> The covenant of grace was God’s saving response to humanity’s inability to fulfill the terms of the covenant of works.

Flavel’s theology of the covenant of redemption developed ideas contained in the WCF. Though the covenant of works and covenant of grace are explicitly mentioned in the Confession, the covenant of redemption is inferred from the article on God’s eternal decree, which states that in “the secret counsel and good pleasure” of God’s will, the elect were chosen in Christ.<sup>15</sup> The article on Christ the Mediator stated that the Father had an eternal purpose to give Christ a people who were “in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.”<sup>16</sup> The WCF affirms that the plan of redemption was conceived in eternity past between the Father and Son and that the covenant of grace brought about redemption in time and history.

The earliest use of the term “covenant of redemption” occurred before the drafting of the WCF in David Dickson’s 1638 address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Dickson spoke of “a covenant of redemption betwixt God and the Mediatour Christ, preceeding the Covenant of Grace and salvation made betwixt God and the faithfull Man through Christ, which is the ground of all this treating that God has with Man in the preaching of the Gospell.”<sup>17</sup> Several years later Edward Fisher argued that the covenant of redemption was theologically necessary to satisfy God’s justice and repair humanity’s fallen state, and so a “speciall Covenant, or mutuall agreement made betwixt God and Christ, as expressed [in] Isa. 53.10.”<sup>18</sup> Though the doctrine was not explicated at Westminster, the 1658 Savoy Declaration made explicit reference to the covenant of redemption: “It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to chuse and ordain the Lord Jesus his onely begot-

ten Son, according to a Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man.”<sup>19</sup> According to Carl Trueman, the covenant of redemption added to the development of covenant theology by bringing together God’s eternal decrees (covenant of redemption) and Christ’s execution of redemption in history (covenant of grace), and so became “the nexus between eternity and time with respect to salvation.”<sup>20</sup>

Flavel developed the covenant of grace in light of both the covenant of redemption and the covenant of works. The theological background to the covenant of grace can be traced to Calvin.<sup>21</sup> The WCF defined the covenant of grace in response to the covenant of works: “Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by [the covenant of works], the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ.”<sup>22</sup> Flavel also defined the covenant of grace as a response to the covenant of works. “What is the covenant of grace?” he asked in his exposition on the Shorter Confession. “It is a new compact, or agreement, made with sinners, out of mere grace, wherein God promiseth to be our God, and that we shall be his people, and to give everlasting life to all that believe in Christ” (Jer 31:33).<sup>23</sup> The covenant of grace was “new” in the sense that it contrasted the covenant of works, which God entered with Adam and his posterity before the fall (Rom 5:12).<sup>24</sup> Flavel provided a definition for the covenant of works: “When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.”<sup>25</sup> Because Adam was created morally upright (Eccl 7:29) there was no need for a mediator in the covenant of works. For this reason, God entered into the “new” covenant, the covenant of grace, to provide a mediator to overcome the curse of death that resulted from the covenant of works and to fulfill the eternal plan of salvation provided in the covenant of redemption. Christ was that Mediator, and in Flavel’s theology

it was the Spirit who prepared Christ to redeem the elect.

### **THE SPIRIT'S ROLE IN REDEMPTION**

Flavel's work *The Fountain of Life* is a collection of sermons on redemption in Christ. Theologically, the sermons begin with the covenant of redemption and continue with the covenant of grace, expounding on Christ's pre-incarnate state, his ministry, death, and resurrection. Flavel's pneumatology developed in step with how Christ was revealed in Scripture as prophet, priest, and king. Flavel applied the work of the Spirit most significantly at the end of the work, highlighting the gift of the Spirit at Christ's exaltation.

Flavel began his book by teaching the covenant of redemption from Isa 53:10-12: "the business of mans salvation was transacted upon Covenant-terms, betwixt the Father and the Son, from all Eternity."<sup>26</sup> "Before this world was made," he preached, "then were his delights in us. While as yet we had no existence; but onely in the infinite purpose of God; who had decreed this for us, in Christ Jesus, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 1. 9."<sup>27</sup> The persons in the covenant transaction were only the Father and Son, because "The Spirit hath another office assigned him, even to apply as Christ's Vicegerent, the redemption designed by the Father, and purchased by the Son for us."<sup>28</sup> As vicegerent, the Spirit is Christ's kingly deputy.<sup>29</sup>

Though the Spirit did not participate in the covenant of redemption, he did play an indispensable role in Christ's incarnation and the commission for his redemptive offices in the covenant of grace. In order for the pre-incarnate Christ to come to earth and redeem the elect, he had to assume "the entire humane nature, consisting of a true human soul, and body," becoming "a true and real man, by that assumption."<sup>30</sup> But Christ's divine sinless nature could only assume a human body untainted by original sin only because the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary (Luke 1:35).<sup>31</sup> The Spirit "formed the body of Christ in the womb, and so prepared him to be a sacrifice for us. He filled that human-

ity with his unexampled fullness."<sup>32</sup> Patrick Gillespie agreed when he wrote that the Spirit united Christ's divine nature to human nature by miraculous conception.<sup>33</sup> Owen similarly attributed Christ's miraculous conception to the Spirit.<sup>34</sup> Flavel also taught that the Spirit anointed Christ with wisdom during his ministry (Acts 10:38)<sup>35</sup> and allowed him to commune with his Father even on the cross.<sup>36</sup> Primarily, the hypostatic union qualified and "prepared him [Christ] for a full discharge of his mediatorship, in the office of our Prophet, Priest, and King" to become the only mediator between God and sinners in the covenant of grace.<sup>37</sup>

Yet for Christ to have the authority of mediator, he had to be commissioned by the Father. From John 6:27 Flavel taught that Christ's work of redemption would be "invalid and vain, without a due call, and commission from the Father."<sup>38</sup> For this reason, the Father sealed the Son with the Holy Spirit, which ratified and confirmed his credentials, establishing that his authority came from the Father. The Spirit was "the great Seal of Heaven,"<sup>39</sup> Christ's "Credentials from heaven,"<sup>40</sup> which sealed him to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King. For Owen, the Spirit was the "Visible Pledge" at Christ's baptism.<sup>41</sup> Owen also noted how the Spirit prepared Christ for his incarnation, three-fold ministry, death, and resurrection.<sup>42</sup> For the Puritans, the Spirit fully discharged Christ to act as Mediator.

Christ's prophetic office served two purposes, "one External, consisting in a true and full Revelation of the will of God to Men, according to John 17.6.... The other in illuminating the mind, and opening the Heart to receive and embrace that Doctrine."<sup>43</sup> Christ must illuminate the unregenerate's understanding by his Word and Spirit because of natural blindness and ignorance (1 Cor 2:14).<sup>44</sup> Today Christ speaks through his Spirit who was sent as his vicegerent, so that "when the Spirit comes down upon the Souls in the administration of the ordinances; he effectually opens the heart to receive the Lord Jesus, by the hearing of

faith.<sup>45</sup> The Spirit then illuminates the soul with new light so that Scriptural truths are understood and the sinner can come to saving faith. Flavel described three aspects of the Spirit's illumination. This illumination is "a very affecting light" that makes an impression on sinners, as the two men on the Emmaus rode stated, "Did not our hearts burn within us, whilst he talked with us, and opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). The illumined heart receives a growing light that "shines more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov 4:18), so that the truths of the gospel grow clearer in time. For Flavel, the Spirit also illuminated the elect, giving them a saving knowledge of Christ and affectionate love for the gospel. "In a word," he preached, "all saving light endears Jesus Christ to the soul."<sup>46</sup>

Christ's priestly office also served a double purpose, to make oblation and intercession. Examining Gal 3:13-14, Flavel preached that one of the main consequences of Christ's death was to procure the gift of the Spirit for the elect.<sup>47</sup> As the text reads, Christ died "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The "blood of Christ procured for us the Spirit of sanctification. Had not Christ died, the Spirit [would] never [have] come down from Heaven upon any such design."<sup>48</sup> Because of Christ's priestly office, the Spirit was sent to sanctify believers.

Christ also reigns as king through Word and Spirit. This office applies to the elect what Christ "revealed and purchased as a Prophet and Priest."<sup>49</sup> The three-fold offices, then, build on one another: the Spirit illuminates, sanctifies, and then directs believers as they live under Christ's rule. Christ began to rule by his Spirit at his ascension when the Spirit descended. So Christ's "eternal Kingdom is administered by his Spirit, who is his prorex or vicegerent in our hearts."<sup>50</sup> Flavel acknowledged that the Spirit operated upon God's people under the Old Covenant, but now his ministry comes more fully after Christ's exaltation.

How should we have enjoyed the great blessings of the Spirit and Ordinances, if Christ had not ascended? And surely we could not have been without either. If Christ had not gone away, the comforter had not come, John 16:7. He begins where Christ finished. For he takes of his, and shews it to us, John 16:14. And therefore it's said, John 7:39. The Holy Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. He was then given as a sanctifying spirit, but not given (in that measure as afterwards he was) to furnish and qualifie men with gifts for service. And indeed by Christs ascension, both his sanctifying and his ministering gifts were shed forth more commonly and more abundantly upon men.<sup>51</sup>

Christ ruled his people through Word and Spirit because believers are directed by their great Teacher, the Spirit, who speaks to them from the Word, "this is the way [of holiness], walk in it" (Isa 30:20-21).<sup>52</sup>

#### **APPLYING THE SPIRIT, THE FRIEND OF BELIEVERS**

After Flavel explained how the doctrine of redemption in Christ transitioned from Christ's pre-incarnate state to the giving of the Spirit, he urged believers to receive and respect the Spirit properly. Since Christ reigns as king, it is a sin to abuse or neglect his kingly gifts, most significantly, the gift of the Spirit. Flavel pleaded with his church members, "See that you abuse not the Spirit, whom Christ sent from heaven at his ascension; to supply his bodily absence among us, and is the great pledge of his care for, and tender love to his people.... O deal kindly with the Spirit, and obey his voice."<sup>53</sup> To help believers, Flavel offered three applications.

First, believers must recognize that at Christ's exaltation the gift of the Spirit was the "first and principal mercy that Christ received" for his people upon entering heaven. Flavel described a picture of this heavenly scene while preaching on John 14:16-17. "No sooner had he set foot upon the

place [heaven] but the first thing, the great thing that was upon his heart to ask the Father for us, was that the Spirit might be forthwith dispatched, and sent down to his people. So that the Spirit is the first-born of mercies. And deserves the first place in our hearts, and esteem."<sup>54</sup> Believers must cherish the Spirit as the greatest of Christ's kingly gifts.

Second, believers can show obedience to the Spirit by understanding his economic function in the Trinity, namely, as one who represents the Father and Son because he was sent by them. Drawing from John 14:26 and 15:26, Flavel connected the Spirit's derived authority as one sent by the Father and Son. "The Spirit comes not in his own name to us (though, if so, he deserves a dear welcome for his own sake, and for the benefits we receive by him which are inestimable,) but he comes to us in the name, and in the loves both of the Father and Son."<sup>55</sup> For this reason, "if you have any love for the God that made you, any kindness for Christ that died for you, shew it by your obedience to the Spirit that comes from them both; and in both their names to us; and who will be both offended and grieved if you grieve him."<sup>56</sup> Fellow Puritan Henry Hickman agreed:

Though there be no difference as to the Essence of the Persons, yet there is a difference in the oeconomy.... To sin against Father or Son, is not so dangerous, as to sin against the Spirit; because he acting not in his own name, but in the name of Father and Son, from both of whom he is sent; to sin against him, is to sin against all the authority of God, all the love of the Trinity, the lowest condescension that divine goodness ever did, or can make.<sup>57</sup>

Believers' obedience to the Spirit displays their respect for God the Father and Son.

Finally, not only should believers not sin against the Spirit because he represents Father and Son, but they should love and obey him for his divine nature and offices. On account of the Spirit's nature, believers should not grieve the Spirit

because he is "God, Co-equal with the Father and Son in Nature, and dignity.... Beware of him therefore, and grieve him not, for in so doing, you grieve God."<sup>58</sup> Flavel lists numerous reasons why the Spirit's offices obligate believers to show gratitude and obedience because he is sent to help us pray, showing us what to ask the Lord in prayer (Rom 8:26). He also comes to comfort believers (John 14:16). He glorifies Christ by taking what is his, namely, his death, resurrection, ascension, and even his present intercession in heaven (Heb 7:25), and declaring it to the believer: "He can be with us in a moment, he can (as one well observes) tell you what were the very last thoughts Christ was thinking in Heaven about you."<sup>59</sup> The Spirit also makes the ordinances of preaching of the Word and the Lord's Supper lively and efficacious. Because of the work of the Spirit who unites us to Christ we now have communion with him. The Spirit soothes believers' infirmities and comforts when they are overwhelmed, preserves them from sin, and through his sanctifying work gives the saints evidence that salvation and heaven are theirs. Flavel concludes his appeal:

It were endless to enumerate the mercies you have by him. And now, Reader, dost thou not blush to think how unworthy thou hast treated such a friend. For which of all these his Offices or benefits dost thou grieve and quench him? O grieve not the holy Spirit, whom Christ sent as soon as ever he came to Heaven, in his Fathers name, and in his own name to perform all these Offices for you.<sup>60</sup>

Grieving the Spirit, wrote Flavel's friend William Jenkyn, is like loosing your best friend.<sup>61</sup>

Flavel's theology of the Spirit flowed from his Christology within his covenant theology. The Father and Son entered into covenant to redeem the elect. The Spirit's role in the covenant of grace united Christ's divine and human nature and commissioned him for the work of redemption as prophet, priest, and king. The Spirit then cor-

respondingly worked in believers through those same offices to illuminate, sanctify, and rule Christ's people.

## **THE SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER**

### ***THE SPIRIT AND THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION***

John Flavel believed that the redemptive work of the cross must be applied by the Spirit through the preaching of the Word for the elect to enter the covenant of grace, grow in Christ, and find assurance of salvation. Patrick Gillespie also stated that "Covenant favour and grace is tendered to us by the Gospel-Covenant, and effectually applied unto us by the Spirit of the Lord."<sup>62</sup> The Spirit who united Christ's human and divine nature in the hypostatic union now mystically unites believers to Christ in the covenant of grace. The first union was the basis for the second. Christ took on human flesh so that the elect might be united to him and receive all spiritual blessings because "Christ and his benefits go inseparably and undividedly together."<sup>63</sup> In this way, Flavel's theology of union with Christ followed Calvin and Westminster.<sup>64</sup> Flavel's doctrine of union with Christ begins with the work of the Spirit, who effectually calls sinners and works with the Word to save them.

Believers' union with Christ begins with the work of the Spirit. According to Flavel, "there is a strict and dear Union betwixt Christ and all true believers."<sup>65</sup> Two bonds unite believers to Christ. On the divine side, the Spirit bonds the believer to Christ through the preaching of the Word. On the human side, faith is the bond that unites the believer to receive Christ.<sup>66</sup> Following the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Flavel defined this work of the Spirit as the doctrine of effectual calling: "Effectual calling 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."<sup>67</sup> In the covenant of grace the Spirit must convict, enlighten, renew,

and persuade sinners to embrace Christ because sin has rendered them unable to do so without Divine causation.

Sinners cannot believe in Christ because of the effects of sin, so the Spirit must first regenerate them. Flavel described Adam's sinless state before the fall as "a Beautiful and Blessed creature.... His mind was bright, clear, and apprehensive of the Law and Will of God; his Will cheerfully complied therewith; his sensitive appetitive and inferior power stood in an obedient subordination."<sup>68</sup> The mind, will, and appetite were the faculties of the soul that reflected God's image.<sup>69</sup> The mind, or understanding, is the leading faculty of the soul, which directed human thoughts and conscience. The will has freedom to make choices and has dominion or command over its decisions. The appetite or affections direct the soul to the object of its desire to love, secure happiness, and delight in God. After the fall, however, sin defaced the beauty of the Divine image and "stamp the Image of Satan upon it: turn'd all its noble power and faculties against the Author and Fountain of its Being."<sup>70</sup> Flavel's brother, Phineas, agreed that because of sin, "The Mind, Will, and Affections of the sinner are all kept and secured against Christ."<sup>71</sup> For this reason, degenerate souls must be made alive or "quickened with a Supernatural principle of life by the Spirit of God" to have new life in Christ.<sup>72</sup> As a result, "Three things must be wrought upon man, before he can come to Christ: His blind understanding must be enlightened; his hard and rocky heart must be broken, and melted; his stiff, fixed, and obstinate will must be conquered, and subdued: but all these are the effects of a supernatural power."<sup>73</sup> This supernatural power is the Spirit's effectual call.

The elect respond to the efficacious call of the gospel when the Spirit works in conjunction with the Word to make the preached Word "irresistible."<sup>74</sup> Scripture "is a successful instrument only when it is in the hand of the Spirit, without whose influence it never did, nor can convince, convert, or save any soul."<sup>75</sup> When Spirit and Word act

together, the darkened mind is illuminated in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 26:18) and the rebellious will is renewed to respond to God (Ps 110:3; Ezek 36:26).<sup>76</sup> With renewed affections believers are now able to see Christ as “the loveliest person souls can set their eyes upon.”<sup>77</sup> Flavel drew a timely application to ministers based on the efficacious call:

See hence the necessity of fervent prayer to accompany the preaching of the Gospel. Without the Spirit and power of God accompanying the Word, no Heart can ever be opened to Christ.... Let Ministers pray, and the People pray that the Gospel may be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, 1 Pet. 1.12. It greatly concerns us that preach the Gospel to wrestle with God upon our knees, to accompany us in the dispensation of it unto the People; to steep that seed we sow among you in tears and prayers before you hear it; and I beseech you Brethren let us not strive alone, joyn your cries to Heaven with ours, for the blessing of the Spirit upon the Word.<sup>78</sup>

The subject of illumination, inward light, brought Puritans into disagreement with the Quakers on issue of the Spirit and Word. Quakers taught God spoke through the written Word, but superseded Scripture’s authority through their teachings on inward spiritual experience. The famous Quaker George Fox taught that every individual was born with the inextinguishable light of Christ. For the Puritans, his views extinguished not only the doctrine of total depravity but the necessity of the Word for conversion and sanctification. Minister William Bridges, on the other hand, listed seven reasons why Scripture is a believers’ only light: it is true, admirable, safe and sure, pleasant and satisfying, full and sufficient, clear, and the best.<sup>79</sup> As a result, believers are to know and understand Scripture, intend to keep it, and walk by its commands.<sup>80</sup> John Owen encountered Quakerism during his years as Vice-Chancellor at Oxford and summarized the differences between Reformed

and Quaker teachings: “the issue between these men and us is this and no other: We persuade men to take as the only rule, and the holy promised Spirit of God, sought by ardent prayers and supplications, in the use of all means appointed by Christ for that end, for their guide. They deal with men to turn into themselves, and to attend unto the light within them.”<sup>81</sup> Quakerism, then, elevated the Spirit at the cost of Scripture’s role in the life of the believer and in the church.<sup>82</sup>

In 1687 Flavel began correspondence with a former Puritan turned Quaker named Clement Lake.<sup>83</sup> Flavel noted two errors Quakers taught regarding the Spirit. First, he stated, “he cannot be a Christian that rejects the Scriptures as a Rule; but so do the Quakers.”<sup>84</sup> Next, “He cannot be a Christian that maketh no distinction between the Godly, and the Ungodly, but doth affirm that Christ enlightens every man that cometh into the World, with a saving Light.”<sup>85</sup> Flavel believed the Spirit worked with the Word and only savingly enlightened the elect, contrary to Lake’s position. Puritan Robert Fleming concurred with Owen and Flavel, but then went on to state that Quakerism’s teaching led individuals to blaspheme the Holy Spirit since Scripture described those who were once enlightened and tasted the Spirit’s gift could not be brought again to repentance (Heb 6:4-6).<sup>86</sup> Former Protestants who embraced Quakerism, then, rejected the true person and work of the Spirit. Flavel was unable to convince Lake to leave Quakerism and return to orthodox Protestant views. His pneumatology reinforced Reformed Orthodoxy in contrast to teachings of Quakerism.

#### ***THE SPIRIT AND THE LIFE IN CHRIST***

“Believers are the birth or offspring of the Spirit,” Flavel preached.<sup>87</sup> Or, to put it in the apostle Paul’s words, believers are “new creatures in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17), filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18), that is, filled with Christ (Col 3:16; Rom 8:9-10). As a result, the Puritans emphasized the power of the Spirit in the new Christian’s life. For



Flavel, the power of the indwelling Spirit was visibly displayed in the Christian life, because a holy life gave evidence of its union with Christ. The Spirit also draws believers into communion with God through the means of grace. In these areas, Flavel's theology is representative of Puritan piety.

Flavel listed seven evidences that the Spirit indwells believers.<sup>88</sup> The first evidence of the Spirit's indwelling is conviction and humiliation for sin. As defined from John 16:8-9 the Spirit came to convict the world of sin. As a result, Flavel stated, "where we see no conviction of sin, we can expect no conversion to Christ."<sup>89</sup> Second, the Spirit truly makes alive those united to Christ because they are no longer dead to the law (Rom 8:2). Though some believers may feel estranged from Christ, their hunger and desire to be with him proves the Spirit indwells them. Third, those indwelt by the Spirit desire to see Christ's glory and kingdom spread throughout the world. Fourth, where the Spirit dwells mortification of sin will occur. The Spirit and flesh war against each other (Gal 5:17; Rom 8:13), so that the believer and the Spirit have the same goal in sanctification: to destroy and mortify sin. Fifth, the Spirit directs believers to prayer (Rom 8:26) by stirring up their affections to pray, supplying matters for prayer, and teaching them what to ask God. Sixth, the Spirit helps believers be heavenly-minded (Rom 8:5-6). Flavel commented, "If God, Christ, Heaven, and the world to come, engage the thoughts and the affections of the soul, and the temper of such a soul is spiritual, and the Spirit of God dwelleth there: this is the life of the regenerate: Phil. 3.20."<sup>90</sup> The last evidence of the Spirit's indwelling is that believers follow the Spirit's lead (Rom 8:14). "[It is] the office of the Spirit to guide us into all truth; and [it is] our great duty to follow his guidance" (Rom 8:14).<sup>91</sup>

Because believers are united to Christ, the Spirit draws them into communion with Christ. "Communion with God," John Owen wrote,

consisteth in his communication of himself unto us, with our returnall unto him, of that which he requireth and accepteth, flowing from that Union which in Jesus Christ we have with him.... It is then ... mutuall communication in giving and receiving, after a most holy and spirituall manner, which is between God and the Saints while they walke together in a Covenant of Peace, ratified by the blood of Jesus.<sup>92</sup>

Flavel concurred with Owen and distinguished the state of communion and actual communion. The state of communion is the position of being united to Christ, because "the same spirit of holiness which dwells in Christ without measure, is communicated by him to the saints in measure, 1 John 4.13. He hath given us of his Spirit."<sup>93</sup> The state of communion, then, defines the reality that exists once believers are united to Christ. Believers receive six benefits from this state of communion with Christ: his names and titles as sons (John 1:12), joint-heirs (Rom 8:17), priests and kings (Rev 1:6); his righteousness (2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9); his holiness (1 Cor 1:30); his death (Gal 2:20); his life and resurrection (Eph 2:1; Gal 2:20); and his glory (John 17:22-24).<sup>94</sup>

Actual communion with God involves spending time communing with the Lord. Flavel listed three ways believers commune with God: contemplating his attributes, practicing religious duties, and responding to different providences God brings into their life.<sup>95</sup> First, believers commune with God as they reflect on his divine attributes such as his immense greatness (Psalm 8) and his purity and holiness (Isa 6:3-5). Contemplating the goodness and mercy of God humbles believers' hearts to thankfulness and obedience (Luke 7:44). Meditating on God's veracity and faithfulness builds believers' confidence (Heb 12:5-6). Recognizing God's displeasure of sin produces repentance and humiliation in a redeemed heart (Ps 51:8; Ezra 9:6). Lastly, God's omniscience obliges believers to live sincerely before God who knows all (Ps 18:23).<sup>96</sup>

Next, believers have communion with God through various religious duties or means of grace such as guarding their hearts,<sup>97</sup> hearing and reading the Word,<sup>98</sup> partaking of the sacraments,<sup>99</sup> and prayer.<sup>100</sup> As believers participate in these duties, the Spirit produces four things in their lives: sorrow for sin (Psalm 32:4-5), the strengthening of faith (Psalm 27:13), growth in love (John 14:21), and consolation during difficulties (1 Pet 4:13-14).<sup>101</sup> Flavel believed using the means of grace drew the heart to God.

Finally, God desires to commune with his people through difficult times in life.<sup>102</sup> Times of spiritual affliction for sin confirm that believers are adopted children of God (Heb 12:7). When believers lack provision they discover that God is all they need (Ps 23:1). Times of danger cause unsure hearts to trust in God for protection (Ps 56:3). Flavel's view of communion with God drove believers to take every opportunity in life to spend time with God.

#### **THE SPIRIT AND ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

The final area that Flavel's pneumatology impacted was assurance of salvation. Later English Puritans like Flavel developed their view of assurance in accord with the WCF. Foundationally, assurance was grounded in Scripture's promises of salvation. From there, believers could examine in their life evidence that those promises were fulfilled, and then the Spirit witnessed to believers' hearts that they were children of God.<sup>103</sup> Assurance, then, grew out of saving faith, and as a result, came to the believer at a point subsequent to conversion.

The WCF stated that assurance was "founded, upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of Adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption."<sup>104</sup> The Puritans described assurance of salvation through a syl-

logism: "All that truly have received Christ Jesus, they are the children of God. I have truly received Jesus Christ. Therefore I am a child of God."<sup>105</sup>

The first premise – all who receive Jesus are God's children – is based on the promises of Scripture. The divine promise of salvation was Christ-centered, so believers were to "beleeve in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him."<sup>106</sup> God promised in both the Old and New Testament that all who called upon him would be saved (Joel 3:5 LXX; Rom 10:13). So Paul could write in 2 Tim 2:10, "God's firm foundation stands bearing the seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his.'" The Puritans believed Scripture affirmed that all who trust in Christ will be saved and kept by God.

The second premise—I have truly received Jesus Christ—involved self-examination on the part of professing Christians. Being a thoughtful and seasoned pastor, Flavel anticipated that believers would then ask, "But now what comfort is this to a poor Believer, that God knows who are his?"<sup>107</sup> How does a believer state with confidence, "I have truly received Christ," though he struggles with doubts and sin? To assist believers the indwelling Spirit helps them examine their lives based on how Scripture defined a Christian. In helping believers, the Spirit fulfills the promises of the new covenant made in Jeremiah 31. Flavel remarked,

It is very observable, that the works of grace wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, are represented to us in scripture, as a transcript, or copy of the written work: Jer. 31.33. I will write my Law in their hearts. Now as a true copy answers the original, word for word, letter for letter, point for point; so do the works of the Spirit in our souls harmonize with the dictates of the Spirit in the Scriptures.<sup>108</sup>

Flavel examined his life for signs of God's grace, and "by this means he attained to a well-grounded assurance."<sup>109</sup> Throughout his ministry he called on believers to examine their lives in

light of the promises of Scripture to gain assurance. Hickman concurred,

The same Spirit also works in us that Faith by which we are enabled to believe those Scripture Propositions to be divine infallible truths; he also worketh in us every gracious habit, and exciteth those gracious acts, which be the evidences and marks of our conversion, justification, and title to glory; he also helpth to feel and discover those acts in our selves, and by comparing them with the rule, to find their sincerity.<sup>110</sup>

For Flavel, the Scriptures “contain the signs of faith, and the very things within you that answer those signs in the word.”<sup>111</sup> Self-examination, then, is biblical: “The questioning and examining of our Faith is a commanded Scripture-duty.”<sup>112</sup> Flavel concludes, “For my own part, I verily believe that the sweetest hours Christians enjoy in this World, is, when they retired into their Closets, and sit there concealed from all eyes, but him that made them; looking now into the Bible, then into their own Hearts, and then up to God: closely following the grand Debate bout their Interest in Christ, till they have brought it to the happy desired issue.”<sup>113</sup> At that point, Flavel believed the inference from the syllogism—I am a child of God—became a reality for the believer.

The Puritans did, however, have different views on whether or not the Spirit witnessed or sealed believers through Word-examination or immediately apart from the Word.<sup>114</sup> Thomas Mall warned Christians not to expect a “vocal testimony” outside of the Spirit’s testimony from Scripture.<sup>115</sup> Likewise, Ezekiel Culverwell agreed when he advised believers to build their assurance on God’s mercy and truth as revealed in his Word.<sup>116</sup> Thomas Goodwin, on the other hand, held that the Spirit witnessed immediately and independent from the syllogism: “The sealing of the Holy Spirit is an immediate assurance by a heavenly and divine light of a divine authority, which the Holy Ghost sheddeth in a man’s heart,

(not having relation to grace wrought or anything in a man’s self,) whereby he sealeth him up to the day of redemption.”<sup>117</sup>

Flavel’s theology of assurance was representative of both the mediate (Word-examination) and immediate sealing views at different times in his ministry.<sup>118</sup> In his 1667 work, *A Saint Indeed*, he denied any notion that the believer found assurance through the Spirit’s immediate witness apart from Scripture and examination.<sup>119</sup> He reaffirmed this position in 1679 when he published a sermon on Eph 1:13.<sup>120</sup> Yet by 1685 he did not deny the immediate witness of the Spirit, when stating, “There is a witness of the Spirit ... or sealing which comes not in an Argumentative way, by reasoning from either justification or sanctification: but seems to come Immediately from the Spirit.”<sup>121</sup> But within five years, in 1690, he expressed reservation on immediate sealing: “immediate Sealings of the Spirit, which if such a thing be at all, it is but rare and extraordinary. I will not deny there may be an immediate Testimony of the Spirit, but sure I am his mediate Testimony by his graces in us, is his usual way of sealing Believers.”<sup>122</sup>

What can explain the change and reservation concerning the immediate view? An event near the end of Flavel’s life can help clarify the shift away from the immediate view in 1690, though nothing in his writings provided an explanation for his openness to it from 1679 to 1685. In 1690 Samuel Crisp, the son of Tobias Crisp, reprinted his father’s sermons from the 1640s that many Puritans considered Antinomian. To authenticate Crisp’s sermons, Samuel Crisp had twelve London ministers validate that the writings were his father’s by signing the preface to the republished sermons. Unknown to the twelve ministers, Samuel Crisp attached to his preface an attack on Richard Baxter, who adamantly opposed the rise of Antinomian teachings since the Civil War fifty years earlier because he thought Tobias Crisp connected the doctrine of election and justification in such a way that led to lawless living.<sup>123</sup> So, when Baxter saw the preface signed by orthodox minis-

ters his fury was reignited. John Howe sought to resolve the issue (and pacify Baxter) by having the ministers sign the preface to one of Flavel's 1690 work against Antinomianism.<sup>124</sup> Flavel began writing works against Antinomian doctrine. Antinomian teaching held to the immediate view, so to adhere to the immediate view of sealing was untenable at this point in his ministry.

Antinomian teaching attacked covenant theology's strong emphasis on the use of Scripture in gaining assurance of salvation. If Christians are not bound by law then what measure did they have to gauge that God's promises were fulfilled in their obedience? Patrick Gillespie observed that Antinomians "leave to the Believer no way of trial of the Spirits which yet is his duty, 1 John 4.1. They confound the efficient cause of our obedience which is the Spirit of Grace; and the objective cause, which is the holy rule of the Word of God, the written Word, which two are distinguished, but not to be separated; for the Believer is under both, Ezek. 36.27."<sup>125</sup> Writing against Antinomian teaching, John Sedgwick agreed: "the Spirit and the Word are in such conjunction in the work [of obedience], that he doth leade and guide men into acts of obedience in and by the Law which he himself writes in their hearts, Isaiah 59.21."<sup>126</sup> Flavel concurred and asked, "If once a man pretend the Spirit without the Scriptures to be his Rule, whither will not his own deluding Fancies carry him, under a vain and sinful pretence of the Spirit!"<sup>127</sup> For Flavel, Antinomians made several errors concerning assurance of salvation. First, it is an error to believe, "That men ought not to doubt of their faith, or question, Whether we believe, or no: Nay, That we ought no more to question our faith than to question Christ."<sup>128</sup> Second, Antinomians "speak very slightly of trying ourselves by marks and signs of grace.. . to make sanctification an evidence of justification."<sup>129</sup> According to Flavel, the Spirit assured believers with the Word through self-examination. "Scripture-light," he preached, "is a safe and sure Light, a pleasant and sufficient Light."<sup>130</sup> Once again, Flavel's theology

reinforced the WCF.

## CONCLUSION

John Flavel's theology of the Spirit was not innovative but representative of Reformed Orthodoxy expressed among the English Puritans. His last work was actually an exposition of Westminster's Shorter Catechism, which he used to catechize his people in Dartmouth. His covenant theology established a biblical Christology which in turn built a foundation for his pneumatology. The Spirit assisted in both the hypostatic union of Christ and the mystical union of believers to Christ. The Spirit saved, sanctified, and assured believers through the Word. Overall, Flavel's theology was evangelical, that is, it aimed at the conversion of unbelievers and the sanctification of believers.

Flavel's friend, Harvard's president Increase Mather, pinned a fitting testimony to the influence of Flavel's ministry, which many in Dartmouth described as blessed by the Spirit.

I am inform'd by unquestionable hands that there was a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit when these Sermons [from Revelation 3:20] were viva voce delivered, a great number of Souls having been brought home to Christ thereby. The Lord grant that the second preaching of them to far greater Multitude by this way of the Press, may by the same Spirit, be made abundantly successful for the Conversion and Salvation of Gods Elect.<sup>131</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>John Flavell, *The Fountain of Life Opened, or A Display of Christ in His Essential and Mediatorial Glory* (London, 1673), 609-10. The modern spelling of his last name is Flavel; otherwise, when citing seventeenth century sources, spelling, italics, and grammar will be left unchanged throughout this article. For events from Flavel's life, see *The Life of Mr. John Flavel, Minister of Dartmouth in The Whole Works of Reverend Mr. John Flavel, Late Minister at Dartmouth in Devon, in Two Volumes* (London, 1701), 1:[i-vii].

<sup>2</sup>Though there is little consensus on the term "Puri-

tan,” I will use it to define Flavel throughout this article because it captures the British context for Reformed ministers and theologians during the seventeenth century. John Spurr attempts a definition which emphasizes soteriological and social aspects: The essence of Puritanism “grows out of the individual’s conviction that they have been personally saved by God, elected to salvation by a merciful God for no merit of their own; and that, as a consequence of this election, they must lead a life of visible piety, must be a member of a church modeled on the pattern of the New Testament, and must work to make their community and nation a model Christian society” (*English Puritanism, 1603-1689* [London: Macmillan Press, 1998], 5).

<sup>3</sup>J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1990), 179.

<sup>4</sup>Geoffrey F. Nuttal, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), 6. Nuttal does, however, see a disputed relationship between the Puritans the Quakers in this work.

<sup>5</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 537.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 20:538-40.

<sup>7</sup>Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism* (repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 21.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax* (London, 1630), xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>9</sup>*The Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Agreed Upon by the Assembly of Divine at Westminster* (London, 1649).

<sup>10</sup>According to Richard Muller, Flavel’s ministry corresponded with the rise of Reformed High Orthodoxy (1640-1725), which “did not create the Reformed doctrinal system; it modified, developed, and elaborated an extant system in relation to a changing intellectual environment” (*Vol. 1: Prolegomena to Theology in Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520-1725* [2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 74).

<sup>11</sup>Quoted in Edward Windeatt, “John Flavell: A Notable Dartmouth Puritan and His Bibliography”

(Dartmouth, UK: Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art, 1911), 14. Windeatt found this remark in an edition of Anthony á Wood’s *Athenae Oxonienses* in the Bodleian Library.

<sup>12</sup>For example, Jonathan Edwards quoted Flavel more than anyone except Solomon Stoddard and Thomas Shepard in his revival defense *Religious Affections* (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [ed. John E. Smith; New Haven: Yale University, 1959]). Princeton’s president, Archibald Alexander, was converted by reading Flavel’s works. See Archibald Alexander, *Practical Truths* (New York: American Tract Society, 1857), 75-78.

<sup>13</sup>J. Stephen Yuille, *The Inner Sanctum of Puritan Piety: John Flavel’s Doctrine of Mystical Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2007); John Thomas Jr., *An Analysis of the Use of Application in the Preaching of John Flavel* (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007); Adam Embry, *Keeper of the Great Seal of Heaven: Sealing of the Spirit in the Thought of John Flavel* (Th.M. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); Clifford B. Boone, *Puritan Evangelism: Preaching for Conversion in Late-Seventeenth Century English Puritanism as seen in the Works of John Flavel* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wales, Lampeter, 2009). There were two academic works written on Flavel in the twentieth century: Earl T. Farrell, *The Doctrine of Man and Grace as Held by the Reverend John Flavel* (B. A. thesis, Duke University, 1949) and Kwai Sing Chang, *John Flavel of Dartmouth, 1630-1691* (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1952).

<sup>14</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 32.

<sup>15</sup>*Confession of Faith ... at Westminster*, 10.

<sup>16</sup>*Confession of Faith ... at Westminster*, 19.

<sup>17</sup>Alexander Peterkin, ed. *Records of the Kirk of Scotland, Containing the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies, from the Year 1638 Downwards* (Edinburgh, 1843), 159. The background to the development of the covenant of redemption can be found in Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2007), 80-83.

- <sup>18</sup>Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (London, 1645), 36.
- <sup>19</sup>*A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practiced in the Congregational Churches in England ... in their meeting at the Savoy* (London, 1658), 15.
- <sup>20</sup>Trueman, *John Owen*, 87.
- <sup>21</sup>Peter Lillback, *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).
- <sup>22</sup>*Confession of Faith ... at Westminster*, 17.
- <sup>23</sup>John Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism with Practical Inferences from Each Question* (London, 1692), 44.
- <sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 34-35.
- <sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.
- <sup>26</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 26.
- <sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.
- <sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 27. Elsewhere, Flavel does include the Spirit in God's divine decrees: "When the Father, Son, and Spirit sate (as I may say) at the Council Table, contriving and laying the design for the salvation of a few out of many of Adams degenerate off-spring, there was none came before them to speak one word for thee; but such was the divine pleasure to insert thy name in that Catalogue of the saved" (604).
- <sup>29</sup>"Vicegerent, Vice-roy: A Deputy to a King" in H. C. Gent, *The English Dictionarie: or, An Interpreter of Hard English Words* (London, 1623), n. p.
- <sup>30</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 51.
- <sup>31</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 51.
- <sup>32</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 573.
- <sup>33</sup>Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened* (London: 1677), 173.
- <sup>34</sup>John Owen, ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ: *or, A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit* (London, 1674), 128-29.
- <sup>35</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 579.
- <sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 392-93.
- <sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 58.
- <sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 65, 529.
- <sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.
- <sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 63.
- <sup>41</sup>Owen, *Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*, 139.
- <sup>42</sup>Owen, *Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*, 138-39; John Owen, *Salus Electorum, Sanguis Jesu; or, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (London, 1648), 24-26.
- <sup>43</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 96.
- <sup>44</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 52.
- <sup>45</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 117-18.
- <sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 124.
- <sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.
- <sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 535.
- <sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.
- <sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 200. "Prorex: Deputie King" in *English Dictionarie*, n. p.
- <sup>51</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 539.
- <sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 621; cf. 539.
- <sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 572.
- <sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup>Henry Hickman, *The Believers Duty Towards the Spirit, and the Spirits Office Towards Believers, or, A Discourse concerning Believers not Grieving the Spirit, and The Spirits sealing up Believers to the day of Redemption* (London, 1665), 27.
- <sup>58</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 573. Flavel offers several passages to justify the Spirit's divinity: 2 Sam 23:23; Gen 1:2; Ps 139:7; and Rom 9:1.
- <sup>59</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 573. Though Flavel attributes the idea that we can know Christ's thoughts of us (his intercession on our behalf) to Thomas Goodwin, he does not reference which book Goodwin stated this. Dr. Mark Jones advised me this idea is found in Goodwin's *Christ Set Forth* (London, 1642).
- <sup>60</sup>Flavell, *Fountain of Life*, 574.
- <sup>61</sup>William Jenkyn, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, Together with many large and useful Deductions ... The Second Part* (London, 1654), 624.
- <sup>62</sup>Patrick Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened* (London, 1677), 27.
- <sup>63</sup>John Flavell, *The Method of Grace, in Bringing Home the Eternal Redemption* (London, 1681), 4.
- <sup>64</sup>Calvin, *Institutes*, 20:538.
- <sup>65</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 26; 6.191-92; John Flavell, *England's Duty Under the Present Gospel Liberty from Rev. III vers. 20* (London, 1689), 353.
- <sup>66</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 32-33, 129; 6.191-92.

- <sup>67</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 67.
- <sup>68</sup>John Flavell, *Pneumatologia, A Treatise of the Soul of Man* (London, 1685), 66.
- <sup>69</sup>Flavell, *Soul of Man*, 19-29.
- <sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 66.
- <sup>71</sup>Phineas Flavell, *The Grand Evil Discovered: or, The Deceitfull Heart Tryed and Cast: Being the Substance of some Sermons Preached from Jerem. XVII. 9* (London, 1676), 10.
- <sup>72</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 93.
- <sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 394.
- <sup>74</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, 42.
- <sup>75</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 362.
- <sup>76</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 67.
- <sup>77</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 149.
- <sup>78</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, 64.
- <sup>79</sup>William Bridges, *Scripture Light, The Most Sure Light* (London, 1656), 12-14.
- <sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>81</sup>John Owen, *ΣΨΝΕΣΙΣ ΠΝΕΨΜΑΤΙΚΗ, or The Causes, Waies & Means of Understanding the Mind of God as Revealed in His Word with Assurance Therein* (London, 1678), 94.
- <sup>82</sup>Michael A. G. Haykin, "John Owen and the Challenge of the Quakers," in *John Owen, The Man and His Theology* (ed. Robert W. Oliver; Phillipsburg, PA: P&R, 2002), 140.
- <sup>83</sup>*Something by Way of a Testimony concerning Clement Lake of Crediton in Devonshire; with something he wrote in his Life time, by way of Answer, unto John Flavell, Independent Preacher of Dartmouth* (London, 1692).
- <sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.
- <sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.
- <sup>86</sup>Robert Fleming, *A Survey of Quakerism* (London, 1677), 56.
- <sup>87</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 104.
- <sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 414-20.
- <sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 414.
- <sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 418.
- <sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 419.
- <sup>92</sup>John Owen, *Of Communion with God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, Each Person Distinctly; in Love, Grace, and Consolation: or, The Saints Fellowship With the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost Unfolded* (London, 1657), 5.
- <sup>93</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, 398.
- <sup>94</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 168-71.
- <sup>95</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, 403-12.
- <sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 403-09. Flavell encouraged believers to trust in the attributes of God in the face of affliction in the second half of *Two Treatises: The First of Fear . . . The Second, The Righteous Man's Refuge in the Evil Day* (London, 1682).
- <sup>97</sup>John Flavell, *A Saint Indeed, or The Great Work of a Christian Explained and Pressed from Prov. 4:23* (London, 1671) and *Signs of Grace, and Symptoms of Hypocrisie; Opened in A Practical Treatise Upon Revelations III.17, 18; Being the Second Part of The Saint Indeed* (London, 1698).
- <sup>98</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 171-77.
- <sup>99</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 193-95. For sermons on the Lord's Supper, see John Flavell, *Sacramental Meditations Upon Divers Select Places of Scripture* (London, 1679).
- <sup>100</sup>Flavell, *An Exposition of the Assemblies Catechism*, 195-201.
- <sup>101</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, 409-11.
- <sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 411-12.
- <sup>103</sup>*The Confession of Faith . . . at Westminster*, 36.
- <sup>104</sup>*Confession of Faith . . . at Westminster*, 36.
- <sup>105</sup>Flavell, *Method of Grace*, 139. Since the drafting of the Westminster Confession of Faith in the 1640s, Puritan divines were known for using syllogisms in their ministry to help believers fortify their faith. See Joel R. Beeke, "Personal Assurance of Faith: The Puritans and Chapter 18.2 of the Westminster Confession," *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993): 18-21; R. W. Hawkes, "The Logic of Assurance in English Puritan Theology," *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990): 251.
- <sup>106</sup>*The Confession of Faith . . . at Westminster*, 36.
- <sup>107</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, 366.
- <sup>108</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 412.
- <sup>109</sup>*The Life of Flavell*, [1:v].
- <sup>110</sup>Hickman, *The Believers Duty*, 83.
- <sup>111</sup>Flavell, *The Method of Grace*, 158.

- <sup>112</sup>John Flavell, *The Second Appendix: Giving a Brief Account of the Rise and Growth of Antinomianism in ΠΑΝΗΛΙΟΤΗΤΑ, A Succinct and Seasonable Discourse of the Occasions, Causes, Nature, Rise, Growth, and Remedies of Mental Errors* (London, 1691), 351. He lists several verses to support this claim: 2 Cor 13:5; 2 Pet 1:10; 1 Cor 10:12; 2 John 8.
- <sup>113</sup>Flavell, *Rise and Growth of Antinomianism*, 407-08.
- <sup>114</sup>For overviews on the history of interpretation for the sealing of the Spirit, see Garth B. Wilson, "The Puritan Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: A Critical Investigation of a Crucial Chapter in the History of Protestant Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Toronto School of Theology, Knox College, 1978), 223-51; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1987), 116-24; Michael A. Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit: the Teaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1989); J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 179-89; Joel R. Beeke, *The Quest for Full Assurance: The Legacy of Calvin and His Successors* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1999); Joel Beeke, "Introduction," in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Eureka, CA: Tanski Publications, 1996), 1:4-22; Choon-Gill Chae, "Thomas Goodwin's Doctrine of the Sealing of the Holy Spirit: Historical, Biblical, and Systematic-Theological Analysis" (Th.M. thesis, Toronto Baptist Seminary & Bible College, 2010).
- <sup>115</sup>Thomas Mall, *The Axe at the Root of Professors Mis-carriages* (London, 1668), 42-43.
- <sup>116</sup>Ezekiel Culverwell, *Time Well Spent in Sacred Meditation* (London, 1634), 17.
- <sup>117</sup>Thomas Goodwin, *An Exposition of the First Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, vol. 1 (Eureka, CA: Tanski, 1996), 233.
- <sup>118</sup>Iain Murray suggested development in Flavel's understanding of assurance from *A Saint Indeed* to *The Soul of Man*, but he did not come to any conclusions because of the lack of dating for Flavel's writings in the 1820 edition of his *Works*. See Iain H. Murray, *The Old Evangelicalism: Old Truths for a New Awakening* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 2005), 187.
- <sup>119</sup>Flavell, *A Saint Indeed*, 28-29.
- <sup>120</sup>Flavell, *Sacramental Meditations*, 58-83.
- <sup>121</sup>Flavel, *Soul of Man*, 240.
- <sup>122</sup>John Flavel, *Vindiciae Legis & Foederis: or, A Reply to Mr. Philip Carey's Solemn Call* (London, 1690), 77.
- <sup>123</sup>Truman, *John Owen*, 114; Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 158; Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689-1765* (London: The Olive Tree, 1967), 28.
- <sup>124</sup>J. I. Packer, *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Carlisle, UK: Pater-noster, 2003), 413-14.
- <sup>125</sup>Patrick Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened* (London, 1661), 273.
- <sup>126</sup>John Sedgwick, *Antinomianisme Anatomized, or, A Glasse for the Lawlesse* (London, 1643), 40.
- <sup>127</sup>Flavell, *Rise and Growth of Antinomianism*, 315-16.
- <sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*, 319.
- <sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*, 322.
- <sup>130</sup>Flavell, *A Succinct and Seasonable Discourse*, 141.
- <sup>131</sup>Flavell, *England's Duty*, xxxv-xxxvi.