

## SCHLEIERMACHER ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

RANDY L. MADDOX<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit has become a center of vigorous theological reflection. An integral part of this reflection is the investigation and interpretation of the history of the doctrine. It is rapidly becoming evident that the nineteenth century represents a significant, albeit problematic, development. The significance of this period lies in the fact that many of the problems and questions posed in contemporary reflection on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit are direct consequences of the unique theological developments of the nineteenth century. An understanding of the motivation for and character of those changes can contribute significantly to the treatment of such problems.

The problematic nature of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the nineteenth century is most graphically manifested in the variety of judgments rendered on this topic. At one extreme there is the complaint that Schleiermacher and other nineteenth-century theologians showed a perilous depreciation of the theological concept of the Spirit.<sup>2</sup> At the other extreme stands Karl Barth's charge that the whole of modern theology, following Schleiermacher, has been a one-sided theology of the Holy Spirit, implicitly, if not explicitly.<sup>3</sup> How are such diverse judgments possible? G. Ebeling suggests an answer when he notes that the unique aspect of nineteenth-century treatment of the Holy Spirit is the close association of pneumatology and eccle-

---

1. Randy L. Maddox is a Ph.D. Candidate in Systematic Theology at Emory University.

2. B. Holm "The Work of the Spirit: The Reformation to the Present," *The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church* (ed. P. Opsahl; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978) 100.

3. K. Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959) 66.

siology.<sup>4</sup> For many, this association is seen as so close that finally pneumatology is reduced to ecclesiology.

The charge of reducing pneumatology to ecclesiology has been explicitly leveled against Schleiermacher by W. Brandt in his monograph *Der Heilige Geist und die Kirche bei Schleiermacher*. His thesis is that Schleiermacher has "reduced the work of the Holy Spirit to the establishment of the believers in the Church."<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this paper is to investigate the accuracy of that charge by giving a comprehensive overview of Schleiermacher's understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Attention will then be directed to some implications of Schleiermacher's achievement for contemporary work on the doctrine.

#### SCHLEIERMACHER'S THEOLOGICAL METHOD

To begin this investigation it is necessary to make a few observations on Schleiermacher's methodology, especially in *The Christian Faith*.<sup>6</sup> Schleiermacher understands theological doctrines to be accounts of Christian religious affections set forth in speech (§15). To put it in more contemporary terms, true theological affirmations are always derived "from below." Moreover, the starting point of a system of doctrine is the mass of propositions derived prior to the process of systematizing them (§20). While some concepts may arise secondarily during the process of investigating the systematic interrelations of the "religio-empirically" derived propositions, these "quasi" theological propositions are not as authoritative for Christian doctrine as the prior propositions. Any validity they have must be tested by seeing if they agree with the primal religious consciousness that is the ultimate source of all authentic doctrine.

This is a crucial point when one turns to Schleiermacher's work relating to the Holy Spirit, for he insists that one can only deal with the Holy Spirit inasmuch as human persons can and have been affected by

the Spirit. As Brandt puts it, "Like all propositions of faith, statements about the Holy Spirit must also be *a posteriori*; pneumatology *a priori* is Hegelian speculation and not theology."<sup>7</sup> For this reason, Schleiermacher refused to talk about the "inner Trinity" at all in his dogmatics proper, and in an appendix related to it, he attempts to show that it is impossible to handle this subject in the fashion we do other doctrines. Instead, he is content to stress what he considers the "essential elements in the doctrine of the Trinity," namely, "the union of the Divine Essence with human nature, both in the personality of Christ and in the common Spirit of the Church" (§170). As we shall see, the "union of the Divine Essence with human nature" that is characteristic of the Holy Spirit is the divine/human phenomenon of the Christian Church. That is to say, Schleiermacher not only limits himself to dealing with the Holy Spirit in terms of effects on humanity, he also deals with these effects primarily in terms of the effects on the corporate body of humanity rather than on individuals.<sup>8</sup> It is this move that distinguished him from previous Reformed theologians who dealt primarily with the Holy Spirit's effects on individuals.

Thus, within Schleiermacher's methodology and presuppositions, one can only talk about the Holy Spirit in terms of the Spirit's activity in the Church. For him, this activity is best captured in the word "*Gemeingeist*" (common or community Spirit).

#### SCHLEIERMACHER'S UNDERSTANDING OF *GEIST*

Before developing Schleiermacher's concept of common Spirit, it is necessary to first acquaint ourselves with his use of *Geist* as contrasted with his contemporary setting—German Idealism.

The word "*Geist*" in German translates two distinct ideas—spirit (*pneuma*) and mind (*nous*). Most German Idealists identified the two, seeing the spiritual nature of the human as simply the highest expression of the rational nature. Schleiermacher seems to accept this when he argues in the *Ethics* that "Pneuma is only a higher development of

4. G. Ebeling, *Dogmatik des christlichen Glaubens* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1980) 3, 11.

5. W. Brandt, *Der Heilige Geist und die Kirche bei Schleiermacher* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1968) 18.

6. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). References in the text of this essay are to sections in *The Christian Faith*.

7. Brandt, 309.

8. See *The Christian Faith*, §108.5 where Schleiermacher relates regeneration to Christ rather than the Holy Spirit. Likewise, §110 on sanctification.

what we call reason (*Vernunft*)."<sup>9</sup> However, as W. Vorwiebe has shown, this statement must be seen in its larger context. Here Schleiermacher is arguing for the similarity of reason and spirit, and thus their ability to cooperate in human activity. Schleiermacher, however, does not identify the two or derive spirit from reason. For him, "Pneuma is not innate, rather it comes from outside and grasps the possessor of Nous, penetrating throughout one's being and working through them (*durchwirkt ihn und wirkt durch ihn*)."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as a Christian, Schleiermacher affirms that "the possibility of a human being living life as one filled with Spirit is first effected through the entrance of Pneuma as a Divine Principle in history; wherein is seen the significance of the appearance of Christ."<sup>11</sup> Spirit is thus a religious category that can cooperate with the human as rational, but which is not derived from reason. Rather, it stands above reason as its perfecter.

Another characteristic of Schleiermacher's understanding of *Geist* is that it is a "trans-individual" reality. That is, it is "in all and in each the same" without being identified with individuals (§123.3). For most German Idealists, each individual *Geist* is an expression of Absolute *Geist*, which itself is in no way the sum of the individuals, but rather a "trans-individual" unity. Schleiermacher accepts this approach, but within the boundaries of the distinction between *pneuma* and *nous* discussed above. There is a "trans-individual" *nous* in the world. But, more importantly, there is a higher "trans-individual" *pneuma* in the Church (and only in the Church). As Brandt puts it, "The *Geist* of the Church is, for Schleiermacher, not immediately bound, as it is for Herder, to the *Geist* of nature, the rule of Reason, or the visible tendencies of human society. . . . The *Gemeingeist* of the Church is much more the impulse to a general Love—only as an expression of the special *Geist* of Christ."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Holy Spirit, as the common Spirit of the Church is not just the sum of the individual "spirits." Rather, the Spirit is a trans-individual reality that conveys *pneuma* to individuals. This trans-individual nature of *Geist* as

9. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Sitte* (*Sämtliche Werke* 12; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1843) 313.

10. W. Vorwiebe, "Pneuma und Nous in Schleiermacher's Christliche Sitte," *ZTK* 13 (1932) 242.

11. Vorwiebe, 238.

12. Brandt, 302.

*Gemeingeist* brings us to the heart of Schleiermacher's understanding of the Holy Spirit.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE *GEMEINGEIST*

Schleiermacher's primary thesis is, "The Holy Spirit is the union of the Divine Essence with human nature in the form of the common Spirit animating the life in common of believers" (§123). To understand this thesis, we must recall T. Tice's distinction<sup>13</sup> that "common Spirit" (*Gemeingeist*) does not mean just a consensus or common disposition of a group. For this idea Schleiermacher utilized the word *Gemeinsinn*.<sup>14</sup> By *Gemeingeist* he has something more vital and theological in mind. To understand it, we must first know what a "church" was for Schleiermacher, and then we can deal with the Holy Spirit's place in the Church.

Schleiermacher, true to his Moravian heritage, defined the Church as "nothing more than a communion or association relating to religion or piety" (§3.1). This was not just a sociological or juridical grouping as it was for the theologians during the Enlightenment. Rather, it was a true "community" of faith and life that arose necessarily as an expression of the experience of "consciousness of kind" in the believer (§6.2). Thus, the Christian Church is identical with the fellowship of believers (§113) who come together to form a system of mutual interaction and cooperation (§116). This interaction is both for the building of the Body of Christ and for exerting influence on those outside of the Church.

The Holy Spirit is seen as the bond by means of which the influence exercised on those outside the Church forms a unity, and the mutual interaction within the Church becomes an organic system (§116.1). To develop this idea, Schleiermacher makes use of the model of the Church as a "Moral Person" (§121.1; §116.1). This term was developed within the realm of eighteenth century "legal" terminology, both secular and ecclesiastical. Of its many uses therein, it soon was distilled to refer primarily to a "composite moral person," i.e., a

13. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* (Richmond: John Knox, 1966) 68 n. 18.

14. Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline*, §313.

consideration of a group as composing a unity of purpose and expression in moral relationships.<sup>15</sup> However, this unity was primarily seen as “conceptual” or fictional in nature. In contrast to this, Schleiermacher saw the “moral person” nature of a community as a reality that transcended such fictional accounts. It was, according to Brandt, “an organism which developed out of its own ‘focus of Life’ according to its own purposes, and developed toward its own goal.”<sup>16</sup> Schleiermacher’s purpose in designating the common Spirit as a Moral Person was to stress the “working with-one-another and for-one-another” that arises naturally within the Church.<sup>17</sup> The common spirit is the “love found in each for every other” which “seeks the advancement of the whole” (§121.2).

Caution is required at this point because a natural tendency is to see this common Spirit as simply an expression of mutual good will on behalf of the assembled individuals, as if it were a particular quality that each happened to have which formed a bond when they came together. Schleiermacher expressly rejects this view. For him, “the presence of the Spirit is the condition of anyone’s sharing in the common life” (§121.2), not merely the result thereof. While the common spirit is found only within the Church and is identified with the impulse to unity and love in the Church, it is something which is “there” confronting one when they join the Church and indeed is the power which transforms the person into a real participant in the church, since the fellowship with Christ is only possible by partaking of the Holy Spirit (§124). To explain how this is possible, Schleiermacher utilizes the Idealist model of reason as trans-individual yet “within-all and in-each-the-same.” Likewise, “the Spirit is, in all who share in Him, one and the same, without being increased when the participants multiply, or being diminished when they grow fewer” (§123.3).

So, the Holy Spirit is not just the sum of the total of human spirits that join in the Church. Moreover, Schleiermacher insists that the Holy Spirit is in no way derived from human nature, but is divine—not in a derived sense, as in Arianism, but immediately divine (§123.2). Thus,

---

15. Brandt, 106.

16. Brandt, 108. Cf. *The Christian Faith*, §116.3.

17. Brandt, 136.

while the Holy Spirit is only active by working “within” persons, not “upon” them from the outside, the Spirit should never be reduced to something merely human.

As suggested above, Schleiermacher asserts that there is an essential identity of redemption with participation in the Christian fellowship (§108.5). This raises an important question. Traditionally, redemption is discussed in relation to Christology, and Schleiermacher himself is normally characterized as a Christocentric theologian. So, how does Christ relate to the common Spirit in the Church?

Schleiermacher’s answer to this question is that if it is a matter of trying to decide whether Christ or the Holy Spirit is the key to redemption, we must obviously opt for Christ. To explain this he takes us back to the first disciples as a case study in how redemption takes place (§108.5). To follow this example, however, we must first understand redemption itself. For Schleiermacher, the essence of redemption is that “the God-consciousness already present in human nature, though feeble and repressed, becomes stimulated and made dominant by the entrance of the living influence of Christ.” (§106.1). Christ’s influence is capable of effecting this awakening because of his sinless perfection (§88.2) which can be summarized as a perfect expression of His God-consciousness through his human self-consciousness (§98)—something historically unique. So, Christ’s communication of redemption to his disciples took place through the impact of his “lived” sinless perfection among them.

It is essential, however, to see that there were two steps to this communication of Christ’s “spirit” to the disciples (§122). As long as Christ was present on earth, the union of the divine and human as a spiritual reality was limited to himself. He could cultivate the disciples’ susceptibility for this, but he could not communicate it until he had been taken away and the Holy Spirit was given.<sup>18</sup> When he is taken from them, he leaves them the Holy Spirit—the *Gemeingeist* of their fellowship—as his continuing presence and activity on earth. The *Gemeingeist* is the Holy Spirit only insofar as it is a prolongation of those activities characteristic of Christ (§122.3). The test for this is

---

18. Schleiermacher prefers the Gospel of John as the most accurate account, both historically and theologically, concerning Christ. See his *Life of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

whether the Church is continually willing the development of the kingdom of God (§116.3).

It is now understandable how Schleiermacher can compare Christ and the Church as both expressions of the divine essence joined with human nature, and at the same time give Christ a priority over the Church. Not only is participation in the Church contingent on belief in Christ as redeemer (§14), but the common love which binds the Church together is a common love for Christ (§122.2). Even more importantly, however, the new corporate life now present in the Church was originally founded by Christ through his influence on his disciples, and the influence which the Church has on the world is only a "passing on" of the original influence of Christ (§88). This is why "these three facts—being drawn by that union into the fellowship with believers, having a share in the Holy Spirit, and being drawn into living fellowship with Christ—must simply mean one and the same thing" (§124.1).

We are now in a position to better understand Schleiermacher's claim that the Holy Spirit as the *Gemeingeist* is a unity which transcends the sum of the individuals in the community. This claim is based on two points. The first is that the unity is like that of a community viewed as a Moral Person (see above), wherein the personality of each individual is conditioned by the whole. But, more importantly, the transcendent character of this unity is stressed in that it is primordially derived not from the community but from Christ. The Church has the *Gemeingeist* only as a communication of the influence of Christ—on the original disciples and through them on us today (§121.2).

In the introduction to this essay we noted Brandt's charge that Schleiermacher has "reduced" the Holy Spirit to the Church. The force of this charge can now be seen if we view the limitations of the Spirit in terms of time and scope. In terms of time, as we saw above, prior to Christ there was no immediate presence of the divine in creation. Since the Church derived its divine presence from Christ, then the Holy Spirit as the *Gemeingeist* had no existence prior to Pentecost.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of the scope of the Holy Spirit in the Church, one must see the Church in terms of Schleiermacher's view of election. Being a

19. See *The Christian Faith*, §132 where Schleiermacher distinguished between the spirit of the Jewish people and the Christian Spirit. See also §123.1.

Reformed theologian, Schleiermacher distinguished between the elect and the remainder of the world who were not (or not yet [§120, *Postscript*]) elect. Moreover, within the elect, he distinguished between the elect who had already responded to the call and partaken of the Spirit—whom he called the "Regenerate," and those who were elect but had not yet responded—whom he designated the "Called." Corresponding to this distinction, in his doctrine of the Church he distinguished between the inner circle who were joined together by the *Gemeingeist* directly and the outer circle who were the "Called" that had not yet been incorporated into the Church (§116.1). In this outer circle the Holy Spirit was present only mediately in the form of preparatory grace creating susceptibility (§122.3). This mediate presence was simply the presence of the members of the inner circle interacting with the outer circle (§124.2). Finally, besides the Church, there was the world. In the world, the Church is the locus of the Spirit, but the Spirit's real activity is limited to that directly expressed in the inner circle and indirectly in the outer (§126.1). So, Schleiermacher definitely does limit the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world to the *Gemeingeist* of the Christian Church. Whether the Holy Spirit is anything other than this presence experienced in the world will be the subject of our investigation of Schleiermacher's treatment of the Trinity (see below).

The charge of limiting the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church must be tempered, however, by noting Schleiermacher's view of the consummation of the Church. While the Church must work according to the laws of temporal life, which means that it can only grow gradually, Schleiermacher is convinced that no evil or opposition to the Spirit is absolute. Given his inclination to universalism hinted at above, he appears to believe that someday all peoples everywhere will become part of the inner circle of the Church and thus, while the Holy Spirit will still be limited to the *Gemeingeist* of the Christian Church, this will not be a real limitation (§157.1).

Further clarity on Schleiermacher's conception of the Holy Spirit can be obtained by noting what he says about many of the traditional activities ascribed to the Holy Spirit. To begin with, he expressly denies that the Holy Spirit is the same Spirit to whom the creation of the world is ascribed, or to whom the many extraordinary activities in the Old Testament—including prophecy—are ascribed. What is more, the Holy Spirit had no connection with the Spirit mentioned in relation to the Incarnation of Christ (§123.1).

The Holy Spirit is involved in the process of inspiration of the Scriptures; however, one must avoid any magical conceptualizations of this. Primarily, the inspiration of the Apostles was the influence of Christ's God-consciousness upon them; or, following his ascension, the influence of the common Spirit (§130.1). This inspiration is such that the Holy Spirit could only speak through the authors "as they themselves would have spoken."<sup>20</sup> Thus, there are many "imperfections" in Scripture such as would reflect the authors' limitation. Equally important concerning inspiration is that the Scriptures are seen as only the first (albeit normative) example of a series of presentations of the Christian Faith, which apparently share in inspiration to a lesser degree (§129).

The Holy Spirit does give the gifts to the Church. Here again, however, one must avoid magical and enthusiastic conceptions. Christ brought the perfect exemplification—and thus the end—of prophecy (§103.4) and miracles (§103.4). Of the legitimate gifts that remain, they have an initial basis in human nature (§126.1) but transcend that base (§123.2). They are workings of the Holy Spirit, but they are only legitimate when they fit the standard established by the activities of Christ (§124.2).

Having said all of this, one question remains: "Does Schleiermacher really believe that what he calls the Holy Spirit is what the Church has meant by that term?" His answer is equivocal. That is, he admits that his view is at odds with much of traditional teaching (especially that preoccupied with Trinitarian concerns) and with some Scriptural accounts (mainly Old Testament). However, he claims his view is in agreement with "the spirit of the New Testament" (§123.1), and in this he refers especially to John.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE TRINITY

It will be recalled that Schleiermacher has summarized the essential elements of the doctrine of the Trinity as the affirmation of the union of the divine essence with human nature in the personality of Christ and in the common Spirit of the Church (§170.1). These state-

20. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*. (Missoula: Scholar's, 1977) 107.

ments are considered affirmations of the Christian self-consciousness and as such are dogmatic material. However, the further speculative elaborations that have arisen in the attempt to explain these affirmations cannot be considered on the same level. Schleiermacher gives three reasons for this. First, he points to the lack of explicit exegetical support for most "inner Trinity" speculative formulations (§170.2). Second, he reminds the reader that the terminology used in these formulations was derived from a "heathen" environment (§172.1). Third, he shows at length the conceptual impossibilities of really understanding the traditional emphases on unity and trinity at the same time (§171).

From these observations Schleiermacher draws two conclusions. First, the Church must be content primarily with adhering to the essential elements of the doctrine and utilizing these as a "coping-stone of Christian doctrine" (§170.1). Second, since the old formulations are not acceptable, the Church should seek a contemporary reconstruction (§172.2).

It is in his suggestions for this reconstruction that Schleiermacher shows his conceptual understanding of the Trinity most clearly. He specifically suggests the possibility of using a form of Sabellianism as a model (§172.3). Indeed, he wrote a lengthy article expounding and defending what he considered to be the primary aspects of Sabellianism.<sup>21</sup> The point that Schleiermacher stresses in this discussion is that the economic distinctions between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should not be understood as being paralleled by eternal distinctions within the Godhead itself. There are two reasons for this. First, an assertion of such an eternal distinction is not an utterance concerning the religious consciousness (§170.2). Second, such distinctions would imperil the all-important claim that the divine essence present in Jesus and the church is precisely the very essence of God (§172.3). What is needed, according to Schleiermacher, is a formula which can exhibit in their truth both unions of the divine essence with human nature without asserting eternal distinctions in the supreme being (§172.3). To understand the type of formula Schleiermacher

21. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepance between the Sabellian and Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity," *The Biblical Repository and Quarterly Observer* 5 (1835) 265-353; and 6 (1835) 1-116.

envisions (he never exhaustively formulated it himself), it is necessary to note that he correlates the discussion of the Trinity with the dialectic between "God hidden" and "God revealed."<sup>22</sup> In terms of this dialectic, he treats the trinitarian distinctions as essential to the manifestation of "God revealed," but denies that they authorize us to postulate corresponding eternal distinctions in "God hidden." At the same time, one of Schleiermacher's most pressing concerns in his discussion of this dialectic is to assert the absolute unity of "God hidden" and "God revealed."<sup>23</sup> The form which God's self-revelation has taken can in no way be treated as merely incidental and totally dissociated from the nature of God in itself.

But, how can Schleiermacher develop a view of God wherein one can avoid asserting eternal distinctions in the supreme being and at the same time maintain that the trinitarian form of God's self-revelation is not incidental to God's being? It is in his answer to this question that Schleiermacher's affinities to Sabellianism are seen, for he appears to resort to a historical theory of the origin of the "persons" in the Trinity. For example, he speaks favorably of what he sees as the "true" Sabellian position that the peculiar *perigraphé* of the Spirit was developed in the Godhead at the time of the arising of the Church and the Spirit's union with it.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the *perigraphé* of the Son was developed at the time of the Incarnation. Schleiermacher is not, however, ascribing here to a crass modalism. This is evident on two counts. First, he seems to believe that the *perigraphé* of the Son (and the Father?<sup>25</sup>) continue to be characteristic of God during the time of the Church. Second, as noted above, he is adamant in maintaining that

22. R. Williams, *Schleiermacher the Theologian* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 147, quoting the first edition of the *Glaubenslehre*, §190.2. Williams' entire chapter on the Trinity in Schleiermacher is a significant and sympathetic reading of Schleiermacher's approach. I am indebted to this chapter for much of what follows, but ultimately I find Schleiermacher more of a traditional Sabellian than Williams appears to believe.

23. Williams, 148.

24. Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy," 6 (1835) 59-60.

25. Schleiermacher's understanding of the "Father" in the Trinity is the most problematic aspect of his discussion. He apparently does not treat the Father as a designation equivalent with the Spirit and Son, but rather sees the Father as the designation of the unity of the divine essence as such. See §172.3.

these manifestations of God are true to God's very nature and not just accommodations to the limited capacities of human understanding.

Schleiermacher's proposal for a formulation of the Trinity raises many intriguing questions concerning its adequacy and consistency. These, however, are beyond the scope of this investigation. The important point for us to note is that his limitation of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world to the *Gemeingeist* of the Christian Church is paralleled by his approach to the very essence of God's self where the particular *perigraphé* of the Spirit only arises at the moment of union with the Church. Thus, Brandt's charge that Schleiermacher has reduced the work of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church can be intensified to say that Schleiermacher has hinged the very being of the Holy Spirit on the Spirit's relation to the Church. For him, the divine/human phenomenon of the *Gemeingeist* of the Christian Church is the Holy Spirit.

#### IMPLICATIONS

We stated in the introduction that our interest in Schleiermacher is not merely historical. His understanding of the Holy Spirit has had a significant influence, both positive and negative, on contemporary theological formulations.

On the positive side, Schleiermacher's approach was a significant critique of the "individualistic" understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit that had been characteristic of much Protestant theology of his day. He executed this critique by emphasizing the role of the community in conversion and character formation. A contemporary example of the same emphasis can be found in the work of H. Berkof.<sup>26</sup>

Another positive aspect of Schleiermacher's approach was the careful distinction between Spirit as *pneuma* and Spirit as *nous*. This distinction has the implication of emphasizing the "extra-human" nature of the Holy Spirit's activity. This emphasis is represented in the contemporary scene in Tillich's affirmation of the "ecstatic" nature of the Spirit's work.<sup>27</sup>

26. H. Berkof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond: John Knox, 1964), see esp. chap. 3.

27. See P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976) 3. 112.

The negative influence of Schleiermacher's approach is centered in his drastic limitation of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church. Contemporary discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has included significant attempts to transcend such limitation in both "temporal" and "spatial" terms. In terms of "time," there has been a renewed interest, drawing on a renewed study of Eastern Orthodox thought, in stressing the role of the Holy Spirit in creation and the implications of this for understanding the Spirit's work in recreation.<sup>28</sup> In terms of "space," there has been a widespread affirmation of the need to talk about the legitimate work of the Holy Spirit both in other religions and in "secular" human life.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, regardless of whether one views the effect as positive or negative, there can be no doubt that Schleiermacher's understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit must be included in the heritage he has bequeathed to contemporary theology.

---

28. See W. Pannenberg, "The Spirit of Life," *Faith and Reality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) 20-38.

29. See Berkof, chap. 5.