

“ALL WERE BAPTIZED”

RONALD E. COTTLE

Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California 91106

The present study attempts to probe the meaning of 1 Cor. 12:13 and review critically its treatment by scholars from Riggs to Dunn and Baker to Bruner including others at various points in between. In order to place the passage in its proper perspective, it must be examined in light of its larger context within the first letter to the Corinthians. It is generally agreed that in the chapters between Paul's discussion of Christian Freedom (8:1—11:1) and his essay on the resurrection (15:1—58) he devotes his attention to matters concerning church worship. Following an interesting section on the veiling of women in church (11:2-16) and a lengthy discourse on the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), the Apostle moves to a consideration of what he calls *pneumatikon* or “spirituals” (“spiritual gifts” is the usual rendering) in 12:1—14:40.

Chapter 12:1—31a makes the point that there are *many* (various) spirituals, including both *charismaton*, *energmaton*, and *diakonion*, but all of them have their source and purpose in the *one* spirit (*pneuma*). After a brief introduction which recognizes the agency of the Spirit (vss 1-3), Paul launches upon his claim of “variety in unity and unity in variety” in that ideal Christian worship which is truly spiritual (*pneumatikon*) and as a result “decent and in order” (14:40). He states in 12:4 that there are various charismata (*diareseis charismaton*) and goes on to enumerate the nine so-called “gifts of the Spirit” as “manifestations of the Spirit for the common good” (vss. 7-10). He concludes by affirming in vs 11 that “all these are inspired by the one and the same Spirit.” Hence “variety in unity and unity in variety,” a message the division-ridden Corinthians needed to hear is sounded strongly.

Paul then (in 12:12-27) works back from these various manifestations of the Spirit to the original act by which the Corinthians, and indeed all Christians, were incorporated into the Body of Christ, his purpose again being to show “variety in unity and unity in variety.” In the human body, which is essentially one, there are many members and they are differentiated by their functions. So the one Body of Christ into which we were all admitted by the one baptism of the Spirit also consists of a variety of members differentiated by the diversity of their functions (*energmaton*). Again the central teaching is clear “variety in unity and unity in variety.”

Finally in vss 28-31a the Apostle moves to *diakonion*—ministries. As with the *charismaton* and the *energmaton*, the *diakonion* proceed from the one Spirit and are exercised in the one Body and hence are “appointed” (KJV “set”) in the church in a definite order and scale of service. Once again the central theme stands out consistently: “variety in unity and unity in variety.”

Paul then encourages the cultivation of the higher gifts and at the same time points to the very best way which surpasses even the best *pneumatikon*. It is the way of *agape* apart from which all charismata fail and which will endure even when they (the charismata) have vanished. 1 Cor. 13:1-13 enunciates this conviction. Paul considers love's superiority (vss 1-3); love's nature (vss 4-7); and love's permanence (vss 8-13). Once more, the theme "variety in unity and unity in variety" is plain. Love is the unifying factor which gives meaning and wholeness to the various gifts, functions and ministries of the one Spirit in the one Body.

Having placed the "spirituals" in their ideal relationship to the whole Body in love, Paul concludes the section with a practical, down-to-earth treatment of a problem which plagued the Corinthians, namely, the exercise of the speech gifts, especially tongues and prophecy. In vs 1 of chapter 14 he encourages the pursuit of all the "spirituals" as long as love is the ultimate aim and the higher spirituals are recognized and sought. Next (in vss 2-19) the Apostle gives an instructive comparison of tongues and prophecy and lays down principles of guidance in the use of both manifestations of the Spirit. Finally, he concludes by urging decorum and order in the use of all spirituals for the edification of the entire worshipping community (vss 20-40).

Now in the light of this context, what is the meaning of 1 Cor. 12:13?

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

Some who practice infant baptism see water baptism in this verse, water baptism described as conveying the Spirit and incorporating the one baptized into the Body of Christ. A few of the scholars adopting this view are Bultmann,¹ Schlatter,² Beasley-Murray,³ Schnackenburg,⁴ and others. The basic argument of these scholars is that *baptizein* implies immersion in water and therefore such a sense is to be understood here.

However, that *baptizesthai* does not invariably signify immersion in water is evidenced by a number of passages where there would be contradiction if such a meaning were insisted upon. For example, Mk. 10:38—"Are you able...to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Lk. 12:50—"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!" Acts 1:5—"John baptized with water, but...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:2—"And all were baptized into Moses..." Two passages would contain needless and awkward tautology if *baptizesthai* were *always* taken to mean immersion in water: Jn. 1:26—"...I baptize with water..."; Jn. 1:31—"...I came baptizing with water..."

1. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. I. New York: Scribner, 1955, pp. 138, 333.
2. Adolf Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu: Eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther*. Stuttgart: Calwer, 1956 (second edition), p. 346.
3. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*. London: Macmillan, 1962, pp. 169, 273.
4. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Vol. I: *Einleitung und Kommentar zu Kap. 1-4*). Friburg: Herder, 1965, p. 304.

Therefore, it seems clear that Paul is not necessarily speaking of baptism *in water* in this passage (1 Cor. 12:13). On the other hand, the view that Paul is speaking of Spirit-baptism and not water-baptism is affirmed by Kittel,⁵ Wendland,⁶ Barth,⁷ and Best⁸ among others.

A second view is that of some non-pentecostals who also do not practice infant baptism and generally see conversion here in the sense of "the spiritual transformation which puts the believer 'in Christ' and which is the one and only baptism in the Spirit with the effect of receiving the gift of the Spirit." Hence the phrase "baptism in the Spirit" used of this *initiatory experience* and emphasis placed upon Eph. 4:5—"One Lord, one faith, one baptism") is seen to exclude the possibility of any subsequent Spirit-baptism of believers already in the *Body of Christ*.

The argument generally goes something like this.

(1) The metaphor of "baptism" for this spiritual act is drawn from the rite of (water) baptism, just as it was in John the Baptist's and Luke's talk of Spirit-baptism and Jesus' talk of the baptism of the cross (death).

(2) *Baptizein* has only two meanings for Paul—one literal (the water rite: 1 Cor. 1:13-17) and the other "a spiritual transformation" which, as was said, puts the believer in Christ and which is the effect of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁹

(3) Paul is here speaking in metaphorical language of spiritual realities and relationships and not of ritual acts. This is evidenced by 12:13c where *potizein* refers to Spirit-baptism and not to any ritual act such as water-baptism, the Lord's Supper, or Confirmation.¹⁰

Potizein also has two basic meanings: (a) to give to drink; and (b) to flood, water, or irrigate. "That Paul knew both senses is evidenced in 1 Cor. 3:2 (I gave you...to drink..." NEB) and 1 Cor. 3:6 and 8 ("I planted...Apollon watered..." and "He who plants and he who waters are equal.")

Non-pentecostals who do not practice infant (water) baptism, then, generally conclude that Paul used the second sense in 1 Cor. 12:13 and thereby described conversion—the act of initiation into the Body of Christ—with the familiar agricultural metaphor of water flooding upon parched ground, a metaphor used of the "golden age to come" by Isaiah (32:15; 44:3); Ezekiel (39:29); and Joel (2:28). The development of this position

5. G. Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. I. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964ff, p. 43.
6. H. D. Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1964, p. 97.
7. Markus Barth, *Die Taufe—ein Sakrament? Ein exegetischer Beitrag zum Gespräch über die Kirchliche Taufe*. Zollikon—Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1951, p. 322.
8. Ernst Best, *One Body in Christ*. London: S.P.C.K., 1955, p. 73.
9. See James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (SBT, second series, no. 15). Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1970, p. 130.
10. Again see Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 131, against G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*. London: Longmans, Green, 1951, p. 56; J. C. Lambert, *The Sacraments in the New Testament*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903, p. 163; H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913, p. 239; and Eduard Schweizer, *Pneuma in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. VI, edited by G. Kittel, p. 424, n. 626.

from 1 Cor. 12:13 usually yields this four-fold result:

(a) Every believer who is a member of the Body of Christ became such by being baptized in the one Holy Spirit;

(b) Therefore, anyone who is not so baptized is not a member of the Body of Christ and thus not a Christian;

(c) Hence, Baptism in the Spirit must be something that every believer experiences at conversion;

(d) Therefore, there is no necessity nor even any possibility for a second baptism in the Spirit in the Pentecostalist sense.

Now for the Pentecostalist's point-of-view. Some Pentecostalists give *eis* the force of "in," "for the sake of," or "with a view to" and hence translate 1 Cor. 12:13:

"For in one Spirit we were all baptized for the sake of one body (*eis hen soma*) and . . . all made to drink of one Spirit."

This would yield the sense of being Spirit-baptized while *already* in the Body. Derek Prince¹² gives it this meaning and Kittel¹³ allows for this possibility. However, as Arndt-Gingrich¹⁴ show and Dunn¹⁵ affirms, the object of *eis* is a state not an action after a verb of motion like *baptizein* and can only have the sense of "movement toward so as to be in."¹⁶ Hence, the only way to translate *hemeis pantes eis hen soma ebaptisthemen* is "we were all baptized into one Body." If this be so, the passage at this point must refer to *conversion* (with or without the rite of water-baptism) and not to "a second definite work of grace" or "second baptism" in the Pentecostalist sense.

This is precisely the interpretation given by Riggs:

"This is simply and only a reference to what takes place at conversion."¹⁷

However, Riggs is attacked because of his use of *en* with *baptizein* with instrumental force in the sense of "by." Notwithstanding the fact that Riggs has much scholarly company among non-Pentecostalists in the usage of *en* in the sense of "by" (including Moffatt,¹⁸ Cullmann,¹⁹ Schnackenburg,²⁰ Cerfaux,²¹ it is never so used with *baptizein* in the New Testament. As Dunn puts it (rightly, I think):

11. See J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949, p. 17.
12. Derek Prince, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, cited by Dunn, p. 59.
13. G. Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. I.
14. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, see under *eis*, p. 227.
15. James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 128.
16. Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963, p. 255.
17. Ralph M. Riggs, *The Spirit Himself*. Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1949, p. 59.
18. James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938, p. 186.
19. Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*. London: S. C. M. Press, 1950, p. 30.
20. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*, pp. 28-29.
21. L. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, p. 302.
22. James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 128.

"In the New Testament *en* with *baptizein* never designates the one who performs the baptism; on the contrary, it always indicates the element in which the baptisand is immersed (or with which he is deluged)—except, of course, when it is part of a fuller phrase like *en te eremo* or *en to onomati*."²²

I submit, however, that Dunn's and others' attack upon Riggs' use of *en* as "by," while it is correct from a grammatical and exegetical point-of-view, does not succeed in overturning Riggs' chief argument (which argument is the same essentially as Dunn's), namely that 1 Cor. 12:13a refers to *conversion* and not to either water-baptism or baptism in the Spirit as a believer's second or pentecostal baptism.

The real difference between Dunn and Riggs is the way in which each takes the final clause of 1 Cor. 12:13:

"and we all were made to drink of one Spirit—*kai pantes hen pneuma epoitisthemem*."

It is here that Riggs sees the second definite work of grace—"the pentecostal Baptism in the Holy Spirit."²³ A close examination of Riggs' words on this point—interestingly there are very few of them—indicate some hesitation in so rendering this final clause:

"The last clause of 1 Cor. 12:13, 'and have all been made to drink into one Spirit,' *may* (not *must* or *do*—emphasis mine) refer to the Baptism in the Spirit. The Corinthians had been baptized into the Body of Christ, and also into the Holy Spirit. The two clauses of this verse, then, speak of two experiences: salvation, and the Baptism in the Spirit."²⁴

Riggs obviously is taking *potizein* in the sense of its second meaning "to flood, water, or irrigate" (1 Cor. 3:6, 8) rather than in its first sense "to give to drink" (1 Cor. 3:2) and is equating the admitted metaphorical description with the Pentecostal effusion described in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19. That is, he is using scripture (history) to interpret scripture (doctrine) and hence sees the second or Pentecostal baptism in this final clause of vs 13 while reading conversion in the first clause.

It seems that this interpretation is perfectly permissible in view of the larger context referred to earlier. In fact, it minimizes the difficulties more than any other. *Potizein* is used with *pneuma* on only one other occasion in scripture (in the LXX at Isa. 29:10) and it there translates the Hebrew *nasak* which always means "to pour out" or "to flood." Here in 1 Cor. 12:13, then, Paul is using a very familiar image—that of God's pouring out His Spirit as prophesied by Joel 2:28; Isa. 32:15; 44:3; and Eze. 39:29. Conversion for Paul was the initial entrance into the one Body by the one Baptism into the Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:5). The flooding of the various members of the one Body in the one Spirit is a second and distinct experience. The second experience might occur simultaneously with the initial conversion (Cornelius, Acts 10[?]), but it seems more often to have come at a later time (Acts 2:1-4; 8:19).

23. Ralph M. Riggs, *The Spirit Himself*, p. 59.

24. Ralph M. Riggs, *The Spirit Himself*, p. 59.

Perhaps the clearest argument against this view is that of Anthony Hoekema in his *What About Tongue-Speaking?* Hoekema admits that: "Pentecostals agree that the first part of this passage refers to the original salvation experience of the believers here addressed. Riggs claims, however, that the second clause of the verse, 'and have been all made to drink of the one Spirit,' refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal sense; he therefore contends that this passage speaks of two experiences: salvation and Spirit-baptism."²⁵

Hoekema's argument against this view is two-fold. (1) First, he says that, taken this way, the second clause *necessarily must exclude certain believers* since not all believers are flooded with the Spirit in the Pentecostal sense. But this is to presuppose that the Apostle is speaking of *all* believers and not of the Corinthians "here addressed" (Hoekema, above quote)—a presupposition not at all justified by the textual evidence. The text of 1 Cor. 11:2—14:40 is describing the *Corinthian* church, not in terms of what it *is* but in terms of what it *ought—and could—be*, if it lived up to its potential and kept itself centered in the one Spirit and focused upon the whole worshipping Body.

(2) Second, Hoekema argues that to suggest that all the members of the Corinthian church had also been baptized in the Pentecostal sense "flies in the face of Paul's designation of the Corinthians as 'carnal' and as 'babes in Christ'." (See 11:62) Not at all. Again, the text of 1 Cor. 11:2-14-40 is describing what this gifted and greatly blessed congregation should and could be if the members would recognize the oneness of being (Body) and power (Spirit) which lay at the very source of their various spiritual impartations, abilities and functions.

Paul is—as always in this section—urging "unity in variety and variety in unity." The Corinthians are "carnal" and "babes" not because they have not experienced the initiatory Baptism into the One Spirit and One Body at conversion and the (subsequent) flooding of the Spirit, but because they continually lose sight of "unity in variety and variety in unity" in their church worship. Instead of not possessing the Holy Spirit infilling (flooding), they are failing to keep its manifestations decent and orderly unto the edification of the whole worshipping church (or Body) at Corinth.

To correct this error is the whole burden of 1 Cor. 14:20-40, and to extol what might and should be the worship practices of the assembled church at Corinth is the whole burden of Paul's discourse on "variety in unity and unity in variety" of 1 Cor. 12, 13, and 14.

25. Anthony S. Hoekema, *What About Tongue-Speaking?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966, p. 62.

Bibliographical materials referred to but not actually quoted in the article:

1. Baker, John. *Baptized in One Spirit*. Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos Books, 1967.
2. Bruner, Frederick Dale. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.