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God's Empowering Presence by G D Fee: An Extended Review

Peter Head

God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul
Gordon D Fee (Peabody MA: Hendrickson 1994) pp xxiv and 967 £30 hb
ISBN 0-943575-94-X

1 Introduction

This magnificent and massive book of almost one thousand pages constitutes the major work of its kind on the subject of Paul's theology of the Holy Spirit. Fee is one of the premier evangelical New Testament scholars of our generation, and he has a special gift for exegetical work on Paul, having published commentaries on 1 Corinthians, Philippians and the Pastoral Epistles. Furthermore he is both a lively and well-organised writer who attempts boldly, and with some success, to speak both to those engaged in pastoral ministry and to other New Testament scholars. If that were not enough to whet your appetite, Fee is self-consciously and confessionally Pentecostal. There is little doubt then that this volume will occupy an important place in the future study of Paul's thought.

Notwithstanding all this, it must be admitted that the most immediately notable aspect of this book is its size and this tends to determine the way in which it will be read (as even Fee acknowledges on page 11). It is by no means obvious that ministers will have time to read the whole book and more than likely that busy scholars will simply note the conclusions and dip into the exegetical portions of interest to them. It is also somewhat daunting to review – hence the somewhat extended scope of this article, since a brief review could not hope to do it justice, especially in view of the importance of the subject matter. I shall firstly therefore give an overview of the shape of the book and then summarize Fee's general exegetical and theological conclusions, probing one or two areas where it seems to me that alternative readings of Paul's thought are justified.

The book consists of two parts. Part One is *Analysis*, and contains detailed exegetical discussions of every reference to the Spirit in the

writings of Paul (according to Fee's conclusions about their chronological order). To give an idea of the scale of the project we have 40 pages on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 200 on 1 Corinthians, 80 on 2 Corinthians, 100 on Galatians, 160 on Romans, 20 on Colossians, 70 on Ephesians, 20 on Philippians, 40 on the Pastorals – over 750 pages in all. Philemon is the only book without any discussion; because it is 'the only letter in the extant Pauline corpus in which the Holy Spirit is neither mentioned nor alluded to in some way'; even so Fee does note the use of *pneuma* in verse 25 for the human spirit. This section contains an absolute wealth of information. Fee is usually careful to preface his exegetical comments with an assessment of the overall purpose of the epistle and on those passages which he addresses at length he offers more detailed comments than many large-scale critical commentaries. As one might expect he is also alert to the textual evidence relevant to exegesis, as well as some that is not at all relevant to exegesis but interesting nonetheless.¹

Part Two is *Synthesis*. Here Fee draws together the exegetical conclusions of the first section. Without meaning to downplay the importance of the exegetical sections and the implied method which privileges the authoritative text as the source of Paul's thought, most readers will probably be best served by reading the introduction and then turning straight over to this synthetic section in which Fee's major conclusions are outlined, turning back to the more detailed exegetical work when required. The chapter headings summarize the basic features of Fee's approach: *The Spirit as Eschatological Fulfilment*, *The Spirit as God's Personal Presence*, *The Soteriological Spirit*, *The Spirit and the People of God*. I shall survey these at some length in the following four sections of this review. These chapters are followed by a concluding chapter on the relevance of Paul's teaching and an appendix on antecedents to Paul's thought in contemporary Judaism. It would be a brave reader who started at the beginning and worked right through to the end (not even Fee expects people to read the whole book!). In what follows I shall work my way through these synthetic chapters, summarizing and outlining Fee's discussions and returning to his exegetical sections in order to flesh out controversial or difficult points.

2 *The Spirit as Eschatological Fulfilment* (chapter 12)

In this chapter Fee helpfully emphasises the importance of the eschatological framework of Paul's thought in general, and especially in relation to the Holy Spirit who was 'both the *certain evidence* that the

¹ For an example of the latter, Fee adds a full discussion of the textual problems associated with 1 Corinthians 14:34-5, which he (infamously?) regards as neither original to 1 Corinthians nor authentic to Paul (pp 272-81).

future had dawned, and the *absolute guarantee* of its final consummation' (p 806); hence the metaphors of 'down payment', 'first-fruits', 'seal' etc. Fee argues that the Holy Spirit is the *guarantor*, but not the *agent*, of the believer's resurrection; he also argues firmly against the view that the Holy Spirit effected Christ's resurrection (see pp 808f). It may be a small point but I think that he may overstate the negative case here, especially in view of 1 Corinthians 6:14 ('God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power'). Fee takes 'power' here to refer to 'God's power in the abstract', but it is unclear why, given Paul's association of Spirit and power in passages such as Romans 1:4; 15:13, 19 etc, the Holy Spirit should be excluded at this point (despite Fee's treatment of Romans 8:11).

The dynamic eschatological ministry of the Spirit effects the inclusion of Gentiles into the new people of God (Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13f; Rom 15:13) through the new Torah-free covenant (2 Cor 3:8 etc). Further, the Spirit enables and effects the kind of righteousness which the old covenant called for but could not produce (cf Jer 31:31-4; Ezek 36:36-37:14). Fee thus rightly points to the importance of the experience of the Spirit, by Jew and Gentile alike, in Paul's arguments about Torah-free Gentile inclusion into the new covenant people of God (and hence to modern debates about Paul's view of the Torah). There is excellent material here, although at times the very concentration on the Spirit leads Fee into statements which need more careful qualification than they are given, especially in relation to the work of Christ. For example Fee describes the Spirit as 'the new covenant replacement of Torah' and 'the effective end of Torah', and he further says that 'the Spirit is sufficient to do what Torah was not able to do' (pp 813, 815). Doubtless there is a sense in which both these are true, but Paul also describes Christ, and God's action in the death of Christ, in pretty much the same terms (eg Rom 10:4; 8:3f cf 3:21-6). In a later section Fee helpfully distinguishes between the objective *historical* and *positional* reality of salvation achieved by God in the work of Christ and the subjective *experiential appropriation* of that achieved salvation in the life of the believer by the work of the Holy Spirit (p 854). It is perhaps merely a consequence of the concentration on the Spirit's work that this reviewer felt that further attention needed to be given to the finished objective work of Christ in order truly to understand Paul's view of the ongoing subjective work of the Holy Spirit.²

Fee has a full discussion of Paul's spirit-flesh contrast. He argues that

- 2 A further example of this type of difficulty is found in the closing prayer at the end of the book, which seems strangely un-Christocentric, and therefore rather unlike Paul, in its view of the Spirit:

*Holy Spirit, all divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down every idol throne,
Reign supreme, and reign alone.*

while some uses of 'flesh' in Paul are morally neutral and refer to humanity in its frailty, mortality and weakness (eg Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 10:3), many are eschatologically pejorative, describing human existence outside Christ or believers' lives before they came to be in Christ and live by the Spirit. For Fee, the spirit-flesh contrast *never* refers to a battle or struggle within the believer (against traditional interpretations of, for example, Galatians 5:17 or Romans 7:14-25), but to the contrast between life in the old aeon (which is past for the believer) and life in the new aeon of the Spirit in which the believer now lives. While Fee is no doubt on good grounds in reasoning that the point of Paul's argument in Galatians 5 is to show that life in the Spirit precludes lawless immorality through the leading of the Spirit and the crucifying of the flesh (Gal 5:17f, 24), the fact that he expresses his view decisively against the internal-struggle view without anywhere taking adequate account of the whole dying-and-rising-with-Christ theme is problematic. So one can say 'yes' to all that Fee asserts, that 'Christ's death and resurrection have pronounced a death sentence on the "flesh"', that the flesh has been crippled or killed in the believer through Christ and the Spirit and that 'the already crippled flesh will be finally brought to ruin at the coming of Christ' (p 822). But this leaves unsaid a lot that Paul says about making this eschatological truth effective in the here-and-now life of the believer by continually believing that this deadness is really true in our case (Rom 6:11), by not yielding our members to sin (6:13), and by putting to death those works of the flesh that characterized the old (but still affect us; Col 3:5-8; Eph 4:17-32 esp v 22).

In the final section of this chapter Fee discusses the relationship between the role of the Spirit as God's empowering presence and Paul's theme of weakness. Here he attempts to steer a path between an unbiblical triumphalism which assumes that weaknesses in the present are somehow alien to the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit (a view which arguably reflects an over-realized eschatology), and an unbiblical defeatism or under-realized eschatology which underestimates the Spirit's powerful assistance in the believer's life in the flesh (not 'according to the flesh'). At this point Fee argues (from Romans 8:17-27 and 2 Corinthians 12:9) that 'the Spirit is seen as the source of empowering in the midst of affliction or weakness' (p 825), and that this is displayed in visible demonstrations of God's power from a weak messenger that evidence the Spirit's presence. What appears to be missing from this discussion is the point which seems to dominate 2 Corinthians, which is that the Spirit's power at work in the life of Paul is seen in the shaping of the apostle as an appropriate minister (or angel) of the new covenant, moulded in the image of the incarnate covenant mediator and manifest in weakness and humility and service. As the Lord said: 'my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor 12:9). This surely refers to a pattern of life and ministry profoundly shaped by the way of the crucified Lord. In this sense it is surely incongruous to interpret Paul

as if he is thinking of moments of particular visible manifestations of divine power within the sphere of his human weakness. It is precisely those weaknesses and suffering which replicate the sufferings of the crucified one which qualify Paul for new covenant ministry (cf 2 Cor 1:5; 2:15; 4:10-12; 12:10; 13:4).³ It is arguable that the very concentration on the work of the Spirit which makes this work so valuable leads to over-claims made about wider areas of Pauline thought.

3 *The Spirit as God's Personal Presence (chapter 13)*

Here Fee argues that 'Paul expresses his experience of God in a fundamentally Trinitarian way, but never grapples with the theological issues that this experience raises' (p 827). This is one of Fee's most important contributions: to locate the origins of Trinitarian thought firmly in the New Testament, and to challenge the practical 'binitarianism' of much modern Christianity (as he puts it: 'I believe in God the Father; I believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son; but I wonder about the Holy Ghost'). He argues that although Paul most frequently speaks of the Spirit as the agent of God's activity, in ways that do not demand or presume personhood, the personhood of the Spirit is confirmed implicitly by the scarcity of impersonal images and in a number of passages where the Spirit is presented as personal subject (searching, knowing, teaching, dwelling, crying out, leading, bearing witness, desiring, interceding, helping, strengthening, grieving etc p 830).

Furthermore, Fee argues, Paul does not characteristically identify or confuse the Spirit with the risen Christ. On the contrary Paul thinks of the Spirit primarily in relation to God (he uses 'Holy Spirit' seventeen times, and 'Spirit of God' or 'his Spirit' sixteen times, but 'Spirit of Christ/Jesus' only three times). It is God who sends or gives the Spirit (Gal 4:6; 1 Thess 4:8; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Gal 3:5; Rom 5:5; Eph 1:17), as in the Old Testament (eg Joel 2:28). This is confirmed specifically in 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 in which the closest kind of relation between the Spirit and God is expressed (as in Romans 8:26f). In this context the fact that Paul should also speak of 'the Spirit of Christ' (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:9; Phil 1:19) is more telling in expressing his high Christology than his pneumatology. In each case the reason for the different mode of expression is Paul's emphasis on the work of Christ applied by the Spirit to the believer. It is very clear that Paul's view of the Spirit is given definition and substance by Christ and his work (cf Rom 8:14-17; Phil 3:10; 1 Cor 12:3 etc); but despite the claims of many scholars evidence is lacking that Paul identified the Spirit with the

3 Cf P Barnett 'Paul Doing Theology for the Corinthians: Second Corinthians' *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honour of J I Packer* D Lewis and A McGrath edd (Leicester: Apolllos 1996) pp 123-36, especially pp 129f.

risen Christ. Fee argues that the texts which are supposed to support this view (1 Cor 6:17; 15:47; 2 Cor 3:17f) do not, and other texts such as Romans 8:26f (cf v 34; 9:1; 15:30) clearly distinguish between the two.

Taking 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 as an example, Fee had previously shown, in his exegetical sections, that these verses conclude the passage from 3:1-18 which forms a prominent part of Paul's defence of the character of his apostolic ministry as a dispensation or ministry (*diakonia*) of the Spirit (v 8). He helpfully shows the importance of Exodus 34:34 to Paul's argument, re verse 17: 'the Lord in that text, he is saying, is now to be understood (not literally, but in an analogical way) as referring to the Spirit.' He goes on: 'The Spirit, who applies the work of Christ to the life of the believer, is the key to the eschatological experience of God's presence' (p 312).

Paul's somewhat fluid language in expressing the relation of the Spirit to Christ arises, according to Fee, from his concern not with ontology but with soteriology and Christian experience. Paul's gospel orients itself around a soteriological and functional Trinitarianism (the capitalisation comes from Fee): 'God's saving a people for his name through the redemptive work of Christ and the appropriating work of the Spirit' (p 839). Evidence for this is found both in explicitly Trinitarian texts, such as 2 Corinthians 13:13, where Paul '*equate[s] the activity of the three divine Persons (to use the language of a later time) in concert and in one prayer*' (p 840; cf also 1 Cor 12:4-6; Eph 4:4-6); and in other soteriological texts where Trinitarian terms are used (eg 1 Thess 1:4f; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 1:4-7; 2:4f; 2:12; 6:11; 6:19f; 2 Cor 1:21f; Gal 3:1-5; Rom 8:3f; 8:15-17; Col 3:16; Eph 1:17; 2:18; 2:20-22; Phil 3:3). Paul's God '*is experienced as a triune reality*' (p 841).

In a very helpful conclusion to the chapter Fee notes that the reception of the Spirit is the new covenant expression of the presence of God among his people (fulfilling Ezekiel 36:26f; 37:14); this presence can be spoken about using the language of the Spirit 'dwelling' in or among the people of God (also promised in the new covenant promises of Ezekiel 37:27 etc). This complex of ideas also informs Paul's use of temple imagery (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19f; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:22; 4:30 cf Is 63:10); the living God is now present with his people through the Spirit: 'the Spirit is none other than the fulfilment of the promise that God himself would once again be present with his people' (p 845).

4 The Soteriological Spirit (chapter 14)

In this chapter Fee makes the important point that for Paul salvation is entered into individually (rather than ethnically or nationally as in the old

covenant), but that which is entered into is the eschatological people of God 'since God is saving *a people* for his name, *not a disparate group of individuals*' (p 846). In this section Fee draws together his earlier discussions of passages such as 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 and Romans 15:18f to suggest that the Spirit empowered Paul's gospel proclamation with a double display of power. The role of the eschatological Spirit in Paul's gospel-preaching ministry involves *both* empowered words, which brought conviction about the truth of the gospel, *and* powerful deeds, in signs and wonders. 'It would never occur to him that the miraculous would *not* accompany the proclamation of the gospel, or that in another time some would think of these two empowerings as "either-or"' (p 849f).

Fee argues that Paul's depiction of the gospel's impact on the Thessalonians as 'in power and in the Holy Spirit and in full conviction' (1 Thess 1:5 treated on pp 40-48) refers *primarily* to 'Paul's Spirit-empowered proclamation of Christ', that is, to the effectiveness of Paul's proclamation in terms of its impact upon the Thessalonians and their conversion (and not only on the conviction given to the preacher as some commentators have argued). Having said this, Fee moves on to ask whether this might include miraculous activities demonstrating the Spirit's power. At this point he turns to 2 Corinthians 12:12, Romans 15:18f and Galatians 3:1-5, suggesting that Paul's converts normally/regularly/typically experienced such associated phenomena, that 'the Thessalonians undoubtedly experienced such phenomena' and thus that the collocation of 'power and Spirit' *most likely* implies Spirit-empowered miracles. This process of argument, however, moves away from the earlier exegetical conclusion which focused on the Spirit's powerful assistance in gospel proclamation and appropriation. It also prejudices the exegetical conclusions to be drawn from these other passages.

On a related passage Fee notes that the 'demonstration of the Spirit and power' (1 Cor 2:4f) cannot be taken as a reference to 'signs and wonders' or 'spiritual gifts and miracles' since in the context of 1 Corinthians this is the very triumphalist assumption Paul is arguing against. In contrast to Jewish requests for signs and Greek desire for wisdom the gospel preaches Christ crucified (cf 1:22f). It would thus be a little odd, as Fee notes, if Paul were to appeal to powerful signs and wonders that persuaded hearers!! Rather, in 2:1-5 Paul is contrasting his approach to that of other sophistic orators. In the very situation of his personal weakness the demonstration of the Spirit's power is seen in the Corinthians' conversion, as the Spirit applies the word of the gospel, Christ and him crucified, to their hearts: 'the evidence lies with the Corinthians themselves and their own experience of the Spirit as they responded to the message of the gospel' (p 92). Having got this far, however, Fee is unwilling to exclude

the thought of spiritual gifts, arguing that for the Corinthians 'to hear the words "the Spirit and power" would automatically have recalled the visible evidences of the Spirit's presence' (p 93 note). Two things need to be said against this conclusion. First, that it is not at all clear what sort of 'visible evidence' there would have been at the time of Paul's early preaching, since Fee has already concluded that miraculous signs, like sophisticated oratory, were notable by their absence. The silence of Acts 18, the argument of 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, together with the reference to patience/endurance in 2 Corinthians 12:12 suggests that miraculous manifestations were not characteristic of Paul's initial gospel preaching in Corinth or the initial Corinthian response. Secondly, Fee's method involves a confusion of Paul's meaning with the potentially misunderstood reception of the message by those whose view of the Spirit's role Paul is directly challenging. No doubt Paul's Corinthian readers may have recalled miraculous activity, even though Paul meant to speak of the Spirit's work in applying the gospel to the hearts and minds of his hearers. This hypothetical suggestion, however, points only to the difficulty Paul must have had in persuading them to change their views, a difficulty that persisted into 2 Corinthians.

On this issue Fee's exegetical work seems stronger than his synthesis. Exegetically Fee accepts that both 1 Thessalonians 2:4f and 1 Corinthians 2:4f are best taken as expressions of the power of the Spirit at work in the conversion of those who hear the gospel, the word of the cross. The Holy Spirit's power is demonstrated in the transformation of human hearts and minds as they are exposed to the frail human preaching of the cross. We might compare Fee's comment in connection with Ephesians 6:17: 'the "word of God" that is the Spirit's sword is the faithful speaking forth of the gospel in the arena of darkness, so that men and women might hear and be delivered from Satan's grasp' (p 729).

Nor can Galatians 3 be brought in as decisive evidence against the view presented here. The Galatians had heard the word of the gospel, the public presentation of Christ crucified, and received the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:1f). Clearly this was 'a reception of the Spirit that was dynamically experienced' (Fee p 383) as these Gentiles came to believe in Christ and experience God's grace, forgiveness and empowering. But there is no reference to specifically miraculous (in the 'signs and wonders' sense) activity at this point. Indeed, Fee's concentration on the visible miraculous phenomena is somewhat at odds with Paul's description of his arrival in 4:13f and with his emphasis on the transforming role of the Spirit in 5:22f. It is only in the following verses (3:4f) that Paul moves on from the beginning of the Christian life – that is, Spirit-empowered faith in the gospel message of Christ's death – to the ongoing Christian experience of the Holy Spirit. Here he introduces the miracle-working activity of God as

associated with his continued provision of the Holy Spirit to the believer (3:4f). But these are not here associated with the initial gospel-preaching: the reference in verse 4 to experiencing (or suffering) so many things precludes this.

If one takes a somewhat different position from Fee in relation to the initial work of the Spirit in empowering the word of the cross and bringing faith and life to birth in the hearts and minds of pagan unbelievers, one would not have to deny that the evidence of the Pauline letters suggests that a number of the churches to which these letters were addressed were genuinely 'charismatic', and experienced God at work through the Holy Spirit in miraculous healing, prophetic utterances and so on. On the contrary it is precisely the radical internal transformation by the Spirit that enables and encourages spontaneous participation in praise and worship (1 Cor 14; 1 Thess 5:19-22). Nevertheless I think Fee oversteps the mark in describing such ongoing 'charismatic' activities as 'signs and wonders' (p 389). The two passages in which Paul uses such language suggest that while these appropriately characterize Paul's own apostolic and salvation-historically decisive ministry, they are not used generally of what was going on outside Paul's personal presence and influence. Note, for example, that in 2 Corinthians 12:12 'signs and wonders and mighty works' are associated with apostleship ('the signs of an apostle') and that the whole context of Romans 15:18f emphasises Paul's redemptive-historically unique ministry as apostle of the Gentiles.⁴ No doubt, in view of these passages, it is reasonably clear that Paul conceived of his ministry as customarily associated with the miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit (Acts includes numerous accounts of such activity, eg 13:11; 14:3, 10; 15:12; 16:18, 26; 19:6, 11f; 20:10). Nevertheless, Fee's general conclusion, already mentioned, that the Spirit *both* empowered Paul's words *and* provided powerful deeds, in signs and wonders, would in my view be better construed as 'always ... sometimes': Paul's effective proclamation of the gospel of the crucified Christ is *always* attributed to the Spirit's power alongside the word, and this preaching was *sometimes* associated with dramatic miraculous activity.

In making these points Fee does tend to raise the stakes somewhat as he regularly berates non-charismatic Evangelicals for letting their assumptions control their application of Paul's teaching about the Spirit. For example, in his discussion of Galatians 3 he comments: 'Those who tend to think otherwise [ie than Fee] about these texts do so much less on exegetical grounds than on existential ones' (p 389). Clearly there is a big issue here about the influence of our pre-understandings on our exegesis

4 Cf further D A Carson 'The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament' *Power Religion: The Selling out of the Evangelical Church?* M S Horton ed (USA: Moody Press; Amersham: Scripture Press Foundation 1992) pp 89-118.

and interpretation of Scripture which deserves a somewhat fuller exploration than can be offered here. On the one hand Fee is doubtless correct in pointing out the failures of many conservatives and the arbitrariness of their handling of Scripture, even perhaps to the grieving of the Spirit in the process. On the other hand, however, it is clear that Fee is no freer from pre-understandings and assumptions than anyone else. In particular these pre-understandings emerge in the transition from exegesis to synthesis at a number of crucial points where his assumptions arguably overpower his own exegetical conclusions.⁵

In his section on 'The Spirit and Conversion' (pp 853ff) Fee argues that conversion is the work of the Spirit who alone identifies God's people in the present eschatological age; hence the force of the metaphors of adoption, washing, renewal and sanctification. This is well said, although we might need to add that while it is true theologically that the Spirit identifies the people of God, the public identification of the Christian is based on the observable outworkings of the converting eschatological Spirit in faith, hope, love and the other fruit. Fee argues that Paul did not connect the reception of the Spirit directly with water baptism; rather, as in 1 Corinthians 1:13-17 *'he specifically associates the reception of the Spirit with his proclamation of the gospel, not with baptism'* (p 862). In an important, but unfortunately brief, discussion he further argues against the view that Spirit baptism is a secondary experience after conversion. Conversion is, for Paul, the start of an ongoing indwelling by the Spirit characterized, for example, by prayer 'in the Spirit' (Eph 6:18; cf Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15, 26f). For Paul this included glossolalia (1 Cor 14:18; cf vv 2, 14-16, 28) and (at least one!) visionary experience (2 Cor 12:1-10), although 'he disallows that they have any value at all in authenticating ministry' and we know about them only because the Corinthians made too much of them (p 868).

5 The Spirit and the People of God (chapter 15)

The frequency with which Paul utilizes Old Testament terminology relating to Israel as the people of God (God's people, saints, elect, 'Israel of God', etc) 'makes it clear that Paul saw the church not only as in continuity with the old covenant people of God, but as in the true

5 Further questions about the influence of Fee's assumptions arise in reading his comments on 1 Thessalonians 5:19f. Here he clearly explains that v 20 follows and explains the seemingly general instruction of v 19 by specifying the sphere of activity involved: 'By not "quenching" the Spirit... I mean in particular, "Do not despise prophetic utterances"' (p 59). Once again, where the exegetical work might lead one to reflect on the Spirit's role in communicating God's word through prophecy which requires testing, Fee's discussion is taken up to some extent with 'charismatic manifestations', which he assumes have got somewhat out of hand in their meetings.

succession of that people' (p 871). One feature of this continuity is found in the corporate nature of the church, as is illustrated in Paul's opposition to Corinthian individualism (eg 1 Cor 5:1-13; 6:1-11), and the frequency of Paul's 'one another' terminology. In Paul's thought, the people of God, as his believing community, are formed through the work of the Holy Spirit, as for example in 1 Corinthians 12:13: 'For we all were baptized in the one Spirit into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we all were caused to drink one Spirit.' In his earlier discussion of this passage Fee had disclaimed the view that this refers to two stages of Christian experience of the Spirit. Rather they are taken as referring in parallel to a common *experience* of the Spirit in conversion, noting that the expressive metaphors of baptism/immersion and drinking 'imply a much greater experiential and visibly manifest reception of the Spirit than many have tended to experience in subsequent church history (see on 2:4-5)' (p 181). This approach raises a range of questions. Notwithstanding the problematic emphasis on *visible* manifestations, a bigger issue is that if it is true that those converted in the New Testament period had *a qualitatively different experience of the Spirit* in conversion than the vast majority of believers since then, it follows that the fault for this cannot be laid at any door other than the Holy Spirit himself. To assume otherwise is to *assume* either that the Spirit is somehow powerless in the face of Christian indifference (a conclusion rather at odds with the New Testament evidence so ably marshalled by Fee), *or* that this experience can somehow be generated by means of some coercion and heightened expectation. Perhaps we could suggest that Fee's argument cannot be sustained on the basis of the *metaphors* of baptism/immersion and drinking.

In a section on 'The Spirit and Christian Life' Fee rightly shows that the Spirit dominates Paul's conception of the Christian life. That to which Torah pointed, God's own righteousness, is that righteousness which the empowering Spirit enables in the believer as the mind is renewed after Christ and subsequent steps are guided by the Holy Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit are the expression in the life of the believer of conformity to Christ. The Spirit prompted worship, prayer, prophecy, charismata, and glossolalia in the Pauline churches.

6 Conclusion

Fee closes with the question 'Where to from here?' in which the relevance of Pauline pneumatology is discussed. In this section he both summarizes the main features of his discussion and reflects on the present and future prospects of renewal and reformation. With the eight features of his summary few *Churchman* readers will probably quarrel (especially when stated in point form):

- 1 The Spirit plays an *absolutely crucial* role in Paul's experience and theology.
- 2 Paul experienced and understood the Spirit in a thoroughly *eschatological framework*.
- 3 The Spirit's entry into the life of the individual is *dynamically experienced*.
- 4 The experience of the Spirit meant the return of *God's own personal presence* to his people.
- 5 Paul has fundamental *Trinitarian presuppositions*.
- 6 This Trinitarian understanding is foundational to salvation in Christ (the heart of Paul's thought).
- 7 The Spirit is *the absolutely essential constituent of the whole of the Christian life*.
- 8 The Spirit is the key to all truly Christian *spirituality*.

Fee pleads for a 'recapturing of the Pauline perspective of Christian life as essentially the life of the Spirit, dynamically experienced and eschatologically oriented – but *fully integrated into the life of the church*' (p 901). Clearly many would configure such a renewal in significantly different ways from Fee, depending largely, in my opinion, on one's approach to some of the issues raised earlier in this review. Nonetheless all those who are interested in the reformation and renewal of the life of the church and their own walk with God will want to wrestle, in prayerful dependence upon the Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, with the arguments and passion of this learned tome.

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