

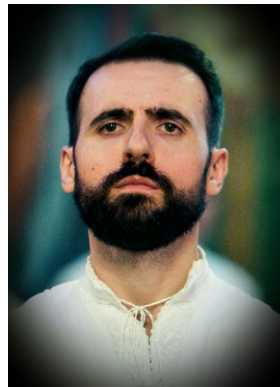


Mihai-Iulian Grobnicu

Baptism in the Holy Spirit – An Analysis of the Doctrine at Symeon the New Theologian and in Classical Pentecostal Movement

Abstract

At the beginning of the eleventh century, a great spiritual personality, Saint Symeon the New Theologian, struggled to teach his audience about the importance of being aware of the presence of God in their hearts, minds, and lives. His charismatic figure and mystical approach towards theology raised questions started a conflict and ended with an exile. Although there were multiple reasons why that happened, all can be summarized in a single line: the clash



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between a living, experiential model of theology and a rationalistic, institutional, intellectual one. This polemic is of great importance, for our time as well, giving the important topic it brings ahead: the hard work of *speaking* and *living* theology simultaneously.

This paper is looking to analyze the teaching of this great mystic and the Pentecostal theology in regards to the *experience of the Holy Spirit*, especially on the subject concerning *Spirit Baptism* and it's relation to the sacramental life encountered in the Church. I made this choice not because it is a trend, nowadays, to find commonalities to sustain the ecumenical dialogue, but mainly because of the theology of Saint Symeon the New Theologian, the greatest mystical personality within the Orthodox Church started to be often quoted by theologians within the Pentecostal movement as a proto-charismatic figure.¹ This interest is due to the charismatic personality of Saint Symeon and his emphasis on the personal, conscious and sensible experience of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual life of every Christian.

Keywords

Baptism of tears, Awareness, Empowerment, Holy Spirit Baptism, Restoration

¹ See Stanley M. Burgess, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: The Medieval Churches - Symeon the New Theologian*, in: Stanley M. Burgess and Ed M. van der Maas (eds.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 2002), pp. 435-436.

1 Introduction

My paper has three parts. The first one is discussing Saint Symeon's point of view on this topic, the second brings the Pentecostal theology to the fore, and the third one is the place where I am presenting what these two positions have in common and what is distinct about them. Therefore, my objectives are threefold. First, I want to clarify some statements made by Saint Symeon, from an Orthodox perspective, statements which could be easily seen as staying far away from the Eastern tradition, but near the Pentecostal perspective. Second, I wish to identify special concepts (e.g. the *second Baptism*, the indwelling presence of the Spirit in our personal lives, etc.) which are central to the Pentecostal faith and can be found in the Orthodox theology too. Thirdly, I look forward to bring new ideas for the dialogue between Orthodox and Pentecostals, especially regarding the event of Spirit baptism and on the signs which attest the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

In which regards the methodology of the paper, the analytical and systematical methods are taken into consideration to examine critically the teaching about the experience of the Holy Spirit in two different ecclesiological backgrounds. Likewise, historical methods will help this research to locate a certain idea in the correct cultural background. Thirdly, the use of the genealogical method is a valuable tool for the output of the paper. It means that the statements of Saint Symeon are to be considered only in a close relationship with his spiritual father, other fathers of the Church and with the entire Orthodox Tradition. The same is for the Pentecostal theology: to understand it, I have to place it in the Western background, more precisely in the Wesleyan tradition and what followed after it (the Holiness movement). Finally, the descriptive method has its place to accomplish the goal of this study.

Nonetheless, this article has also its limitations, which further studies could and have to take into consideration. First of all,

the space of this paper did not allow me to discuss the doctrine of deification, which I consider to be the final act of the experience of the Holy Spirit. Maybe a future study will analyze the teaching of deification in the Orthodox and Pentecostal theology, using Saint Symeon as a framework. A second limitation of this study is represented by the short remarks on the nature of the charismatic experience and its place in the life of the Church. Besides these, the Pentecostal perspective of this paper describes mainly the position of the Classical Pentecostalism, and it does not refer to Charismatic posts. Also, when I spoke about the raising and development of the Pentecostal movement and Pentecostal theology, I took as reference point Pentecostalism in United States of America, as the place from where the Pentecostal movement, as we know it today, ignited.

2 Sacramental Life and the Experience of the Holy Spirit at Symeon the New Theologian

The greatest mystical theologian of the Eastern Christianity, Saint Symeon the New Theologian, lived in a period that represented the height of the Byzantine Empire's glory. This period was identified with the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Basil the Second (crowned in 960, but ruler from 976 to 1025). The power was present not only at the political level but also in which regards the cultural, spiritual, liturgical and missionary life. That was the period immediate after the iconoclast conflicts when monks defended the usage of icons. Therefore the role of monasteries and the influence of monks increased. This power created a tension between "priest and prophet, institution and charism, church and sacrament"².

² Alexander Golitzin, *Saint Symeon the New Theologian. On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 3: Life, Times and Theology* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), p.19.

The sources for Symeon's life are the biography written by his apprentice, Nicetas Stethatos, and his sermons and letters³. According to these, he was born in 949, in the village Galatia, Paphlagonia (Asia Minor) and died in 1022, on 12th of March, in the monastery of Saint Marines, in Paloutikon, across Constantinople.

2.1 The call for a conscious experience

To better understand Symeon's sayings about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, few words are to be said about the role of the experience of the Holy Spirit and how important is this experience, for salvation and Christian life in general, according to symeonian theology. To put it bluntly, every Christian has to struggle for a conscious and personal experience of the Spirit received through ascetic work, powerful prayer, and deep repentance. For Symeon, God manifests Himself in a conscious way in every moment of the history, not only during the apostolic times, as various theologians were teaching, in Constantinople, at the end of the first millennium⁴. Symeon, as well, doesn't teach from hearing only, but as a result of his spiritual experience, hence experiencing the truth about the

³ The chronology used in this paper is the one established by Irénée Hausherr, Introduction, in: Nicetas Stethatos, *Vie De Syméon Le Nouveau Théologien (949-1022): Un Grand Mystique Byzantin* (Orientalia Christiana, 45, Roma: Pont. Inst. Orientalium Stud. 1928), pp. V-CXIII.

⁴ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Thanksgiving*, 1, in: *The Discourses* (The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. C.J. de Catanzaro, New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 361. The theological context of the entire discussion is created by the rationalistic discourse about God, which was prevalent in Constantinople, at that time. God was experienced only by thought, in a discursive manner, as a result of hearing the scriptures. The personal experience was denied entirely here, on earth, because it was believed that only the apostles had the personal experience of the Holy Spirit on earth. Therefore, Symeon has in mind the relationship between Scripture, Tradition and Experience.

conscious presence of the Spirit in his life. In one of his discourses, Symeon describes the experience of his friend, named George (the subject of this description is, in fact, Symeon, who does not want to speak about him) in the following words:

“He had spent but a few days and nights doing so without wearying himself if I may say so, he was so greatly enlightened by the grace from on high that it seemed to him that he had gone outside his body and his dwelling and the whole world. Though it was the night, it became like broad daylight⁵.”

Furthermore, the New Theologian says that every Christian has to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in this manner, in order to enter “into the knowledge and contemplation [*en gnosei kai theoria*] of such beauty [the vision of light]”, to “be completely united with it, and have communion with it”, in order to be called Christian⁶. Shortly put: one can say that has the grace of the Holy Spirit only if the presence of the Holy

⁵ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses*, 6, in: *The Discourses*, p. 122. Symeon describes his experiences also in *Catecheses* 22 and 36 in an effort to show that this kind of events have to be a part of everyone’s life.

⁶ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses*, 8, in: *The Discourses*, p. 146. Symeon speaks here also about two kinds of experience, through *knowledge* and through *contemplation* (the mystical experience). Another place where Symeon makes this distinction is in *Catecheses* 13, in: *The Discourses*, p. 183, where he says: “There is no knowledge without vision, nor vision without knowledge. This is what I want to say – there is a vision, and in the vision there is knowledge and perception.” Symeon refers to knowledge and contemplation, showing that these two are understood together, but the contemplation is the one which brings forth the knowledge. That is why, one cannot sustain that there is a clash, in symeonian theology, between reason and faith, as Jean Darrouzès does. See Jean Darrouzès, Introduction, in: Jean Darrouzès (ed.), *Syméon Le Nouveau Théologien: Traités Théologiques Et Ethiques* (Sources Chrétiennes, 122, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966), pp. 28-29 (7-37).

Spirit is experienced in a conscious, perceptible, sensible way⁷. Following this line of thought, Symeon writes against those who say that they possess the Holy Spirit in an unconscious way since the Baptism, that they have the grace only through faith, without experiencing God's presence:

“Here I am again, writing against those who say they have the Spirit of God unconsciously, who think that they have Him in themselves as a result of divine Baptism (...) and confessing they felt nothing whatever in their baptism, still imagine that the gift of God has indwelt and existed within their soul, unconsciously and insensibly, from that moment up to present time”⁸.

Therefore, Symeon teaches that everyone can and should experience, in a conscious way, the presence of the Holy Spirit. He also says that Christians cannot possess the gift of the Spirit in an unconscious way from the Baptism (the sacramental baptism) and that if they are unconscious of the Spirit on earth,

⁷ This expectation is to be found in the spiritual directions of many writers from Eastern Orthodoxy and is grounded on the importance of experience for the correct exposition of the faith (see the call of Apostle Nathanael in Jn. 1.45–51). One of them is St. Gregory the Theologian, most quoted author, among Eastern fathers, by Symeon, who is also recognized as the first one to formulate the importance of experience for the concise of the discourse. “The elevation of the affective perception of grace over the logical structures of doctrine was propounded in the fourth century by Gregory [the Theologian] in the course of a precise apologetical argument with Neo-Arians logicians”, says father John A. McGuckin, St. Symeon the New Theologian (969-1022): Byzantine Spiritual Renewal in Search of a Precedent, in: R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The Church Retrospective: papers read at the 1995 Summer Meeting and the 1996 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Ecclesiastical History Society in association with the Boydell Press, 1997), p. 82 (75-90).

⁸ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse 5*, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 2: On Virtue and Christian Life* (trans. Alexander Golitzin, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), p. 44. Declarations like this can be found all over his writings: see the *Ethical Discourse 5, 9 and 10* for the best examples.

they will be unconscious in the age to come as well⁹, so for eternity. Thus, for Symeon, the teaching about the conscious experience of God is related to salvation.

We can imagine how surprised Symeon's audience was during his sermons, hearing these sharp declarations. *No one can possess the Holy Spirit in an imperceptible way; no one can be called Christian without experiencing the vision of light. If there is no conscious experience of Christ, the baptism could be understood as simply water baptism*¹⁰. These lines sound not very orthodox at first sight, but near to the Messalian view, where the personal experience counts more than the ecclesial, sacramental life.

2.3 Baptism – sacrament and personal experience

However, if everything is personal and if personal sanctity is the actual measure of all that which is of God, what happens to sacramental life¹¹? What place does the experience of the Holy Spirit have within the sacramental life? What is the relation between Baptism with the Holy Spirit, named by Symeon (and by the Eastern theology) “the baptism of tears” and the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments)¹², especially with Baptism and Holy Eucharist¹³?

⁹ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse 10*, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1: The Church and the Last Things* (trans. Alexander Golitzin, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), pp. 163-164.

¹⁰ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse 10*, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1*, p. 149, 156 et passim.

¹¹ Alexander Golitzin, *Saint Symeon the New Theologian. On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 3: Life, Times and Theology* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), p. 48.

¹² The Orthodox Church does not use the western terminology of „sacraments“. Instead of this, it uses the term “mystery”, considered for its potential to explain better the miracle, without limiting the reality at a certain definition. The Holy Mysteries are means of grace, but how do they work remains a mystery known by God alone.

To put it straightly, Saint Symeon emphasizes the importance of baptism of tears (or baptism with the Holy Spirit) over the Mystery of baptism. This baptism is different from the Mystery of Baptism and does not represent Chrismation¹⁴. That leads us to the following question: does that mean that the Mystery of Baptism has only a symbolic value for Symeon?

After studying the entire corpus of his writings, one can tell that Symeon was clearly within the Orthodox Tradition in which regards this matter, meaning that Baptism is a mystery (sacrament) and does not have just a symbolic or anamnetic function. Although some of his sentences are misleading, Saint Symeon has never denied the necessity of the Baptism for salvation and the spiritual growth in Christian life. Hence, he emphasizes that through the Mystery of Baptism the Holy Spirit is working and that is not merely symbolical¹⁵, the Baptism

Symeon himself tries to explain what the mysteries are: "By mysteries I mean things that are seen by all without being understood by them. From the Spirit who renews him he obtains new eyes as well as new ears. From henceforth unlike an ordinary man, he does not see the objects of sense with physical vision; he sees them spiritually as one who has become superhuman, and sees them as images of things invisible, and their forms are to him formless and shapeless". See St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses*, 14, in: *The Discourses*, p. 189.

¹³ In order to create a correct image, I will use, in the first part of this paper, the term "baptism" for the Holy Mystery of Baptism and the expression "baptism of tears" for "baptism with the Holy Spirit". These express, in a good manner, the sacramental and charismatic theology of Saint Symeon and of the Orthodox Church.

¹⁴ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Chapters*, 1.36, in: *The Practical and Theological Chapters; and the Three Theological Discourses* (trans. Paul McGuckin, Kalamazoo, Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1982), p. 42. "In the first baptism, water symbolizes tears and the oil of Chrismation prefigures the inner anointing of the Spirit. But the second baptism is no longer a type of the truth, but the truth itself."

¹⁵ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 10, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1*, p. 149. Also see St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Epistles*, 3, in: *The Epistles of St Symeon the New Theologian* (H. J. M. Turner and Joseph Paramelle (eds.), trans. H. J. M. Turner, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 121.

frees us from the ancestral sin, death, and impurity, gives the grace and brings us into the Vine of God¹⁶. Furthermore, through Baptism, God makes us new, He will number us with the saints, and we will become sons of God, because “the talent of sanctification and adoption to sonship” was given to us¹⁷. In this context, Symeon underlines the baptism of the infants, who become true sheep of Christ’s flock: “For I believe that baptized infants are, by the Holy Spirit, both sanctified and kept safe, but since also they are completely delivered from the Devil’s tyrannical rule and sealed with the sign of the life-creating Cross, they are sheep belonging to Christ’s spiritual flock and choice lambs¹⁸.”

However, as Symeon stresses, throughout our entire lives, due to our misbehavior, the grace received at Baptism is lost, and our relationship with God is not consolidated¹⁹. The human person fell from this statue of “familiarity and boldness” with God, and did not enrich the gifts received at Baptism. That is why Symeon spoke about repentance to regain that “familiarity²⁰.” To define the *event of repentance*, Symeon uses

¹⁶ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Hymnes*, 55, in: Johannes Koder (ed.), *Syméon Le Nouveau Théologien: Hymnes* (Sources chrétiennes, 196, trans. Johannes Koder, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2003), p. 257.

¹⁷ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 13, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 2: On Virtue and Christian Life*, p. 171. See also St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Epistles*, 1, in: *The Epistles of St Symeon the New Theologian*, p. 31.

¹⁸ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Epistles*, 4, in: *The Epistles of St Symeon the New Theologian*, p. 143.

¹⁹ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses*, 2, in: *The Discourses*, pp. 50-51.

²⁰ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 13, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 2: On Virtue and Christian Life*, p. 171. In his speeches addressed to the monks of Saint Mamas’ monastery, Saint Symeon says: “Those of you who have defiled their first Baptism through the transgression of God’s commandments (...) display a worthy penitence by means of all sorts of deeds and words, that you may draw on yourselves the grace of the all-holy Spirit”. See

some terms which are inter-related and which are part of the patristic literature, such as repentance (*metanoia*), contrition (*katanyxis*), compunction (*penthos*²¹), as well as tears and humility²². Hence, for Symeon, *Repentance is the renewal of the baptismal grace*²³.

St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses*, 32, in: *The Discourses*, p. 337.

²¹ See Irénée Hausherr, *Penthos: La Doctrine De La Componction Dans L'orient Chrétien*, Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1944), p. 9, 15 et passim. For more details on this subject see Myrrha Lot-Borodine, "Le mystère du 'don des larmes' dans l'Orient chrétien", in: Olivier Clément (ed.), *La Douloureuse Joie: Aperçus Sur La Prière Personnelle De L'orient Chrétien*, Bégrolles en Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1981), pp. 133-195. I. Hausherr proposes a definition of *penthos* as *the mourning for lost salvation, for yourself or for others*. On this direction, he quotes from the *Life of St Cyril of Philea*, by Nicolas Kataskepenos: "The *penthos* is godly mourning [sorrowful], begotten by repentance; *penthos* is a feeling accompanied by sadness and pain because of the privation of what gives joy" (I. Hausherr, *Penthos*, p. 26.) A very important thing, in which regards the spiritual development during the ascetic effort, is to know how to differentiate "the tears": "The crucial distinction lies between sensual or natural tears and spiritual tears (there is also a third possibility: tears may be demonic). Sensual tears are emotional; spiritual tears are ascetic." Though, frequently, the emotional tears express our earthly sadness, and the spiritual tears express our peace and joy which indicates the grace of the Holy Spirit, Holy Fathers did not make a sharp distinction between them. "On the lower level they are bitter; on the higher level, sweet. On the lower level they are a form of purification; on the higher level, of illumination." It is not a distinction, but rather an inter-penetration, a gradually development from one to another one. See Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Kingdom* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), pp. 55-56.

²² A. Golitzin, *Saint Symeon the New Theologian. On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 3...*, p. 56.

²³ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Hymnes*, 15, in: Johannes Koder (ed.), *Syméon Le Nouveau Théologien: Hymnes* (Sources chrétiennes, 174, trans. Johannes Koder, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1971), pp. 255-258.

Furthermore, using powerful images, *Symeon pictures repentance as a new baptism*, a baptism through which the believer answers in a conscious way to the grace given to him at the moment of Baptism's Mystery: "Sorrow works in two ways: it is like water because it quenches all the fire of passion with tears and washes the soul clean of stains, and it is like a fire which gives life by the presence of the Holy Spirit. It kindles, blazes up, and warms the heart, and inflames it with love and desire for God²⁴."

The new aspect of this baptism, named by Saint Symeon the "baptism of tears" or "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" is the awareness of the grace which is received through Holy Mysteries, but also a new birth and vision of God:

"As many as received Him' (...), meaning clearly those who have confessed Him as God and not merely man, to them He gave power through Baptism to become children of God, having freed them from the devil's tyranny so that they might be not merely believers but, if they should wish to follow His commandments, acquire holiness in addition to the working of the commandments (...) because they 'were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, but of God.' Birth here signifies the spiritual transformation which is actively shown in baptism by the Holy Spirit"²⁵.

Symeon emphasizes the relation between the accomplishment of the commandments, tears, humility and the knowledge of God. Essential for Symeon is the awareness of the Holy Spirit, and that presupposes a dynamic relationship with God, which has a starting point in humility, continues through the struggle to fulfill the commandments of Christ to end in the Spirit.

²⁴ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Chapters*, 3.12, in: *The Practical and Theological Chapters; and the Three Theological Discourses*, p. 74.

²⁵ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 10, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1: The Church and the Last Things*, p. 156. This is the only time when Symeon uses the expression "baptism with the Holy Spirit".

“When a man’s soul has been purified by tears, and in proportion to his repentance and fulfillment of the commandments, he is first deemed worthy of knowing by grace what is proper to him and his entire self. Then, after much intense purification and profound humility, he begins little by little to perceive in some obscure way things which concern God and the divine, and, to the degree that he perceives, he is wounded to the quick and acquires yet greater humility, deeming himself entirely unworthy of the knowledge and revelation of such mysteries”²⁶.

²⁶ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 9, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 2: On Virtue and Christian Life*, p. 127. See also *Chapters*, 1.35, in: *The Practical and Theological Chapters; and the Three Theological Discourses*, p. 42. When someone’s eyes are full of tears, one is repenting for her/his sins, but also, enjoying the beauty and mercy of God, one is happy and praise God for everything He has done (see I. Hausherr, *Penthos*, pp. 61-52.) See also *Catecheses*, 9, in: *The Discourses*, p. 160 - in order to produce in us repentance, Symeon recommends “constantly and daily” confessions; only after that “repentance gives rise to the tear from the depths of the soul; the tear cleanses the heart and wipes away great sins. When these have been blotted out through tears the soul finds itself in the comfort of the Spirit of God and is watered by streams of sweetest compunction.” When someone’s eyes are full of tears, one is repenting for her/his sins, but also, enjoying the beauty and mercy of God, one is happy and praise God for everything He has done. I. Hausherr describes some of the features of the teaching about tears at Symeon, and one of them is this: the repentance must be always in touch with thanksgiving for what is received. But even in those moments of enlightenment and joy, the human person is conscious that what is received is received by grace, and that she/he is not worthily to receive it. This thought that God gave something which the human person did not deserve it, produces the grief for what has been done and for how good is God. (see I. Hausherr, *Penthos*, pp. 61-62.) For Hausherr is very hard to understand why for Symeon “penthos,” the godly sorrow, is not only part of the ascetic struggle, but also part of contemplation, because tears are for Symeon the clearest sign of grace (see I. Hausherr, *Penthos*, p. 193.)

The realism of this relationship with God, started with the baptism of tears, is described by Symeon in such powerful words that one thinks the entire history of salvation is being experienced in the life of each Christian: "To that love no one among men has ever drawn near unless first he purified his heart through repentance and many tears, and penetrated the depths of humility, and became pregnant with the Holy Spirit"²⁷.

Symeon is also making a comparison between these two baptisms and says that the second is superior.

"We receive the remission of our sins at our divine baptism, and we were freed from the ancient course and sanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit. But this is not yet that perfect grace of which Scriptures speaks: 'I shall dwell in them and walk in them and walk therein' This applies only to those who are strong in faith and show it in their works, for if we fell back into evil and shameful deeds after our baptism, we completely throw away this very sanctification. It is in proportion to our repentance, confession, and tears that we receive the remission of our former sins, and as consequence of this, sanctification and grace from on high"²⁸.

²⁷ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 8, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 2: On Virtue and Christian Life*. p. 110.

²⁸ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Chapters*, 3,45, in: *The Practical and Theological Chapters; and the Three Theological Discourses*, p. 85. Check also *Catecheses* 29 and 32, in: *The Discourses*, pp. 313, 337. See the similarity with Saint John Climacus: "The tears that come after baptism are greater than baptism itself, though it may seem rash to say so. Baptism washes off those evils that were previously within us, whereas the sins committed after baptism are washed away by tears. The baptism received by us as children we have all defiled, but we cleanse it anew with our tears. If God in His love for the human race had not given us tears, those being saved would be few indeed and hard to find." Saint John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, New York: Paulist Press, 1982), p. 137, 259.

2.4 Holy Spirit Baptism and Eucharist

From this overview, it could be seen the relation between the two kinds of baptism, which are very well described in Symeon's teaching, though the emphasis is not altogether the same. Whether would be the first or the second baptism, the core subject addressed by Symeon, in all of his writings, is that Christians have to be aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and must answer to it. In the symeonian theology, the single matter that counts is the relationship between the human person and God. Only by considering this personal encounter as a starting point for any activity, all the rest - Church, Scripture, mysteries, priesthood, etc. – get a sense.

As a result of seeing the mission of each Christian in such a manner, for Symeon the New Theologian the Eucharist is directly linked to the baptism of tears as a conscious mystical event. The grace received with the Holy Baptism is constantly renewed and fulfilled through the baptism of tears, followed by the Holy Eucharist²⁹. Symeon declares that “the Incarnate Word has made His tabernacle as light in us by the communion of His immaculate body and blood” and that Christians see his glory because God came, through Eucharist, and made their body His tabernacle³⁰.

In that sense, the Eucharist represents the most important way of experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit. In the Eucharist,

²⁹ Saint Symeon the Pious (Symeon's spiritual father) told Symeon: “Brother, never communicate without tears” (see *Catecheses*, 4, in: *The Discourses*, p. 70.) If we are to take into consideration Symeon's teachings regarding the baptism of tears, then this will mean that Christians should come to receive Holy Communion in a perfect state of compunction.

³⁰ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 10, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1: The Church and the Last Things*, p. 157. The entire *Ethical Discourses* 10 and 14 discuss the importance of the Holy Eucharist for the spiritual life and the salvation of the human being.

Christians touch the inaccessible God, because the bread and wine placed and poured in Christ's name, "actually become Your Body and Your Blood through the advent of Your Spirit and the power of the Highest³¹." Of course, Eucharist represents such an experience if the human beings will be fully conscious about what it represents if Christians will be *present* at this event. In this context, Symeon is reiterating his sharp declarations made in regards to the Holy Baptism. In that sense, "if in eating these [His flesh and His blood] we perceive nothing more happening to us than the material food, nor receive in knowledge another kind of life, we then partake of mere bread alone and not also of God."³² However, if the receiver does not experience the Mystery in this manner that does not mean that there is no real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. That only means an unworthy communion for the one who did not prepare carefully for this encounter with God. Hence, the conscious experience represents for Symeon the true way of receiving the Holy Communion.

Although he is stressing, all over his writings, the importance of the baptism of tears and the spiritual growth accomplished through it, speaking about Eucharist Symeon is declaring that, though baptism is necessary, it is not enough:

"That Baptism alone does not suffice us for salvation, but that communion in the flesh of Jesus God and His precious blood is

³¹ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Hymns*, 14, in: Johannes Koder (ed.), *Syméon Le Nouveau Théologien: Hymnes* (Sources chrétiennes, 156, trans. Johannes Koder, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1969), pp. 58-59.

³² St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 10, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1: The Church and the Last Things*, p. 166. Same subject is discussed in *The Ethical Discourse* 14, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 2: On Virtue and Christian Life*, p. 180. The entire *Ethical Discourses* 10 and 14 discuss about the importance of the Holy Eucharist for the spiritual life and salvation.

still more suited and necessary for us, listen to what follows: «And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us»³³.

Thus, the Holy Communion brings Christians to total union with Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and leads us to the transfiguration and deification. In other words, through Holy Communion, the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God takes place in every Christian³⁴.

2.5 Summary of St. Symeons Theology of Baptism

As a result, the entire spiritual life is based on the conscious experience of God, through our answer to His call. It is real that all the Christians received the grace of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Baptism, but that grace has to be increased, following the directions were given by Christ. Otherwise, that grace (and rest of the gifts received from God) is to remain buried, bearing no harvest (as the talent dug in the ground – *Matt.* 25, 14–30). Thus, Symeon says it requires a specific appropriation of the grace, through the accomplishment of the commandments and constant effort to remain in contact with God. Henceforth, the grace received at Baptism is essential for our spiritual growth because is the first call of God, but it cannot grow within ourselves if there is no answer to it.

This answer brings the Christian into a new relationship with God, a relationship where both companions are aware of each other's presence. Without that awareness, it does not matter how much it values the gift brought by one of them because it will not be noticed. Moreover, it has to be noticed to be used properly. In this state of consciousness, as Symeon emphasizes, Christians can reach the very act of repentance, when the

³³ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Ethical Discourse* 10, in: *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 1: The Church and the Last Things*, p. 157.

³⁴ A. Golitzin, *Saint Symeon the New Theologian. On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol. 3*, p. 93.

slightest misbehavior that is in conflict with God's words is bringing upon the soul the sadness of losing a close relationship. This is the moment when one is experiencing the baptism with the Holy Spirit or the baptism of tears, a moment full of mix feelings, an event when Christians are becoming more aware of the greatness of the gifts received. That is why through repentance and, more important, through Holy Communion, according to Saint Symeon the New Theologian, we re-establish the forgotten relationship with God.

Although "baptism of tears" describes the compunction which brings the awareness of the grace, the peak of the mystical experience is given in the Holy Communion. That is the reason why Symeon advised his brothers not to take Holy Communion without tears because only in humility human beings could answer in a proper way to God's grace. Therefore, "baptism of tears" is a way of bringing to fruition God's grace received at Holy Baptism to receive the Holy Eucharist.

3 The Experience of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Baptism

The expression "Holy Spirit Baptism" has been described, in the first part of this paper, as a critical moment in the spiritual life as seen and lived by Saint Symeon the New Theologian. Nowadays, is well known worldwide, because of the Pentecostal Movement. Describing an experience of the Holy Spirit, which is different and after conversion, Holy Spirit Baptism is seen by many Pentecostal theologians as a *distinct* teaching of Pentecostalism. For the second part of the paper, I have in mind to present the roots of the Pentecostal understanding of Holy Spirit Baptism, what is different about

it³⁵, how is related to the work of salvation, what is its purpose and what kind of experience is it.

3.1 Historical backgrounds

The Pentecostal movement was inspired by the Holiness³⁶ and Keswick³⁷ movements in which regards the Holy Spirit Baptism. On the one hand, this expression was used by the Holiness members. In 1859, Phoebe Palmer described the “Holiness to the Lord” as a “full baptism of the Holy Spirit,” which is compulsory for every believer³⁸. Further on, Asa Mahan, another prominent member of the Holiness movement, said that the consequences of the baptism in the Holy Ghost were: cleansing from sin, accumulation of moral and spiritual power,

³⁵ After the Pentecostal development, a lot of Charismatics members within other churches exposed their understanding of Spirit-Baptism, which is very often distinct in comparison with the Classical Pentecostal doctrine. In this paper I am interested to point to the teaching about Spirit Baptism as understood by Classical Pentecostal Movement.

³⁶ Following John Wesley’s thoughts and interest in Christian holiness, Holiness Movement emerged from Methodism and its central point constitutes Wesley’s emphasis on second work of grace as leading event to Christian perfection. For more information see Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2nd ed., 1997.)

³⁷ Constituted as a movement committed to Christian holiness in England, *Higher Life Movement*, also known as *Keswick movement*, has put a lot of effort in making Christians aware that they have to behave properly as Christians in order to experience the work of God in their life.

³⁸ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), p. 88. In the same year, P. Palmer published her book *The promise of the Father*, where she declares that “the full baptism of the Holy Ghost, as a grace to be experienced and enjoyed in the present life, was the distinguishing doctrine of Methodism”. See D. Dayton, *Theological Roots...*, p. 88.

more intimate fellowship with the Father and His Son and a “unity of the Spirit among believers³⁹”.

In line with them, John Fletcher stressed the Holiness point of view about Holy Spirit Baptism. Emphasizing the need for Christian perfection from Wesley’s writings and the revivalist’s penchant for crisis experience, Fletcher arrives at an understanding of “sanctification” as a “second blessing,” or a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” after regeneration⁴⁰. Holiness movement understood sanctification as a second definite work of grace (regeneration is the first one) “whereby” the Adamic nature is eradicated⁴¹. The big dilemma was: what is given through the Holy Spirit Baptism - holiness or power?

This question led Benjamin Harden Irwin to speak about the third blessing: so far as the sin question is concerned, it is forever settled in the two works of grace – forgiveness, and cleansing. Hence, the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire gives special anointing and deep inner illuminating⁴². That is why, for Irwin, the “baptism of fire” is a subsequent experience to sanctification.

On the other hand, Holy Spirit Baptism is also mentioned within the Keswick revival. Here the Holy Spirit Baptism is understood as a post-conversion empowerment for the witness. For Keswick adherents, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not

³⁹ D. Dayton, *Theological Roots...*, p. 89.

⁴⁰ Frank D. Macchia, Baptized in the Spirit: Towards a Global Pentecostal Theology, in: Steven M. Studebaker (ed.), *Defining Issues in Pentecostalism: Classical and Emergent* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2008), p. 14 (13-28).

⁴¹ Harold D. Hunter, *Spirit-Baptism: A Pentecostal Alternative* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1983), p. 3. Holiness members understand the relation between regeneration and sanctification as the negative and positive aspect of the same work: the first work is conversion (justification and regeneration, which are distinct in nature, but they are received at the same moment), then it comes the second work: a perfect cleansing of heart and the baptism of the Holy Spirit” (Russell R. Byrum apud D. Dayton, *Theological Roots...*, p. 94.)

⁴² D. Dayton, *Theological Roots...*, p. 97.

anymore relate to sanctification but is seen simply as an endowment with power for mission.

Beside Holiness and Keswick, American revivalist influenced Pentecostalism also. Through Charles Finney and L. Moody, the doctrine of “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is seen as “endowment of power on high” and as a gift of the Holy Spirit for service⁴³.

A great number of Pentecostals adopted the Keswick’s point of view, “shifting their spiritual emphasis from Sanctification to Holy Spirit Baptism as a charismatic movement⁴⁴”. However, for these distinctions, regarding *ordo salutis*, we need to have a good image of the relation between Holy Spirit Baptism and salvation, which I am going to present at a later stage in this paper. For now, I will turn my attention to the sources quoted by Pentecostals to ground the teaching about baptism with the Holy Spirit and how these sources are interpreted in the light of this doctrine.

3.2 Scriptural arguments

The basis for the Holy Spirit Baptism, as seen by Pentecostal Movement, is found in the Book of Acts (*Acts* 2, 1-4), where it is described the event of Pentecost, merged with reflections about the baptism professed by Saint John the Baptist. Hence, the argumentation starts from John the Baptist’s words (*Mark* 1:4) about the distinction between his baptism with water (a baptism of repentance) and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is going to be made by Jesus Christ (*Mark* 1, 8, *Acts* 1, 4-5). Then, the discourse is being formulated using the terminology of *Acts* 11, 16, emphasizing that the central act of

⁴³ D. Dayton, *Theological Roots...*, p. 102. For them, the Holy Spirit dwells in every believer, but through the Spirit-Baptism one receives a special gift for service. This doctrine is further developed by Reuben A. Torrey and J. Chapman.

⁴⁴ F. D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.:Zondervan, 2006), p. 28.

the baptism, the immersion, is understood as an immersion “in the reality of the Spirit⁴⁵”.

To put it short, Classical Pentecostalism describes the baptism with the Holy Spirit as “an experience of the Spirit’s power accompanied by speaking in tongues as on the Day of Pentecost⁴⁶”. Emphasizing the charismatic theology of Saint Luke, almost all the Classical Pentecostal groups are speaking about Holy Spirit Baptism as a work of the Spirit which is distinct from and (usually) after his work of regeneration, adoption, and justification⁴⁷. The baptism presupposes conversion, on the presumption that disciples were already Christians at Pentecost⁴⁸. Usually, this subsequence is understood as a logical subsequence: “even if salvation and baptism in the Spirit are at the same moment, salvation (conversion, regeneration) precedes Spirit baptism⁴⁹”.

4 Ordo salutis and Holy Spirit Baptism

As stated previously in the paper, the essence of this experience is to receive *power for service*, which is distinct from purity⁵⁰. Speaking about that, Roger Stronstad says that “for Luke, the Holy Spirit is not brought into relation to salvation or

⁴⁵ John Rodman Williams, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, in: Stanley M. Burgess and Ed M. van der Maas (eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 2002), p. 355.

⁴⁶ David Petts, The Baptism in the Holy Spirit - the Theological Distinctive, in: Keith Warrington (ed.), *Pentecostal Perspectives*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), p. 98 (98-119).

⁴⁷ H. D. Hunter, *Spirit-Baptism : A Pentecostal Alternative*, p. 4.

⁴⁸ D. Petts, The Baptism in the Holy Spirit - the Theological Distinctive, p. 99. Luke says that their names were written in heaven (Lk. 10.20); also, in *Acts*, the reception of the Spirit is subsequent to regeneration: the baptism of Samaritans in *Acts* 8, or the baptism of Paul in *Acts* 9.

⁴⁹ J. R. Williams, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p. 357.

⁵⁰ H. D. Hunter, *Spirit-Baptism : A Pentecostal Alternative*, p. 4.

sanctification, as is commonly asserted, but is exclusively brought into relation to the third dimension of Christian life – service”⁵¹. Thus, it can be remarked a shift from salvation to service and from community to individual in the Christian life as understood by Pentecostal theology. In that sense, Frank Macchia explains that, for Pentecostals, Holy Spirit Baptism is viewed as the personal renewal needed to bring the church back to the wealthy and powerful charismatic life evident in the book of Acts⁵². Shortly put, In which regards the relationship between the work of salvation and Holy Spirit Baptism, for a significant part of Pentecostals, the receiving of the Holy Spirit through the baptism of the Spirit has nothing to do with salvation. “One may truly believe in Christ and not yet have received the gift of the Holy Spirit”⁵³. This does not mean that some of the people received a part of the Spirit at conversion and through the Spirit baptism they receive the rest.

If we look to arrange the events in chronological order, then we can say that, for the main part of the Pentecostal Movement, salvation has two moments. The “first work of grace” contains the calling of God and, after that, the conversion, regeneration, justification and adoption of the believer⁵⁴. All these actions are usually summed up in what is known as the event of “conversion”. Conversion is the fundamental experience of salvation. At conversion “the sinner is born again in such a glorious and transforming manner that old things are passed

⁵¹ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), p. 12, 62. For Luke, the Holy Spirit is given to those who are already disciples or believers and for that reason the purpose of the gift of the Spirit is charismatic or vocational.

⁵² F. D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit : A Global Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 62-63.

⁵³ J. R. Williams, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 357. Pentecostals use to say that salvation relates to sinners, baptism in the Holy Spirit relates to saints.

⁵⁴ H. D. Hunter, *Spirit-Baptism : A Pentecostal Alternative*, pp. 230-240.

away, and all things become new⁵⁵". Conversion presupposes faith in Jesus Christ and, in some groups, confession of sins.

The second moment within *the act of salvation (ordo salutis)*, named "the second work of grace", is sanctification. Sanctification is related to the state of the believer after the regeneration. This doctrinal development is linked to the question raised by the adherents of the Holiness movement who were interested to know how is possible to assure an "eternal security" for the converted who fell back from the state of grace? Therefore, the issue of sins after conversion led Pentecostals with Wesleyan origins to speak about sanctification as a second stage, following conversion, and before Holy Spirit Baptism⁵⁶. At this juncture, sins are finally rooted out, and for that reason, salvation depends on sanctification, on overcoming of sin⁵⁷. Further on, when Pentecostalism started to spread, a third work of grace, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit will be understood and taught as part of the journey to salvation⁵⁸.

5 Developing the Teaching

William J. Seymour, the leader of the Azusa Street Mission, understood Holy Spirit Baptism as a part of the journey to

⁵⁵ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press, 1972), p. 247.

⁵⁶ J. R. Williams, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p. 358. These Pentecostals are grouped in *Church of God in Christ, Church of God* (Cleveland, TN), *International Pentecostal Holiness Church* and others.

⁵⁷ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, p. 249. These groups of Pentecostals emphasized perfectionism taught by John Wesley, though Wesley never had a clear position about the Christian perfection.

⁵⁸ Edmund J. Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation: Eastern Orthodoxy and Classical Pentecostalism on Becoming Like Christ* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), p. 188. From this point arises the teaching about the "three stage-pattern," where Spirit-Baptism is seen as a part of *ordo salutis*.

salvation. In the first number of “The Apostolic Faith”⁵⁹, a member of his mission, or even Seymour himself, speaks about the first work of grace (justification) as “act of God’s free grace by which we receive remission of sins.” The second stage, sanctification, “makes us holy” and it is required to receive the Holy Spirit Baptism. Hence, for Seymour, the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a “gift of power upon the sanctified life”⁶⁰.

The main part of Pentecostals (e.g. Assemblies of God), however, which does not have Wesleyan origins, speaks about sanctification as both given in salvation and progressive throughout the Christian life⁶¹. In this respect, this line of thought within Pentecostalism never accepted the doctrine of perfection, nor the language of the second blessing. They speak about conversion and the indwelling of the Spirit, and they see Holy Spirit Baptism as a post-conversion empowerment for witness which simply follows conversion⁶². Thus, the mainstream of Pentecostalism sees the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a gift which always precedes and affects mission or vocation⁶³.

⁵⁹ Unknown author, The apostolic faith movement, in: *The Apostolic Faith*, 1 (September 1906), p. 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ J. R. Williams, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p. 358. Charismatics groups within other churches have the same position.

⁶² F. D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: Towards a Global Pentecostal Theology*, p. 15.

⁶³ R. Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, p. 83. The charismatic activity of the Spirit, through Spirit-Baptism, was questioned by James D. G. Dunn. In his book, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, Dunn shows that “for the writers of the NT the baptism or gift of the Spirit was part of the event (or process) of becoming a Christian, together with the effective proclamation of the Gospel, belief in (*eis*) Jesus as Lord, and water-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus.” – see James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit; a Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Naperville, Ill.: A. R. Allenson, 1970), p. 226.

Emphasizing so much the charismatic activity of the Spirit, the distinctive purpose of Holy Spirit Baptism (endowment with power), Classical Pentecostals make a formal distinction between Christ's sanctifying and Spirit baptismal work⁶⁴. In this context, the legitimate questions are: can someone experience the presence of the Holy Spirit without receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Could someone be saved without receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit? All these questions regard the relation between Holy Spirit Baptism and justification/sanctification.

Though is not so emphasized throughout their doctrine, Pentecostals also speak about regeneration as a work of the Spirit (based on *John* 3:5 or *Titus* 3:5)⁶⁵ Seymour envisioned a more integral connection between sanctification and Holy Spirit Baptism by declaring it a "gift of power upon the sanctified life"⁶⁶. Therefore, trying to answer this question, we can name three exegetical directions within Pentecostalism.

First, those who see the work of justification and sanctification made by Christ and the Holy Spirit Baptism made by the Holy Spirit completely separated. Second, there are those who do not see any distinctions between regeneration, sanctification, and Holy Spirit Baptism. Third, many Pentecostals followed a middle path: "initial indwelling of the Spirit as occurring with

⁶⁴ F. D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit : A Global Pentecostal Theology*, p. 80: "Pentecostal parted from their Holiness forebears by defining sanctification as a Christological category. They splintered Christ's sanctifying from his Spirit baptismal ministry for ecclesiological reason. They wanted to preserve their uniqueness as an empowered and charismatically endowed community as well as their use of Spirit baptism as a critical challenge to a divided and spiritually slothful church."

⁶⁵ D. Petts, *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit - the Theological Distinctive*, p. 109.

⁶⁶ Unknown author, The apostolic faith movement, in: *The Apostolic Faith*, 1 (September 1906), p. 2.

regeneration/justification and the ‘fullness’ of the indwelling as taking place with the experience of Spirit baptism.”⁶⁷

Another well-known voice within Pentecostalism, Amos Yong, tried answering to these questions in more coherent and cohesive way. He put salvation next to Holy Spirit Baptism and argued that “salvation – understood as baptism in the Holy Spirit – is not, however, only a one time in a forgone past, but is experienced as an ongoing and deepening relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.”⁶⁸

6 The Experience of the Holy Spirit and the Ordinances

As we have seen in the above paragraphs, Pentecostalism emphasizes personal encounter with God through Spirit baptism. There are no means of receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit; there are no rites. Everything is spontaneous and charismatic. On the one hand, to be saved one must have faith in Jesus Christ, and the grace of salvation is given for free. On the other hand, Pentecostals are stressing the teaching about Spirit baptism. Through this baptism, one is filled with the Holy Spirit and is empowered for service. In Spirit baptism one experiences the presence of the Holy Spirit in a direct and conscious way. This understanding lead us to these questions:

⁶⁷ Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2010), p. 88. For this direction, Macchia gave the example of Mrs. A. A. Body (see A. A. Body, *Testimony of a Vicar’s Wife*, in: Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p. 88) Frank Macchia points to this relation, as a more helpful trend, also in his well-known book *Baptized in the Holy Spirit* (see Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit : A Global Pentecostal Theology*, p. 77.) Here, he declares that is better to accent “the gift of the Spirit given in regeneration and to view the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism as empowerment for witness as a ‘release’ of an already-indwelling Spirit in life.”

⁶⁸ Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 31.

how do Pentecostals relate to sacraments? More specific, what is the relation between Spirit baptism and water baptism?

First of all, Pentecostals use the word “ordinances” instead of “sacraments.” Though it does have the same meaning, the fact that sacramental churches are using it made them see in its significance a self-contained efficacy. Secondly, Classical Pentecostals speak about two ordinances: water baptism and Lord’s Supper.⁶⁹

Azusa Mission’s newspaper, *The Apostolic Faith*, discussed ordinances for the first time in 1907. There are three ordinances: foot washing, Lord’s Supper and water baptism.⁷⁰ Foot washing was seen as a “type of regeneration”, while Lord’s Supper is “a memorial of the death of our Lord.” This ordinance heals the body if we discern the Lord’s body by faith (1 *Cor.* 11: 29-30) and also teaches us salvation and sanctification through the Blood. In which regards the baptism, Pentecostals are seeing water baptism as commanded by Jesus (*Mark* 16: 16) and as an ordinance which “forth the believer with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection (*Rom.* 6: 3-5)”. Although Jesus commands it, water baptism “is not a saving ordinance,” but “it is obedience to the command of Jesus, following saving faith.”⁷¹ Baptism does not bring regeneration, but is seen as “a confession of personal salvation, (...) a part of the ongoing personal response of believers to the commands of Jesus subsequent to their initial response at salvation.”⁷² As it could be seen from Azusa’s newspaper, baptism has to be interpreted as obedience to Christ’s commandments, without any implication in *ordo salutis*. The General Assembly of the Church

⁶⁹ Richard Bicknell, The Ordinances: The Marginalised Aspects of Pentecostalism in: Keith Warrington (ed.), *Pentecostal Perspectives*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), p. 205 (204-222).

⁷⁰ Unknown author, The Ordinances Taught by Our Lord, in: *The Apostolic Faith*, 10 (September 1907), p. 2.

⁷¹ Unknown author, The Ordinances Taught by Our Lord, in: *The Apostolic Faith*, 10 (September 1907), p. 2.

⁷² Richard Bicknell, The Ordinances..., pp. 205-206.

of God Evangel declared in 1912 that water baptism is essential, even if someone was baptized in the Spirit before.⁷³

Comparing water baptism with Spirit baptism, Durham says that in the first one the administrator is a person and that the element of the ordinance is water, while in the Spirit baptism the administrator is Christ and the element is the Spirit.⁷⁴ To the contrary, for Seymour, water baptism is a sacrament. Sacraments are “certain signs of grace, and God’s good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him”.⁷⁵ Seymour underlines that water baptism is a “sign of regeneration”, therefore not only a “sign of profession.”⁷⁶

Hence, the emphasis is not altogether the same. On the one hand, Pentecostals will always compare water baptism with baptism in the Spirit, emphasizing the superiority of the second. On the other hand, they will speak about water baptism as being important, but not essential to baptism in the Holy Spirit. “Pentecostals speak of water baptism as either preceding or following Spirit baptism but as having no necessary connection with it.”⁷⁷

Another question which is raised about water baptism is its relation to forgiveness and salvation. Though generally, Pentecostals see water baptism as a symbol of salvation, they also consider it “connected with forgiveness of sins”, but not with “the gift of the Spirit that is thereupon promised.”⁷⁸

⁷³ Kimberly Ervin Alexander, *Matters of Conscience, Matters of Unity, Matters of Orthodoxy: Trinity and Water Baptism in Early Pentecostal Theology and Practice*, in: *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 17, no. 1 (2008), p. 54 (48-69).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ William Joseph Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 2000), p. 17.

⁷⁷ J. R. Williams, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 360.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Let me now speak briefly about the second ordinance, the Lord's Supper, and the connection it has to Spirit baptism. As well as in the case of water baptism, Pentecostals have an Evangelical interpretation about Lord's Supper. In general lines, they emphasize the non-effective and symbolic nature of the ordinances, which means that the Supper cannot save. Therefore there is no "salvific grace" in it⁷⁹.

The main function of the Lord's Supper is to be an anamnesis: "the partaking of the bread and wine is understood simply as a memorial"⁸⁰. The elements of bread and wine are "symbols" or "emblems", and what it is in this sacrament is not the real presence of Christ but a "realized presence of the Lord that makes the feast"⁸¹. The purpose of this ordinance is that it strengthens one's inner being in everyday temptations and is "healing from sickness"⁸². However, Pentecostals always remind that one is reinforced not through the elements, but Christ's presence makes him or her more powerful.

Another point of view belongs to Frank Macchia, who has taken a more sacramental position in this discussion. Macchia sees justification as a justice of the Spirit, which is *koinonia*, or a sharing of life. However, the church "participates as a body in the justice of the Spirit not only through charisma and word but also through rites of the Spirits"⁸³. Besides the emphasis put on the community, Macchia underlines the necessity of sacraments for participation in the justice of the Spirit:

"When believers perform these rites in the power of the Spirit, they recognize that *their justification* does not come from their own resources or religious devotion. They come *again and again* by the Spirit through these

⁷⁹ Richard Bicknell, *The Ordinances...*, p. 210.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁸² Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, apud Richard Bicknell, *The Ordinances...*, p. 209.

⁸³ Frank Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit : Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, p. 282.

rites (...). They are not just reminded, but they participate once more in the very power of these events, for they have the Spirit within.”⁸⁴

Therefore, water baptism has to be an integral part of the whole experience of becoming Christian, and Eucharist has to be a way of connecting an ongoing, fresh reception of the Spirit, to baptism as the rite of initiation.⁸⁵ What Macchia is trying to say is that we discuss about the same grace, the same Spirit who is present at our initiation and who gives through His presence “a genuinely new beginning in the Christian life”:

“Can grace both emerge from what is granted in Christian initiation and confront us from beyond with something genuinely new? Are we not talking here about two sides of the same coin, since what is granted in initiation is a *living relationship* with God and not a ‘material’ deposit of grace that can somehow burst forth in life?”⁸⁶

Macchia is helped in his approach by the thoughts of Simon Chan, who describes Spirit baptism as given sacramentally but fulfilled in the Holy Communion:

“Some kind of doctrine specifying the experiential distinctiveness of Spirit-baptism is needed for the long-term survival of Pentecostal charismatic reality. Here, we can learn something from the sacramentalists. They have

⁸⁴ Frank Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit : Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, p. 283 [intention is mine] Macchia also says that “The Spirit not only binds us to Christ through the proclaimed gospel but also in ‘signs following.’ These signs are primarily the sacraments as the universally valid means instituted by Christ through which Christ is present in the Church.” (see F. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit : A Global Pentecostal Theology*, p. 72.)

⁸⁵ Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit : A Global Pentecostal Theology*, p. 71, 75. “Infant baptism as done in hope of future faith as exercised by the child can approximate the full meaning of justification by faith.” (see F. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit : Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, p. 289.)

⁸⁶ Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit : A Global Pentecostal Theology*, p. 74.

incorporated the Pentecostal distinctiveness into their sacraments of baptism and confirmation (...). Pentecostals, having no sacrament of confirmation, nevertheless seek to preserve the experience of Spirit-baptism in their doctrine of subsequence. But if the doctrine of subsequence is to have any theological coherence it has to be interpreted within the complex of conversion-initiation. This has proved to be difficult without a sacramental theology. One way open to classical Pentecostals is to locate Spirit-baptism in the sacrament of Holy Communion. It is a distinct event, but at the same time it is part of a unified initiation ritual which includes baptism and confirmation. Further, it is a continuous event and therefore capable of symbolizing the concept of repeatable 'infillings.'⁸⁷

Unfortunately, we do not have enough data to know if such a shift will be adopted by the mainstream of Pentecostalism, how long it will take and if this will turn out to have an impact on the long-term survival of charismatic Pentecostal reality. Hence, I can conclude that, for Classical Pentecostalism, the experience of the Holy Spirit is based only on the direct and conscious encounter with the Holy Spirit in the Spirit baptism. In this context, the sacraments or the ordinances are only symbols. The reason for this understanding is not only the evangelical understanding of sacraments as symbols but also the distinction made by Pentecostals between conversion-initiation and the rest of the Christian life, including Spirit baptism. That is why theologians, such as Simon Chan or Frank Macchia, propose a more theologically adequate teaching for the doctrine of subsequence.

⁸⁷ Simon Chan, *Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence*, in: *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, no. 2/2 (1999), pp. 210-211 (195-211).

7 Conclusion

Hence, it can be said that, for the majority of Pentecostals, the purpose of the Holy Spirit Baptism is the receiving of power for witness, for performing mighty works, and also for continuity in the *dynamis* of the Holy Spirit down to the present.⁸⁸ Steven Land sees in these activities nothing else than the image of the Kingdom,⁸⁹ which is brought forth by the coming of the Spirit. Therefore, the Spirit baptism is the event that can bring back the reality experienced at Pentecost, experience which is the best icon we have for the Kingdom of God.

Although Pentecostal effort to return to the Christian experience from the days of the Apostles is remarkable, one can note their shift from community to individuality, from salvation to mission, sharp distinctions which were not part of the pattern noticed in the development of the Christianity during the first centuries. Beside this discrepancy, I consider that Spirit baptism doctrine points to a gap in the Pentecostal theological system, lacking the connection between the doctrines concerning Christ's work and Spirit's activity. Christ and the Holy Spirit are working on earth together, in a close relationship which reminds the unity that exists in the Holy Trinity. The Word of God does not take flesh without the coming of the Spirit, and the Spirit is sent, from the Father, on earth, by the Son of God.

That is why I think that only such a real connection between Christology and Pneumatology can make this teaching more theologically adequate. Moreover, to make that, I believe that *Spirit baptism* has to be elaborated on the entire Scripture, not

⁸⁸ J. R. Williams, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 360.

⁸⁹ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), p. 131. "In these ways: gifts and fruits of the Spirit as external witness for justification, sanctification and Spirit filling, and speaking in tongues (eschatological language of heaven) – early Pentecostals correlated their vision of the kingdom, the Christian life and God."

only on the theology of Saint Luke, which is seen by Pentecostals mainly as a charismatic theology. Nonetheless, it has to be emphasized that throughout the entire New Testament the baptism with the Holy Spirit is related to the experience of becoming a Christian and to water baptism⁹⁰.

The dialogue is about persons. In a dialogue, different persons come forth together with their entire experience, their features, and their background. To put it short, in a dialogue is brought ahead one's whole life. In the first two parts of this paper I have discussed, on the one hand, the personality and the experience of Saint Symeon the New Theologian and, on the other hand, the features and the experience of Classical Pentecostals. My paper has dealt with their views on the Baptism with the Holy Spirit until this point.

During this study, I have observed a lot of similarities as well as discrepancies between these two interpretations. Therefore, this final section is looking to bring more light on some major points the teaching about Spirit Baptism has brought up during our analysis and what is the relevance for the current inter-confessional discussions. What kind of experience is behind it? What place does it have in the process of Salvation? Which is the relation with the sacramental baptism? Is there any connection between Spirit baptism at Symeon and in Pentecostalism? Can this doctrine be used as starting point in a dialogue between Orthodox and Pentecostals?

To answer to that, few aspects have to be taken into consideration. First of all, both Symeon and Classical Pentecostal theology speaks about a second baptism, named baptism in the Holy Spirit, described as superior to the first baptism with water.

Second, for both, Symeon and Pentecostals, this baptism does not deny the efficacy of first baptism or the original conversion and justification. Nonetheless, Symeon relates this baptism with

⁹⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit...*, p.226.

the work of salvation, being a fulfillment of the grace received through the Holy Mystery of Baptism, which is a baptism with water and Holy Spirit. Everything for Symeon is related to salvation, understood as restoration and transformation of the human being. The baptism of tears is also related to entire sacramental life, especially with Holy Eucharist, which is the continuous actualization of the grace that Christians received through baptism in infancy. This baptism does not bring a different grace but is the grace received previously through Holy Mysteries, which is now fulfilled by one's response to it.

The distinction, however, stands in the different purpose Spirit baptism has for Symeon and Pentecostalism. As seen, Pentecostals describe this event as an endowment with power for evangelization, never regarding it as a part of the *ordo salutis*. This is one of the reasons why Spirit baptism has no relation with the sacraments, besides the fact that sacraments have just an anamnestic function. Moreover, I think that this is the place where the dialogue can be fruitful. There are well-known theologians within Classical Pentecostalism which want to adopt a more sacramental vision to make the doctrine of Spirit baptism more theologically coherent.

I have presented the position of Simon Chan and Frank Macchia earlier in my paper, stressing the fact that both are trying not to make a sharp separation between conversion-initiation and Spirit baptism, relating the first part to Holy Baptism and confirmation, and Spirit baptism to Holy Communion. This position is coming near to Saint Symeon's tradition, where "baptism of tears" is in straight relation to Holy Communion.

On the one hand, adopting such a view, the Pentecostal doctrine about Spirit baptism will become more coherent, not only about justification but also about the entire spiritual life of the church. On the other hand, from such a discussion about the importance of Spirit baptism, Orthodox can re-discover something that is present in their Tradition, but they forgot it. That is the missionary feature of Holy Communion. In essence, this means that Christians can go and speak about God only after they

experienced the presence of God in a conscious way. Moreover, the Holy Communion is the peak of that experience. One can speak the word only after she or he took and eat the Word through the coming of the Holy Spirit. In that sense, Saint Symeon is very clear. For him, no one can teach “the things of the Spirit without the Spirit.”⁹¹

For a good explanation of the subject I divided this paper into three parts: in the first part I have presented Saint Symeon’s teaching regarding the experience of the Holy Spirit, in the second part I did the same for the Pentecostal position, and in the third part I pointed out some of the most significant similarities and differences between them.

Hence, my paper is dealing with two main topics. First of them is the importance of a conscious experience of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, which does not deny the unconscious presence of the Holy Spirit and its efficacy in the spiritual life. Second, while are speaking about the sacrament of baptism, both these teachings emphasize the necessity of a second baptism, a superior one: the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The most important topic regarding the teaching about the experience of the Holy Spirit in Christian life and for a future enriching dialogue between Orthodox and Pentecostals is the doctrine of Spirit baptism. Why do I believe that? First of all, because the teaching about the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the crucial point regarding the personal and conscious relationship with God, emphasized both by Symeon and Pentecostal. Secondly, because from this doctrine Orthodox and Pentecostals could start new discussions regarding some ecclesiological subjects as the importance of hierarchy, the significant role of the sacraments in the life of the Church, the way in which is understood the divine grace, etc. Thirdly, because this teaching brings new insights about Christian

⁹¹ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Theological Discourses* 1, in: *The Practical and Theological Chapters; and the Three Theological Discourses*, p. 116.

mission, about the fact that Christians has to experience God in order to speak about Him, has to accomplish His commandments to teach them.

Therefore, starting from this doctrine and using the theology of Saint Symeon, Orthodox and Pentecostals can not only agree that they have a lot in common, but they can bring new points of dialogue on the ecumenical table. I am sure that at the beginning of the 21st century one of the major theological debates is going to be the experience of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christian people and at this point, the dialogue between Orthodox and Pentecostals can be fruitful.

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