

April 24, 1951

Dr. John Newton Thomas, Dean,
The Graduate Department,
The Campus

Dear Dr. Thomas:

Rev. Joseph Hopper has satisfactorily completed his major thesis for the Th.M. degree on "The Holy Spirit and Five New Testament Doctrines". It was a very satisfactory piece of work.

Sincerely yours,

James E. Bear.

THE HOLY SPIRIT
AND
FIVE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Union Theological Seminary
Richmond, Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Theology

by
Joseph Barron Hopper

May 1951

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Table of Contents	2
Preface	8
<u>Introduction</u>	10
A. The Word "Spirit" in the Bible	10
1. The Hebrew <u>רוּחַ</u>	10
2. The Greek <u>πνεῦμα</u>	13
3. Conclusion	17
B. The Old Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	20
1. The manifestation and activity of the Spirit	21
2. The Person of the Spirit	28
3. Conclusion	35
C. Distribution of the New Testament Passages Relating to the Holy Spirit	37
D. The "Coming" of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost	44
1. The outpouring of the Spirit	46
2. The relation of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit to prior manifestations of the Spirit	51
3. Conclusion	55
I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF REVELA-	

CHAPTER

PAGE

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION .v.	58
A. New Testament Affirmations of Old Testa- ment Inspiration	61
1. New Testament mention of divine origin of the Old Testament . . .	61
2. New Testament convictions as to the character and purpose of the Old Testament	66
B. The Consciousness of the New Testament Writers of their own Inspiration . . .	74
1. New Testament writers were conscious of speaking in and for the Spirit	74
2. Writers of the New Testament felt the same purposeful authority as did Old Testament writers	86
3. Peter put Paul's writings on a level with those of the Old Testament .	89
C. Conclusion	92
II. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCAR- NATION	96
A. The Holy Spirit was active in Preparing the Setting and Characters concerned with the birth of Christ	102
1. Zacharias, Elizabeth and John . .	102

CHAPTER

PAGE

2. John "lesser" than Jesus	104
3. Simeon and Anna	105
B. The Holy Spirit and the Conception of Jesus	108
1. Jesus was born without a human father	109
2. Conception was Caused by the Holy Spirit	112
3. The Holy Spirit did not take the place of a human father in the conception	115
C. Conclusion	121
III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF REGENER- ATION	124
A. The Holy Spirit and the New Birth (John 3:1-15)	128
1. Source of the New Birth	130
2. Object of the New Birth	131
3. Sign of the New Birth	132
4. Nature of the New Birth	134
5. Mystery of the New Birth	136
6. Conclusion	138
B. The Holy Spirit and the Conviction of Sin (John 16:8-11)	141

CHAPTER

PAGE

1. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin	145
2. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of righteousness	146
3. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of judgment	148
C. The Holy Spirit Moves to Repentance .	153
1. John the Baptist	157
2. Peter at Pentecost	157
3. Stephen	158
4. Peter to Cornelius	158
5. Conversion of Paul	159
6. Rom. 8:1	160
7. I Thess. 1:5	160
D. The Holy Spirit and Faith	162
1. The Acts	164
2. Writings of John	165
3. Writings of Paul	167
E. Conclusion	169
IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF SANC- TIFICATION	171
A. Filled with the Spirit	178
1. The Acts	178
2. In the Epistles	179

CHAPTER	PAGE
B. The Spirit of Life	185
1. A New controlling authority in our lives	187
2. A new center of interest	189
3. A new conviction of eventual com- plete sanctification.	191
4. Conclusion	192
C. Walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-25)	195
1. Conflict between Flesh and Spirit	199
2. The works of the Flesh	200
3. The fruit of the Spirit	202
4. The triumph of the Spirit	205
D. The Power of the Spirit	208
V. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH	214
A. The Holy Spirit and the Government of the Church	217
1. The Holy Spirit and the govern- ment of the Church as a whole	218
2. The Holy Spirit and the offi- cers of the Church	221
B. The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit	226
1. The Church is a body	230
2. The Church is a building	233

CHAPTER	PAGE
C. The Holy Spirit and Worship	239
1. Sacraments	241
2. Prayer	243
3. Singing	244
4. Preaching the Word	245
D. The Holy Spirit and the Mission of the Church	247
CONCLUSION	250
BIBLIOGRAPHY	251

PREFACE

This study was begun not with any idea of contributing anything new in the field of scholarship on the subject of the Holy Spirit but with a desire to know and understand more fully His place in God's dealings with men. This study ends with a feeling of much learned but also of much which remains to be more fully comprehended as we further study the Scripture and are led by Him in richer Christian experience. May the Spirit of God continue to guide into all truth! If the aim of graduate study be restricted to the production and development of some new and original contribution to the field of human knowledge, I have failed. But if it be to enrich and inform and develop a student's thinking and future usefulness, I hope I have attained some measure of success.

My approach has been to read through the entire New Testament, underscoring and giving special study to passages distinctly relating to the Holy Spirit. Following this I read some of the major works on the Holy Spirit. The composition of this paper was by a topical study of the Scripture passages, with the help of standard commentaries, and helpful light from these works on the Holy Spirit. In most cases there

has been no attempt to debate points of argument with these authorities, but to use their ideas where I feel they help to understand the Scripture and shed light upon their application to our theology and our Christian living.

O grant us light, that we may know
The wisdom Thou alone canst give;
That truth may guide wher-e'er we go,
And virtue bless wher-e'er we live.

-- Lawrence Tuttielt

INTRODUCTION

A. The Word "Spirit" in the Bible

The word translated as "spirit" in the English Bible represents the Old Testament רוּחַ (ruach) and the New Testament πνεῦμα (pneuma). While English-speaking people usually put "spirit" in a category to itself--a vague, intangible, invisible entity, usually defined by what it is not (in physical terms)--the Scriptural words of the Old and New Testaments at least represented the idea of "spirit" by a term suggesting a common physical phenomenon, i.e., that of "breath" or "wind." Although the Hebrews were equally at a loss with us to give a scientific proof and description of the "spiritual," perhaps their deep consciousness of the realm of spirit is due to the term they applied to it, whereas our materialistic and naturalistic age is prone to discount or forget that which we cannot see, and which is designated by a term which conjures up no analogies in our thinking.

1. The Hebrew word for "spirit" is רוּחַ, for which the root meanings are "breath," "wind" and "life" or "spirit." Gesenius' discussion may be abstracted as follows:

1. Breath (a) breath of the nostrils, a snuffing, snorting, hence anger (Job 4:9), pride (Ps. 76:12). (b) breath of the mouth, to draw breath, to take breath. Often the vital breath, breath of life (Gen. 6:17). (c) breath of air, air in motion (i) a slight breeze (Job 4:15), to snuff up the breeze (Jer. 2:24), the breeze of the day (Gen. 3:8). (ii) Oftener, wind, i.e., a strong wind (Gen. 8:1). also a tempest, hurricane (Job 1:19). The air was supposed to be put in motion by the breath of God, hence the wind is also called the breath, blast, wind of Jehovah (Is. 40:7). Wind is also put for a side or quarter of the heavens (Ex. 42:16) or for anything empty, vain (Is. 26:18). So to sow the wind (Hos. 8:7); to inherit the wind (Prov. 11:29).

2. The vital breath, spirit, life (ψυχή), the principle of life as embodied and manifested in the breath of the mouth and nostrils (Ez. 37:8). Hence is said the life of my spirit, i.e., my life, (Is. 38:16) my spirit, life, revives, returns (I Sam. 30:12).

3. Animus, the rational soul, mind, spirit (a) As the seat of the affections, emotions, and passions of various kinds (Prov. 25:28). To it are attributed patience, impatience, pride, quietness, lowliness of mind and grief of mind. (b) In reference to the disposition, the mode of feeling and acting; in which sense one is said to have firmness of mind, spirit (Ps. 51:12); a manly spirit (Prov. 18:14). Sometimes also of a spirit or disposition common to many, as the spirit of whoredom (Hos. 4:12). (c) Of will, counsel, purpose (Ez. 1:12) whither the mind (purpose) was to go, they went. (d) More rarely of the understanding, intellect (Ex. 28:3).

4. The Spirit of God, of Jehovah (Job 33:4). With a suffix, the holy Spirit of God, the divine Spirit of power, which like the wind and breath cannot be seen, but which pervades the universe (Ps. 139:7), animates and fills it with life (Gen. 1:2) through which God governs and protects the world and also mankind (Is. 40:3); and invites to the life of virtue and

holiness (Ps. 51:13). Especially the O.T. refers to this divine Spirit all extraordinary gifts and powers of mind (as of the artificer, prophet, interpreter of dreams, warrior, king). Spoken also of an evil spirit from God which entered Saul (I Sam. 16:14); also an unclean spirit, false and deceitful (Zech. 13:12).¹

The simple development of this word רוח is clear from this analysis. The word descriptive of the wind, was easily transferred to the human breath; this in turn came to stand for the life principle of men and animals who at birth received "wind" and at death gave it up; again this was co-existent with the unseen and undefinable rational factors of man, which, finally, bore analogy, if not actual connection, with the unseen though very active and real divine Spirit, who, to the Hebrew mind, was the source of all "wind," "breath," "life" and "mental powers."

A study of the "natural" connotations of the word (רוח) reveals that neither breath nor wind was ever a merely natural phenomenon to the Hebrew. In breath he saw the seat of life itself. In the wind he found an unseen power beyond his control. He traced both to their ultimate source in God, and spoke of "God's breath" and "God's wind." To them he ascribed functions which contain in germ most of the work of the Spirit. He regarded them as God's agents and went so far as to personify the wind in poetry and apocalypse.²

¹ William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1892) pp. 967-969.

² Albert Curry Winn, "רוח", A Study of the

2. Turning to the New Testament we find the Greek πνεῦμα representing our word "spirit." It too has the same essential idea as does רוח, i.e., that of wind, breath, etc.³ The lexicon outline of the meaning of πνεῦμα closely follows that of its Hebrew equivalent, as follows:

1. A movement of air, blast

- (a) of wind
- (b) breath of the nostrils or mouth.

2. The Spirit, i.e., the vital principle by which the body is animated (Jn. 19:30), the rational spirit, the power by which a human feels, thinks, wills, decides; the soul. (I Cor. 2:11).

3. A spirit, i.e., a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, deceiving, and acting

- (a) Generically, as Lk. 24:37, Jn. 4:24.
- (b) A human soul that has left the body as in Heb. 12:23.
- (c) A spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e., an angel (Heb. 1:14).
- (d) The spiritual nature of Christ, higher than the highest angels, close to God and most intimately united to him. (I Tim. 3:16)

Basic Term in Old Testament Pneumatology," (unpublished thesis, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, 1945) p. 94.

³ The New Testament employs several terms for "wind" which are discussed by Trench. See: Richard Chen-evix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1901 p. 257 ff. These are: (1) ἄνεμος --lighter, gentler, motion of air than πνεῦμα (Acts 2:2; 17:23). (2) πνεῦμα --seldom used for wind in the N.T. (3) ὄλεως --the strong, tempestuous wind (Mt. 11:7; 14:24). (4) λαίλαψ --a whirlwind, tempestuous wind, a squall (Mk. 4:37, Lk. 8:23). (5) εὐεχμία --a sudden storm, tempest, whirlwind (Deut. 4:11).

4. The Scriptures also ascribe a πνεῦμα to God, i.e., God's power and agency--manifest in the course of affairs, and by its influence upon souls productive in the theocratic body (the Church) of all the higher spiritual gifts and blessings.

(a) This πνεῦμα is called... in the N. T. πνεῦμα ἁγίου and

(b) τὸ ἔντα πνεῦμα τὸ θεοῦ (Rev. 3:1)

5. Univ. The disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any power, affection, emotion, desire. (2 Cor. 12:18 etc.)⁴

Here again, as in the Hebrew, the extension of the original idea contained in πνεῦμα (the movement of a mass of air) is perfectly natural. However, this analysis (by Thayer) of the meaning of πνεῦμα is based on its New Testament usage. A glance at the list of examples of the usage of πνεῦμα in Classical Greek is sufficient to show that its predominant use there was for the idea of "wind" and "breath" and only rarely "spirit" and still more rarely "divine spirit."⁵

Thus in ancient (Classical Greek) writers πνεῦμα is neither the soul nor God, but a substance identical with or akin to air, but possessing, according to some writers, intelligence, according to others, being the substance of which the soul is composed, and to others a sort of soul-stuff or world-stuff, the basis of all life, if not of all existence.⁶

⁴ Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1886).

⁵ Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) Vol. II, p. 1424.

⁶ Ernest DeWitt Burton, A Critical and Exegetical

Even in post-classical Greek writings the idea of "wind" predominates, although the idea of "breath" gives way to that of "life." Still

... it remains that with rare if any exception, πνεῦμα is to the end of the first Christian century still a term of substance, not of functions, and a name not of God or the human soul, but of the substance of which both are composed, a refined and ethereal substance, yet still a substance and not yet thought of as immaterial.⁷

It is clear then that the writers of the New Testament took a Greek word, the synonym for רוח, and used it to denote the Hebrew idea of "spirit." While the two words are synonymous, the Hebrews had associated their term with God from the very beginning. What changes or advances, if any, in the idea of "spirit" were made by the New Testament writers as over against the concept of Old Testament writers we shall seek to determine later. Yet it is evident that the New Testament πνεῦμα not only incorporated a rich heritage of Hebrew Scriptural meaning, but also found richer, more profound, and more personal meaning in the teachings of Christ. In the process, πνεῦμα lost the

ical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920) p. 487. Burton has here a splendid discussion of the meaning of πνεῦμα and רוח (pp. 486-495).

⁷ Ibid., p. 481.

idea of a substance (as in Classical Greek) and

...having now become an individualized term and as such a name both for the soul of man and the Spirit of God, is used as the seat of the moral and religious life of man.⁸

These remarks raise the question as to the whole psychological basis for the use of this Greek term. This has bearing upon what the New Testament, and especially the letters of Paul, expects us to understand by the word πνεῦμα. The Greek used two terms (ψυχή and πνεῦμα) for two concepts where our English "spirit" is often used indiscriminately.

From Xenophanes down to New Testament times ψυχή, soul, is an individual and functional term whose definition was not in that of which it was composed but in its functions; it is the seat of life, feeling, thought. πνεῦμα, on the other hand, is a term of substance, defined not by its functions, which are very variable, but by its qualities. Cf. the terms "knife" and "steel," "sword" and "bronze."⁹

But in the New Testament, πνεῦμα, took on a much fuller meaning. ψυχή remained the general term for the seat of life, feeling, thought, but πνεῦμα gained the idea of the seat of the moral and religious life of man.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., p. 489. See also, Herman Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark) pp. 503-510.

⁹ Ibid., p. 486.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 489.

For the purposes of this study it is more to the point to discover in what way πνεῦμα was conceived with relation to God than as a part of the psychological being of man. To the Biblical writers the former was always the source of the latter, and indeed the source of all that is and all that happens.

It must ever be maintained that the principle which gives life to the creature is of God, and originally belongs to God, so that where God's πνεῦμα is spoken of it is primarily in such a manner that we must understand by it the life-principle in the creature, which is part of God, and manifests itself creatively.¹¹

Hence πνεῦμα in the New Testament, particularly where it is the Divine Spirit (and most usages of πνεῦμα are of this kind¹²), has an "individual" or "personal" connotation not found in the Classical Greek.

3. We conclude then, that, beginning with the Hebrew word רוח meaning "wind" and "breath" we have to do with the lofty concept of "spirit" contained in the New Testament πνεῦμα, which has two closely related and converging meanings: (1) The highest aspect of man, "the seat of his moral and religious life," that upon which God could most easily operate, for it was that

¹¹ Cremer, Op. cit., p. 507.

¹² See p. 39.

in man which responded to God. (2) The aspect or manifestation of God which operates on the "human" κνεῖν. The fact that the writers of Scripture did not attempt to define κνεῖν in either sense, and the fact that they usually meant God's spirit when they used the word κνεῖν, shows that they looked upon God as the prime mover of every event and fact--hence the constant Scriptural assumption that every aspect of religious experience is in some way related to and caused by κνεῖν. They could neither define nor definitely describe this relationship, but it was too real to avoid. I think this accounts for the usage of the word κνεῖν by the New Testament writers, particularly by Paul. They sometimes threw in an expression involving reference to the Spirit in an apparently haphazard way (from our viewpoint). Just what such a phrase means is difficult and perhaps impossible to explain if we expect an exact scientific statement as to the activity or contribution of the Spirit in this particular reference. The answer lies in the fundamental and ever present assumption of Paul and the other New Testament writers that every event, particularly in the realm of religious experience, was controlled by the Spirit.

In both the Old and New Testament the idea of "spirit" is that of the movement of the wind: unseen,

powerful, out of human control, apparently capricious, yet everywhere evident. Like the breath, "spirit" is absolutely essential to life and consciousness and action. Both רוח and πνεῦμα, particularly in the New Testament, undergirded all the religious thinking of God's people. For the Christians of the first century, such a consciousness of the Spirit and belief in His activity meant that no miracle, no unexplainable phenomenon, no factor of "spiritual" living was in any sense un-natural or questionable. If we today can gain a similar concept and awareness of this Spiritual activity we will have less room for questioning both Biblical and current religious phenomena.

B. The Old Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

In discussing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament we are immediately confronted with two aspects of the study which may result in two different conclusions. One is the view which looks upon Old Testament allusions to the Spirit entirely in the light of the Old Testament alone. The other takes these same allusions and treats them in the light of New Testament teaching and the development of Christian doctrines over many centuries of study and debate.

For a student brought up in the Christian tradition it is almost impossible to avoid the second of these two positions. When the Spirit of God is referred to in the Old Testament he simply cannot free himself from the concept of the Trinity which almost wholly comes from his Christian viewpoint. Many of the more voluminous works on the Holy Spirit reflect this situation. Admitting the impossibility of freeing my own mind from this non-Old Testament influence, the attempt here will be to point out briefly the Old Testament doctrine of the Spirit in the light of the Old Testament alone. This will be done by looking first at the activities ascribed to the Spirit in the Old Testament and, secondly, at the "doctrine" of the Person of the

Spirit--the key point being His distinctive personality in relation to God Himself.

1. The Manifestation and Activity of the Spirit in the Old Testament. While Old Testament religion was based on a legal system, there was room for the spiritual too, and we find the Spirit active in many ways and in different areas, but He does not characterize the system as a whole. The Hebrew וְיָ has already been discussed. Where it stood for the Divine Spirit, it represents God at work, God's energy and power.

The most widely diffused of all religious systems, polytheism, is the perversion of a great truth, the truth of the variety and fulness of the divine nature... It is the distinctive mark of polytheism that it sacrifices the unity to the variety of the divine nature. Against this error the Old Testament everywhere contends... The Old Testament overthrows the error, the New Testament brings to light the truth, of polytheism.¹

Where pagan religions referred all events to someone in a hierarchy of deities, the Old Testament refers them to the Divine Spirit.

One scholar finds 78 Old Testament passages which refer to the Divine Spirit. The ~~most~~ ^{most} common name for Him is the "Spirit of God" (62 times as the Spirit of Jehovah, 12 times as the Spirit of Elohim); He is

¹ J. Ritchie Smith, The Holy Spirit In the Gospels (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1926) pp. 19-20.

called the "Holy Spirit" three times; once or twice He is termed the Good Spirit.² As we shall see later the term "Spirit of God" makes it very difficult to determine whether anything other than God Himself is meant.

The following list includes the main activities of the Spirit, as discovered in the Old Testament.

a. The Spirit of God bears a relation to all creation.

i. He was present at the creation of the earth, in some way carrying out God's creative commands. Gen. 1:2 states, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Job 26:13, "By his Spirit the heavens are garnished." In Ps. 104:30 the Spirit is designated as the agent in the creation of life; "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created."

ii. The Spirit in some way sustains and controls and governs in all nature. Old Testament writers "regarded the phenomena of Nature as the result of God's direct action through His Spirit. At every point their conception of the Spirit saved from pantheism on the one hand and polytheism on the other."³

² Ibid, p. 29 ff.

³ International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: The Howard Severance Co., 1930) Vol. III. Article on the Holy Spirit by E. Y. Mullins, p. 1407.

iii. In some peculiar fashion the Spirit effected the creation of man himself. Job 33:4 declares, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life." The fact that most of the references in this paragraph are from Job and Psalms, poetic works, makes their exact meaning open to question.

b. The Spirit of God bestows extraordinary powers upon men.

The work of the Spirit is mainly directed to preparing men for public service, and is almost entirely confined to extraordinary persons and events.⁴

The following classes of people had this special endowment of the Spirit:

i. Artizans and national leaders. For example, Bezalel was given special skill in workmanship for the Tabernacle (Ex. 31:3). Othniel (Judges 3:10), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephthah (Judges 11:29) Samson (Judges 13:25) and Nehemiah (Neh. 9:20) were all given skill to rule their people and wage war successfully.

ii. Prophets. This is the most outstanding manifestation of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament. The prophets regarded themselves as the voice of the Spirit of God. They looked upon possession of the Spirit as the approval and sanction of their message, as well

⁴ Smith, Op. cit., p. 38.

as the source of their message. Micah 3:8, "I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah" reflects their attitude.

The prophet is not the passive instrument, but the conscious and willing agent of the Spirit. He may justly, therefore, be held to account for the proper discharge of his mission. The Spirit uses men according to their capacity, temper, experience. After he came upon them, they differ among themselves as widely as before. He does not destroy, but develops and directs the native gifts and energies of men, so that under his inspiration every man becomes more truly and thoroughly himself. The message bears the impress of the personality of the prophet. The substance is communicated by the Spirit; the form is determined by the character and experience of the messenger, acting indeed under the control and direction of the Spirit.⁵

With such a definite consciousness of the Spirit operative in their lives and message, it is not surprising that

the richest deposits (of Old Testament material on the Spirit) are found in the poets and prophets, especially in Isaiah and Ezekiel, from each of which, in the opinion of Warfield, the whole doctrine of the Spirit could probably be derived.⁶

Perhaps the most definite declaration of inspiration to be found in Scripture is Ezekiel 2:2, "And the Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me."

⁵ Ibid, p. 41.

⁶ James Benjamin Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit (New York: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1936) p. 18.

iii. The Messiah. The Messianic prophecies, particularly those in Isaiah, point to One who would be endowed with the Spirit of God in a peculiar way--in somewhat the same sense in which the prophets themselves possessed the Spirit, but in far larger measure. Isaiah 42:1, "Behold, my servant, whom I behold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles." Whatever interpretation scholars may try to place upon the Messianic prophecies (this is not the place to enter into a discussion of this subject) there is no doubt that the prophets saw him as peculiarly endowed with the Spirit who would fit him for His work.

So we see the Old Testament writers saying that the Son of David, or the Servant of Jehovah, will be anointed with the Spirit to qualify him for his messianic mission, and then we find the New Testament telling us that these predictions have been fulfilled in Jesus, upon whom the Spirit came at his baptism and who did all his works in the power of the Spirit of God.⁷

c. The Spirit bestows moral and spiritual character to individual worshippers. There is far less of this concept in the Old Testament than in the New Testament, but still it is present, and, in prophecy, a time is

⁷ Walter Thomas Conner, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1949) p. 30.

anticipated when this will be a general work of the Spirit of God. Several times the Spirit is called "holy" and "good" (Ps. 51:11; 143:10; Is. 63:10-11; Neh. 9:20). In none of these instances does the American Standard Version capitalize "holy" or "good." Emphasis is on the holiness and goodness of the Spirit, even as God Himself is characterized by these two attributes. Hence the Spirit, essentially holy and good Himself, was recognized as the source of inward moral purity. This is especially true of the prophets, yet was also recognized as a general principle. Ps. 139:7, "Whither shall I go from thy presence?" is a strong incentive for personal moral purity in such a presence. The reference in Ps. 51 again equates the Holy Spirit and the Lord's presence.

It is clear that the presence of the Holy Spirit means cleansing, restoration, joy and usefulness. With sins forgiven, heart cleansed, the joy of salvation restored, the Holy Spirit abiding with him, he will teach transgressors the ways of God and sinners will be converted to God.⁸

It should be noted that this type of activity by the Spirit of God was restricted largely to the Chosen People, although Melchisadec, Ruth, and Balaam are exceptions. Some interpret Gen. 6:3, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever," to mean the withdrawal

⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

of God's Spirit from the world in general until the time of Pentecost.

There are definite predictions of a time when the "Spirit will be poured out on all flesh." This is definitely tied up with the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. Clearest of these references is the passage (quoted by Peter at Pentecost) in Joel 2:28-29.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.

Here people of all classes, without distinctions of any sort, are to be endowed with the Spirit as were only the prophets in the days of the Old Testament.

The activities of the Spirit in the Old Testament may be summarized then as follows:

It was not....in his moral and spiritual life that the Spirit was supposed to be operative so much as in unusual states and experiences, such as prophecy, ecstasies, and power. The Spirit is regarded as an adequate cause for phenomena which are deemed supernatural and inexplicable. Not practical religious value, relation to holiness and life, but the mysterious and miraculous is the test and proof of the Spirit's operation. Hence the prophet with the ecstatic inspiration which was commonly attributed to him was the typical example of a Spirit-filled man.⁹

⁹ George Barker Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899) p. 431.

2. The Person of the Spirit in the Old Testament. It is possible to take the position that all the manifestations and activities of the Spirit of God, discussed above, are, after all, mere descriptions of God Himself at work. To borrow from the terminology of Christian theology, some would refer everything in the previous part of this chapter to the first person of the Trinity rather than to the third. In my own opinion, positive proof one way or the other, without bringing in the New Testament, is impossible. We simply do not have enough evidence in the way of specific Old Testament statements to give a scientific proof that the references of the Old Testament to the Spirit of God refer to the third Person of the Trinity--certainly not the proof which would convince a skeptic in these matters. I do think that in the light of the fuller revelation of the New Testament we can see in the Old Testament unmistakable evidence and indeed positive proof of the Spirit of God as somehow distinct from God as well as being God.

a. Before going further and noting the attributes of the Spirit and His personality as a distinct One in the Godhead, it is to the point here to note what the Jews themselves now believe about the Spirit of God. Presumably they are less influenced by Christian doc-

trines than other commentators, and perhaps reflect the attitude of pre-Christian era Jews on this subject.

The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia comments:

There is no indication...that the "holy spirit" was regarded as a separate entity. Christian theology developed from the term its doctrine of the Holy Ghost as a member of the Trinity.¹⁰

Naturally this writer from whom this quotation comes is giving his own view, which does not necessarily represent Jewish theology. On the other hand the Jewish Encyclopedia takes a different position:

Although the Holy Spirit is often named instead of God...yet it was conceived as being something distinct. The Spirit was among the ten things that were created on the first day (Hag. 12a,b). Though the nature of the Holy Spirit is really nowhere described, the name indicates that it was conceived as a kind of wind that became manifest through noise and light.¹¹

It is noteworthy that the Holy Spirit is less frequently referred to in the Apocrypha and by Hellenistic Jewish writers; and this circumstance leads to the conclusion that the conception of the Holy Spirit was not prominent in the intellectual life of the Jewish people, especially in the Diaspora.¹²

Hoyle's discussion of this subject¹³ indicates that actually Jewish opinion varied all the way from the idea

¹⁰ The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Inc., 1943) Vol. 9, p. 268.

¹¹ The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk & Wagnalls co., 1916) p. 448.

¹² Ibid., p. 450.

¹³ Birch Hoyle, "Spirit (Holy), Spirit of God" Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, James Hastings editor. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921) Vol. XI p 784ff.

of the Spirit as the energy of God, as an ethical principle, to personalization in connection with the Logos.

The absence of doctrinal formularies from Talmudic Judaism gave room for all shades of opinion, provided that they could in some way be connected with the letter of the O. T. Scriptures and did not contravene the doctrine of the Shēmā' (Dt. 6:4-6). Hence no systematic or authoritative doctrine of the Holy Spirit can be deduced from the mass of traditions contained in the Gemara and the Midrashim, and the anonymous authorship of many sayings about the Holy Spirit makes the tracing of the historical development of doctrine well-nigh impossible.¹⁴

Nowhere in books on the doctrines of Judaism today, or their doctrines in bygone centuries, can I find any development of the idea of the Spirit of God as anything distinct from God Himself. The only exceptions to this statement are where a few Jewish scholars have attempted to work out some distinction between the two on philosophical grounds--not on the basis of the Old Testament Scripture. This would support the opinion, then, that without the light of the New Testament, one is not likely to deduce the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as distinct in any way from God. This does not mean that certain Old Testament characters and authors did not make the distinction--but, if they did, it did not affect the rigid Jewish belief in the one and only God as set forth in the Ten Commandments. "Hear, O Israel:

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 789.

the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. 6:4).

The Jew missed the distinction, for he probably regarded the phrase "Spirit of God," so often elsewhere used, as a mere title of God, one person.¹⁵

Nor does this opinion mean that we are unjustified in reading the Old Testament in the light of the New, and even using Old Testament passages on the Spirit of God to support and prove our own Christian doctrines of the Holy Spirit. I think this is a logical position--just as, for instance, a child who is learning arithmetic has no idea what algebra is, or that there is even such a science--but that does not prevent him from later on discovering that some of his arithmetical problems actually involved the fundamentals of algebra, at the time completely unknown to him as such but nevertheless involved in his childish computations.

b. Now let us see what the Old Testament itself leads us to believe about the Person of the Holy Spirit. Our discussion has already indicated that the Spirit of God was active as an agent in creation and in imparting life, special gifts, and prophetic inspiration; all the things said about God are said about the Spirit of God--the two terms seem often to be used interchangeably. Hence there is no question about the divine nature of the

¹⁵ Green, Op. cit., p. 37.

Spirit of God in the Old Testament. For the purposes of this thesis, it is worth noting that most of the activity of the Spirit in connection with the New Testament doctrines which we will study later, can be discovered in the Old Testament too--or at least they are foreshadowed there. The difficult question is: What is the Spirit of God in the Old Testament? Is He in any way distinct from God (as we have come to believe in Christian theology)? The answer may be briefly summarized:

i. The Spirit of God is God (as we have just indicated.

The Spirit of God is not an influence exerted by God at a point from which He is Himself distant. God is always present in the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is God actually present and in operation.¹⁶

ii. The Spirit is often referred to as "falling on" or "resting on" some one. From the standpoint of Christian thinking this certainly refers to the Holy Spirit as a person working in men. While we may interpret these Old Testament passages as indicating a distinction within the Godhead, the words themselves do not insist that we must so interpret them; the evidence is slim, at best, that the Jews so regarded it--they did look upon the possession of the Spirit as an empowering from on

¹⁶ A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931) p. 127.

High.

iii. There are some passages where the wording could point to a distinction within the Godhead. Some¹⁷ point to the expression in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, let us make man in our image." (Also 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8). This may mean that God is referring to numerical distinctions within His Godhead; it could also refer to His inclusion of, for instance, the angels; or to the "editorial we."

There are plural forms of the divine name with which singular verbs and adjectives are usually joined: Elohim; Adonai; the Holy One; Creator; Maker. These are sometimes represented as survivals of the polytheism which was the primitive religion of mankind, but they are more frequently and properly regarded as the plural of eminence or majesty.¹⁸

To claim that ~~Gen. 1:26~~ is a definite and final statement of the doctrine of Trinity in Unity would be false.¹⁹

¹⁷ Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (New York: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946) p. 221.

¹⁸ Smith, Op. cit., p. 20-21.

¹⁹ G. Campbell Morgan, The Spirit of God (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900) p. 35. Davidson makes the following comment on these passages: "If God, who speaks in these passages, uses the word us of Himself, there is a perfectly clear statement to the effect that the Godhead is a plurality--whether that plurality be a duality, or a trinity, or some other number is spoken of. But so far the sense has no vagueness or obscurity. The point, however, is whether the Divine speaker uses the word us of Himself, i.e., of the Godhead alone, or whether He does not rather include others, e.g., His Heavenly council along with Him. The opinion of most expositors is to the latter effect." Davidson, Op. cit., p. 129.

Apparently the Jews themselves never detected such a doctrine in these passages. Other scholars see the Trinity in the "Holy, Holy, Holy" of Isaiah 6:3, or in Hag. 2:5; Zech. 4:6; Isa. 43:10,11.

My own conclusion from a brief study of this evidence is that in itself it does not prove any doctrine of the Person of the Spirit in any distinction from God. I do believe that in the light of the New Testament we can see the doctrine of the Trinity very clearly set forth in most or all of these references. And I further believe these passages can make our New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit fuller and more meaningful.

There are indications (in the Old Testament)... of the number of Persons in the Godhead, and their various characteristics and offices. Here, of course, we are reading the Old Testament in the light of the New. These representations would never of themselves convey the conception of the Trinity, nor is there reason to believe that the truth was apprehended by the sacred writers themselves; but it lay in the mind of the Spirit, and in the light of the event is seen to have a place in the Old Scripture. If indeed there are Three Persons in the Godhead, a truth so transcendent could not be altogether concealed. Gleams of it must break through the darkness. God could not reveal himself, however obscurely, for the redemption of men, and give no intimation of that three-fold nature upon which the work of redemption rests.²⁰

²⁰ Smith, Op. cit., p. 20.

3. Conclusion. The Spirit of God in the Old Testament is best understood from the standpoint of His activity everywhere evident rather than from the theological doctrines of His personality and being. This activity is manifestly Divine, and is, indeed, God Himself in action. This activity was particularly in evidence in the framework of God's Chosen Nation, and within that framework was largely restricted to granting of special gifts and powers--particularly that of the inspiration of the prophets. Dr. Smith summarizes this as follows:

This...is the teaching of the Old Testament regarding the Spirit of God, which moulded the thought of Jesus. The Spirit appears as the divine influence or energy, rather than a Person. He is the manifestation or representation of God. But there are hints of a profounder truth, hints, and suggestions of his Personality, of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. Jesus and his disciples brought out into clear light the truth thus obscurely intimated. The Spirit is no longer represented as a personification, but as a Person, one with God in nature, yet distinct from him in Person and office.²¹

²¹ Ibid., p. 49-50. The following is the conclusion of a thorough study of the word רוח in the Old Testament (by A. C. Winn): "That in Old Testament times the רוח was, in some cases at least, definitely personified seems, from the above evidence, an inescapable conclusion. It is not nearly so clear that the Hebrews went into the consequences and ramifications of this personification. A general trend toward emphasis in more-than-human personalities is evident in the Old Testament. Such Persons include: Wisdom (Prov. 1-8), the Messianic King, the Suffering Servant, and רוח. That all of these partook of the Divine nature is clear,

but how they were related to each other and how they were to be reconciled with a strict monotheism were problems the Hebrew did not try to solve. Thus the Trinity was 'latent' in the Old Testament in a remarkable way. But it was never 'patent' until the Word was made flesh and we beheld the glory of the only begotten of the Father, Full of grace and truth." Albert Curry Winn, D.D., A Study of the Basic Term in Old Testament Pneumatology, Unpublished theses, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., 1945. p. 89.

C. Distribution of New Testament Passages relating to the Holy Spirit

A study of the word πνεῦμα as translated into the English New Testament¹ shows that it occurs 399 times. This includes 31 uses of the word "spiritual" and 42 uses of the word πνεῦμα with reference to evil spirits or demons. In 94 cases, the American Standard Version does not capitalize "spirit" but in 139 cases the word is capitalized. In addition there are 93 occurrences of πνεῦμα ἁγίου which is, of course, capitalized. This list does not include Mt. 14:26 and Mk. 6:49 where the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water and cried, "It is a ghost" (φάντασμα). But Luke 24:37 uses πνεῦμα where Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection (some manuscript evidence here is in favor of φάντασμα instead.)

Just what decided whether "spirit" should be capitalized or not (in the American Standard Version) I cannot discover. In the majority of cases, the context is sufficient to indicate whether the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or some other usage was meant. Nevertheless some American Standard Version renditions are open to question. For instance, II Cor. 3:6 is translated:

¹ American Standard Version.

"who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."² Again, I Cor. 2:12, "But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God."³ Yet again, Rom. 7:6, "But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter."⁴ In all these passages one could refer this word to the Holy Spirit, and many commentators do this. Other similar cases are in Acts 19:21; 20:22; Rom. 1:4; 12:11; I Cor. 6:17; 14:2; II Cor. 3:8; I Tim. 3:16. In all eleven of these verses just cited, the Revised Standard Version (1946) capitalizes the word spirit (where the American Standard Version does not). On the other hand in a few cases where spirit is capitalized some would not so render it. For instance,

² Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915) pp. 85f.

³ Archibald Robertson, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915) p. 45. Also Lias in Cambridge Greek Testament Series, p. 45.

⁴ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906) p. 176. Also Parry in Cambridge Greek Testament Series. p. 102.

Jn. 4:24, "God is a Spirit" in the American Standard Version is translated "God is spirit" in the Revised Standard Version. (American Standard Version margin does this also.) Also see Rev. 1:4; 31; 4:5; 5:6--all of which refer to the "seven spirits." Nevertheless, for our purposes of indicating the general distribution of the word πνεῦμα in the New Testament, such a few variable translations do not seriously affect the over-all picture. The table below gives a fair picture of this usage:

	πνεῦμα ἅγιον	Capitalized	Un-capitalized	Demonik	πνευματικός	Total
Matthew	5	7	2	4	0	18
Mark	4	2	3	14	0	23
Luke	13	4	7	12	0	36
John	3	12	7	0	0	22
Acts	42	11	6	8	0	67
Romans	6	18	10	0	4	38
I Corinthians	2	19	18	0	17	56
II Corinthians	2	6	9	0	0	17
Galatians	0	16	2	0	1	19
Ephesians	2	9	2	1	3	17
Philippians	0	3	2	0	0	5
Colossians	0	1	1	0	2	4
I Thessalonians	3	1	1	0	0	5
II Thessalonians	0	1	1	0	0	2
I Timothy	0	1	2	0	0	3
II Timothy	1	0	2	0	0	3
Titus	1	0	0	0	0	1
Philemon	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hebrews	5	2	4	0	0	11
James	0	0	2	0	0	2
I Peter	1	3	4	0	3	11
II Peter	1	0	0	0	0	1
I John	0	6	6	0	0	12
II John	0	0	0	0	0	0
III John	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jude	2	0	0	0	0	2
Revelation	0	17	2	3	1	23
Total	93	138	94	42	31	399

From this several general observations may be made which have a general bearing on our study in this chapter.

1. Only two New Testament books contain no use of the word πνεῦμα at all (II and III John). Two others (Philemon and James) contain the word πνεῦμα with meanings other than the Holy Spirit.

2. Luke uses the word πνεῦμα for the Holy Spirit 70 times in his Gospel and in Acts. Paul uses it in the same way 91 times in his epistles (23 in Romans, 21 in I Corinthians, 16 in Galatians, 11 in Ephesians, and 8 in II Corinthians). John uses it 58 times in his Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation. James is the only New Testament writer who makes no reference, by name, to the Holy Spirit.

3. These figures take no account of passages such as John 14-17 where there is an extended discourse on the Holy Spirit, although the term πνεῦμα ἅγιον itself is not often used. Note should be made that the use of the term Paraclete occurs 4 times in this particular passage. Nor do these figures account for many passages which many believe refer to the work of the Holy Spirit without using His name.

4. In general, it is fair to say that the writers of the New Testament acknowledged the being and activity

of the Holy Spirit everywhere and at all times and faithfully recorded mention of His activity and influence wherever their writings so necessitated it.

Going further into our study, we note several passages where special discussion of the Holy Spirit is given. These are (1) John 14-17; (2) Rom. 8; (3) I Cor. 2; (4) I Cor. 12; (5) Gal. 5. The book of Acts contains abundant reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and to the activity of the Spirit in the early church, but there are no explanations of His activity in this book, no searching into the nature of His work in the human heart. Aside from the four Gospels, the Book of Revelation, which is a prophetic picture of the Church undergoing persecution and conflict until it is finally perfected and emerges triumphant, contains more references (many of them repetitions) to the activity of the Spirit than any other New Testament book except Acts, which records the first few decades of the history of the Church. These two "historical" books contain most of the references to the Holy Spirit as "leading," "guiding," and "speaking" (for the purpose of directing activity in) the Church, whereas the Pauline references to the Spirit are generally more "doctrinal" in content.

Another point to be considered is the usage of

κνεῦμα with and without the article. Apparently it is used with and without the article indiscriminately. References to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of man, and evil spirits appear both with and without the article. A. T. Robertson comments upon this as follows:

So also κνεῦμα and κνεῦμα ἅγιον may occur with and without the article. Garvie quotes Bartlet on Acts as saying that when κνεῦμα ἅγιον is anarthrous it describes the human condition, not the divine agency. But it may be questioned if this is not a purely artificial rule, as there are evident exceptions to it. The use of κνεῦμα with a genitive like κνεῦμα χριστοῦ (Ro. 8:9) and with a preposition, ἐκ κνεύματος (Jn. 3:5), accounts for some examples. An example like οὐκ ἔστιν κνεῦμα (Jn. 7:39) merely illustrates the use of κνεῦμα like Θεός as substantially a proper name. As for Middleton's rule that the article is absent when the personality of the Holy Spirit is taught, that is nullified by Jn. 14:26, τὸ κνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, where the Holy Spirit is spoken of in distinction from the Father and the Son. Cf. also 15:26. See also τὸ κνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (Lu. 3:22), at the baptism of Jesus.⁵

⁵ A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914). p. 795. See also J. Ritchie Smith, The Holy Spirit in the Gospels (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1926): "It may be noted...that no distinction can be drawn between the use of the term Holy Spirit with and without the article. Upon Mark 1:8 Swete remarks that 'κνεῦμα ἅγιον is the Holy Spirit in his operations; contrast τὸ κν. τὸ ἅγ. the Holy Spirit regarded as a Divine Person.' But obviously Holy Spirit in the Greek as in the English is a proper name, and may be used indifferently with or without the article, like Θεός and κύριος and χριστός. Meyer says correctly that in the New Testament κνεῦμα ἅγιον with and without the article is ever the Holy Spirit in the ordinary Biblical dogmatic sense." p. 132. For a different viewpoint see Frederick Blass, Grammar of New Testament Greek (London: MacMillan & Co., 1898) p. 149.

In conclusion, we may again note the general character of the distribution of allusions to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Of course, there are countless references where His name is not mentioned but His activity is evident. He is not associated with one activity, one era, one group of Christians, or one set of doctrines, but reference to Him is made "here, there, and everywhere." First century Christians had a definite assurance and awareness of the Spirit's activity and hence referred to Him in a most natural way as the moving and guiding and controlling "force" in connection with every aspect of religious experience and every step of progress taken by the early Church.

D. The "Coming" of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

With so much evidence of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit before the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2, it is natural for the question often to be raised: "What is the explanation of the coming of the Holy Spirit?" We have seen that, whether actually regarded as a Person of the Trinity or not, the Holy Spirit's activity was recognized in the Old Testament. He had been active in the lives of several people at the time of the birth of Christ. All through the life of Christ the Holy Spirit is mentioned as leading and strengthening Him. Yet John clearly says that the Holy Spirit was not yet given: "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39) The disciples had already received the Spirit from Jesus: "He breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22).

Although the Spirit was thus already operative in the world, Jesus very clearly told the disciples that there was to be a special and unprecedented "coming" of the Spirit upon them. The coming of the Spirit was conditional to His own (Jesus') departure from the dis-

ciples. The Spirit would not only give guidance, reveal new truth, bring to mind forgotten teachings of Jesus, and exert special influence upon the world, but also actually take the place of the physical presence of Jesus which the disciples now enjoyed. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not; neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:16-17) See also John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15.

This promise and prediction was dramatically fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:2-4). In forty-eight Greek words, Luke describes this coming of the Holy Spirit. Clearly the whole of the rest of the book of Acts is a development of the meaning of this event--indeed the whole subsequent history of the Church is dependent upon this experience. It is therefore worth careful atten-

tion from two aspects: 1. The Outpouring itself. 2. The relation of this to prior manifestations of the Spirit.

1. The Outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

a. This event was predicted in advance.

i. In Old Testament prophecy. Peter, on this occasion, immediately connected this coming of the Spirit with the prophecy of Joel, "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh." (Acts 2:17) Other prophets had suggested the same quite often.

ii. By John the Baptist. "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." (Matt. 3:11). The disciples of Jesus would remember this when they saw tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost.

iii. By Jesus, prior to His death. Particularly was this true in John 14-16, to which reference has been made above.

iv. By Jesus, following His resurrection. In Acts 1:4-5 Jesus charged His disciples to wait for "the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John (note reference in ii. above) / indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the

Holy Spirit not many days hence." Again in Acts 1:8 where the outline of the future program of the Church is given, Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you."

b. These disciples were prepared for this event. There is no indication that they were in any way startled or surprized. This is to be expected, following such clear warning only a few days before from Jesus Himself. These men were witnesses to too many recent supernatural events to be taken aback by this one. But they were preparing themselves by prayer and anticipation of this event. The assumption is warranted that the allusion in Acts 2:1 to the effect that "they were all together in one place" was for prayer and meditation, as was their habit. "These all continued steadfastly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). They were not surprised but they were empowered and filled with unspeakable joy. "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42).

c. This event was attended by unusual and spectacular signs.

i. "There came from heaven a sound as of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." (Acts 2:2) The word for wind here

(πνοή) is that of a "breath of wind," "a slight breeze."

As Trench points out¹ this was probably because Luke wanted to reserve a stronger term for naming the Spirit (πνεῦμα). By qualifying it with the fact that it was "from heaven," had a "sound" as of the "rushing" of a "mighty" wind we are given the impression of something like a tornado.

A tornado is practically irresistible in its power. The only safe place when one strikes is in a cave below the surface of the ground. ...This sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind must have been meant to symbolize the power of the Spirit--the power with which these disciples were to bear witness to Jesus and his saving grace.²

ii. "Tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them." This was the baptism predicted by John the Baptist. Here again the appearance of God's glory was accompanied by fire as it had been to Moses before the burning bush and later on Mt. Sinai, and to Isaiah in the temple. On all these occasions the human senses of hearing, touch, and sight were stimulated as the whole being of the men involved were brought into a unique contact with the Divine. Undoubtedly the sensation of light,

¹ Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1901) p. 257.

² Walter Thomas Conner, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949) p. 58.

heat, and power, with all the meaning and association which fire brings to human beings, were suddenly brought to bear upon these disciples. And unlike the pillar of fire which rested upon the tabernacle in the wilderness, here was a fire which came to each individual present, for "it sat upon each one of them."

iii. "And they...began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Again, as with Moses and Isaiah, there was both a loosening of the powers of verbal expression and also a strong impulse to witness publicly to the spiritual experience in their own hearts. The surprising thing at Pentecost is not that they spoke and were understood by people of different languages, amazing as was this miracle, but that they spoke publicly at all at a time when to do so was courting trouble, if not death itself. But such has been the power of the Spirit in all ages and even now, to loosen the tongues of God's messengers.

There are some, who, in line with the mode of thought and belief which seeks to reduce all supernatural phenomena of the Bible (and elsewhere) to a natural explanation, or to a mere subjective state of mind of those recording such experiences, would explain away by sundry psychological means this whole event. Removed as we are by nineteen centuries from the events of Pentecost there

is little scientific proof possible, unless we accept the testimony of the Scripture writers. And if we do, we cannot avoid believing that these signs were actual occurrences, seen and heard by the disciples. Any contradiction of this is by those of whom Jesus spoke when discussing the coming of the Holy Spirit--"whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him." (Jn. 14:17)

When a ship enters the harbor we see the foaming spray under the bow and hear the waters dashing against the sides. When a horse runs through the street we hear the noise of his hoofs against the pavement and see the clouds of dust. But who will say that these things seen and heard are symbolic? They necessarily belong to those actions and are parts of them, impossible without them. Therefore we do not believe that the Pentecost signs were symbolic, or intended to create a sensation, but that they belonged inseparably to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and were caused by it. The outpouring could not take place without creating these signs. When the mountain-stream dashes down the steep sides of the rocks we must hear the sound of rushing waters, we must see the flying spray; so when the Holy Spirit flows down from the mountains of God's holiness, the sound of a rushing, mighty wind must be heard, and glorious brightness must be seen, and speaking with foreign tongues must follow.³

Pentecost was a unique day in history, for on it occurred the event so clearly predicted and eagerly awaited, the event which marked the birth of the Church

³ Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946) p. 130.

and empowered it for a world mission. That there should be a display of divine power perceptible to the human senses was entirely appropriate and in keeping with other great occasions when the Glory of God was revealed to man. Moses on Mt. Sinai, Isaiah in the temple, shepherds about Bethlehem, Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, --all witnessed this divine display. The disciples at Pentecost were under the same impact and witnessed the inevitable supernatural "fire-works" which accompany the great historical infusions of the Divine into the human realm.

2. The relation of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit to Prior manifestations of the Spirit. We have already noted at the beginning of this discussion the apparent contradiction, i.e., that the Spirit did not come until this day of Pentecost, yet He is often active in history prior to this. Probably what seems to us to be a contradiction stems from our human inability to fathom the mystery of the Divine nature. Our attempts to define have never been satisfactory. We have seen God manifest in many ways--sometimes as God Himself operating in natural and human affairs, again as the Spirit of God, and again as the Son of God. We see these as the evidence of One God and our attempts to grasp how He is sometimes one and then another completely fail.

It is only when God is manifest to us that we detect these different "persons."

Accordingly the indwelling works of God are the activities of His Being, without the distinction of Persons; while His outgoing works admit and to some extent demand this distinction: e.g., the common and well-known distinguishing of the Father's work as that of creation, the Son's as that of redemption, and the Holy Spirit's as that of sanctification relates only to God's out-going works. While these operations--creation, redemption, and sanctification--are hidden in the thoughts of His heart, His counsel, and His Being, it is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost who creates, Father, Son and Holy Ghost who redeems, Father, Son and Holy Ghost who sanctifies without any division or distinction of activities.⁴

Yet even this explanation becomes nonsense and verbal jargon when we give it "scientific" examination, and try to offer reasonable proof thereof. The fact that the Church struggled for centuries to satisfy itself on these matters, going through all the extremes from tritheism to modalism, is testimony to the incapacity of the human mind to understand the things of God. The problem of Pentecost, then, is bound to our human inability to understand. We think of the Spirit as some measured quantity of power like steam or electricity which was given by God to the Church, and yet this Spirit is God Himself. To our problem we offer several answers, admitting that their acceptance and reasonableness de-

⁴ Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 15.

pende not so much upon the generally accepted lines of proof, but upon faith and acceptance of Scriptural testimony.

a. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was given to individuals and not to the Church as a whole. There is no testimony in the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit poured out upon a mass of people during the centuries prior to the coming of Christ. He came to leaders who spoke to the masses and directed their activity. On the other hand the book of Acts continually asserts the coming of the Spirit not only upon leaders but also upon the Church as a whole. For example, the Holy Spirit directed the Church (congregation) at Antioch to set aside Paul and Barnabas for special missionary labors. Undoubtedly He spoke to the two Apostles too, yet it was the whole church which, under the Spirit, took this step. Again, the decision of the Jerusalem council was reached by the action of the Spirit in directing the thoughts of the entire church there assembled.

b. In the Old Testament it was recognized that the presence of the Holy Spirit at that time was partial and imperfect and that there would come a time of the full outpouring of the Spirit. The prophets, although conscious of the operation of God's Spirit in

their own lives, realized that the time would come when God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. The disciples, at Pentecost, were quick to realize the fulfillment of this prophecy, and to discern the meaning of the Old Testament predictions in the light of its present actuality.

c. The Holy Spirit who came at Pentecost came to those who had been in intimate association with Christ Himself and were looking for "another Comforter" even the "Spirit of truth." Conscious as Old Testament leaders were of the presence and power of God whose Spirit pervaded their lives, they had never seen God face to face and known the indescribable fruits of fellowship such as the disciples had had with Jesus. Hence at Pentecost the Holy Spirit, for the first time in history, could be given to men who in the fullest sense both needed Him and could appreciate Him. And as the Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus in the hearts of Christians, He assumed the direction of their affairs, the position of authority, and the imparting of power for which the Disciples had formerly looked to the Master. In the Old Testament times such a relationship could not exist no matter how powerfully the Spirit might operate.

This explains John's remark (Jn. 7:29) "The Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not

yet glorified." It took the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ to show the world Who He was and to what extent He was willing to go to redeem the world. Only then was He glorified--only then was His true character and nature and purpose fully manifest in terms men could see and understand--only then did Jesus Christ occupy a place in the hearts of men which no other could occupy, for He had accomplished for them that which neither they themselves nor any other could accomplish. The removal of God incarnate from physical association with Christians, made possible and necessary the return of God the Holy Spirit to continue the work which men now understood and felt so necessary--the perfection of the redemption of individuals and the completion of God's work in the world through the Church. Jesus had said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." Now the Holy Spirit continued to guide believers in the "way;" He came as the "Spirit of truth" to turn the Church from error in the knowledge of the only true God; He became a new life principle, imparting the inner spark enabling man to pursue his new life in Christ Jesus.

3. It is fair to conclude that Pentecost became the occasion of the first real outpouring of the Spirit the world had ever known. In the Old Testament

the Spirit had acted for special purposes in leaders; now He came to all. In the Old Testament His presence was but dimly understood and appreciated; because He was only partially known; now He came in fullness and in power. In the Old Testament He prepared men for the coming of One they could not know; now He took the place of, and made more fully understandable, the Son of God, known to them now through experience and to subsequent centuries of Christians known in actual recorded history.

His coming into the world on the Day of Pentecost did not mean that He had not always operated in the world and in the hearts of men wherever and whenever they turned to God and were sanctified in their living. But now this function was realized by men, and became immeasurably more effective as it carried out the work of Christ. And His coming again and again in the history of the Church has been to awaken men and reveal to them the work of Christ. Pentecost was like the grand opening of a theatrical production which is repeated time and time again. Jesus clearly predicted not only the "coming" of the Holy Spirit but also His continual coming and further revealing of all Truth. And the working out of the great doctrines of the Christian faith were under the guidance of the Spirit Himself,

who, as became evident, not only effects the religious experiences which we know as regeneration, sanctification, etc. but also revealed to Paul and others that it was He, who, in the Divine economy of things, performed these functions. There is no limit to His power even yet to regenerate and sanctify human hearts, and to lead us into fuller understanding of God's work and purposes. The Holy Spirit comes again every time He effects these changes in a human heart, or reveals a new step forward for His Church. Pentecost was the most sudden and powerful and dramatic outpouring of the Spirit, who has come again and again to affect the history of the world and to lead the Church to her final triumph.

Low before him with our praises we fall,
Of whom, and in whom, and through whom are all:
Of whom, the Father; and in whom, the Son;
Through whom, the Spirit, and with them ever One.

--Peter Abelard.
(Tr. by T. M. Neale)

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION AND
INSPIRATION

The greatest work of the Holy Spirit, so far as men are concerned, is in our regeneration and sanctification. But there are two major contributions of the Holy Spirit which are basic to our spiritual experience. By revealing God's truth to certain men, causing them to record this revelation, and enabling us to read with understanding and profit, the Holy Spirit gives us God's Word, the Bible. By bringing Divine power into the realm of nature and human affairs, the extraordinary and miraculous have become a matter of history, and men have especially rejoiced at the miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ. Chapter I treats the Holy Spirit's activity which makes the Scriptures what they are for us; Chapter II concerns His activity in connection with the coming of the Son of God into human life.

When we deal with the work of the Holy Spirit we face the highest task of the Christian. For it is here that we reverently examine God in action. This study leads us into the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and experience. It leads us closest to the unseen

and hallowed presence of God Himself. We do not see God, but we do see His actions. And these experienced (if not seen) works of God are effected by His Holy Spirit.

As Jonathan Edwards says, "The Spirit is the deity in act"--not the action of the deity, but the deity in ACTION. In the Old Testament the Spirit of God is a synonym for God acting (Denney). The Spirit is the member of the Trinity who carries into effect the plans of the Godhead. Hence, He is called the Executive of the Godhead.¹

When God chose to put a revelation of Himself and His will into writing, the Holy Spirit executed this mission; when He chose to send His Son to earth, the Spirit prepared His coming and effected His miraculous birth; when He chooses to save a man's soul, the Holy Spirit performs the necessary work.

Sin having once entered, a factor which must be taken into account, the Holy Spirit's work shines most gloriously in gathering and saving the elect; prior to which are His operations in the work of redemption and in the economy of the natural life. The same Spirit who in the beginning moved upon the waters has in the dispensation of grace given us the Holy Scripture, the Person of Christ, and the Christian Church; it is He who, in connection with the original creation and by these means of grace, now regenerates and sanctifies us as the children of God.²

¹ James B. Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1936) p. 41.

² Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946) p. 25.

In all His actions we see that

...the work of the Holy Spirit consists in leading all creation to its destiny, the final purpose of which is the glory of God.³

First in the above order, and, it seems to me, basic in a process of thinking about the work of the Holy Spirit, is His part in the production of the Scriptures. There are those who give Him no credit whatsoever in this regard; for them the Bible becomes entirely the work of men and hence no different from other books; they fail to believe what the Bible teaches about itself. There are others who assign the Holy Spirit varying degrees of responsibility for our Scriptures. That some may go far beyond what the Scriptures teach in their effort to prove its supernatural origin is no credit to their scholarship or spiritual understanding of the Bible. It is our purpose here to examine the New Testament evidence as to the inspiration of the New Testament by the Holy Spirit. We are faced at the outset with two facts: (1) That there is not nearly so much evidence to this point, as one might suppose from the volume of argument which is carried on over the matter; and (2) That many of the references cited pro and con various theories and doctrines were never intended to serve as evidence of this sort.

³ Ibid., p. 22.

A. New Testament Affirmations of Old Testament
Inspiration

The New Testament is full of quotations and allusions to the Old Testament. Some of these directly refer to the Holy Spirit (or to God) as the speaker of the passage quoted, regardless of human author. Even in the far larger number of quotations where no source or speaker is actually mentioned, the inference is always the same, i.e., that the Scriptures were absolutely authoritative because they were the word of God. Whether New Testament writers quoted loosely (as was quite often the case) or based an argument on the exact phrasing in the Old Testament (as Paul and the author of Hebrews sometimes did) this source was regarded as the word of God and hence the supreme authority.

1. Let us first examine the passages where Divine origin of the Old Testament is mentioned in the New Testament.

a. Jesus spoke of the Old Testament as having its source in God. He may have varied from the Rabbinical interpretation of many things in the Old Testament, such as the laws of the Sabbath and the efficacy of legal ceremonialism. But He agreed with the

Jewish doctrine of the origin of the Scriptures.

The Old Testament is the court of appeal before which He summons the false traditions of the Scribes; the touchstone by which He tries the suggestions of the Tempter; the treasury of devotion upon which He draws even in the hour of death.⁴

Two references show this: "He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord." (Matt. 22:43, Mk. 12:36. In Luke 20:42 we have the same statement (with the reference to the Spirit omitted.) Again, "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)..." (Jn. 10:35).

b. Peter is quoted by Luke, in Acts, as using the same expression. Later he expressed the same idea in an epistle. "Brethren it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus." (Acts 1:16). "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1:21). Again in I Pet. 1:11, Peter, speaking of the prophets says that they sought to discover the time at which "the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto."

c. The whole company of Christians in Jerusalem in concerted prayer said: "...Lord, thou art

⁴ H. B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament. (London: MacMillan & Co., 1921) p. 331.

God,... who by the Holy Spirit by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say..." (Acts 4:24-25).

d. Paul, who represents, among New Testament writers, the highest type of scholarship in Jewish theology, and who never differed with its teaching regarding the authorship and authority of the Old Testament, shared the same position with others in the New Testament Church: "Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers." (Acts 28:25).

e. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, who takes special pains to prove his points by appeals to the authority of the Old Testament, quotes as though directly from the Holy Spirit Himself: "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith..." (Heb. 3:7) "...and the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for that he hath said..." (Heb. 10:15). This writer not only quotes from the Old Testament, but looks upon the whole order of Old Testament things as of God. This means that the Scriptures are merely a part of a movement, the whole of which is swept along in the current of the Divine-ordered stream of affairs.

Such a passage as 9:8 (and the author's whole discussion of the Old Testament order) shows that he was not thinking, as some of our modern orthodox writers, of inspiration in vacuo, as the isolated transaction apart from the whole movement of which the writing of Scripture was a part. The writing of Scripture (and Scripture itself) has meaning only as seen and interpreted

in relation to its background and the whole historical and social movement of which it was a part. This gives a legitimate and necessary place for historical and literary criticism in understanding and interpreting Scripture. This means that Scripture must be interpreted in relation to its context, in a broad but very definite sense. This author's treatment of Scripture justifies the recognition of historical development in interpreting and applying Scripture. What it does not justify is the emptying of all divine significance out of Scripture meaning.⁵

f. There are also many passages where an Old Testament quotation is introduced by the expression: "for thus it is written through the prophet."

(οὕτως γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου) Comparing the grammar of this (and similar) expressions with, for instance, Acts 28:25 (where the Holy Spirit is named as the agent), it is evident that it was a more or less fixed pattern for introducing a quotation, a pattern which recognized the Divine authorship of the Old Testament Scriptures. Note: Mt. 1:22, 2:5, 17, 3:3; Luke 3:4, Acts 2:16 etc.

All this testimony is overwhelmingly to the effect that the Jews of the first century, and the early Christian leaders, and even Jesus Christ Himself, regarded the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of the Lord, who "by the Holy Spirit" spoke through certain human

⁵ Walter Thomas Conner, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949) p. 156.

writers. They did not speculate apparently, as to exactly how this revelation and inspiration came about, except for a few general ideas which we will observe shortly. For them it was an accomplished and irrefutable fact.

It should also be noted that there is wide variation in the way in which the Old Testament is quoted in the New. Most of the quotations come from the LXX rather than the Hebrew original. While the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews always quotes with extreme accuracy, Paul seldom does so. He usually quotes freely from the Old Testament. While the quotation may not be verbally accurate, he usually quotes an Old Testament passage in the right sense--even at times through his own inspiration giving a wider and deeper spiritual content to his quotations through his own choice of words. He is so well versed in the language of Scripture that he sometimes quotes a passage in a different connection and hence a different meaning from the original. This shows how he revered the very language of his Bible, as the language of God Himself and hence authoritative. Yet the way in which he quotes shows that Paul's own inspiration did not free him from inaccuracy in quoting, but enabled him, when necessary to further inspire what was already inspired by giving the Old Testament an even

more exalted meaning in the light of the fact of Jesus Christ.

(Paul's) sense of the contemporaneousness of Scripture is shown repeatedly in his use of Scripture. His belief in faith in Christ as the key to the understanding of the Old Testament is shown in the way in which he reads the deeper meaning of New Testament thought into the language of the Old Testament. And the cases in which his quotation is obviously inaccurate or his exegesis is not sound according to modern standards of exegesis would fit into his own great assertion that the bearer of revelation must be understood as one who carries treasure in earthen vessels that the greatness of the power may be of God.⁶

2. In addition to this evidence showing that New Testament writers regarded the Old Testament as inspired by the Holy Spirit, is there any indication that they had any convictions as to the character and purpose of this inspiration which brought into existence a "Scripture?" There are several statements, by New Testament writers, which indicate that they did.

a. While the writers of the New Testament expressed no clear-cut theory of the method of inspiration they regarded it as the product of a definite and recognizable guidance by the Holy Spirit. For them it was no trite or thoughtless expression which

⁶ Holmes Rolston, Consider Paul (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1951) p. 160. This whole book, and especially Chapter VII, pp. 136-161, is a full and careful study of this subject.

they used in quoting from the Old Testament--"thus spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the prophet" etc. We have just pointed out above numerous references to the effect that these New Testament writers spoke of the Old Testament writers as instruments speaking for the Spirit. Peter carries us a step further when he wrote, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1:21). Peter is seeking to guide his readers to a full "remembrance of" and following after the true "word of prophecy" as over against the words of false prophets. The distinguishing feature is that the true word of prophecy cannot come by mere human impulse or initiative but must come when the Holy Spirit comes upon men, and they speak from God.

Peter here seems to classify his own Gospel messages with such true prophecy, claiming as an eye-witness of the events in the life of Christ the right to place his message in the same channel of inspiration as were the messages of the prophets themselves--messages which his own testimony (of facts in the life of Christ) fulfills and completes. The wording of this particular verse indicates that these men who spoke for God were "borne along" by the Spirit as ships before the wind on the sea. This is one of the most emphatic

statements in the Bible as to the character of inspiration.

This is one of the great sedes for the fact of Inspiration. Peter presents the fact, no theory, no hypothesis. The fact is that God and the Spirit are the real speakers, the anthropoi are the mouthpieces. Our fathers, therefore, called God the causa efficiens or principalis, the speakers (writers) the causae instrumentalis. The act itself they called the suggestio rerum et verborum, by this meaning what Peter calls φερόμενοι, "borne along by the spirit." Since both the Hebrew Ruach and the Greek πνεῦμα mean Breath, Wind, Peter's principle is most expressive for the act of Inspiration, this word "inspire" (from the Latin) is equally perfect.⁷

It would not be fair to try to build a whole doctrine of inspiration on this one statement in II Peter. But it is one of the most definite testimonies we have to the thought of men in Peter's day as to the character of Old Testament inspiration. To them, the Old Testa-

⁷ R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude. (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938) p. 304. Dr. Warfield makes the following comment on this passage: "The term here used is a very specific one. It is not to be confounded with guiding, or directing, or controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word. It goes beyond all such terms, in assigning the effect produced specifically to the active agent. What is "borne" is taken up by the "bearer," and conveyed by the "bearer's" power, not its own, to the "bearer's" goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs." Benjamin B. Warfield, "Inspiration" International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: Howard-Severance Co., 1930) Vol. III, p. 1475.

ment writers were not independent and free agents in the composition of their books, but were irresistably carried along by the Holy Spirit.

We must bear in mind Peter's purpose here is to contrast the sure word of prophecy with all false prophets. He goes so far as to say that because of its character, the Old Testament cannot be subjected to "private interpretation." Whether or not Peter entertained the idea of "inerrancy" so often expressed since his time, we cannot say, but he evidently regards the Old Testament as absolutely trustworthy, "as a light that shineth in a dark place" which probably meant he held the Scriptures as without error. The New Testament does not discuss the "inerrancy" of the Old Testament. Jesus, Paul, and others clearly recognized that much of the legal and ceremonial processes of the Old Testament were now superceeded by the coming of Christ and by further revelation--but this was no attack upon the truth of their Scriptures. I think that their conviction that the Old Testament was the Word of God, granted to men through the Holy Spirit, per se included a belief that it was without error. Unless this was their conviction, it is hardly possible to see how they could have appealed to the very words of the Old Testament, and even to obscure historical matters as proof texts. As the work of

the Spirit of God, it was unthinkable that any fault could be found in it. It is likely that orthodox Jews, and the early Christians as well, accepted their Scriptures more literally as the infallible Word of God than even the most orthodox Christians do today.

b. There was a distinct purpose in the guidance of the Spirit which created the Old Testament Scriptures. This is a distinctive feature in the doctrine of inspiration which is easily overlooked. The great work of the Holy Spirit has always been to bring to completion the purposes of God. The Spirit has always used the Scriptures, not simply to record, but to implement, to bring to its desired end, the plans God has for His people. Two passages from the pen of the Apostle Paul clearly bring out this idea. To young Timothy he wrote as follows:

But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. (II Tim. 3:15-17)

There is another statement by Paul in Rom. 15:4 of the purposeful character of the Scriptures: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learn-

ing, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."

Of course Paul is here talking about the Old Testament. Especially in the passage to Timothy he lists the purposes for which Scripture was written. He does not mention the Holy Spirit. But it is evident that he regards Scripture as Divinely inspired. The grand purpose of Scripture, says he, is to "make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Then he lists the numerous contributions which these writings make to the spiritual development of a man. The Apostle concludes with the sweeping affirmation that such a person who is led by the Scriptures to a saving faith and who is instructed by the Scripture in all these matters pertaining to his life and thought, is rendered a complete and finished product for the glory of God and the benefit of his fellow men. This statement of Paul not only defines very ^{precisely} ~~definitely~~ the principle purposes of the Scripture but very clearly limits it to these matters. The Bible makes no pretense of being a guidebook or information bureau of any and every matter, but only of certain things for which it was designed by God. The Bible is the "sword of the Spirit" and as such is intended as the Spirit's means of carrying to completion certain features of God's will for men.

In II Tim. 3:16 we have the only use in the American Standard Version of the word "inspire." Dr. Warfield and other scholars point out that even this is a misleading mistranslation.

For the Greek word in this passage--ΘΕΟΠΝΕΥΤΟΣ, --very distinctly does not mean "inspired of God." This phrase is rather the rendering of the Latin, divinitus inspirata.... The Greek term has, however, nothing to say of in spiring or in spiration: it speaks only of "spiring" or "spiration." What it says of Scripture is, not that it is "breathed into by God" or is the product of the Divine "inbreathing" into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, "God-breathed," the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them.⁸

This passage is addressed to a young man, Timothy, and as such naturally shows the Bible as a guide-book, and an instruction book in the things God wants him to know. The other passage, Rom. 15:4, cited above, urges Paul's readers to find in the Scriptures a message to give comfort and patience in present trials and sufferings, with a full hope and certainty of the eventual outcome. If Paul could say such about the Old Testament, to which these passages refer, how much more could be said about the value of the purpose of the New Testament

⁸ Benjamin B. Warfield, "Inspiration," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago, Howard-Severance Co., 1930) Vol. III, p. 1473.

for our lives?

In neither of these passages is the Holy Spirit mentioned by name. Yet in the word θεόπνευτος is a definite reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. We see from a study of the word for "spirit" in the Old and New Testaments (See introduction, pp. 10ff) that it means breath or air. Somehow this "breathing out of God" is always in a definite way associated with the Holy Spirit who brought into being through the writers of the Old Testament these sacred writings which are profitable for so many things.

By way of summary we note that the evidence in the New Testament is entirely in favor of the conclusion that the New Testament writers affirmed that the Spirit inspired the writers of the Old Testament. In this they shared the common Jewish attitude towards and respect for the Old Testament. Furthermore, while they apparently held no fully developed theories of the method of this inspiration, they did feel that the Old Testament writers were irresistably carried along by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that their writings were sacred and holy in every sense of the term, with complete authority in all matters for which ^{they were} it was purposed.

B. The Consciousness of the New Testament Writers of their own Inspiration

Having seen what an exalted opinion was current among writers of the New Testament (and the early Christians and Jews of the same period) with respect to the inspiration of the Old Testament, we now turn to the question: Did they have any idea of their own inspiration? Did they have any idea that their writings eventually would be regarded as they now regarded the Old Testament? It is clear to all students of Church History, particularly that which was recorded in the Book of Acts, that the early Christians were motivated and empowered by the Spirit in every phase of their lives, but especially when they wrote these books. It is the thesis of this chapter that, although there is no indication in the New Testament that these writers expected their books to be placed with the Old Testament to form a complete and sacred Scripture, nevertheless they were writers who were deeply conscious of recording what they knew to be a message from the Holy Spirit and hence fully authoritative.

1. The New Testament writers were conscious of speaking in and for the Spirit. We note here examples of this consciousness.

a. Most conspicuous is John, the author of Revelation. In this book we hear the echo of the conviction of the Old Testament prophets who said, "Thus saith the Lord" and proceeded to record the message. The preface of Revelation clearly indicates this Divine origin: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants." (Rev. 1:1) This was not just a revelation for John himself, but was granted to him for the express purpose of extending it (through his written record) to all readers. John constantly refers to the fact that he is writing with the authority of the Spirit of God who directed his work:

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, what thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches... (Rev. 1:10-11; see 4:2).

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write ..., yea, saith the Spirit... (Rev. 14:13).

John saw the heavenly panorama spread before him and in response to the command of the Spirit wrote down a description of what he saw and recorded the words uttered by the characters in the vision. He tries to give complete credit to the Spirit as the source of his message.

b. The writers of the four Gospels and the book of Acts nowhere express consciousness of a Divine origin to their work, or of the Spirit's superintendence of its composition in any way. But these four writers were well versed in the historical books of the Old Testament which they regarded as inspired of God. They did not regard these books as mere history but as a revelation of God's will and law. Hence these writers must have felt that they too, in recording a far more "sacred" history had the guidance of the Spirit.

Surely Luke, who was so conscious of the leading of the Spirit in the formation of the early Church, could not fail to feel himself as a part of the same movement. Surely the apostle John who seemed to fathom the very depths of spiritual knowledge was deeply conscious that he was in a superior way the recipient of the promise from Jesus which he himself recorded, i.e., that the Spirit would come upon the followers of Jesus to give them understanding and revelation:

But when the Comforter even the Holy Spirit is come, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. (Jn. 14:26)

The historians of the New Testament were too conscious of their task not to realize its hopelessness without the direction of the Holy Spirit whose coming

at Pentecost and whose continual presence and power meant so much to them. If as Christians they regarded themselves as possessing the Spirit in a fashion immeasurably superior to any previous bestowal of the Spirit upon mankind, they must have extended His influence into the composition of their writings.

Would it not be irrational to suppose that the men who wrote after the Spirit came were less inspired than the men who wrote before He came?⁹

c. The Apostle Paul, who wrote the largest body of New Testament material, was conscious of a peculiar authority as he spoke and as he wrote. He was most jealous of his right to be called an apostle, and zealously defended this right. Somehow, to him, this included the function of speaking in the name of the Lord in a special way. As a matter of fact the two were inseparable in his thinking: (1) As an Apostle he was the bearer of a Divine revelation; (2) Divine revelations to him were a proof of his apostleship.

...the apostles exercised authority by virtue of a power they consciously possessed in themselves, independent of any church or church council... Hence the power and authority to command, to ordain and to judge in the churches, they derived not from the Church, nor from the church council, nor from the apostolate, but directly from the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

⁹ Green, Op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁰ Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 147.

The first two chapters of Galatians are ample source of information to show this. Here, as in all his epistles, Paul introduces himself as divinely called to be an apostle. Further on he makes this claim:

For I make known to you brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:11-12).

I believe that much of Paul's "inspiration" came from direct revelations from the Lord by the Holy Spirit in experiences of which we have no record except Paul's occasional references to them. Where else was his source for a statement such as I Thess. 4:15:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep?

See also Eph. 3:3ff, II Cor. 12:1ff. The teachings of Jesus were his authority in I Cor. 7:10, "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband." "Questions have been raised by his subsequent statement in verse 12, "But to the rest say I, not the Lord..." This passage does not deny the inspiration of this particular bit of Pauline instruction but does indicate that he was not conscious of any direct revelation on the matter as was usually the case. The fact that Paul closes this

whole passage with the words, "and I think that I also have the Spirit of God..." indicates that he was conscious of Divine guidance as he discussed these controversial matters upon which he had rather strong personal feelings. This remark ^{may} have been directed toward certain others with ideas somewhat differing from his; and these others may also have claimed spiritual guidance.

The phrase in I Tim. 4:1, "But the Spirit saith expressly," may mean one of two things: (1) Paul is quoting a revelation he himself has received from the Holy Spirit, or (2) He is quoting what the Spirit has said to some other prophet or apostle. Either meaning would be perfectly natural to Paul. And either meaning would bear testimony in clear-cut terms to Paul's conviction that the Holy Spirit can and does make such explicit revelations. In other places Paul was sure that the Holy Spirit was speaking to him. For instance, in Acts 20:23 he is quoted as saying that "the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." (Later, in Acts 21:11, Philip the evangelist confirmed this revelation which had already come to Paul: "Thus said the Holy Spirit...") In Rom. 9:1, Paul declares: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bear-

ing witness with me in the Holy Spirit..."

By far the fullest discussion by Paul of the work of the Spirit in revealing God's truth is in I Cor. 2, particularly verses 10-16. Here Paul is seeking to show the Corinthian Christians the true purpose of his ministry among them, and especially that his messages were not just bits of worldly learning and interesting speech, but are the Gospel, attended by the outpouring of the Spirit. This meant that he had brought to them hitherto unknown truths which God chose to reveal through the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that in I Cor. 2:10-16 Paul clearly states the three steps of Divine revelation as he had learned them through experience.

i. First of all, the Spirit knows the things pertaining to God in a way which no one else can. "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (V. 10).

The statement that this revelation was made through the Spirit takes us into the profundities of the Godhead itself and assigns a reason for it: "for the Spirit searcheth all things," etc. There is, of course, no flimsy thought here of putting the Spirit over against the other two persons of the Godhead, as if he alone searches all things. All we know is what Paul states here: the Spirit, one in essence with the Father and the Son, exercises this divine function. It is best not to attempt to follow this thought any farther. All we can add is that in the economy of grace it is the Spirit's

office to convey God's revelation to us. The verb "to search" ... is the timeless present (tense). In one timeless act the Spirit sounds the absolute depth of "all things" ... Though we know something about these things through the Spirit's revelation, their inner profundities are still "in mystery" to our minds.¹¹

The Apostle goes on to use a most interesting analogy to show what he means (vs. 11). He says: "Just as a man's spirit (here Paul evidently means the human self-consciousness) knows everything pertaining to a man--information no other man has access to--so the Spirit of God understands the "mind" and will of God as no one else can." In the personification of a human πνεῦμα as over against the "self" of the man (ἑαυτοῦ) and in the relationship of the two, Paul sees an analogy to how the Holy Spirit has access to the things of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit has for God somewhat the function that the (human) πνεῦμα has to ἑαυτοῦ.

ii. The Spirit in turn makes these matters known to men. "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit." (v. 10). Somehow the Holy Spirit is able to translate these hitherto unrevealed secrets of God (matters which the unaided human mind cannot discover for itself) into terms understandable to human

¹¹ R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians. (Columbus: Lutheran Book concern, 1936) p. 105.

beings. Paul claims to be a teacher of these matters. In doing so he is enabled by the Spirit "to combine spiritual things with spiritual words" (ῥηματικῶς συνκρίνοντες), v. 13. Depending on whether the gender of this ῥηματικῶς is masculine or neuter the meaning of this phrase is "combining or adapting spiritual matters to spiritual hearers" or "interpreting spiritual things (the mysteries of divine wisdom) by a spiritual mode of expression (understandable by the human mind)." In either case the point is that the gap between Divine and human "language" is bridged by the revelation through the Holy Spirit.

But even the Spirit cannot reveal Divine wisdom to everyone. Hence the necessity for step three in Paul's analysis, see below. Paul states the spiritual content of his messages as divinely inspired: "Which things also we speak, not in words taught of men's wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit."

The very words which the Apostles speak are taught them by the Spirit. He is their teacher even as to the "words." This is proof positive for Verbal Inspiration... The Spirit is the teacher of the logoi in regard to all that the Apostles spoke, hence also in regard to all of the Gospel which they wrote, for the two are identical.¹²

¹² Ibid., p. 112.

iii. Certain individuals are prepared to receive the Spirit's message. In his natural, or unspiritual state "the natural man (ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος) does not receive the things pertaining to God." (v. 14)

Although...ψυχή is not used in the New Testament in a bad sense, to distinguish the animal from the spiritual principle in the human soul, yet ψυχικός is used of a man whose motives do not rise above the level of merely human needs and aspirations. The ψυχικός is the "unrenewed" man, the "natural" man...as distinct from the man who is activated by the Spirit.¹³

The unregenerate man's natural "physical" process of thinking makes him regard the things of God as "foolishness" (μωρία). He looks upon them as fables and fit for children. Because they are on an entirely different plane from his own standards of thinking, he can have no comprehension of them. He does not possess the spiritual ability to judge (or examine) and hence to grasp spiritual truth.(v. 14) But Paul claims that some (v. 12) have received "not the spirit of the world" but "the spirit which is from God," in order that (ἵνα) "we might know the things that were freely given us of God." God through His Spirit gives to some men the "spiritual" capacity needed to receive Spirit-given messages. Only such men have a God-given right to discern

¹³ Archibald Robertson, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911) p. 49.

spiritual truths. They possess the standard by which to judge all things. They have the "spirit which is from (ϵK , denoting source) God."

This is the spirit of true faith and trust toward God, the spirit of humility and love, the utter opposite of the spirit of "the rulers of this world-age, v. 6. How the apostles "received" this new spirit Paul is not here concerned to state, he registers only the fact with a decided historical acrist.¹⁴

If Paul were writing today perhaps he would find in the modern radio an illustration of this process. It is as though God's will was inaudible to all but one transmitter, the Holy Spirit, which, in turn, "broadcasts" God's message which, to some receiving sets, is a senseless jargon, while to others, who are properly tuned to the transmitter, the message is clear and understandable.

The possession of the gift of the Spirit of God is a sort of middle term which enables the Apostle to claim the power to know, and to utter, the deep things of God.¹⁵

In his closing phrase, "But we have the mind of Christ," Paul claims to be among those spiritually prepared for Divine Revelation. Only those who are in Christ may possess the mind of Christ.

¹⁴ Lenski, Op. cit., p. 109.

¹⁵ Robertson, Op. cit., p. 46.

This imparting or intrusion of the divine Spirit is rendered possible by the fundamental fact of the Christian state, namely, the living union of the Christian with Christ. Christ not only lives in him but knows and apprehends and thinks in him and conversely he does all this in Christ: the whole thought is thus summed up in the last words of the section, "we have in us Christ's mind."¹⁶

Whether or not Paul included all true Christians in this number of the spiritually responsive we do not know. But possession of this spiritual receptivity (in common with others) plus his conviction of Apostolic right to speak for the Lord, point definitely to this conclusion: that Paul was conscious of speaking and writing the Word of God in a way different from and superior to what any "ordinary Christian" might be able to do.

St. Paul thinks that he, as well as certain others, has the Spirit of God: he knows that he has the mind of Christ: he is an Apostle of Jesus Christ and speaks with the authority of his office. His letters are to be read in the Churches and obeyed; the prophet or spiritual person who seeks recognition must first acknowledge that the things which Paul writes to the Church are the commandment of the Lord. Yet he is conscious that some of the counsels he gives do not fall under that category, and when he would establish a doctrine, he does not support it by authority but by argument. Certainly he does not claim that all he writes is protected from error, or that all is equally or uniformly inspired.¹⁷

¹⁶ John Parry, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (Cambridge: University Press, 1916) p. 56.

¹⁷ Swete, Op. cit., p. 334.

2. The writers of the New Testament felt the same purposeful authority as did the Old Testament writers. We have already pointed out that the writers of the New Testament looked upon themselves as inspired in a special way by the Holy Spirit. There seems to be a sense of purpose and authority in their writings as though they expected their words (like those of the Old Testament) to be obeyed because of the Divine authority behind them. These writers were "borne along" by an irresistible impulse which they knew to be the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, as to John on the Isle of Patmos, the Holy Spirit spoke, and John recorded much as a stenographer does, though this was not always the case even with John. Luke's "it seemed good to me also ...to write" may have involved an entirely different method of composition but the Spirit was just as active. Paul's sense of Apostolic calling and Spiritual illumination made him conscious of inspiration as he wrote. As organs of the Holy Spirit they possessed unanimity of message and authority of purpose. The early Church immediately recognized this unique character of the New Testament books, long before they were brought into the official canon of the Bible.

What we have said about the purposeful charac-

ter of the inspiration of Scripture (Old Testament) based on Rom. 15:4 and II Tim. 3:14-17 is even more true of the New Testament. The Gospel writers may have used different approaches but their purpose was to provide the Scriptures which are able "to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." The rest of the New Testament in various ways serves the purpose of the Spirit of God and "is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

But if the Apostolic writers were inspired men, we may safely apply to their writings what St. Paul has said of the ancient scriptures. They too, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of these Apostolic scriptures might have hope. They are profitable for teaching (etc.) unto every good work. It is in the practical use of the Old and New Testaments that their inspiration appears. Inspiration is not defined in Scripture, and the Church has shown a wise self-restraint in refusing to enter upon this ground. But no Christian who makes the prophetic and Apostolic writings the guide of his religious thinking and daily living will doubt that there is a true sense in which these books stand alone as a Divine library. Full as they are of the personal characteristics and infirmities of their human authors, they are also full, according to their several measures, of the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God and of Christ. The human element in the written word coexists with the Divine after a manner inscrutable to our comprehension. It is so in the mystery of the Christian life; it is

so, to take the highest instance, in the mystery of the Word made flesh. We believe, we experience the truth of the union, and it is enough.¹⁸

In spite of the definite superintendence of their work by the Holy Spirit, these writers were not merely recording machines. Had such been the case it would not have been necessary to employ some of the greatest and most talented minds in the early Church to write the New Testament. Anyone would have done, Christian or non-Christian. But the Holy Spirit worked through those who were "spiritually minded" and who lived in Christ, allowing them to use their God-given talents freely, to search out, to collect material. They even had freedom to record personal matters (as when Paul asked for someone to bring him his cloak, or extended personal greetings to friends)--but all under the guidance and direction and control of the Spirit.

Hence the confession of inspiration does not exclude ordinary numbering, collecting of documents, sifting, recording, etc. It recognizes all these matters which are plainly discernable in Scripture. Style, diction, repetitions, all retain their value. But it must be insisted that the Scripture as a whole, as finally presented to the Church, as to content, selection and arrangement of documents, structure, and even words, owes its existence to the Holy Spirit., i.e., that the men employed in this work were consciously or unconscious-

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 338.

ly so controlled and directed by the Spirit, in all their thinking, selecting, sifting, choice of words, and writing, that their final product, delivered to posterity, possessed a perfect warrant of divine and absolute authority.¹⁹

3. In one passage Peter seems to place Paul's writings on a level with those of the Old Testament. Referring to Paul's Epistles, Peter says (II Pet. 3:16) "Wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς), unto their own destruction." Some of the scholars have thought that these words refer to a canon of the New Testament already drawn up by the early Church and have dated II Peter late; or have denied its authenticity on this basis. But the evident authority and inspiration of Paul's writings must have made the early Christians (including Peter) fully aware of their right to be placed alongside the Old Testament. Paul's epistles were circulated among the churches, even those to whom they were not addressed. How far the early Church went toward accepting the writings of Paul and the other New Testament writers as canonical we do not know. But

¹⁹ Kuyper, Op. cit., p. 78. See also John Owan, A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication) Abridged by George Burder. p. 78.

we do know that they were highly regarded, accepted as inspired, and referred to as authoritative. They could scarcely have done more than this for the Old Testament.

It can be shown they were all regarded as sacred by the earliest Christian writers. They are uniformly cited by them as an unquestionable authority in faith and practice. Very early they were collected in a volume and catalogues given of them. They were publicly read in religious assemblies. Commentaries were written upon them. And it is specially to be noticed that the various sects into which the early Church was soon divided, all appealed to them alike.²⁰

Although we have no written record of this, it has always been believed by the Church, that the Holy Spirit's activity did not cease with the composition of the New Testament but governed and guided the church in preserving and eventually canonizing this material. And this work of the Spirit, as predicted by Jesus in John 14:26; 16:13-14 continues today, evidencing the truth of the Word in our hearts (See Confession of Faith, Chap. I, Section 5) and enabling us to understand its message.

As the Apostolic age appealed to the Old Testament, so the next age or the next but one, while maintaining the primitive estimate of the Hebrew Canon, naturally looked with growing reverence to the writings of the Apostles

²⁰ James Morgan: The Scripture Testimony to the Holy Spirit (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1865) p. 464.

and Apostolic men, and began to see in them a new collection of inspired Scriptures. For this, the New Testament, as we have seen, was not directly responsible. Nevertheless there was solid ground for the attitude of the Church toward these writings. The anointing which teaches all things and is true, the Spirit which came to guide believers into all the truth, could not have failed to guide and teach in an especial degree those leaders of the Church to whom it was given to shape the first beginnings of Christian life and thought... A long experience has confirmed the judgement of the second and third centuries which ascribed to the New Testament the same inspiration that its writers attribute to the Old.²¹

²⁰ Swete., op. cit., p. 337.

C. Conclusion

We have pointed to the abundant internal evidence in the New Testament to the fact that its writers regarded the Old Testament as the work of the Holy Spirit (a Divine product--the breath of God) and that they knew their own writing had its source in Divine revelations through the guidance of the Spirit. There is further indication (though positive proof from New Testament evidence is impossible because of lack of sufficient testimony) that the New Testament writers themselves regarded their work as entirely authoritative in the Churches, in the same sense as was the Old Testament.

Now, if men, consciously speaking under the influence of the holy Spirit, insisted on the Old Testament as being a Divine product, full and infallible for the purposes for which it was intended, then, as the Church under the guidance of the Spirit placed their writings in the same category of inspiration as the Old Testament, the latter writings too are the "infallible rule of faith and practice" the church has always taken it to be. Except in a few cases, the Bible makes no statement as to the method the Spirit used in inspiring its writers, nor does it assert that it is

without error.

There is in Scripture no attempt at painful particularity or precise and literal accuracy. It is sufficient that the substance of the truth shall be correctly conveyed. The writers tell their story as honest witnesses always do, each in his own way, differing in various matters of detail, while yet they are in substantial harmony with one another. The truth of history or doctrine is not tied to a single form of words but may be expressed in various modes of speech. There are different ways of telling a story, each of which is true, though they do not precisely agree in every particular. The sacred writers are not mere amanuenses, the pen of the Holy Spirit as Augustine calls them. Yet it must be noted that Augustine recognized also the human element in the Scripture. "For to speak of the matter as it is, who is able? I venture to say, my brethren, perhaps not John himself spoke of the matter as it is, but even he only as he was able; for it was man that spoke of God, inspired indeed by God, but still man. Because he was inspired he said something; if he had not been inspired he would have said nothing; but because a man inspired, he spoke not the whole, but what a man could he spoke."²²

But if the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit, then the method too is a matter for the Spirit to determine as He used different means and instruments to bring the Scriptures into being, and its infallible character stands not on any proofs which can be given but upon our faith that a work inspired of the Holy Spirit is de facto errorless and upon the testimony of the Spirit

²² J. Ritchie Smith, The Holy Spirit in the Gospels (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1926) pp. 216-217.

in our own hearts as we read the pages of the Book.

Amid all the variety that resulted from the dynamic use which the divine Master Teacher made of the different writers the one astounding fact stands out, that not a single writer utters a false note, uses one false word or phrase, or contradicts with a single statement expressed in his style what another writer expresses in a different style. If this is not Verbal Inspiration--and there is no other, --then what, pray, shall it be called?²³

This position is summed up in the Confession of Faith, which, speaking of the Scriptures, says:

...our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, are from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.²⁴

It seems to me that the more we study the New Testament the more evident it becomes that we are dealing with the record of a group of men and women who were literally "caught up" and "borne along" upon the current of the Holy Spirit from the day of Pentecost forward, so that all they did, including the writing of these books, was in the power and under the guidance of the Spirit. Little wonder that men so conscious of the Spirit at work carrying out God's purposes should

²³ Lenski, Op. cit., p. 113.

²⁴ James Benjamin Green, A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1951) p. 17.

be thoroughly convinced that the Scripture which testified to the things of Christ in their own hearts and so powerfully affected all who came in contact with it was indeed a major work of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

The earthly life of Jesus was marked at the beginning and at the end by a miracle: the miracle of the Virgin Birth and the miracle of the Resurrection. The latter was the more spectacular, was witnessed by many people, became the note of triumph which dominated Apostolic preaching, and has ever since been the occasion of great rejoicing among Christians as well as the grounds for their faith and hope. The former has often been neglected--buried under the details of other stories which adorn the record of our Saviour's birth. It is to this we turn our attention as we study the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Doctrine of the Incarnation.

It is well to note first of all that the Incarnation refers to more than the Virgin Birth.

Incarnation means enfleshment. It denotes the assumption of human nature by the Son of God. Incarnation is the name of the act by which the Son of God became man.¹

Perhaps the best Scriptural expression of the full doctrine of the Incarnation is Phil. 2:5-8:

¹ J. B. Green, Studies in the Holy Spirit (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1936) p. 58.

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross.

and again in the prologue of John's Gospel, especially in 1:1-5, 15:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

See also Col. 1:15-17. These passages concern the initial act in the plan of God to redeem men and much of it lies in the realm of unexplained mystery. We do not know the exact function and status of the only Begotten prior to the Incarnation. We only know that He left it. He voluntarily humbled Himself. We only know that "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son."

Within the framework of this great mystery of the Incarnation, the coming of the eternal Son of God into human life, the work of the Holy Spirit in effecting

the birth itself is the focal point of our attention here. There are many aspects of the Incarnation which deserve our study but which are not the sphere of our discussion here: the love of God thereby revealed, the humility and self-sacrifice of the Son Himself, the question of how the Logos was able to restrict and limit Himself in this fashion, and so on.

Nor is it our purpose here to discuss the various problems raised by those who, comparing texts in Luke and Matthew with each other and with known history of the period, find discrepancies and errors in matters pertaining to history, geography and characters. Honest examination of these matters is important and useful so long as it is not a deliberate attempt to overthrow the truth of the whole story by locating some point which can be made to appear in error. Most of the literature on the subject of the Virgin Birth is largely taken up with either an attack or defense of the trustworthiness of the Infancy Narrative.

But here we are concerned with the function of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Incarnation, and to the best of our information it was in the performance of this miracle whereby a virgin conceived a son (and from this point forward in the life of Jesus) that the

work of the Holy Spirit is evident. This is in complete accordance with the general function of the Third Person of the Trinity, i.e., to carry into effect and bring to its final perfect conclusion the ordinances of God. In this case God had purposed this way of salvation for sinful men. The Holy Spirit brought the plan into operation.

The Incarnation, in whatever way we conceive of it, is a stupendous miracle--'the mystery of godliness'--and the astonishing thing would have been, had such an event taken place, and nothing of the nature of miracle been associated with it.²

Some of the most exalted flights of prophetic oratory in the Old Testament concern the coming of the long-awaited Messiah and the relation of the Holy Spirit to this Messiah. The birth stories of Jesus abound in references to these Old Testament prophecies, and are the occasion for numerous prophetic utterances on the part of the principle players in the drama of the Nativity. It was appropriate that there should be a renewal of prophetic activity just at the time toward which the Spirit of God had pointed through the Old Testament prophets. Some of these prophecies were referred by the Gospel writers to Jesus; others He applied to

² James Orr, The Virgin Birth of Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907) p. 86.

Himself. Actually the word of Old Testament prophecy was but a part in the great stream of preparation by the Spirit for the Lord's coming. The Spirit of God had worked in every phase of the life of the Hebrew nation to prepare the place and the people for the coming of the Messiah. It is not surprising then to find references to His Old Testament utterances through the prophecies included in the accounts of the Birth of Jesus by the Evangelists.

Turning to the New Testament, we find our sources in Matthew 1 - 2 and Luke 1 - 2. The two accounts reflect the general viewpoints of Joseph and Mary respectively. We do not know how the Evangelists obtained their information, whether directly or through others, but it is generally agreed that every detail of the two stories clearly point to one or the other of these two who knew most intimately what took place.

In both accounts there is abundant testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the key to the whole situation. From Joseph's standpoint the Holy Spirit's work in Mary, was the basis of his acceptance of her condition without jumping to the natural suspicion. From Mary's standpoint the Holy Spirit's work here was enough to make her submissive to the altogether strange and mys-

terious event taking place. From the standpoint of the writers, and of all readers, it is the work of the Holy Spirit which renders this event a glorious tribute to God's power to accomplish all things, even a conception, in order to carry out His holy designs.

A. The Holy Spirit was active in Preparing the Setting and Characters concerned with the Birth of Christ

The Holy Spirit prepared the setting for the coming of Jesus by special activities in the lives of those who would early associate with him.

1. There are numerous references to the Holy Spirit in connection with Zacharias, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist. The announcement of the angel to Zacharias filled him with amazement because he and his wife were advanced in years. But the miracle happened and a son was born to Elizabeth. The account does not state, as in the case of Mary, that Elizabeth conceived due to the Holy Spirit's coming upon her. This was not necessary inasmuch as the birth of John the Baptist was the result of purely natural physical process. But the inference that the miracle of childbirth to one so advanced in age was brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit is warranted by the references to His continual presence in and influence upon this aged couple. When Mary visited Elizabeth we read:

And it came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed art thou among women... (Lk. 1:41-42)

Again, after the birth of John, Zacharias' tongue was loosened:

...and his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel.
(Lk. 1:67-68)

These two passages indicate the exceptional outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon these two elderly people. But the strongest testimony to the fact that the Holy Spirit was at work in accomplishing this miracle, from the very start, lies in the words of the angel to Zacharias as he predicted the type of person his son would be.

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. (Lk. 1:15)

Here is a mystery even the modern scientist cannot fathom: just when does personality come to the human infant? Here, however, the Holy Spirit's presence with the infant who grew to be John the Baptist, is affirmed even prior to birth. We are justified in the conclusion that the Holy Spirit was responsible for bringing about this remarkable birth--by natural means to be sure--but under circumstances beyond ordinary nature. Such a statement proves the unusual and unprecedented activity of the Holy Spirit who at this time was

preparing the forerunner of the Messiah. This man was not to be dependent upon ordinary food and drink but would derive his source of strength from the Holy Spirit.

The contrast between the false and hateful excitement of drunkenness and the divine exaltation of spiritual fervour is also found in Eph. 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit." Comp. Acts 2:18.³

The expression used here by Luke, πνεύματος ἁγίου κληρονομεῖται is a strong one. πίμπλημι means to fill; "what wholly takes possession of the mind is said to fill it."⁴ This "possession" by the holy Spirit continued to be the power controlling John the Baptist.

2. But our interest here with the Holy Spirit is in connection with the Incarnation. The account in Luke clearly intends by its very nature to show that John was to be ^{no} ~~to~~ be an ordinary person. Even his birth was extraordinary in the sense that Isaac and Samuel were born by extraordinary Divine influence. But Luke is equally at pains to point out that John was by no means to be compared with Christ for whom he was the fore-runner. If there was a Divine influence, causing the miracle of birth in old age in the case of John, it is perfectly

³ F. W. Farrar, The Gospel According to St. Luke (Cambridge: University Press, 1884) p. 91.

⁴ J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889) p. 509.

logical to accept the fact that an even greater miracle should and would be performed in the case of One the latchet of whose shoes John was not worthy to unloose.

It is clearly the intention of the narrator to exhibit the greatness of Jesus in comparison with His forerunner, John... Are we to suppose that after laying such special stress upon the unusual manner of the promised birth of John the narrator proceeded to narrate a promise of a perfectly ordinary birth of Jesus; are we to suppose that it is the intention of the narrator that while John was born of aged parents by a special dispensation of divine grace, Jesus was simply the child of Joseph and Mary? No supposition, we think, would more completely miss the point of the narrative. Verses 36 and 37 surely provide the true key to the relation between the two accounts; the angel there points to the coming birth of John the Baptist from an aged mother as an example of that omnipotence of God which is to be manifested in yet plainer fashion in the birth of Jesus... A wonderful, if not plainly supernatural conception in the case of John followed by a merely natural conception in the case of Jesus, which the interpolation theory requires us to find, would have seemed to the composer of the narrative to involve a lamentable anticlimax.⁵

3. Another evidence of how the Holy Spirit was active at the time of the birth of Jesus is found in the story of Simeon (Lk. 2:25-35). Here was a man whose whole life seems to have been a searching for the coming of the Messiah.

⁵ J. Gresham Machen, The Virgin Birth of Christ (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930) p. 162.

This man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus...then he received him into his arms and blessed God.

Seldom in the Bible do we find a record of such complete possession by the Holy Spirit. Yet it is not at all improper that the same Spirit who prepared the body of Jesus in the womb of Mary, and who prepared a forerunner to proclaim the opening of the Christ's ministry, should also prepare a man like Simeon (and Anna, although specific mention of the Holy Spirit working in her is missing) to give formal and public announcement, upon the occasion of the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple, of the significance of this event, i.e., that the promised Messiah and hope of Israel and redeemer of many had now come. The Holy Spirit used this means to confirm to Mary and Joseph, if to no one else, the meaning of the coming of the expected Baby in such a unique way as foretold by the angel.

It seemed that, from these stories, all those who were associated with Mary and the infant Jesus felt a peculiar outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was true of Simeon and Anna after His birth, of Elizabeth and

Zacharias before hand, and of John who had a special mission to perform in introducing the ministry of Christ. In all this it is evident that the Holy Spirit was active in controlling the situation into which the Incarnation took place.

B. The Holy Spirit and the Conception of Jesus

The Gospel account affirms that the Holy Spirit brought about the conception of Jesus Himself. In all the debate that has centered on the Virgin Birth and in the literature on the subject, the part played by the Holy Spirit sometimes gets lost under the piles of discussion about the narrative itself. Basic of course is the attitude taken toward the Bible. If it is not a trustworthy record but is an entirely human document or collection of documents, then, naturally, the scholar who so desires, can delete, rearrange, or reinterpret passages such as those dealing with the Virgin Birth to suit himself (and those with this viewpoint often do seek to remove all miraculous content from the Bible.)

Of course, if one is going to proceed on the apriori assumption that miracles are impossible, then of course he will not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. But neither will he believe in the sinless life of Jesus, nor in his unique sonship, nor in any miraculous works attributed to him, nor in any saving significance attached to his death, nor in his resurrection. In that case Jesus died and remained dead, and Christianity was one more beautiful dream that turned out to be only an illusion. I am not saying this on the ground that the virgin birth must first be established and everything else made to depend on that. I am saying it on the ground that the virgin birth as presented to Matthew and Luke fits in with the rest of the New Testament picture of Jesus and with the

place he has occupied in historic Christianity.⁶

If, on the other hand, the Bible is accepted as a true record of these matters, it remains only to seek to discover the full meaning of what it says. In the case of the Virgin Birth Passages, there can be no doubt on the part of those who accept the record that they teach that Jesus was: 1. Born without a human father, 2. That the miracle of conception was effected by the Holy Spirit, 3. But that in no way was the Spirit a mere substitute for a human father.

1. Jesus was born without a human father. We have this in as plain language as possible, yet without vulgarity or immodesty.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together (πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς) she was found with child of (ἐκ) the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (Mt. 1:18-20)

And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took

⁶ Walter Thomas Conner, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949) p. 45.

unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name Jesus. (Mt. 1:24-25)

And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (πνεῦμα ἁγίου ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ) and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee (καὶ σὺναισθήσει ὑπὸ τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν) wherefore also (ὥστε καὶ) the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. (Lk. 1:34-35)

a. There is, first of all, the statement that Joseph and Mary had not come together as man and wife, which means that Joseph could not have been the father of Jesus. We ^{know} _^ this to be true from:

i. The statement of Matthew, in Mt. 1:18.

Among the Jews the betrothal took place a year before marriage, and during the interval the betrothed maiden remained with her own family. But from the day of betrothal the pair were regarded as man and wife.⁷

This betrothal ceremony included all the vows now associated with marriage itself. Hence technically Joseph and Mary could not be called husband and wife (v. 20).

The οὐκ ἐγινώκει denotes nothing but the home-bringing which followed the Jewish espousal. It is not identical with..."he knew her not,"

⁷ A. Carr, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Cambridge University Press, 1890) p. 83.

in v. 25, although the homebringing naturally included the sexual union of the couple.⁸

ii. The concern of Joseph when he found Mary with child, knowing he was not the father. (Mt. 1:19)

iii. The statement that he "knew her not till she brought forth a son." (Mt. 1:25).

The euphemism οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτήν is frequent in Greek, also in Hebrew and Latin. The idea is "to know intimately, i.e., sexually, the verb being intensified."⁹

iv. The statement of Mary, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Lk. 1:34)

b. In the second place, no other man was the father of Jesus. We know this from:

i. The statement of Mary in Lk. 1:34, just quoted above.

The words are the avowal of a maiden conscious of her own purity; and they are drawn from her by the strange declaration that she is to have a son before she is married.¹⁰

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus, Lutheran Book Concern, 1932) p. 40.

⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁰ Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906) p. 24.

ii. The appeal to prophecy (Mt. 1: 23). It seems to me that, in spite of any results obtained from trying to prove that the word virgin in this passage (Isa. 7:14) meant other than a virgin (as we commonly use the term), Matthew, at least, quoted it to show that the Messiah was to be conceived in a virgin without a human father.

iii. The act of the angel of the Lord in restraining Joseph, who at once suspected that some other man was the father of Mary's child.

If neither Joseph nor any other man was the father of this child, then we are already faced with a miracle, even before we consider the part played by the Holy Spirit. The impulse of Joseph "to put her away privily," and the silence of the rest of the New Testament on this matter which could so easily bring shame and disgrace on Joseph's family, point to the fact that Jesus was born without a human father and yet without any reproach to the character of Mary. This was possible because

2. The miracle of conception was caused by the Holy Spirit. The following expressions testify to this:

a. "Found with child of the Holy Spirit"

(ΕΥΡΕΙΟΝ ΕΝ ΧΑΙΤΑΙ ΕΧΟΥΣΑ ΕΚ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ)

Mt. 1:18.

This at once sheds the full light of divine truth upon the fact here recorded. Matthew has the thoughts of his readers in mind. Not for one instant are we left in doubt, every unworthy thought is completely fore-stalled. In this brief phrase Matthew records what is popularly called the virgin birth, and on this phrase hangs the entire paragraph, yea all else that the New Testament reports concerning the Word made flesh. Either the eternal Son of God entered our race as Matthew here declares, or he did not. If he did not, if Jesus was an ordinary human bastard, or Joseph's natural son by an act of forbidden cohabitation, then they who will may call him their Savior--their lascivious fancy cannot raise him from the mire into which they have cast him.¹¹

b. "For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." (Τὸ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου) Mt. 1:20. Τὸ γεννηθεὶς points to the past act of conception and is neuter, leaving the sex unnamed.

The ineffable mystery of the incarnation is expressed by the angel in the simplest words, yet in the most adequate way. The same thing appears in all the evangelists when they speak of this mystery. Here is one of the clear marks of divine inspiration--facts and realities which the human mind will never penetrate are expressed in words of utter simplicity, yet of perfect adequacy. In every case the fact is placed beyond question as a fact, but the profundity of the manner of the

¹¹ Lenski, Op. cit., p. 41.

fact, how this or that is or can be, is left unrevealed. The reason for the latter is plain--the how lies beyond human comprehension. Who can grasp how the conception took place ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, when no man has yet grasped just how a common human being with his personality and all his physical and mental peculiarities is conceived in the commingact of procreation?¹²

c. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (πνεῦμα ἁγίου ἐκτελεσθῆναι ἐπὶ σέ) and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee (καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσῃ σου)" Lk. 1:35. The scholars differ as to the significance of the omission of the article with Holy Spirit here.¹³ But, as we have already pointed out (p. 42 ff) this can have no real significance here which would affect the interpretation that the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person is here meant.

Here are three statements which clearly show that the conception in the womb of Mary was due to the Holy Spirit who worked a miracle there, even as in the beginning when the earth was waste and void "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" and the first miracle of creation was accomplished.

¹² Ibid., p. 47.

¹³ See Plummer, Op. cit., p. 24. Also F. W. Farrar, The Gospel According to St. Luke (Cambridge University Press, 1884) p. 97.

If the position taken here seems "dogmatic" and "unscientific," equally so are the statements of those who, discarding what little evidence we do have in the Bible (a position in itself a wholly "dogmatic" and "unscientific" observation of data), as in the following quotation with reference to the Infancy Narrative in Matthew and Luke:

They are attempts to account for the unique personality of Christ. They must have taken literary form after the personality of Christ had become in some measure a problem for the church... It is true that the Messianic mission of Jesus appears prominently in both narratives. This would, however, hardly need a birth by the Spirit of God. Nothing in Jewish thought would demand that. Nowhere in Judaism is the Messiah a person of supernatural birth, though sometimes he is regarded as a supernatural person come down from heaven.¹⁴

To this author the whole account, and the term "conceived by the Holy Spirit" is merely the "old Hebrew term for the divine activity operating in the world," which provides "the great mass of the church" with a "satisfactory, provisional answer to the question of the person of Christ." Such is the devious explanation necessary when the Bible is not even given the normal credence which most secular histories enjoy.

3. Although Jesus had no human father, but

¹⁴ Irving F. Wood, The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1904) p. 144.

rather was conceived "of the Holy Spirit" this does not mean that the Holy Spirit took the place of a physical father in causing Mary to conceive. This would put the whole matter on the same level as some of the pagan mythological characters who were born as the result of the union of a god and mortal woman. The sensual and exaggerated details of such myths are wholly missing in the simple Gospel account.

The notion that the Holy Ghost took the place of the human father and supplied the male seed to fructify the ovum, is false, in toto. The Incarnation was vastly beyond this; for the eternal Logos became flesh. This pre-existent Person was conceived by a direct divine act, without a sexual act or any substitute therefor.¹⁵

The prologue to John's Gospel does not narrate the matters connected with the Virgin Birth but rather brings to our attention the pre-existence of the Logos.

The question arises, Is the Prologue intended to be a tacit correction of the Matthaen and Lukan Nativity traditions? Or are these... silently accepted and supplemented by the statement of fuller and deeper truth? The latter alternative accords with the characteristic manner and method of the Fourth Evangelist. So far from excluding the possibility of the virgin birth, it may be argued that the Prologue pre-supposes it. In view of the fact that the tradition of the virgin birth must already have been current in certain Christian circles, and can hardly have been unknown to the writer of

¹⁵ Lenski, Op. cit., p. 58.

the Johannine Prologue, this conclusion becomes at least highly probable.¹⁶

Men become the sons of God through an act of God's grace; Christ was the Son of God through a natural relation. It was not necessary for the Holy Spirit to cause any natural process of conception to take place in Mary's womb in order for her to become pregnant, any more than it was necessary for Jesus to make use of medicines and other treatments a physician might normally use to heal a leper. The Holy Spirit simply "caused" a miracle to happen, and it did, just as Jesus touched a diseased person, and He was healed. It is when we reach this point that we can go no further, for we have no further information--and probably could not understand it if we did.

The virgin conception of Jesus...is not to be interpreted as if it were a miracle in violation of the laws of nature, but rather as brought about by God Himself present in theophany. The conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary differs from all other conceptions of children by their mothers, in that there was no human father. The place of the human father was taken by God Himself; not that God appeared in theophany in human form to beget the child...but that God in a theophany in an extraordinary way, unrevealed to us, and

¹⁶ G. H. Box, "Virgin Birth" in A Dictionary of The Bible, James Hastings, editor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905) Vol. II, p. 805.

without violation of the laws of maternity,
impregnates the Virgin Mary with the holy
seed.¹⁷

After all, we come to a point in nearly every phase of our Christian doctrines when we can not longer rely upon exact proof (Scriptural or otherwise) but must rely upon faith. The human physician relies upon the formula: medicine plus rest equals a cure from illness; the normal method of reproduction is through the physical union of a man and a woman. But just as Jesus in his miracles simply did without the normal physical processes and formula, so the Holy Spirit "came upon" Mary so that "she was found with child of (from) the Holy Spirit." And here faith is exercised. We have the unassailable fact of the Virgin Birth in the words of Matthew and Luke, but there is a point beyond which all the arguments and proofs in the world cannot convince the sceptic if he refuses to accept the fact as stated.

The fact remains that Matthew and Luke affirm that due to the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary, a virgin, conceived and bore a son. And while there is little in

¹⁷ Prof. Biggs, "Virgin Birth" in A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, James Hastings, editor. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906) Vol. II, p. 808.

the rest of the New Testament to confirm this fact, it is equally true that there is not even the slightest attempt to refute the idea of a Virgin Birth as a false doctrine--something Paul would have been sure to do had he felt that it was in any way untrue. On the contrary at several points Paul's writings seem to give tacit confirmation to the narrative of the Virgin Birth, or rather, presuppose it. See Rom. 1:3-4; I Cor. 15:45-47; Gal. 4:4. These verses in themselves would tell us nothing of the Virgin Birth and are not proof texts in support of such a miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit. Yet they do lend support. Especially is this true of Gal. 4:4, "But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law." Paul here makes no suggestion of a human father, but does state the unusual feature of a pre-existent Divine one coming into human life through child-birth--something of a major miracle in itself.

The fact that the New Testament has so little to say about the Virgin Birth is not an argument against the event itself. It was too delicate a matter, and too open to ridicule and mockery, especially when Mary, or close members of her family, were still alive. The Apostles saw no necessity to write and preach on the sub-

ject. It was sufficient to proclaim that God had sent His Son into the world in the form of a human being to be the Saviour of the world. If any one wanted to know "how?" this happened, the record was there in the two Gospels which narrate that Mary conceived a son ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου.

To the unregenerate all this is foolishness. To the person who, by the appeal of the Gospel testimony to the whole series of miracles which compose the life of Jesus, by the sacrifice of this One on the Cross, and by the inner working of the Spirit in his heart, has come to accept the babe of Bethlehem as the Son of God and his personal Saviour--to this person the Work of the Holy Spirit in effecting this feature of the Incarnation is still a wonder and a mystery but is entirely acceptable on the basis of faith.

C. Conclusion

In conclusion it is pertinent to inquire into the values derived from the work of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation. Inasmuch as Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, what effects does our knowledge of this miracle have?

1. It made possible the existence of a Man who was also divine and sinless. Not that God could not otherwise place His Son upon the earth--but He did choose this method. The extra-ordinary, miraculous, way in which Jesus was born meant that He was not subject to the ordinary laws of human generation by which, as the child of two human parents, he would also be merely a human being with all the limitations thereof, and with all the sin with which men are normally born. Not that this completely explains Jesus' character either --certainly the taint of human sin could have been transmitted through Mary too--but there was something about this conception by the Holy Spirit which made the outcome different. The angel Gabriel made this especially plain to Mary. After telling her how Jesus was to be born, he said, "wherefore (ὅτι καὶ) the holy thing (ἅγιον) which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." This statement makes both the holiness and the divinity of

Christ dependent upon the action of the Holy Spirit in bringing about His conception, regardless of whatever other reasons there might be (such as the pre-existence of the Logos).

As by virtue of our conception and birth we are unholy, guilty and defiled, one with sinners, and therefore burdened with the condemnation of hell, so is the Mediator conceived and born holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens.¹⁸

By this Conception, Jesus was automatically set off from all other men.

The Holy Spirit sanctified the flesh on which it wrought. Of the Child of Mary while yet unborn, it is said that He shall be known as holy, even as son of God. His unique conception, without human paternity, means that He is to hold this unique position in human history... The entail of sin was broken at last, and one born of a woman was, even as man, holy and a son of God.¹⁹

2. The Virgin Birth also shows again how the Holy Spirit is God in action, carrying out the purposes of God. We cannot but see in the Incarnation, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit carrying through this great purpose of God. Yet the New Testament declares that the Spirit very plainly was the author of the Incarnation. He was in close relation

¹⁸ Kuyper, op. cit., p. 88.

¹⁹ Swete, op. cit., p. 27.

to Jesus from the very beginning, giving Him power and life and holiness, so that He never knew a moment when He was not conscious of the Holy Spirit. It is not at all strange then that it is the Holy Spirit who took up the work of Christ in the world following the Ascension, and who continually applies to our own hearts and lives the benefits which are ours in Christ Jesus.