

Dr Kelly writes theology with an eye to the work of our triune God and an eye to the church in this third installment of his systematic theology. He plumbs the depth of the Scriptures, dialogues with theologians throughout the ages, both east and west, and he shows the church how God in Christ through the Spirit has saved a people, the body of Christ, to live out their union with Christ. Readers will benefit from reading Dr Kelly's labor of love—a love for our triune God and for the church.

J. V. FESKO

Harriet Barbour Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology,
Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi

Deploying insights and observations culled from a lifetime of study and service, Douglas Kelly's scholarly rigour and pastoral warmth sparkle in this third volume of his highly-regarded systematic theology. Here readers will find a thoroughly Trinitarian exploration of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church that is exegetically sharp, consistently readable, and deeply informed by the full-breadth of the Christian tradition. In short, this is Reformed theology at its best.

MATTHEW C. BINGHAM

Lecturer in Systematic Theology and Church History
at Oak Hill College, London

Here is a work that is clearly the fruit of a lifetime's study and meditation. Dr Kelly guides us through the person and work of the Spirit, the doctrine of the church and the pattern of the Christian life, whilst somehow sacrificing neither depth nor readability. Harvesting insights from an extraordinary range of saints who have gone before him, Dr Kelly takes time to show how the truths he lays out emerge directly from Scripture, making this volume of great pastoral use to those called to preach and teach the riches of the Bible, as well as all those wanting to develop a robustly 'biblical' theology.

JONTY RHODES

Minister, Christ Church Central, Leeds, UK

The church of the twenty-first century desperately needs to be reestablished in the ancient doctrines of the church and the person and power of the Holy Spirit and the glorious relationship between them. I am deeply grateful for Dr Kelly's faithful ministry to the church in presenting us with this confessional and practical resource to help us more fully know and love our triune God and His beloved bride.

BURK PARSONS

Senior Pastor of Saint Andrew's Chapel, Sanford, Florida
Editor of *Tabletalk* magazine

This rousing finale to Professor Kelly's *Systematic Theology* breathes the air of the vast scope of the Christian tradition, reflects decades of discerning yet charitable reading from all corners of the Church, demonstrates the fruit of a life of biblical meditation, and instructs young theologians in how to carry out their calling with confidence yet grace. Throughout this project Dr Kelly has closely followed the order of Calvin's definitive edition of his *Institutes*, but has also mirrored Calvin's combination of clarity and conciseness. Behind his simple and accessible prose, though, are deep wells of reflection on many of the central questions of the Christian faith and life, and we are all in the author's debt. From the first page to the last, read not only to be instructed but to be edified and even lifted up to glorify the triune God in and with His Church.

MARK GARCIA

Professor of Systematic Theology,
Westminster Theological Seminary, Glenside, Pennsylvania

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

V O L U M E T H R E E

Grounded in Holy Scripture and
understood in the light of the Church

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understood in the light of the Church

DOUGLAS F. KELLY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

Douglas F. Kelly is Professor of Theology Emeritus, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Scripture quotations are taken, unless otherwise stated, from the Authorised Version/King James Version, 1611.

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This book is dedicated to

WILLIAM C. MARSH

Former student, faithful friend and fellow soldier of the cross.

I am particularly grateful for all he has done to make
my library building a reality.

*Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and
fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they
are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.*

2 CORINTHIANS 8:23 (AV)

PREFACE

This is the third volume in my series *Systematic Theology*. Volume One dealt with the Trinity (with emphasis on the Father), Volume Two with Christ the Son, and this volume addresses the Holy Spirit and the Church. In a certain sense, I am following the outline of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, where he expounds the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the Church. Therefore, this volume (the Third, and my last) expounds the Holy Spirit and the Church. (I combine into one volume much of the material to which Calvin devoted two volumes.)

I have found it more demanding to write on the Holy Spirit than on the other Two Persons of the Blessed Trinity. That may be because, as I state later in this volume, although the Holy Spirit is closest to us of those in the Trinity, yet He is the hardest to see, because He does not choose to speak much of Himself, but – as one may figuratively say – hides Himself in the folds of the humanity of Christ. We have some conception of God the Father on His rainbow-circled throne, and of course of the incarnate Christ who came here below to save His people by His life, death, and resurrection, so fully presented in the Holy Scriptures. But we do not see the Holy Spirit, yet we know Him most profoundly on the inside of ourselves as redeemed persons, for He is the One who by His mysterious and all-powerful work has united us to Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and this Christ brings us directly to the Father, as we see in 1 Peter 3:18: *'For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ...'*

It is in Christ that we meet the Holy Spirit, and it is in the Holy Spirit that we meet Christ – both in the inspired Scriptures, and in His work in the Church and in our renewed personalities. The Spirit is the One who illumines us to understand the Holy Scriptures. Christ makes us alive by uniting us to Himself in the blessed Spirit, and continues His sanctifying work within us through the energies of that same Spirit, always operating in accordance with the verities given us in the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, is the One who makes alive the Church and the individual believer in the Church. Since He makes us alive, and continues to sanctify us with a view to inexorable glory, we do well to

focus on this blessed and mysterious Person! Yet the end result will leave us gazing upon Christ, the beloved One of the Father! That will be extremely pleasing to the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:12-15).

May this volume serve in the grand task of shedding divine light upon the One whom the Spirit sets before us in the written Word, for our final transformation into the Son's likeness!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since this work has been pursued on and off for several years, it is almost certain that I will forget some who have lent a very helping hand. Although now I am (supposedly) retired, several student assistants helped me greatly during my later years of the professorate at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. They include: (Rev.) Duncan Rankin, now a minister of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Virginia, (Rev.) Johnathan Keenan, now working with the Reformed University Ministries in California, (Rev.) Alex Mark, now a PCA minister in Beaufort, South Carolina, (Rev.) Jay Crout, now an ARP minister in Greenville, South Carolina, (Rev.) Matt Miller, now an ARP minister in Greenville, South Carolina, (Rev.) Mark Miller, minister of the ARP in Clover, South Carolina, and (Rev.) Blake Schwarz, minister of Park Cities PCA in Dallas, Texas.

Above all others, my gratitude is owed to my wife Caroline, who has done a massive amount of work on the computer for me (an inescapable sort of technology that I still find difficult to negotiate), and to my youngest son, Patrick (M. D.), who has interacted with me theologically all the way through. Medical Doctor though he is, his theological acumen is very high, along with a humble spirit. I have made many changes through his suggestions. I am grateful to have worked once again with (Rev.) Malcolm MacLean of Inverness, Scotland.

We can never know exactly who has prayed for us, but I am aware of the prayer meetings of several churches, which have made regular intercession for this project, such as First Presbyterian Church of Dillon, South Carolina, Reedy Creek Presbyterian Church of Minturn, SC, and Union Presbyterian Church near Carthage, North Carolina.

PART ONE

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Supreme Gift is God Himself, sharing His innermost life with His own people. By means of the Holy Spirit, who is ‘the bond of charity between the Father and the Son’, He comes into us, so that we know God, and are thereby lifted in His eternal salvation. Prophet, priest, and king are Old Testament types of what Christ became and did for our salvation.

God in his goodness gives Himself to His people. That is the supreme gift. As Saint Thomas wrote: ‘He brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures ...’¹ This is the essential giving nature of God, brought out in James 1:5, where, to encourage God’s people to seek for wisdom, James says that ‘God is the giving God’.²

We begin with the fact that God created men and women in His own image so that He might relate to them personally, and they to Him. But since God is infinitely above us, for us humans to know God, God Himself must be in charge of the means of our knowing, and thus we only know Him personally insofar as He gives Himself to us, who are infinitely below His eternal being.

The Father accomplishes this by means of giving His Son and Spirit, and at the same time, providing our capacity to grasp the divine Persons. He does this supremely in the Lord Jesus Christ, the God/man, as we shall see. As Saint Basil wrote: ‘... just as the Father is made visible in the Son, so also the Son is recognized in the Spirit.’³ Furthermore, in Him, heaven and earth are united, eternity is bound together with the present moment, and in Him the eternal God is forever united with humankind.

The grounds for this union were being prepared in the very conception of the life of the cosmos (Gen. 1:2), creating man through the Word (cf. John 1:1-3), in the image of Jesus to extend His kingdom through all the

1. Thomas Aquinas, Question 47, First Article, in *Summa of the Summa*, Edited and Annotated by Peter Kreeft (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1990), p. 204.

2. By means of a ‘genitive absolute’ – i.e. *para tou didontos Theou* ...

3. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, vol. viii (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1894), 26.64.

world (Gen. 1:27-28). The Spirit spoke, and man heard and obeyed. This was life in the Garden, when 'God walked in the Garden with man in the cool (literally, *ruach*) of the day' (Gen. 3:8).

When man fell, however, this blest union was severed: life became death, order chaos, and existence a sort of living curse. Thus, life in the presence of the Lord was lost. This fulness of this divine/human union had to be relearned by God's people, vividly characterized in their exile from the Promised Land to Babylon.

This 'relearning' would take the errant people of God beyond the confines of this fallen age. Much of the Pentateuch shows the chosen people being brought into covenants with God: first, Noahic, then Abrahamic, then Mosaic. These historical developments increasingly convey salvation from cosmic judgment, life by faith, obedience ensuing, with the end being man's return to the New Eden in God's presence. Or as Irenaeus puts it, there are four covenants given to the human race: 'One, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the Law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom.'⁴

Relearning was necessary because the history of Israel showed that the people of God cannot re-enter Eden. Instead, Eden must be recreated, and man recreated for it, with his heart, soul and spirit reformed (Ezek. 36:25-28), under a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). Jesus makes this re-creation a reality, as He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. For us to enter this covenant, He speaks of our being 'born again' or 'born from above' (John 3:3, 5). This is a divine gift, administered by the Holy Spirit.

Few realities could be so important to us fallen humans as this 'Gift' – which was the term some of the Church Fathers used to speak of the Holy Spirit. How glad we humans should be that this is who He is – the Gift! Saint Augustine, for instance, describes the Holy Spirit as '... the gift of the Father and the Son When we say, therefore, the gift of the giver, and the giver of the gift, we speak in both cases relatively in reciprocal reference. Therefore the Holy Spirit is a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son; and on that account, perhaps, he is so called, because the same name is suitable to both the Father and the Son In order, therefore, that the communion of both may be signified from a name which is suitable to both, the Holy Spirit is called the gift of both.'⁵

But the giving of God does not merely wait upon the history of the human race, it goes back through all eternity into the Triune God Himself. The Church Fathers help us to grasp this eternal giving within God, for during the first four centuries they were constantly grappling with the demanding concept of the three persons of the Trinity found in the Scriptures.

4. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. I, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1867), III, XI, p. 7.

5. Augustine, *On the Holy Trinity*, XII, II (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church), vol. III, p. 93.

Augustine frequently refers to the Holy Spirit as ‘the bond of charity’ between the Father and the Son: ‘... that absolute love which joins together Father and Son, and [which] joins us also from beneath ...’⁶ And at the same time, he constantly considers Him to be a distinct person, as much as the Father and the Son are distinct (but never separated) persons.⁷ Referring to Augustine, H. Bavinck points out, ‘The Holy Spirit was a gift before he had been given to anyone.’⁸ That is, even before time began, the Holy Spirit was involved in the eternal procession within the divine being, in which He was gift of both Father and Son to and from one another. The seventeenth-century Francis Turretin later explains that both the Son and the Spirit can properly be called the gift of God, and particularly applies this to our salvation:

... (just as Christ, who is a divine person, is nevertheless called the gift of God (John 3:16; 4:10; Isa. 9:6). Thus the Holy Spirit can be called the gift of God. It may seem paradoxical, but it does not imply a contradiction for one to be both a gift and the giver himself, since Christ gave himself for us and to us for the support of our eternal life; “*The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*” (John 6:51).⁹

To return to the Fathers, Saint Athanasius in the fourth century notes that any saving knowledge we may have of the love of God can only come through the gift of the Holy Spirit to us. ‘As the grace given is from the Father through the Son, so we can have no communion in the gift except in the Holy Spirit. For it is when we partake of him that we have the love of the Father and the grace of the Son and the communion of the Spirit himself.’¹⁰

Gregory of Nazianzus (in his *Oration on Holy Baptism*) speaks of the illumination we receive in Christ as ‘The Gift’. Among other things that occur in this illumination, he mentions ‘the following of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Word ...’¹¹ Then he adds: ‘And as Christ the Giver of it is called by many names, so too is this gift We call it, the Gift, the Grace, the Baptism, Unction, Illumination We call it the Gift, because it is given to us in return for nothing on our part ...’¹²

6. *Ibid.*, VII. III (p. 108).

7. Augustine, *op. cit.*, I, IX: ‘But in order to intimate the Trinity, some things are separately affirmed, the Persons being also separately named; and yet are not to be understood as though the other Persons were excluded, on account of the unity of the same Trinity and the One substance and Godhead of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (p. 28).

8. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, vol. 2, John Bolt, General Editor, and John Vriend, Translator (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids Michigan, 2004), p. 321.

9. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Volume I, First Through Tenth Topics, Translated by George Musgrave Giger, Edited by James T. Dennison, Jr. (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing: Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1992), p. 307.

10. Athanasius, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit to Bishop Serapion*, with the translation and notes by C. R. B. Shapland, originally published by Epworth Press, 1951, Epistle One, section 31.

11. Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VII, XL, III.

12. *Ibid.*, *Oration* XL, IV.

This divine gift, who comes to us clothed with many a saving blessing, is none less than Almighty God Himself. He, therefore, is absolutely essential to our salvation, for He alone can bring us into the saving knowledge of God the Father through union with God the Son. He is brought before us throughout the history of redemption in the Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments. The One whose presence is essential to our eternal salvation is well worth our most serious study and highest thoughts.

As we search through the Old Testament, we find that the Spirit of God is, in His own way, at times nearly invisible, preparing to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Pentateuch, the Spirit is active in providing the categories of the Covenant, the redemption of God's people, the Law of God, the Tabernacle presence of the Lord, along with the promise of the New Creation. The Histories (as in Kings and Chronicles) begin to center all of these realities in a Person (foreshadowed in Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, and finally, the Messianic David kingship). Then, as this Davidic Kingdom divides, the Northern branch falls away into idolatry rather quickly, and well over a century later, the Southern Kingdom of Judah falters. Throughout this time of increasing apostasy, God raises up prophets by His Spirit. Revelation 19:10 shows that the Spirit of prophecy is the 'testimony of Jesus'. Thus, the pre-incarnate Christ through his Spirit was at work during the heights and depths of the history of Israel in the Old Testament.

So we find that, throughout the Old Testament and long before His incarnation, Christ the Lord was using the categories of prophet, priest, and king, to describe those who would redeem Israel into the New Creation. Isaiah, Chapters 60 to 65, epitomizes the intertwining of these themes.

Prophet

First we meet Him at work as the supreme prophet, promised by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken I will raise up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Peter explicates something of this in his First Epistle:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost

sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Priest

Next, Christ is portrayed in the High Priest, who represented God to man and man to God in the atoning blood, and all acts of worship in Tabernacle and Temple. Aaron and his descendants made corporate worship acceptable by sprinkling incense upon a censer of burning coals and wafting its scent around the Temple (cf. Lev. 16:12, 13). They had the authority to lay their hands upon the sacrificial animal as sinners confessed their sins, transferring, as it were, their sins to the appointed sacrifice (cf. Lev. 3:2). They also had the authority to instruct the people in the Law of the Lord, following in the steps of Moses, who declared to Israel the feasts of the Lord (cf. Lev. 23:44). And they were empowered to put the benediction upon God's people: 'Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them' (Num. 6:23-27).

Christ, however, is different from all the other priests, in that while they sacrificed animal substitutes, He literally sacrificed Himself as the supreme and final sin offering. We see this in the 'servant songs' of Isaiah, as in Isaiah, chapters 42 to 53. For instance, we are told in Isaiah 53:4, 5: 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet did we esteem stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'

According to the Book of Hebrews, Christ took on the entirety of our nature so as to deliver it from the inside out, thereby defeating our enemies:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. 2:14-18).

King

Finally, as far as kingship, we have to admit that the office of king has a problematic beginning within Israel. Although Moab and the other surrounding countries long had kings, Israel had traditionally seen God

as their king, and understood that the Lord raised up judges to administer the government (cf. *Judg.* 2:16). However, by the time of Samuel, the people of Israel were demanding a king, like the nations around them (cf. *1 Sam.* 8:4ff.). God allowed it, but warned them through Samuel of the severe problems that kingship would entail (cf. *1 Sam.* 8). Even with an earthly king, they should continue to act as they did when the Lord was their king (*1 Sam.* 12:12-15; 24-25), for only then could they be blessed.

Samuel was first divinely led to Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, an impressive person, upon whom the Spirit came (cf. *1 Sam.* 10:8-10), but who eventually failed in character and faith. In impatience, he offered sacrifice before Samuel could arrive (*1 Sam.* 13:8-14) and then spared some of the Amalekites (whom God had appointed for destruction according to *1 Sam.* 15:6-9; 28:18). Whereupon the Lord declared that He would remove him from the throne (*1 Sam.* 15:11, 22, 35).

The Lord then instructed Samuel to find someone else to become king, and directed him to look among Jesse's sons (*1 Sam.* 16:1-5), members of the tribe of Judah. The chosen one turned out to be David, a younger son who kept the sheep. The Spirit of God, from the day Samuel secretly anointed him, came upon David, and never left (*1 Sam.* 16:13). By contrast, because of his disobedience and proud heart, the Lord sent an evil spirit to trouble Saul (*1 Sam.* 16:14) who eventually became insane, gripped with fear of his now son-in-law, David. Although Saul tried to kill him, David eventually prevailed, for the Lord was with him, having departed from Saul. So we see that instead of depending on the Spirit of God, as a king should, Saul actually turned to evil spirits, consulting the witch of Endor before a final battle with the Philistines. Samuel himself was even sent back from the other world to announce judgment upon him in his coming death (*1 Sam.* 28:7-25).

In due time, David was made king, first over the tribe of Judah, reigning from Hebron for seven years and six months (*2 Sam.* 2:11). Then, after Saul's descendant Ishbosheth and his captain Abner were killed (*2 Sam.* 3 and 4), the elders of Israel invited David to become their king (*2 Sam.* 5:3). 'David was thirty years old [at the beginning of his reign over all Israel], and he reigned forty years' (*2 Sam.* 5:4). *2 Samuel* 5:10 summarizes the great success of David's long reign: 'And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.' In contrast to Saul, David's heart was upon God, who promised to establish his house, and he turned God's promises into prayer: 'And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it forever, and do as thou hast said' (*2 Sam.* 7:25). He prayed this way in order that the name of God might be magnified (*2 Sam.* 7:26).

David was not perfect, least of all in his adultery with Bathsheba, and his having her husband killed (*2 Sam.* 11), and his confession of these sins in *Psalms* 32 and 51 have been classics of true repentance over subsequent millennia. In all of his battles, 'the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went' (*2 Sam.* 8:14), and although he and his family would bear heavy consequences for these sins (as, for example, in the rebellion and death

of Absalom, and the rebellion of most of Israel against him), the Spirit of God continued with him.

Still, the kingship of David was the greatest in all the history of Israel. Although it was eclipsed by his son Solomon in terms of sheer wealth and power, Solomon did not have the same godly heart, although we are told that he loved the Lord (cf. 1 Kings 3:3). Without entering into historical details, found in 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles, and elsewhere in the prophets, most of the kings who followed David and Solomon were men of far lesser character and stately success (with some exceptions like Jehoshaphat and Josiah). Solomon himself took on a huge harem, including many foreign wives, for whom he constructed places of worship.

The kings of Israel became apostate from their beginning, with the apostasy occurring first in the Northern Kingdom immediately after it split from Judah in the time of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Not much more than a century or two later, the Southern Kingdom would also apostatize, and for its punishment, would be deported into Babylon, where it learned not to worship idols, before returning home some seventy years later, as we see in Ezra and Nehemiah. After the time of captivity in Babylon, kings were no longer relevant in the history of the people of God, for the people would live ever after under foreign powers, such as Babylon, Medo-Persia, and then Rome.

Yet in spite of failure after failure of all these human kings over the centuries, the concept of kingship would nevertheless be used by the Holy Spirit, speaking through the writers of Scripture, to teach essential truths about the sovereign reign of God Himself. This reign would be concentrated in the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. Earthly kings, even the best ones, could only foreshadow the King of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose body, the Church, as Dumitru Staniloae writes, would be 'fully spiritualized (pneumatized)' in such a way that the Spirit can actually bring his life into our spirits.¹³

The Continual Presence of the Spirit in the Old Testament

From our vantage point, we can look back and see that the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was conforming Israel into the image of the Lord (Gen. 1:27) so that her people, as living icons, might extend God's reign throughout the entire cosmos (Gen. 1:28), representing Him as a Kingdom of Priests (Exod. 19:6; cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6). When we reach the New Testament, we discover that this image of the Lord that had been resisted, corrupted, marred and finally rejected in the history of Israel is fully revealed and finally perfected in Jesus.

Now we can understand the meaning of the opening verses of the Gospel of Mark, which describe the baptism of Jesus, and dramatically

13. Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Volume 4, The Church Communion in the Holy Spirit*, translated and edited by Ioan Ionita (Holy Cross Orthodox Press: Brookline, Massachusetts, 2012), vol. 4, chapter 1. Staniloae, an Eastern Orthodox theologian of Romania (1903–1993) who was professor of Dogmatics in Bucharest, wrote six volumes of dogmatic theology, now translated into English.

announce that the heavens are 'torn open' with the eternal Shekinah Glory of the LORD shining forth (Exod. 40:34-38; 2 Chron. 7:1-4; Isa. 64:1). This glory which had departed from the Temple (Ezek. 8:11) now returns to rest upon Jesus in His baptism (Mark 1:9-11; Matt. 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22). His body, being fully penetrated by the Spirit, radiates the glory of the Lord, and constitutes the New Temple for His people (John 1:14), and is thus the place where God fully meets man (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Matt. 1:23).

Through his death, which constitutes the destruction of the 'temple of his body', the true temple is then recreated in His crucified and risen body (cf. Ezek. 42:16-20):

Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scriptures, and the word which Jesus had said (John 2:19-22).

After His resurrection, His new creational body, fully spiritualized, ascends to the glory of the Father, and can then be poured into the inner beings of His followers (John 7:37-39), as it is 'breathed upon them' (John 20:20-22) through the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-4), constituting them 'living stones' of the new temple community (Hosea 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:4-10). In short, the living reality of the life, resurrection and death of Jesus is communicated to us as Christ's body becomes fully spiritualized in His glorification, in such a way that it actually operates within us through the Holy Spirit.

One can briefly survey the Spirit's work in the Old Testament, noting that He is never separate from Christ, but is forming His kingdom as the centuries go by in the history of Israel. We find Him in Genesis 1-10 in creation and re-creation. In Genesis 11-50 we see how He is heard and obeyed among the Patriarchs, not without much struggle. Through various encounters, where there was struggle, failure and blessing, the Messianic line is at the heart of the inauguration of the kingdom, first when there was no written Word, and then when the Scriptures are given.

In Exodus, the Spirit, as active agent of the Messiah, is organizing the people of God into a kingdom of priests, under the Torah. They are led by the Priesthood and are opened up to the glory of the Lord in the Tabernacle. In Leviticus, we see the presence of the Spirit in the fire, oil, and blood in the priestly service of the Tabernacle, for the cleansing of God's people, and their presentation to God. In Numbers, the true Israel is formed and reformed for the extension of God's kingdom amidst resistance, rebellion and judgment. In Deuteronomy, God's people begin to be delivered into the life of new creational wisdom and understanding, given in the statutes and commandments of the Lord to guide His people into life in the Promised Land.

In the Old Testament Histories, the Holy Spirit is progressively working to reveal Jesus in fuller and further measure to His people. Thus, eternity is brought with its transforming power into fallen time.

After the Spirit in the Pentateuch builds the categories of the Covenant, the Law, and the Tabernacle Presence of the Lord and the promise of the new creation, the Histories begin to center all of these in a Person.

A new phase of the Old Testament experience begins with Joshua (from which name 'Jesus' is derived – i.e. the Lord saves), as he leads the people of God across the Jordan River (in some respects, representing death) into the Promised Land (which in turn represents the new creation). After Joshua come the Judges, who are in various ways anointed by the Spirit for their tasks before there was any earthly king in Israel. They bring redemption and salvation from the enemies of the surrounding fallen age. The narrative begins by focusing on the establishment of an eternal kingdom, in and through the Messianic King, who will in due season baptize his people with 'water and fire'. He will purify them and recreate them to receive His risen and glorified Presence, which is spiritualized after His death, resurrection, and ascension (cf. John 7:37-39). That is how He can literally be brought inside of us through the Spirit.

This reality of a life that is true in the presence of a Holy God is expounded next in the Prophets and clarified in the Wisdom literature. It is the Spirit of God who enables God's people to apply the Torah to the spectrum of their life in a fallen age. This practical godly wisdom is often called *hokmah*. By it, the people of God show in their lives in this world what God is like. Proverbs 1:7-9 uses several synonyms to demonstrate what wisdom is like: 'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.'

We may summarize the usage of wisdom in the main storyline of the Old Testament. The opening occurrence comes in Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh, after which he counsels Pharaoh to seek out 'a man discreet (*biynah*) and wise (*chakam*)' to manage the supplies of Egypt during the coming years of famine (Gen. 41:39). Joseph, a patriarch and prophet, interpreted the Word of God and applied it to the immediate realities. Such wisdom was from the Spirit.

The next use occurs in Moses' review of Covenant history in preparation for the renewal of the Covenant in light of their entrance into the Promised Land. Knowing their great need of leadership as they cross over the Jordan, he directs them to 'Take you wise men (*chakam*), and understanding (*biyn*), and known among your tribes' to be rulers over them, who will guide them into the Laws of the Lord (Deut. 1:13). Insofar as they 'keep' (*shamah*) and 'do the statutes of the Lord', this will become their 'wisdom' (*chokmah*) and 'understanding' (*biynah*) in the sight of the nations, who will 'hear of them [the statutes] and say, Surely this great nation is a wise (*chakam*) and understanding people' (Deut. 4:6).

The final three instances in Deuteronomy all appear in the Song of Moses. Here, the meaning transitions from noun to verbal form, as he first commands the people to 'remember the days of old, and consider (*biyn*) the years of many generations' (Deut. 32:7), particularly how the Lord had

found Israel 'in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness,' and how in His tender mercies, He 'led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye' (Deut. 32:10). Then after recounting the Lord's faithfulness to His people, in contrast to Israel's guilt and idolatry in breaking the Deuteronomic treaty that called forth all the enactments of Covenant curses, Moses gives Israel a promise of future blessing in Covenant renewal. Some have called it 'the Soliloquy from the Heart of God': 'O that they were wise (*chakam*), that they understood (*sakal*) this, that they would consider (*biyn*) their latter end! How one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?' (Deut. 32:29-30).

The Holy Spirit Manifested in the Old Testament

But, even the wisest prophet, priest, or king, is nothing without the life, the breath of God. A central picture of what the Spirit of God does is that of the Spirit breathing upon the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37.

And [he] caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army (Ezek. 37:1-5; 10).

This picture shows that the Lord had put together the structure of the bodies, which previously had been dried and separated – mere piles of bones. Yet once He puts them skillfully back together, they are still not alive. He must breathe into them the breath of life, that is, the Holy Spirit. This means clearly that the people of God in the Old Testament partook of the Holy Spirit, or they would not have been living as the people of God.

The difference is not entirely clear between the experience of Old and New Testament saints of having the Spirit of God. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the believers on the Day of Pentecost certainly indicates a profound new phase in the relationship of the elect to God the Holy Spirit. He is now personally in them in a fullness of power that presumably was not the same in the Old Testament. The Old Testament believers certainly knew the presence of the Spirit, or else they could not have been saved. After his great sins, David prayed, 'Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit¹⁴ from me' (Ps. 51:11). But it was apparently not with the same inner fullness that would be the case after Pentecost.

That is because human nature had not yet been adapted to be the dwelling place of the holy God. Christ in His humanity would accomplish that (cf. Heb. 2:14-18). It would only be after the finished work of Christ and

14. The King James Version sometimes uses lower case when referring to the Holy Spirit.

the outpouring of the Spirit that we believing humans come into fulness of union with Christ. That was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but only achieved totally in the New.

It may not be amiss to say that although the Holy Spirit is as unchanging as any member of the Holy Trinity, the eternal Spirit was also somehow adapted to come with fulness of power into the personalities of the redeemed, without tearing them apart. That is, the work that Christ did in redeeming fallen humanity in Himself, was always powerfully accompanied by the Spirit. Because the Spirit is by nature invisible, we cannot see just how He accomplishes this by Himself, for He hides Himself in the folds of Christ's humanity. And in doing so, He renews us from the inside out, to be living stones in the Temple of God.

It is a marvel: the Spirit inspires the testimony to Jesus of prophets and apostles, and yet it is only in Jesus that we really meet the Spirit in His personal fulness! Instead of directly seeing Him, we see Jesus, and that is what the blessed Spirit wants, as we can see from John 16: 12-15:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

This is the source of the highest human blessedness that can ever be known!

CHAPTER I

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The early phases of the work of the Spirit are traced through the Pentateuch, the Histories, and Wisdom Literature, for throughout the Old Testament, throughout the Old Testament era, He is adapting human nature to be the temple of God.

The Spirit of God is not so clearly set forth in the Old Testament as in the New, but He has His place from the very beginning of creation, although we shall see that long centuries of the history of the people of God must pass before the Spirit's personhood is filled out in vastly larger degree in the knowledge of the Old Testament Church. As Bavinck rightly remarked: 'The Old Testament conveys only an inexplicit indication of God's Trinitarian existence. It is [the first part] of the record of the gradually unfolding doctrine of the Trinity.'¹ And we must never forget that true doctrine merely follows the unfolding work of God in His creation, and the redemptive experience of His presence in and with His people over thousands of years.

Gregory of Nazianzus, who was also well aware of this slow development of divine truths, expressed succinctly (in the fourth century) this 'gradual unfolding' of complex truths in the growth of Scripture: 'You see lights breaking upon us gradually; and the order of theology, which is better for us to keep, neither proclaiming things too suddenly, nor yet keeping them hidden to the end ...'²

As far as the Holy Spirit, in the earliest parts of the Old Testament, the two main words for 'spirit' are connected to 'breath'. As Henry B. Swete wrote: 'The Hebrew *ruah*, like the Greek *pneuma* and the Latin *spiritus*, originally had a physiological and not a psychological value, denoting the human breath.'³ He adds: 'The Spirit of God is the vital power which belongs to the Divine Being, and is seen to be operative in the world and

1. H. Bavinck, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

2. Gregory Nazianzus, *op. cit.*, *The Fifth Theological Oration*, XXVII.

3. Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament: A Study of Primitive Christian Teaching* (MacMillan and Co. Limited: London, 1919), p. 1.

in men. It is the Divine Energy which is the origin of all created life, and especially of human existence and the faculties of human nature.⁴

The Gift at Work in Creation

We first meet the One whom we come to know as the Holy Spirit in the very first chapter of Genesis, and in the second verse: 'And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' What we call 'absolute creation' took place as described in Genesis 1:1, when God brought all things out of nothing by the word of His power. And then verses 2-31 chronicle the process in which the material, spatial mass is shaped into a beautiful, structured form. Going, as it were, from a sort of 'chaos' to a well ordered 'cosmos' (to use the words of Gerhard Von Rad).⁵

Aalders suggests that the term 'waters' refers to the same substance as 'the deep'.⁶ Wolfgang Capito writes that the condition of the early earth as first created must have been something like 'an abyss "filled with a confusion of undifferentiated water and mud" in complete darkness, which would unhinge any human mind that attempted to penetrate it.'⁷

Into this dark, watery mass, Genesis 1:2 tells us that 'the Spirit of God was moving upon the face of the waters'. The participle 'moving' means something like 'hovering' or 'brooding', as it does in the Pi'el stem of the Hebrew verb in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it pictures God's guidance of His people like an eagle brooding over its nest. This 'hovering' over the waters by the Spirit of God shows that the biblical world view is profoundly different from the philosophical dichotomy that Deism places between God and the material world. God's hand and presence are never lifted from the elements and working of the material realm.

This 'hovering' demonstrates that God, through His Spirit, is immediately involved with the complex, and as yet inchoate material elements, shaping them into a beautifully ordered structure, that will be the perfect home for human and animal life. Leupold suggests that 'The germs of all that is created were placed into dead matter by [God]. His was the preparatory work for leading over from the inorganic to the organic.'⁸

Other commentators have supplied an impersonal translation of 'Spirit' at this point. Claus Westermann translated it as 'God's wind'.⁹ Von Rad translates it as 'fearful storm'.¹⁰ But I think it preferable to follow

4. Ibid., p. 2.

5. Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (The Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 49-51.

6. G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis, Volume 1*, Translated by William Heynen (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 1981), p. 54.

7. Wolfgang Capito, *Hexameron, Sive Opus Sex Dierum* (Argentinae [Strasburg], 1539), p. 36.

8. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis, Volume I* (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids MI, 1965), p. 50.

9. Claus Westermann, *Genesis: A Practical Commentary*, Translated by David E. Green (William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co.: Grand Rapids, MI, 1987), p. 4.

10. Von Rad, op. cit., pp. 49, 50.

E. J. Young, who lists three reasons why ‘Spirit’ may not be reduced to wind.¹¹ First, Moses could have used the ordinary expression for wind, which is found in Jonah 1:4 and Job 1:19, but rather he uses the word for Spirit. Secondly, the participle (‘hovering’) does not describe the blowing of a wind. Thirdly, the mention of a mighty wind at this point would be out of place. He adds: ‘If the third clause simply states that a mighty wind was blowing ... it does not contribute to showing that the earth was uninhabitable.’¹² Hence, the presence and working of the Spirit, as He brooded over the waters, demonstrates the wonders of the infinite God forming the inchoate mass into a place of beauty for human habitation. This tells us much about who the Spirit of God is: He executes and brings to perfection the counsel of God, and does so with infinite power.

Pierre Viret rejoices in how the Lord makes nature so beautiful, like a sort of natural symphony, and, at the same time, so useful: ‘... He wished to join an excellent beauty to their profit and usefulness ... the little birds walking, flying and singing in the middle of [lovely spaces], by a great melody and natural music.’¹³ ‘Since God shows marvels in all these things ... what will it be when we come to consider their natures, their properties, and virtues, both most useful, and remedies for men who make use of them.’¹⁴

The Gift at Work in the Human Race

In addition to creation, the early parts of the Old Testament show the working of the Spirit in dealing with a recalcitrant human race, and especially in equipping God’s people for service.

The Spirit largely withdrew from the rebellious human race just before the Flood, as we see in Genesis 6:3: ‘And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man ...’ That clearly implies that the Spirit had been at work in the human race, to move them towards obedience to God, but there came a point of no return, and after that, disaster fell upon all but one chosen family. To reject the promptings of the Holy Spirit is to reject God, and to leave ourselves exposed to the open wrath of God. Similarly, the Spirit withdrew from Saul after his severe disobedience (1 Sam. 16:14).

But to follow His leadings is to find ourselves equipped to glorify God. Fourth-century Athanasius appositely summarized much of the work of the Spirit throughout the long reaches of the Old Testament as follows:

... In Numbers, Moses says to the son of Nun, ‘Be not jealous for me. Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, when the Lord bestows his Spirit upon them.’¹⁵ In Judges it is said of Gothoniel [Othniel], ‘And the Spirit of

11. E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.: Philadelphia, Pa, 1964), pp.36-42.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

13. Pierre Viret, *L’Exposition du Symbole des Apôtres*, in *Instruction Chrétienne, Tome Troisième* (L’Âge d’Homme: Lausanne, 2013), p. 547 (My translation).

14. *Ibid.*, p. 359.

15. Numbers 11:29.

the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel.¹⁶ “And again: ‘The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.’¹⁷ And concerning Samson: ‘The child grew,’ it says, ‘and the Spirit of the Lord began to accompany him,’ and ‘The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily.’¹⁸ David sings: ‘Take not thy Holy Spirit from me’;¹⁹ and again, in the one hundred and forty-second Psalm: ‘Thy good Spirit shall lead me in a plain country, for thy name’s sake, O Lord.’²⁰ In Isaiah it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me.’²¹ And before this it was said: ‘Woe to you, rebellious children! Thus saith the Lord: You took counsel, but not from me, and made covenants, but not through my Spirit to add sins to sins.’²² And again: ‘Hear these things. From the beginning, I have not spoken in secret. When it was, I was there. And now the Lord hath sent me, and his Spirit.’²³ A little later he speaks thus: ‘And this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit which is upon thee’;²⁴ and again in what follows he adds: ‘Neither envoy nor angel, but the Lord himself saved them, because he loved them and had mercy on them; he himself redeemed them and took them up and exalted them all the days of the age. But they were disobedient and provoked his Holy Spirit, and he was turned to enmity toward them.’²⁵ And Ezekiel speaks thus: ‘And the Spirit took me up and brought me to the land of the Chaldeans, to the Captivity in a vision, by the Spirit of God.’²⁶ In Daniel: ‘God raised up the Holy Spirit of a young man whose name was Daniel, and he cried with a loud voice, I am clear from the blood of this woman.’²⁷ Micah says: ‘The house of Jacob provoked the Spirit of the Lord’;²⁸ and by Joel, God says: ‘And it shall be after these things that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.’²⁹ Again, through Zechariah the voice of God says: ‘But receive my words and my commandments which I charge by my Spirit to my servants the prophets,’³⁰ and when the prophet rebukes the people a little farther on, he says: ‘They make their hearts disobedient, lest they should hear my law and the words which the Lord of hosts has sent by his Spirit in the hands of the prophets of old.’³¹ These few examples we have collected and set down from the Old Testament.³²

16. Judges 3:10.

17. Judges 12:29.

18. Judges 13:24,25; 14:6.

19. Psalm 51:11.

20. Psalm 143:10.

21. Isaiah 61:1.

22. Isaiah 30:1.

23. Isaiah 48:16.

24. Isaiah 59:19.

25. Isaiah 63:9,10.

26. Ezekiel 11:24.

27. Not in the Masoretic nor Septuagintal text of the canonical book of Daniel, but it is found in The First Letter to Serapion, Chapter 5: from Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical additions to Daniel: Susannah 45-46.

28. Not found in the canonical book of Micah. But perhaps abstracted from Micah 3:8-12.

29. Joel 2:28.

30. Zechariah 1:6.

31. Zechariah 7:12.

32. Athanasius, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33.

In these and many other references in the Old Testament, we see that the Spirit of God helps to bring to completion the plan of God, as in the work of creation and within humankind. As Bavinck notes, there is a direct connection between the Holy Spirit and beauty: ‘... it is through his Spirit that he is immanent in the creation and vivifies and beautifies it all.’³³ Basil the Great had spoken similarly in his *De Spiritu Sancto*, where he describes ‘the Spirit as the perfecting cause’, and ‘perfecting through the Spirit’.³⁴ He adds: ‘All the glorious and unspeakable harmony of the highest heavens both in the service of God, and in the mutual concord of the celestial powers, can therefore only be preserved by the direction of the Spirit.’³⁵

As the verses used by Athanasius show us, within the created order, Scripture pictures the Spirit of God exerting mighty power in bringing the world into being, and then in upholding it. Psalm 33:6 says: ‘By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.’ (Here again, we see ‘breath’ and ‘word’ used in an interchangeable fashion). Job 26:13 shows the interchangeability of Spirit and ‘hand of God’ in creation: ‘By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens: his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.’

The Spirit of God is involved in the giving of physical life. ‘Breath’ conveys a direct imparting of the energy of life that comes from God. Job 33:4 makes this connection explicit: ‘The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.’ Ecclesiastes 12:7 shows that when the spirit departs from a human, he or she must return to the lifeless dust: ‘Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.’ (This assumes that the human spirit, which was breathed into man by the action of the Spirit of God, can depart at the given time, thereby removing the organizing principle of the ‘dust’, so that the body begins its decomposition.)

Ezekiel saw the ‘Spirit of life’ guiding the strange chariot of history with its wheels (Ezek. 1:20), and later saw that same Spirit breathing upon the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37:1-10) and making them alive. In Ezekiel 37:14, God told the prophet that ‘I shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live.’ We notice that Ezekiel uses the Hebrew possessive suffix (of the Lord), ‘my spirit’ (37:14). Habakkuk 2:18-20 speaks of the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. This power is not to be found in dumb idols.

The creation and sustenance of the natural realm, including the human body and spirit, are all directly dependent upon the presence of God, working all things according to His will. But, as John Calvin’s colleague, Pierre Viret, pointed out in the midst of a vast and mind-expanding meditation on God’s presence in all creation and all its functioning, it is necessary to have ‘the eyes of faith’ to see and contemplate ‘this

33. Bavinck, *op. cit.*, p.262.

34. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 16.38.

35. *Ibid.*

unspeakable height and wisdom and goodness of God, incomprehensible and infinite, which shine forth in all his works and creatures ... as in beautiful and clear mirrors.³⁶

The Gift and Understanding

But the Spirit gives more than physical life and the organization necessary for that life in the complex body. Elsewhere, we see that the Spirit of God endows humankind with intellectual capacity and wisdom. Job 32:8 states: 'But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' Spirit here refers to the Spirit of God, not that of man, for it is parallel in this text to 'the inspiration of the Almighty'. The connection of spirit and wisdom is shown in the unction that the Holy Spirit will bring upon the Messiah, as in Isaiah 11:2: 'And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD ...'

Though we have not yet come to a serious study of the references in the New Testament to the Spirit, when we do so, we will find in many parts of it a strong connection between the Spirit and wisdom. Some of the prayers of the Apostle Paul, for instance, bring it out, as in Ephesians 1:17,18: 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling ...'

Long before that, however, in the early books of the Old Testament, we discover how the Spirit of God imparts wisdom to God's servants to enable them to fulfill their appointed tasks within creation (and here we recall how the Spirit executes the plan of God with the beauty of completion). The patriarch Joseph demonstrated at a high level the wisdom from the Spirit. God's favor upon him caused him to be 'discrete and wise', so that Pharaoh had to note: 'Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?' (Gen. 41:33, 38). Joseph, in fact, is the first person said to be 'wise' in the Old Testament.

A later Pharaoh would be much less pleased when he had to deal with Moses, whom the same God who had endowed Joseph raised up to lead His people out of Egyptian slavery, and organize them into a nation in the freedom of the wilderness. Numbers 11:25 shows that the Spirit was upon Moses and the seventy elders who helped him govern the vast nation of former slaves: 'And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders, and it came to pass, that when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease.'

The Spirit of God guided the people of Israel during their wandering in the wilderness. Isaiah 63:13,14 mentions it: 'Where is he ... That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should

36. Viret, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

not stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.’ Yet these blest people were disobedient and ‘grieved his holy Spirit’.

The Spirit of God not only guided the people of Israel in desolate places, but also ministered to them in particular ways, to orient their lives to Him in worship. He came upon craftsmen who were thereby endowed to construct the Tabernacle. This forerunner of the Temple was – as John Owen explained – an exemplification of the human nature of Christ:

This tabernacle, whereby he came a high priest, was his own human nature. The bodies of men are often called their tabernacles (2 Cor. v. 1; 2 Pet. i.14). And Christ called his own body the temple, John ii.19. His flesh was the veil, Heb. x.20. And in his incarnation, he is said to ‘pitch his tabernacle among us,’ John i.14. Herein dwelt ‘the fulness of the Godhead bodily,’ Col. ii.9, – that is, substantially; represented by all the pledges of God’s presence in the tabernacle of old. This was that tabernacle wherein the Son of God administered his sacerdotal office in this world, and wherein he continueth to do so in his intercession.³⁷

Two of these craftsmen are named in Exodus 31:1-11 (see also Exodus 35:30-35): Bezaleel and Oholiab. Of Bezaleel, God says to Moses: ‘And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship ...’ (Exod. 31:3). That which would represent the humanity of Christ had to be designed absolutely perfectly, according to the pattern the Lord had shown Moses in the Mount (see Heb. 8:5). Through worship in the tabernacle, the people would begin to experience more fully the process of moral transformation that would only be completed with the triumphant work of Christ, prefigured in the holy tent.

The Spirit of God was not only upon Moses and the well-endowed craftsmen, for He was also influencing the whole people of Israel in a general way all through the centuries, long before the immense change that came with Pentecost. As Swete stated: ‘The nation of Israel as a whole had been under the Spirit’s guidance from the time of the Exodus. Even the individual Israelite, though not a prophet, might become conscious of the presence of a purifying, uplifting Power which he knew as the Spirit of God’s holiness, the princely, supremely good Spirit, which was working in the depths of his being.’³⁸ Then David, in 1 Chronicles 28:11-12, delivered to Solomon ‘the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD.’ He says in 2 Samuel 23:2: ‘The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.’ That inspiration would refer not only to the directions for the Temple, but also to the Psalms and other related writings.

37. John Owen, *Hebrews volume 6: Exposition of Hebrews chapters 8.1–10.39, The Works of John Owen, volume XXII* (The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 266, 267.

38. Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

The Gift and Personal Relationship

David would not have been unusual in becoming aware of the Spirit's holy disapproval of his sin. He confesses in Psalm 51:10, 11: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me.' The entire system of sacrifice, set up through Moses, demonstrated daily the need for confession and cleansing from sin, as the priest laid his hand upon the animal sacrifice, as he confessed the sin of the people.³⁹ Even before the system was fully appointed, on the night of their departure from Egyptian slavery, the people were instructed to 'take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it [the Passover lamb].'

In other words, David and the other Old Testament believers well knew that a personal relationship with God had to be maintained through a life of confession, renewed faith, and sacrifice. But this was not all from the side of man alone: various texts indicate that this relationship was through the Spirit of God. So, for example, Deuteronomy 30:6 speaks of the spiritual circumcision wrought by God to make these people new creations: 'And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' While this text does not specify the Spirit of God as the agent of circumcision, Ezekiel 36:25-27 does so: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.'

From such passages, we see that the presence of God is fully in and with His Spirit in this divine work, and also it is at least strongly hinted that the Spirit is in some sense distinguished from God the Father. To employ later theological language, we begin to discern that the Spirit is a distinct *Person*. A person was defined by B. B. Warfield as one who acts with purpose,⁴⁰ and we certainly see His execution of the purposes of God in the redemption of Israel. We also note early evidences of His true personhood in the Deuteronomy reference above to the spiritual circumcision of the elect, as well as in the consciousness of such believers as David, who begged that God would not take His Spirit from him – although this distinction will only be made clear in the New Testament.

39. E.g. see Leviticus 4:1-12, especially noting verses 4 and 6: 'And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD, and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary.'

40. See Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, Michigan. He writes: 'For person means purpose: precisely what distinguishes a person from a thing is that its modes of action are purposive, that all it does is directed to an end and proceeds through the choice of means to that end' (p. 14).

The Gift and Prophecy

Nehemiah 9:20 recapitulates the prophetic history of Israel when he says: ‘Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them [the people in the wilderness].’ He goes on to reflect on their hard-heartedness over the years: ‘Yet many years thou didst forebear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets, yet they would not give ear.’

The definition of Prophecy is usefully stated by Joseph Fitzmyer: ‘*Propheteia* is a combination of prep. *pro* “in front of, in place of”, and *phemi*, “speak”, i.e. an utterance made for God; *prophetes*, “one who speaks for someone else,” i.e. a spokesperson or mouthpiece of God, [as in Exod 4:10-16, where Moses, with Aaron’s more eloquent help, speaks for God to Pharaoh].⁴¹ We see that ‘The prophet is a *man of the Spirit*; the Spirit of God falls upon him, fills his mind, and speaks by his mouth; he finds himself at times dominated by a spiritual force which comes from without and from above.’⁴²

Isaiah 48:16,17 says: ‘Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord GOD and his Spirit hath sent me. Thus said the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit; which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.’

What Micah says in 3:8 would be typical of the prophets: ‘But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sin.’ The prophet Zechariah declared that the Lord’s Spirit would enable the ruler Zerubbabel, and the people of God who would follow him, to rebuild the Temple: ‘This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts’ (4:6).

Haggai 1:14 shows the Lord stirring up the spirits of Zerubbabel and Joshua and the spirit of the remnant of the people. Thus they would finish the work. Zechariah however sees far beyond the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, for he foresees a general cleansing of the people (12:1), and a supernatural outpouring upon them that will make them mourn for what they shall have done to the Messiah: ‘And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his firstborn’ (Zech. 12:10).

Zechariah, complaining of the stubbornness of Israel, shows that they refused to hear both the law, and the Spirit-given words of prophecy: ‘... and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets; therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts’ (7:12). Numbers 11:29, on the other hand, indicates a massive change for

41. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: The Anchor Yale Bible* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2008), p. 467.

42. Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

the better. It is in the context of Joshua's concern that Eldad and Medad had prophesied in the camp, as though this would have displaced Moses. Moses replied: '... Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!' That would happen after the Messiah was glorified, and the Spirit was poured out, so that Peter proclaimed to the whole church: 'ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light' (1 Pet. 2:9).

We have to wait till the New Testament, with the coming down of the Spirit at Pentecost, to gain more insight into how the words of the prophets were at the same time the very words of God. Even there, it is never explained, but we are provided some fuller insight into the way the working of the Spirit of God caused the words of the prophets (and later the apostles) to be His precise message to His people. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16 that the prophetic words were 'inspired', that is, in the original 'God-breathed' (in Greek, *theopneustos*) – a divine product which, nevertheless, fully used the personality and circumstances of the inspired writer.

Peter says in 2 Peter 1:20, 21: 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation [that is, a merely personal opinion]. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The verb 'moved' is, in the Greek, 'carried along', that is, the writers of scripture were somehow lifted up and carried by the Holy Spirit so that they wrote precisely what God wanted written, but they did so in their own personal, historical circumstances.

It is never explained to us how this happened, only that God's Spirit superintended the personality of the writers so that they penned words to the people of God that were 'inspired' or 'God-breathed'. There is no evidence to think that their personalities and their own concerns were violated for this to take place. The psychological mechanics are among the mysteries of God.

A Certain Personal Distinction Indicated

While it is not clarified until the New Testament economy, we can already discern that the Spirit of God is personal – not only in His executing the purposes of God, but also in His presence with the prophets so that they thought and wrote what God intended for His people. He is not merely an impersonal force, but is an acting person from God, who personally interacts with chosen human persons for particular tasks (in this case, speaking and writing). The Spirit comes with mighty power from God to enable the Church (in both Old and New Testaments) to overcome hindrances to the expansion of the Kingdom.

Zechariah 4:6 shows the Word of God announcing that the Spirit will accomplish the task on earth called for by God Himself: 'Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto

Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, said the LORD of hosts.’ There does seem to be a certain personal distinction between ‘the Lord of hosts’ and the ‘spirit’ implied here, but we have to go to other passages to see this distinction more clearly, some in the Old Testament, but especially to the many in the New Testament. Bavinck observes that ‘A threefold self-differentiation in the divine being is most clearly expressed in Psalm 33:6; Isaiah 61:1; 63:9-12, and Haggai 2:5-6.’⁴³

A distinction between God and his Spirit is at least implied in Isaiah 48:16-17: ‘And now the Lord GOD, and His Spirit, hath sent me. Thus saith the LORD thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.’ This distinction is less clear, but is still present, I think, in the account of how the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint the young shepherd David to be king of Israel: ‘[David] was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward’ (1 Sam. 16:12-13).

The messianic promise found in Isaiah 61:1-3 (and taken up by Jesus in His first sermon, given in His home town synagogue in Luke 4, where He applies it directly to Himself in verse 21), may be understood to indicate a certain distinction between the Lord and His Spirit, although the personal distinction is not absolutely clear from that passage alone:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Throughout the Old Testament, we discover the role of the Spirit of God as the giver of wisdom, strength and holiness. Bavinck summarizes the spirit-endowed gifts:

The spirit of God is the principle of all life and well-being, of all the gifts and powers in the sphere of revelation; of courage (Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Sam. 11:6), of physical strength (Judg. 14:6; 15:14), of artistic skill (Exod. 28:3; 31:31-35; 1 Chron. 28:12-19), of the ability to govern (Num. 11:17, 25; 1 Sam. 16:13), of intellect and wisdom (Job 32:8; Isa. 11:2), of holiness and renewal (Ps. 51:11-12; Isa. 63:10; cf. Gen. 6:3; Neh. 9:20; 1 Sam. 10:6,9), and of prophecy and prediction (Num. 11:25, 29; 24:2-3; Micah 3:8; etc.). The Spirit will rest in an unusual measure upon the Messiah (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1), but afterward be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28-29; Isa. 32:1,5; 44:3; Ezek. 36:26-27; 39:29; Zech. 12:10) and give to all a new heart and a new spirit.⁴⁴

43. Bavinck, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

44. Bavinck, *op. cit.*, pp. 263, 264.

This coming of the Spirit to give a new heart and new spirit was a promise central to the New Covenant (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Hebrews chapters 8 and 10). Through this spiritual circumcision, promised and fulfilled, the New Testament states that it results in our taking part in the divine nature: 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust' (2 Pet. 1:4). That is, the Divine Promiser comes along with His promises of grace and makes us into a new creation. For the Spirit to accomplish such a miracle, He has to be of the high substance of God.

Athanasius constantly brings out the reality that for the Spirit to do such works of God, He has to be God Himself. He frequently states this in his *Ad Serapionem*. For instance, in Epistle One, section 24, he writes: 'Further it is through the Spirit that we are all said to be partakers of God. For it says: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" ... If the Holy Spirit were a creature, we should have no participation of God in him.'

Old Testament Adumbrations of a Plurality of Persons within God

What would be called by the later New Testament and Patristic Trinitarian theology 'hypostatic' [or 'personal'] distinctions within the Godhead have been understood by many Christian theologians to have been adumbrated in the Old Testament usage of the names of God. The sixteenth-century Swiss Reformer, Heinrich Bullinger, held that the Hebraic employment of both singular and plural verbs to express the being and activity of God indicates a distinct plurality of persons within *Elohim*.⁴⁵

George A. F. Knight, a twentieth-century scholar, argues the same point: 'We must just accept the fact of the word's [i.e. *Adhonnai*] being a plural and in consequence a manifest parallel in usage to the common word for God in Hebrew, viz. *Elohim*. There are, indeed, singular words for God. *Elohah* is said to occur 57 times, almost always in poetry or very late prose *Elohim* is used most peculiarly (from our point of view) to cover an aspect of the Godhead which is specifically Hebraic, viz., the conception that God is both singular EL and plural *Elohim* at one and the same time ...'⁴⁶

But if a certain distinction within the one God is implied by such usage, then we could ask, why was it not mentioned by the rabbinical scholars? George Knight answers: 'Let us dismiss out of hand some of the "explanations" of this peculiar phenomenon of a plural word for God made by exegetes whose premises were consciously or unconsciously firmly planted on the speculative approach of the Greeks. Some have suggested, for example, that the word is a plural of majesty. But that

45. Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades: The Fourth Decade* (Cambridge at the University Press: Parker Society, 1851), *The Third Decade*, pp. 134,135.

46. George A. F. Knight, *A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of the Trinity* in 'Scottish Journal of Theology' Occasional Papers, No. 1 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd Ltd., 1953), pp. 19, 20.

is surely to read into Hebrew speech a modern way of thinking. The kings of Israel and Judah are all addressed in the singular in our biblical records. Or again, I have seen the suggestion that here we have the “we” of the newspaper editor!⁴⁷

A Change within Judaism?

We can note the suggestion from N. T. Wright that it was not until after the rise of Christianity that Judaism began to interpret monotheism as an absolute numerical oneness of God’s being: ‘Within the most fiercely monotheistic circles throughout [this] period – from the Maccabean revolt to Bar-Kochba – there is no suggestion that “monotheism”, or praying the *Shema*, had anything to do with the numerical analysis of the inner being of Israel’s God himself. It had everything to do with the two-pronged fight against paganism and dualism. Indeed, we find strong evidence during this period of Jewish groups and individuals who, speculating on the meaning of some difficult passages in scripture (Daniel 7, for example, or Genesis 1), suggested that the divine being might encompass a plurality.⁴⁸ Philo could speculate about the Logos as, effectively, a second divine being [*de Som.* I. 229] ... It was only with the rise of Christianity, and arguably under the influence both of polemical constraint and Hellenizing philosophy, that Jews in the second and subsequent centuries reinterpreted “monotheism” as “the numerical oneness of the divine being”.⁴⁹

Augustin Lémann, a Jewish scholar who became a Roman Catholic Abbe, wrote a book showing the serious changes within the synagogue concerning the Messiah and God Himself, in the late Old Testament period, and in the Apocryphal writings. His late nineteenth-century study is marked with exegetical care and theological precision. Among other changes, he demonstrates that the synagogue backed away from the divinity of the Messiah, and from His redemptive suffering, in the direction of His being seen as a secular warrior and victor. This resulted in a very different picture of the Christ.⁵⁰ It was part of ‘the numerical oneness of the divine being’.

Why the Slowness in Revealing Clearly the Trinity?

It is only with the New Testament that we find the Trinity, including the distinct personhood and full Godhood of the Holy Spirit, openly manifested. As G. Vos correctly states: ‘Premature disclosure of the

47. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

48. Wright refers to Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), and Lapide and Moltmann, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine: A Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981). Quoted in N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 34ff.

49. Wright, *ibid.*

50. Abbé Augustin Lémann, *Histoire complète de l’Idée Messianique chez le peuple d’Israel* (Jois M. Desbonnet: Ghent, Belgium, 1974 reprint). See especially pages 262-339.

Trinity would in all probability have proved a temptation to polytheism. For a long time the Deity of the Messiah and the personality of the Holy Spirit were kept more or less in the background.⁵¹

While that is true, B. B. Warfield shows even more plainly why this disclosure had to wait for the right time:

The real reason for the delay in the revelation of the Trinity, however, is grounded in the secular development of the redemptive purpose of God. The times were not ripe for the revelation of the Trinity in the unity of the Godhead until the fullness of the time had come for God to send His Son unto redemption, and His Spirit unto sanctification. This revelation in word must needs wait upon the revelation in deed, to which it brings its necessary explanation, no doubt, but from which it derives its own entire significance and value.⁵²

Gregory Nazianzus had much the same insight in the fourth century:

For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received, to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy Spirit; lest perhaps people might, like men loaded with food beyond their strength, and presenting eyes as yet too weak to bear it to the sun's light, risk the loss of even that which was within the reach of their powers; but that by gradual additions, and as David says, goings up, and advances and progress from glory to glory; the Light of the trinity might shine upon the more illuminated.⁵³

51. G. Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980), p. 73.

52. B. B. Warfield, 'The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity' in *Biblical Foundations*, p. 143.

53. Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration 31*, p. 26.