



# Article of the Month

---

## THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT<sup>1</sup>

Benjamin B. Warfield

**THE** doctrine of the Spirit of God is an exclusively Biblical doctrine. Rückert tells us that the idea connoted by the term is entirely foreign to Hellenism, and first came into the world through Christianity.<sup>2</sup> And Kleinert, in quoting this remark, adds that what is peculiarly anti-heathenish in the conception is already present in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> It would seem, then, that what is most fundamental in the Biblical doctrine of the Spirit of God is common to both Testaments.

The name meets us in the very opening verses of the Old Testament, and it appears there as unannounced and unexplained as in the opening verses of the New Testament. It is plain that it was no more a novelty in the mouth of the author of Genesis than in the mouth of the author of Matthew. But

though it is common to both Testaments, it is not equally common in all parts of the Bible. It does not occur as frequently in the Old Testament as in the New. It is found as often in the Epistles of Paul as in the whole Old Testament. It is not as pervasive in the Old Testament as in the New. It fails in no New Testament book, except the three brief personal letters Philemon and II and III John. On the other hand, in only some half of the thirty-nine Old Testament books is it clearly mentioned,<sup>4</sup> while in as many as sixteen all definite allusion to it seems to be lacking.<sup>5</sup> The principle which governs the use or disuse of it does not lie on the surface. Sometimes it may, perhaps, be partly due to the nature of the subject treated. But if mention of the Spirit of God fails in Leviticus, it is made in Numbers; if it fails in Joshua and Ruth, it is made in Judges and Samuel; if it fails in Ezra, it is made in Nehemiah; if it fails in Jeremiah, it is made in Isaiah and Ezekiel; if it fails in seven or eight of the minor prophets, it is made in the remaining four or five. Whether it occurs in an Old Testament book seems to depend on a number of circumstances which have little or no bearing on the history of the doctrine. We need only note that the name "Spirit of God" meets us at the very opening of revelation, and it, or its equivalents, accompanies us sporadically throughout the volume. The Pentateuch and historical books provide us with the outline of the doctrine; its richest depositories among the prophets are Isaiah and Ezekiel, from each of which alone probably the whole doctrine could be derived.<sup>6</sup>

In passing from the Old Testament to the New, the reader is conscious of no violent discontinuity in the conception of the Spirit which he finds in the two volumes. He may note the increased frequency with which the name appears on the printed page. But he would note this much the same in passing from the earlier to the later chapters of the *Epistle to the Romans*. He may note an increased definiteness and fulness in the conception itself. But something similar to this he would note in passing from the Pentateuch to Isaiah, or from Matthew to John or Paul. The late Professor Smeaton may have overstated the matter in his interesting Cunningham Lectures on "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit." "We find," he says, "that the doctrine of the Spirit taught by the Baptist, by Christ and by the Apostles, was in every respect the same as that with which the Old Testament church was familiar. We nowhere find that their Jewish hearers on any occasion took exception to it. The teaching of our Lord and His Apostles never called forth a question or an opposition from any quarter — a plain proof that on this question nothing was taught by them which came into collision with the sentiments and opinions which up to that time had been accepted, and still continued to be current among the Jews." Some such change in the conception of God doubtless needs to be recognized as that which Dr. Denney describes in the following words: "The Apostles were all Jews, — men, as it has been said, with monotheism as a passion in their blood."<sup>7</sup> They did not cease to be monotheists when they became preachers of Christ, but they instinctively conceived God in a way in which the old revelation had not taught them to conceive him. . . . Distinctions were recognized in what had once been the bare simplicity of the Divine nature. The distinction of Father and Son was the most obvious, and it was enriched, on the basis of Christ's own teaching, and of the actual experience of the Church, by the further distinction of the Holy Spirit."<sup>8</sup> But if there be any fundamental difference between the Old and the New Testament conceptions of the Spirit of God, it escapes us in our ordinary reading of the Bible, and we naturally and without conscious straining read our New Testament

conceptions into the Old Testament passages.

We are, indeed, bidden to do this by the New Testament itself. The New Testament writers identify their "Holy Spirit" with the "Spirit of God" of the older books. All that is attributed to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, is attributed by them to their personal Holy Ghost. It was their own Holy Ghost who was Israel's guide and director and whom Israel rejected when they resisted the leading of God (Acts vii. 51). It was in Him that Christ (doubtless in the person of Noah) preached to the antediluvians (I Pet. iii. 18). It was He who was the author of faith of old as well as now (II Cor. iv. 13). It was He who gave Israel its ritual service (Heb. ix. 8). It was He who spoke in and through David and Isaiah and all the prophets (Matt. xxii. 43, Mark xii. 36, Acts i. 16, xxviii. 25, Heb. iii. 7, x. 15). If Zechariah (vii. 12) or Nehemiah (ix. 20) tells us that Jehovah of Hosts sent His word by His Spirit by the hands of the prophets, Peter tells us that these men from God were moved by the Holy Ghost to speak these words (II Pet. i. 21), and even that it was specifically the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets (I Pet. i. 11). We are assured that it was in Jesus upon whom the Holy Ghost had visibly descended, that Isaiah's predictions were fulfilled that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon his righteous servant (Isa. xlii. 1) and that (Isa. lxi. 1) the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah should be upon Him (Matt. xii. 18, Luke iv. 18, 19). And Peter bids us look upon the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the accomplished promise of Joel that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel ii. 27, 28, Acts ii. 16).<sup>9</sup> There can be no doubt that the New Testament writers identify the Holy Ghost of the New Testament with the Spirit of God of the Old.

This fact, of course, abundantly justifies the instinctive Christian identification. We are sure, with the surety of a divine revelation, that the Spirit of God of the Old Testament is the personal Holy Spirit of the New. But this assurance does not forestall the inquiry whether this personal Spirit was so fully revealed in the Old Testament that those who were dependent on that revelation alone, without the inspired commentary of the New, were able to know Him as He is known to us who enjoy the fuller light. The principle of the progressive delivery of doctrine in the age-long process of God's self-revelation, is not only a reasonable one in itself and one which is justified by the results of investigation, but it is one which is assumed in the Scriptures themselves as God's method of revealing Himself, and which received the practical endorsement of our Saviour in His manner of communicating His saving truth to men. The question is still an open one, therefore, how much of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as it lies in its completeness in the pages of the New Testament had already been made the property of the men of the old dispensation; in other words, what the Old Testament doctrine of the Spirit of God is. We may not find this inconsistent with the fuller New Testament teaching, but we may find it fall short of the whole truth revealed in the latter days in God's Son.

The deep unity between the New and Old Testament conceptions lies, in one broad circumstance, so upon the surface of the two Testaments that our attention is attracted to it at the outset of any investigation of the material. In both Testaments the Spirit of God appears distinctly as *the executive of the Godhead*. If in the New Testament God works all that He does by the Spirit, so in the Old Testament the Spirit is the name of God working. The Spirit of God is in the Old Testament the executive name of God — "the

divine principle of activity everywhere at work in the world."<sup>10</sup> In this common conception lies doubtless the primary reason why we pass from one Testament to the other without sense of discontinuity in the doctrine of the Spirit. The further extent in which this unity may be traced will depend on the nature of the activities which are ascribed to the Spirit in both Testaments.

The Old Testament does not give us, of course, an exhaustive record of all God's activities. It is primarily an account of God's redemptive work prior to the coming of the Messiah — of the progress, in a word, so far, of the new creation of grace built upon the ruins of the first creation, a short account of which is prefixed as background and basis. In the nature of the case, we learn from the Old Testament of those activities of God only which naturally emerge in these accounts; and accordingly the doctrine of the Spirit of God as the divine principle of activity, as taught in the Old Testament, is necessarily confined to the course of divine activities in the first and the initial stages of the second creation. In other words, it is subsumable under the two broad captions of God in the world, and God in His people. It is from this that the circumstance arises which has been frequently noted, that, after the entrance of sin into the world, the work of the Spirit of God on men's spirits is always set forth in the Old Testament in the interests and in the spirit of the kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> The Old Testament is concerned after the sin of man only with the recovery of man; it traces the preparatory stages of the kingdom of God, as God laid its foundations in a chosen nation in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. The segregation of Israel and the establishment of the theocracy thus mark the first steps in the new creation; and following this course of divine working, the doctrine of the Spirit in the new creation as taught in the Old Testament naturally concerns especially the activities of God in the establishment and development of the theocracy and in the preparation of a people to enjoy its blessings. In other words, it falls under the two captions of His national, or rather churchly, and of His individual work. Thus the Old Testament teaching concerning the Spirit, brings before us three spheres of His activity, which will correspond broadly to the conceptions of God in the world, God in the theocracy, and God in the soul.

Broadly speaking, these three spheres of the Spirit's activity appear successively in the pages of the Old Testament. In these pages the Spirit of God is introduced to us primarily in His cosmical, next in His theocratic, and lastly in His individual relations.<sup>12</sup> This is, of course, due chiefly to the natural correspondence of the aspects of His activity which are presented with the course of history, and is not to be taken so strictly as to imply that the revelations relative to each sphere of His working occur exclusively in a single portion of the Old Testament. It supplies us, however, not only with the broad outlines of the historical development of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Old Testament, but also with a logical order of presentation for the material. Perhaps we may also say, in passing, that it suggests a course of development of the doctrine of the Spirit which is at once most natural and, indeed, rationally inevitable, and, as Dr. Dale points out,<sup>13</sup> closely correspondent with what have come to be spoken of as the "traditional" dates attributed to the books of the Old Testament. These books, standing as they stand in this dating, are in the most natural order for the development of this doctrine.

## THE COSMICAL SPIRIT

I. The Spirit of God is first brought before us in the Old Testament, then, in His relations to the first creation, or in what may be called his cosmical relations. In this connection He is represented as the source of all order, life and light in the universe. He is the divine principle of all movement, of all life and of all thought in the world. The basis of this conception is already firmly laid in the first passage in which the Spirit of God is mentioned (Gen. i. 2). In the beginning, we are told, God created the heavens and the earth. And then the process is detailed by which the created earth, at first waste and void, with darkness resting upon the face of the deep, was transformed by successive fiat's into the ordered and populous world in which we live. As the ground of the whole process, we are informed that "the Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters," as much as to say that the obedience, and the precedent power of obedience, of the waste of waters to the successive creative words — as God said, Let there be light; Let there be a firmament; Let the waters be gathered together; Let the waters and the earth bring forth — depended upon the fact that the Spirit of God was already brooding upon the formless void. To the voice of God in heaven saying, Let there be light! the energy of the Spirit of God brooding upon the face of the waters responded, and lo! there was light. Over against the transcendent God, above creation, there seems to be postulated here God brooding upon creation, and the suggestion seems to be that it is only by virtue of God brooding upon creation that the created thing moves and acts and works out the will of God. The Spirit of God, in a word, appears at the very opening of the Bible as God immanent; and, as such, is set over against God transcendent. And it is certainly very instructive to observe that God is conceived as immanent already in what may be called the formless world-stuff which by His immanence in it alone it constituted a stuff from which on the divine command an ordered world may emerge.<sup>14</sup> The Spirit of God thus appears from the outset of the Old Testament as the principle of the very existence and persistence of all things, and as the source and originating cause of all movement and order and life. God's thought and will and word take effect in the world, because God is not only over the world, thinking and willing and commanding, but also in the world, as the principle of all activity, *executing*: this seems the thought of the author of the Biblical cosmogony.<sup>15</sup>

A series of Old Testament passages range themselves under this conception and carry it forward. It is by the Spirit of God, says Job, that the heavens are garnished (xxvi. 13). Isaiah compares the coming of the God of vengeance, repaying fury to His adversaries and recompense to His enemies, to the bursting forth "of a pent-in stream which the Spirit of Jehovah driveth" (lix. 19); and represents the perishing of flesh as like the withering of the grass and the fading of the flower when "the Spirit of Jehovah bloweth upon it" (xl. 7). In such passages the Spirit appears as the principle of cosmical processes. He is also the source of all life, and, as such, the executor of Him with whom, as the Psalmist says, is the fountain of life (Ps. xxxvi. 10 [9]). The Psalmist accordingly ascribes the being of all creatures to Him: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created" (Ps. civ. 30). "The Spirit of God hath made me," declares Job, "and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life" (xxxiii. 4). Accordingly he represents life to be due to the persistence of the Spirit of God in his nostrils (xxvii. 3), and therefore its continuance to

be dependent upon the continuance of the Spirit with man: "If He set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (xxxiv. 14, 15, cf. xii. 10). He is also the source of all intellectual life. Elihu tells us that it is not greatness, nor years, but the Spirit of God that gives understanding: "There is a Spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job xxxii. 8) — a thought which is probably only expressed in another way in Prov. xx. 27, which declares that the spirit of man is "the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of the belly." That the Spirit is the source also of all ethical life seems to follow from the obscure passage, Genesis vi. 3: "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh." Apparently there is here either a direct threat from Jehovah to withdraw that Spirit by virtue of which alone morality could exist in the world, or else a threat that He will, on account of their sin, withdraw the Spirit whose presence gives life so that men may no longer be upheld in their wicked existence, but may sink back into nothingness. In either case ethical considerations come forward prominently, — the occasion of the destruction of mankind is an ethical one, and the gift of life appears as for ethical ends. This, however, is an element in the conception of the Spirit's work which comes to clear enunciation only in another connection.

It would not be easy to overestimate the importance of the early emergence of this doctrine of the immanent Spirit of God, side by side with the high doctrine of the transcendence of God which pervades the Old Testament. Whatever tendency the emphasis on the transcendence of God might engender towards Deistic conceptions would be corrected at once by such teaching as to the immanent Spirit; while in turn any tendencies to Pantheistic or Cosmotheistic conceptions which it might itself arouse would be corrected not only by the prevailing stress upon the divine transcendence, but also by the manner in which the immanence of God is itself presented. For we cannot sufficiently admire the perfection with which, in delivering the doctrine of the immanent Spirit, all possibility is excluded of conceiving of God as entangled in creation — as if the Spirit of God were merely the physical world-spirit, the proper ground rather than effecting cause of cosmical activities. In the very phraseology of Genesis i. 2, for example, the moving Spirit is kept separate from the matter to which He gives movement; He *broods over* rather than is merged in the waste of waters; He acts upon them and cannot be confounded with them as but another name for their own blind surging. So in the 104th Psalm (verses 29, 30) the creative Spirit is *sent forth* by God, and is not merely an alternative name for the unconscious life-ground of nature. It is a thing which is *given* by God and so produces life (Isa. xlii. 5). Though penetrating all things (Ps. cxxxix. 7) and the immanent source of all life-activities (Ps. civ. 30), it is nevertheless always the *personal* cause of physical, psychical and ethical activities. It exercises choice. It is not merely the *general* ground of all such activities; it is the determiner as well of all the *differences* that exist among men. So, for example, Elihu appeals to the Spirit of understanding that is in him (Job xxxii. 8). It is not merely the ground of the *presence* of these powers; it is also to it that their *withdrawal* is to be ascribed (Isa. xl. 7, Gen. vi. 3). Nor are its manifestations confined altogether to what may be called *natural* modes of action; room is left among them for what we may call truly *supernatural* activity (I Kgs. xviii. 12, II Kgs. ii. 16, cf. II Kgs. xix. 7, Isa. xxxvii. 7). All nature worship is further excluded by the clearness of the identification of the Spirit of God with the God over all. Thus the unity of

God was not only preserved but emphasized, and men were taught to look upon the emergence of divine powers and effects in nature as the work of His hands. "Whither shall I go," asks the Psalmist, "from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence" (Ps. cxxxix. 7)? Here the spiritual presence of God is obviously the presence of the God over all in His Spirit. "Who hath . . . meted out heaven with a span? . . . Who hath meted out the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" asks Isaiah (xl. 12, 13) in the same spirit. Obviously the Spirit of God was not conceived as the impersonal ground of life and understanding, but as the personal source of all that was of being, life and light in the world, not as apart from but as one with the great God Almighty in the heavens. And yet, as immanent in the world, He is set over against God transcendent in a manner which prepares the way for His hypostatizing and so for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

It requires little consideration to realize how greatly the Old Testament conception of God is enriched by this teaching. In particular, it behooves us to note how, side by side with the emphasis that is laid upon God as the maker of all things, this doctrine lays an equal emphasis on God as the upholder and governor of all things. Side by side with the emphasis which is laid on the unapproachable majesty of God as the transcendent Person, it lays an equal emphasis on God as the immanent agent in all world changes and all world movements. It thus lays firmly the foundation of the Christian doctrine of Providence — God in the world and in history, leading all things to their destined goal. If without God there was not anything made that has been made, so without God's Spirit there has not anything occurred that has occurred.

### **THE THEOCRATIC SPIRIT**

II. All this is still further emphasized in the second and predominant aspect in which the Spirit of God is brought before us in the Old Testament, viz., in His relations to the second creation.

1. Here, primarily, He is presented as the source of all the supernatural powers and activities which are directed to the foundation and preservation and development of the kingdom of God in the midst of the wicked world. He is thus represented as the theocratic Spirit as pointedly as He is represented as the world-spirit. We are moving here in a distinctly supernatural atmosphere and the activities which come under review belong to an entirely supernatural order. There are a great variety of these activities, but they have this in common: they are all endowments of the theocratic organs with the gifts requisite for the fulfilment of their functions.<sup>16</sup>

There are, for example, the supernatural gifts of strength, resolution, energy, courage in battle which were awakened in chosen leaders for the service of God's people. Thus we are told that the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Othniel to fit him for his work as judge of Israel (Judg. iii. 10), and clothed itself with Gideon (vi. 34), and came upon Jephthah (xi. 29), and, most remarkably of all, came mightily upon and moved Samson, endowing him with superhuman strength (xiii. 25, xiv. 6, 19, xv. 14). Similarly the Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul (I Sam. xi. 6) and upon David (I

Sam. xvi. 13), and clothed Amasai (I Chron. xii. 18). Then, there are the supernatural gifts of skill by which artificers were fitted to serve the kingdom of God in preparing a worthy sanctuary for the worship of the King. There were, for instance, those whom Jehovah had filled with the spirit of wisdom and who were, therefore, wise-hearted to make Aaron's sacred garments (Ex. xxviii. 3). And especially we are told that Jehovah had filled Bezalel "with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. xxxi. 3 f. cf. xxxv. 31) : — and that he should therefore preside over the work of the wise-hearted, in whom the Lord had put wisdom, for the making of the tabernacle and its furniture. Similarly when the temple came to be built, the pattern of it, we are told, was given of Jehovah "by his Spirit" to David (I Chron. xxviii. 12). Quite near to these gifts, but on a higher plane, lies the supernatural gift of wisdom for the administration of judgment and government. Moses was so endowed. And, therefore, the seventy elders were also endowed with it, to fit them to share his cares: "And I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee," said Jehovah, "and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee" (Num. xi. 17, 25).<sup>17</sup> It is in this sense also, doubtless, that Joshua is said to have been full of the Spirit of wisdom (Num. xxvii. 18, Deut. xxxiv. 9).<sup>18</sup> In these aspects, the gift of the Spirit, appearing as it does as an endowment for office, is sometimes sacramentally connected with symbols of conference: in the case of Joshua with the laying on of hands (Deut. xxxiv. 9), in the cases of Saul and David with anointing (I Sam. x. 1, xvi. 13). Possibly its symbolical connection in Samson's case with Nazaritic length of hair may be classed in the same general category.

Prominent above all other theocratic gifts of the Spirit, however, are the gifts of supernatural knowledge and insight, culminating in the great gift of Prophecy. This greatest of gifts in the service of the Kingdom of God is sometimes very closely connected with the other gifts which have been mentioned. Thus the presence of the Spirit in the seventy elders in the wilderness, endowing them to share the burden of judgment with Moses, was manifested by prophetic utterance (Num. xi. 25). The descent of the Spirit upon Saul was likewise manifested by his prophesying (I Sam. x. 6, 10). Sometimes the Spirit's presence in the prophet even manifests itself in the production in others of what may be called sympathetic prophecy accompanied with ecstasy. Instances occur in the cases of the messengers sent by Saul and of Saul himself, when they went to apprehend David (I Sam. xix. 20, 23); and in these cases the phenomenon served the ulterior purpose of a protection for the prophets.<sup>19</sup> In the visions of Ezekiel the presence of the inspiring Spirit is manifested in physical as well as in mental effects (Ezek. iii. 12, 14, 24, viii. 3, xi. 1, 5, 24, xxxvii. 1). Thus clear it is that all these work one and the same Spirit.

In all cases, however, Prophecy is the free gift of the Spirit of God to special organs chosen for the purpose of the revelation of His will. It is so represented in the cases of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 2), of Saul (I Sam. x. 6), of David (I Sam. xvi. 13), of Azariah the son of Oded (II Chron. xv. 1), of Jahaziel the son of Zechariah (II Chron. xx. 14), of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (II Chron. xxiv. 20). To Hosea, "the man that hath the Spirit" was a synonym for "prophet" (ix. 7). Isaiah (xlvi. 16) in a somewhat puzzling

sentence declares, "The Lord God hath sent me and His Spirit," which seems to conjoin the Spirit either with Jehovah as the source of the mission, or else with the prophet as the bearer of the message; and, in either case, refers the prophetic inspiration to the Spirit. A very full insight into the nature of the Spirit's work in prophetic inspiration is provided by the details which Ezekiel gives of the Spirit's mode of dealing with him in communicating his visions. While the richness of the prophetic endowment is indicated to us by Micah (iii. 8): "But I truly am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." There are, however, two passages that speak quite generally of the whole body of prophets as Spirit-led men, which, in their brief explicitness, deserve to be called the classical passages as to prophetic inspiration. In one of these, — the great psalm-prayer of the Levites recorded in the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, — God is first lauded for "giving His good Spirit to instruct" His people, by the mouth of Moses; and then further praised for enduring this people through so many years and "testifying against them by His Spirit through His prophets" (Neh. ix. 20, 30). Here the prophets are conceived as a body of official messengers, through whom the Spirit of God made known His will to His people through all the ages. In exactly similar wise, Zechariah testifies that the Lord of Hosts had sent His words "by His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets" (Zech. vii. 12). These are quite comprehensive statements. They include the whole series of the prophets, and they represent them as the official mouthpieces of the Spirit of God, serving the people of God as His organs.<sup>20</sup>

It is sufficiently clear that an official character attaches to all the manifestations of what we have called the theocratic Spirit. The theocratic Spirit appears to be represented as the executive of the Godhead within the sacred nation, the divine power working in the nation for the protection, governing, instruction and leading of the people to its destined goal. The Levitic prayer in the ninth chapter of Nehemiah traces the history of God's people with great fulness; and all through this history represents God as not only looking down from heaven upon His people, leading them, but, as it were, working within them, inspiring organs for their government and instruction. — "clothing Himself with these" organs as the media of His working, as the expressive Hebrew sometimes suggests (Judges vi. 34, I Chron. xii. 18, II Chron. xxiv. 20). The aspect in which the theocratic Spirit seems to be conceived is as God in His people, manifesting Himself through inspired instruments in supernatural leading and teaching. Very illuminating as to the mode of His working are the instructions given to Zerubbabel through the prophets Zechariah and Haggai. He — and, with him, all the people of the land — is counseled to be strong and of good courage, "for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit abideth among you: fear ye not" (Hag. ii. 5). "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" (Zech. iv. 6). The mountains of opposition are to be reduced to a plain; but not by armed force. The symbol of the source of strength is the seven lamps burning brightly by virtue of perennial supplies from the living olives growing by their side; thus, by a hidden, divine supply of deathless life, the Church of God lives and prospers in the world. Not indeed as if God so inhabited Israel, that all that the house of Israel does is of the Lord. "Shall it be said, O house of Israel, Is the Spirit of the

Lord straitened? — are these his doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" (Micah ii. 7). The gift of the Spirit is only for good. But there is very clearly brought before us here the fact and the mode of God's official inspiration. The theocratic Spirit represents, in a word, the presence of God with His people. And in the Old Testament teaching concerning it, is firmly laid the foundation of the Christian doctrine of God in the Church, leading and guiding it, and supplying it with all needed instruction, powers and graces for its preservation in the world.

We must not omit to observe that in this higher sphere of the theocratic Spirit, the freedom and, so to speak, detachment of the informing Spirit is even more thoroughly guarded than in the case of His cosmical relations. If in the lower sphere the Spirit hovered over rather than was submerged in matter, so here He acts upon His chosen organs in the same sense from without, so that it is impossible to confound His official gifts with their native powers, however exalted. The Spirit here, too, is given by God (Num. xi. 29, Isa. xlii. 1). God puts it on men or fills men with it (Num. xi. 25, Ex. xxviii. 3, xxxi. 3); or the Spirit comes (Judg. iii. 10, xi. 29), comes mightily (xiv. 6, 19, etc., I Sam. xi. 6) upon men, falls on them (Ezek. xi. 5), breaks in upon them, seizes them violently, as it were, and puts them on as a garment (Judg. vi. 34). And this is no less true of the prophets than of the other organs of the Spirit's theocratic work: they are all the instruments of a mighty power, which, though in one sense it is conceived as the endowment of the theocratic people, in another sense is conceived as seizing upon its organs from without and above. And "because it is thus fundamentally a power seizing man powerfully, often violently," it is often replaced by the locution, "the hand of Jehovah,"<sup>21</sup> which is, in this usage, the equivalent of the Spirit of Jehovah (II Kgs. iii. 15, Ezek. i. 3, iii. 14, 22, xxxiii. 22, xxxvii. 1, xl. 1). The intermittent character of the theocratic gifts still further emphasized their gift by a personal Spirit working purposively. They were not permanent possessions of the theocratic organs, to be used according to their own will, but came and went according to the divine gift.<sup>22</sup> The theocratic gifts of the Spirit are, in a word, everywhere emphatically gifts *from* God as well as *of* God; and every tendency to conceive of them as formally the result of a general inspiration of the nation instead of a special inspiration of the chosen organs is rebuked by every allusion to them. God working in and through man, by whatever variety of inspiration, works divinely and from above. He is no more merged in His church than in the creation, but is, in all His operations alike, the free, transcendent Spirit, dividing to each man severally as He will.

The representations concerning the official theocratic Spirit culminate in Isaiah's prophetic descriptions of the Spirit-endowed Messiah:

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: 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; and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay

the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins" (Isa. xi. 1 *sq.*).

"Behold my servant whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. . . . He shall bring forth judgment in truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them forth; he that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it and Spirit to them that walk therein; I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images" (Isa. xlii. 1 *sq.*).

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me" — this is the response of the Messiah to such gracious promises — "because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good-tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, 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 a garland for ashes, the oil of gladness for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (Isa. lxi. 1 *sq.*).

No one will fail to observe in these beautiful descriptions of the endowments of the Messiah, how all the theocratic endowments which had been given separately to others unite upon Him; so that all previous organs of the Spirit appear but as partial types of Him to whom as we are told in the New Testament, God "giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John iii. 34). Here we perceive the difference between the Messiah and other recipients of the Spirit. To them the Spirit had been "meted out" (Isa. xl. 13), according to their place and function in the development of the kingdom of God; upon Him it was poured out without measure. By Him, accordingly, the kingdom of God is consummated. The descriptions of the spiritual endowments of the Messiah are descriptions also, as will no doubt have been noted, of the consummated kingdom of God. His endowment also was not for himself but for the kingdom; it, too, was official. Nevertheless, it was the source in Him of all personal graces also, the opulence and perfection of which are fully described. And thus He becomes the type not only of the theocratic work of the Spirit, but also of His work upon the individual soul, perfecting it after the image of God.

### THE INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT

2. And this brings us naturally to the second aspect in which the Spirit is presented to us in relation to the new creation — His relation to the individual soul, working inwardly in the spirits of men, fitting the children of God for the kingdom of God, even as, working in the nation as such, He, as theocratic Spirit, was preparing God's kingdom for His people. In this aspect He appears specifically as the Spirit of grace. As He is the source of all cosmical life, and of all theocratic life, so is He also the source of all spiritual life. He upholds the soul in being and governs it as part of the great world He has created; He makes it sharer in the theocratic blessings which He brings to His people; but He deals with it, too, within, conforming it to its ideal. In a word, the Spirit of God, in the Old Testament, is not merely the immanent Spirit, the source of all the world's life and all the world's movement; and not merely the inspiring Spirit, the source of His church's strength and safety and of its development in accordance with its special mission; He is as well the indwelling Spirit of holiness in the hearts of God's children. As Hermann Schultz puts it: "The mysterious impulses which enable a man to lead a life well-pleasing to God, are not regarded as a development of human environment, but are nothing else than 'the Spirit of God.' which is also called as being the Spirit peculiarly God's — His Holy Spirit."<sup>23</sup>

We have already had occasion to note that these personal effects of the Spirit's work are sometimes very closely connected with others of His operations. Already as the immanent Spirit of life, indeed, as we saw, there did not lack a connection of His activity with ethical considerations (Gen. vi. 3). We will remember, too, that Nehemiah recalls the goodness — *i.e.*, possibly the graciousness — of the Spirit, when He came to instruct Israel in the person of Moses in the wilderness: "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. ix. 20).<sup>24</sup> When the Spirit came upon Saul, endowing him for his theocratic work, it is represented as having also a very far-reaching personal effect upon him. "The Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon thee," says Samuel, "and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man" (I Sam. x. 6). "And it was so" adds the narrative, "that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him a new heart," or, as the Hebrew has it, "turned him a new heart." Possibly such revolutionary ethical consequences ordinarily attended the official gift of the Spirit, so that the gloss may be a true one which makes II Peter i. 21 declare that they were "holy men of God" who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.<sup>25</sup>

At all events this conception of a thorough ethical change characterises the Old Testament idea of the inner work of the Spirit of Holiness, as He first comes to be called in the Psalms and Isaiah (Ps. li. 11; Isa. lxiii. 10, 11 only).<sup>26</sup> The classical passage in this connection is the Fifty-first Psalm — David's cry of penitence and prayer for mercy after Nathan's probing of his sin with Bathsheba. He prays for the creation within him of a new heart and the renewal of a right spirit within him; and he represents that all his hopes of continued power of new life rest on the continuance of God's holy Spirit, or of the Spirit of God's holiness, with him. Possibly the Spirit is here called holy, primarily, because He is one who cannot dwell in a wicked heart; but it seems also to be implicated that David looks upon Him as the author within him of that holiness without which he cannot hope to see the Lord. A like conception meets us in another Psalm ascribed to David, the One Hundred and Forty-third "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my

God: thy Spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness." The two conceptions of the divine grace and holiness are also combined by Isaiah in an account of how Israel had been, since the days of Moses, dealing ungratefully with God, and, by their rebellion, grieving "the Holy Spirit whom He had graciously put in the midst of them" (Isa. lxiii. 10, 11).<sup>27</sup> The conception may primarily be that the Spirit given to guide Israel was a Spirit of holiness in the sense that He could not brook sin in those with whom He dealt, but the conception that He would guide them in ways of holiness underlies that.

This aspect of the work of the Spirit of God is most richly developed, however, in prophecies of the future. In the Messianic times, Isaiah tells us, the Spirit shall be poured out from on high with the effect that judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness shall abide in the peaceful field (Isa. xxxii. 15). It is in such descriptions of the Messianic era as a time of the reign of the Spirit in the hearts of the people, that the opulence of His saving influences is developed. It is He who shall gather the children of God into the kingdom, so that no one shall be missing (Isa. xxxiv. 16). It is He who, as the source of all blessings, shall be poured out on the seed with the result that it shall spring up in the luxuriant growth and bear such rich fruitage that one shall cry 'I am the Lord's,' and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall write on his hand, 'Unto the Lord,' and shall surname himself by the name of Israel (Isa. xlv. 3 *sq.*). It is His abiding presence which constitutes the preeminent blessing of the new covenant which Jehovah makes with His people in the day of redemption: "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (Isa. lix. 21). The gift of the Spirit as an abiding presence in the heart of the individual is the crowning Messianic blessing. To precisely the same effect is the teaching of Ezekiel. The new heart and new spirit is one of the burdens of his message (xi. 19, xviii. 31, xxxvi. 26): and these are the Messianic gifts of God to His people through the Spirit. God's people are dead; but He will open their graves and cause them to come up out of their graves: "And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live" (xxxvii. 14). They are in captivity; he will bring them out of captivity: "Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God" (xxxix. 29). Like promises appear in Zechariah: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (xii. 10). It is the converting Spirit of God that is spoken of. One thing only is left to complete the picture, — the clear declaration that, in these coming days of blessing, the Spirit hitherto given only to Israel shall be poured out upon the whole world. This Joel gives us in that wonderful passage which is applied by Peter to the outpouring begun at Pentecost: "And it shall come to pass afterward," says the Lord God through His prophet, "that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; . . . and also upon the servants and upon the hand-maids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered" (ii. 28—32).

In this series of passages, the indwelling Spirit of the New Testament is obviously brought before us — the indwelling God, author of all holiness

and of all salvation. Thus there are firmly laid by them the foundations of the Christian doctrine of Regeneration and Sanctification, — of God in the soul quickening its powers of spiritual life and developing it in holiness. Nor can it be a ground of wonder that this aspect of His work is less frequently dwelt upon than His theocratic activities; nor that it is chiefly in prophecies of the future that the richer references to it occur.<sup>28</sup> This was the time of theocratic development; the old dispensation was a time of preparation for the fulness of spiritual graces. It is rather a ground of wonder that even in few and scattered hints and in prophecies of the times of the Spirit yet to come, such a deep and thorough grasp upon His individual work should be exhibited.

By its presentation of this work of the Spirit in the heart, the Old Testament completes its conception of the Spirit of God — the great conception of the immanent, inspiring, indwelling God. In it the three great ideas are thrown prominently forward, of God in the world, God in the Church, God in the soul: the God of Providence, the immanent source of all that comes to pass, the director and governor of the world of matter and spirit alike; the God of the Church, the inspiring source of all Church life and of all Church gifts, through which the Church is instructed, governed, preserved and extended; and the God of grace, the indwelling source of all holiness and of all religious aspirations, emotions and activities. Attention has already been called to the great enrichment which was brought to the general conception of God by this doctrine of the Spirit of God in its first aspect. The additional aspects in which He is presented in the pages of the Old Testament of course still further enrich and elevate the conception. By throwing a still stronger emphasis on the personality of the Spirit they made even wider the great gulf that already yawned between all Pantheising notions and the Biblical doctrine of the Personal God, the immanent source of all that comes to pass. And they bring out with great force and clearness the conceptions of grace and holiness as inherent in the idea of God working, and thus operate to deepen the ethical conception of the Divine Being. It is only as a personal, choosing, gracious and holy God, who bears His people on His heart for good, and who seeks to conform them in life and character to His own holiness — that we can conceive the God of the Old Testament, if we will attend to its doctrine of the Spirit. Thus the fundamental unity of the conception with that of the Holy Ghost of the New Testament grows ever more obvious, the more attentively it is considered. The Spirit of God of the Old Testament performs all the functions which are ascribed to the Holy Ghost of the New Testament, and bears all the same characteristics. They are conceived alike both in their nature and in their operations. We cannot help identifying them.

Such an identification need not involve, however, the assertion that the Spirit of God was conceived in the Old Testament as the Holy Ghost is in the New, as a distinct hypostasis in the divine nature. Whether this be so, or, if so in some measure, how far it may be true, is a matter for separate investigation. The Spirit of God certainly acts as a person and is presented to us as a person, throughout the Old Testament. In no passage is He conceived otherwise than personally — as a free, willing, intelligent being. This is, however, in itself only the pervasive testimony of the Scriptures to the personality of God. For it is equally true that the Spirit of God is everywhere in the Old Testament identified with God. This is only its pervasive testimony to the divine unity. The question for examination is,

how far the one personal God was conceived of as embracing in His unity hypostatical distinctions. This question is a very complicated one and needs very delicate treatment. There are, indeed, three questions included in the general one, which for the sake of clearness we ought to keep apart. We may ask, May the Christian properly see in the Spirit of God of the Old Testament the personal Holy Spirit of the New? This we may answer at once in the affirmative. We may ask again, Are there any hints in the Old Testament anticipating and adumbrating the revelation of the hypostatic Spirit of the New? This also, it seems, we ought to answer in the affirmative. We may ask again, Are these hints of such clearness as actually to reveal this doctrine, apart from the revelation of the New Testament? This should be doubtless answered in the negative. There are hints, and they serve for points of attachment for the fuller New Testament teaching. But they are only hints, and, apart from the New Testament teaching, would be readily explained as personifications or ideal objectivations of the power of God. Undoubtedly, side by side with the stress put upon the unity of God and the identity of the Spirit with the God who gives it, there is a distinction recognized between God and His Spirit — in the sense at least of a discrimination between God over all and God in all, between the Giver and the Given, between the Source and the Executor of the moral law. This distinction already emerges in Genesis i. 2; and it does not grow less observable as we advance through the Old Testament. It is prominent in the standing phrases by which, on the one hand, God is spoken of as sending, putting, placing, pouring, emptying His Spirit upon man, and on the other the Spirit is spoken of as coming, resting, falling, springing upon man. There is a sort of objectifying of the Spirit over against God in both cases; in the former case, by sending Him from Himself God, as it were, separates Him from Himself; in the latter, He appears almost as a distinct person, acting *sua sponte*. Schultz does not hesitate to speak of the Spirit even in Genesis i. 2 as appearing "as very independent, just like a hypostasis or person."<sup>29</sup> Kleinert finds in this passage at least a tendency towards hypostatizing — though he thinks this tendency was not subsequently worked out.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps we are warranted in saying as much as this — that there is observable in the Old Testament, not, indeed, an hypostatizing of the Spirit of God, but a tendency towards it — that, in Hofmann's cautious language, the Spirit appears in the Old Testament "as somewhat distinct from the 'I' of God which God makes the principle of life in the world."<sup>31</sup> A preparation, at least, for the full revelation of the Trinity in the New Testament is observable;<sup>32</sup> points of connection with it are discoverable; and so Christians are able to read the Old Testament without offence, and to find without confusion their own Holy Spirit in its Spirit of God.<sup>33</sup>

More than this could scarcely be looked for. The elements in the doctrine of God which above all others needed emphasis in Old Testament times were naturally His unity and His personality. The great thing to be taught the ancient people of God was that the God of all the earth is one person. Over against the varying idolatries about them, this was the truth of truths for which Israel was primarily to stand; and not until this great truth was ineffaceably stamped upon their souls could the personal distinctions in the Triune-God be safely made known to them. A premature revelation of the Spirit as a distinct hypostasis could have wrought nothing but harm to the people of God. We shall all no doubt agree with Kleinert<sup>34</sup> that it is pragmatic in Isidore of Pelusium to say that Moses knew the doctrine of the

Trinity well enough, but concealed it through fear that Polytheism would profit by it. But we may safely affirm this of God the Revealer, in the gradual delivery of the truth concerning Himself to men. He reveals the whole truth, but in divers portions and in divers manners: and it was incident to the progressive delivery of doctrine that the unity of the Godhead should first be made the firm possession of men, and the Trinity in that unity should be unveiled to them only afterwards, when the times were ripe for it. What we need wonder over is not that the hypostatical distinctness of the Spirit is not more clearly revealed in the Old Testament but that the approaches to it are laid so skillfully that the doctrine of the hypostatical Holy Spirit of the New Testament finds so many and such striking points of attachment in the Old Testament, and yet no Israelite had ever been disturbed in repeating with hearty faith his great Sch'ma, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). Not until the whole doctrine of the Trinity was ready to be manifested in such visible form as at the baptism of Christ — God in heaven, God on earth and God descending from heaven to earth — could any part of the mystery be safely uncovered.

There yet remains an important query which we cannot pass wholly by. We have seen the rich development of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Old Testament. We have seen the testimony the Old Testament bears to the activity of the Spirit of God throughout the old dispensation. What then is meant by calling the new dispensation the dispensation of the Spirit? What does John (vii. 39) mean by saying that the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified? What our Lord Himself, when he promised the Comforter, by saying that the Comforter would not come until He went away and sent Him (John xvi. 7); and by breathing on His disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John xx. 22)? What did the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost mean, when He came to inaugurate the dispensation of the Spirit? It cannot be meant that the Spirit was not active in the old dispensation. We have already seen that the New Testament writers themselves represent Him to have been active in the old dispensation in all the varieties of activity with which He is active in the new. Such passages seem to have diverse references. Some of them may refer to the specifically miraculous endowments which characterized the apostles and the churches which they founded.<sup>35</sup> Others refer to the world-wide mission of the Spirit, promised, indeed, in the Old Testament, but only now to be realized. But there is a more fundamental idea to be reckoned with still. This is the idea of the preparatory nature of the Old Testament dispensation. The old dispensation was a preparatory one and must be strictly conceived as such. What spiritual blessings came to it were by way of prelibation.<sup>36</sup> They were many and various. The Spirit worked in Providence no less universally then than now. He abode in the Church not less really then than now. He wrought in the hearts of God's people not less prevalently then than now. All the good that was in the world was then as now due to Him. All the hope of God's Church then as now depended on Him. Every grace of the godly life then as now was a fruit of His working. But the object of the whole dispensation was only to prepare for the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. He kept the remnant safe and pure; but it was primarily only in order that the seed might be preserved. This was the fundamental end of His activity, then. The dispensation of the Spirit, properly so-called, did not dawn until the period of preparation was over and the day of outpouring had come. The mustard seed had been preserved through all the ages only by the Spirit's brooding care. Now it is planted, and it is by His operation that it is

growing up into a great tree which shades the whole earth, and to the branches of which all the fowls of heaven come for shelter. It is not that His work is more real in the new dispensation than in the old. It is not merely that it is more universal. It is that it is directed to a different end — that it is no longer for the mere preserving of the seed unto the day of planting, but for the perfecting of the fruitage and the gathering of the harvest. The Church, to use a figure of Isaiah's, was then like a pent-in stream; it is now like that pent-in stream with the barriers broken down and the Spirit of the Lord driving it. It was He who preserved it in being when it was pent in. It is He who is now driving on its gathered floods till it shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In one word, that was a day in which the Spirit restrained His power. Now the great day of the Spirit is come.

---

### Footnotes

- 1 From *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, v. vi, 1895, pp. 665—687.
- 2 "Korintherbriefe" i, p. 80.
- 3 Article, "Zur alttest. Lehre vom Geiste Gottes," in the "Jahrb. für deutsch. Theologie" for 1867, i, p. 9.
- 4 These are Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, II Chronicles, Nehemiah, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Micah, Haggai, Zechariah. Deuteronomy and I Chronicles may be added, although they do not contain the explicit phrase, "the Spirit of God" or "the Spirit of Jehovah."
- 5 These are Leviticus, Joshua, Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah. Proverbs, Daniel and Malachi may, for one reason or another, remain unclassified.
- 6 "There is one writer of the Old Testament, in whom all lines and rays of this development come together, and who so stood in the matter of time and of inner manner that they had to come together in this point of unity, if the Old Testament had otherwise found such. This is Ezekiel" (Kleinert, *op. cit.* p. 45). "Isaiah has scattered throughout his prophecies allusions to the Spirit so manifold and various in express descriptions and in brief turns of phrase, that it might not be difficult to put together from his words, the complete doctrine of the Spirit" (Smeaton, "Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," p. 35).
- 7 Fairbairn, "Christ in Modern Theology," p. 377.
- 8 James Denney, "Studies in Theology," p. 70.
- 9 Cf. also the promise of Ezek. xxxvi. 27 and I Thes. iv. 8 (see Toy, "Quotations in the New Testament," p. 202). Cf. also Luke i. 17.
- 10 These words are C. F. Schmid's ("Biblical Theology of the New Testament," Div. ii. § 24, p. 145, E. T.). Cf. Smeaton, *op. cit.* p.36: "Events occurring in the moral government of God, are (in the Old Testament) also ascribed to the Spirit as the Executive of all the divine purposes."
- 11 Kleinert, *op. cit.*, p. 30: "The Old Testament everywhere knows only of an influence of the Divine Spirit upon the human Spirit in the interest and sphere of the Kingdom of God, which is in Israel and is to come through Israel." Hävernick, "Theologie des alten Testaments" p. 77: "Of a communication of the Spirit in the narrower sense, after the entrance of sin, there can be question only in the Theocracy." Oehler, "Biblical Theology of the Old Testament," § 65: "But the Spirit as hwhy twd, or to express it more definitely hwhy Sdq twd only acts within the sphere of revelation. It rules within the Theocracy."

**12** For example, in the Pentateuch His working is perhaps exclusively cosmical and theocratic-official, (Oehler, *op. cit.* § 65); while His ethical work in individuals, is throughout the Old Testament, more a matter of prophecy than of present enjoyment (Dale, "Christian Doctrine," p. 317).

**13** Dale, "Christian Doctrine," p. 318. A striking passage both for its presentation of this fact and for its unwillingness to accept its implications.

**14** Cf. Schultz, "Old Testament Theology," E. T. ii, 184: "Over the lifeless and formless mass of the world-matter this Spirit broods like a bird on its nest, and thus transmits to it the seeds of life, so that afterwards by the word of God it can produce whatever God wills."

**15** Compare some very instructive words as to this account of creation, by the Rev. John Robson, D.D. of Aberdeen (*The Expository Times*, July, 1894, vol. v. No. 10, pp. 467, sq.): "The divine agents in creation are brought before us in the opening of the Book of Genesis, and in the opening of the Gospel of John. The object of John in his Gospel is to speak of Jesus Christ, the word of God; and so he refers only to His agency in the work of creation. The object of Moses in Genesis is to tell the whole divine agency in that work; so in his narrative we have the work of the Spirit recognized. But he does not ignore the word of God; he begins his account of each epoch or each day of creation with the words, 'And God said.' We do not find in Genesis the theological fulness that we do in subsequent writers in the Bible; but we do find in it the elements of all that we subsequently learn or deduce regarding the divine agency in creation. . . . Two agents are mentioned: 'The Spirit of God brooding on the surface of the waters,' and at each new stage of creative development, the Word of God expressed in the words 'God said.' . . . There is thus the Spirit of God present as a constant energy, and there is the word of God giving form to that energy, and at each new epoch calling new forms into being."

**16** Oehler, "Old Testament Theology," § 65: "But the Spirit hwhy twd, as or to express it more definitely hwhy Sdq twd only acts within *the sphere of revelation*. It rules within the theocracy (Isa. lxiii. 11, Hag. ii. 5, Neh. ix. 20) but not as if all citizens of the Old Testament Theocracy as such participated in this Spirit, which Moses expresses as a wish (Num. xi. 29), but which is reserved for the future community of salvation (John iii. 1). In the Old Testament the Spirit's work in the divine kingdom is rather that of *endowing the organs of the theocracy with the gifts required for their calling*, and those gifts of office in the Old Testament are similar to the gifts of grace in the New Testament, I Cor. xii. ff."

**17** The idea of communicating to others the Spirit already resting on one occurs again in II Kings ii. 9, 15, of the communication of Elijah's Spirit (of Prophecy) to Elisha. Cf. Oehler, "Biblical Theology of the Old Testament," § 65.

**18** Cf. the prayer and endowment of Solomon, in I Kgs. iii.

**19** Compare the cases of the communication of the Spirit, in a different way, in Num. xi. 17, 25, 26 and II Kgs. ii. 9, 15— already mentioned.

**20** In such passages as Gen. xli. 38, Dan. iv. 8, ix. 18 and v. 11, 14, we have "the Spirit of the Gods" as the equivalent of "the Spirit of God" on the lips of heathen.

**21** Cf. Orelli, "The Old Testament Prophecy," etc., E. T. p. 11, and also Oehler, "Biblical Theology of Old Testament," § 65 *ad fin.*

**22** Cf. A. B. Davidson, (*The Expositor*, July, 1895, p. 1): "The view that prevailed among the people—and it seems the view of the Old Testament writers themselves— appears to have been this: the prophet did not speak out of a general inspiration of Jehovah, bestowed upon him once for all, as, say, at his call; each particular word that he spoke, whether a prediction or a practical counsel, was due to a special inspiration, exerted on him for the occasion." The statement might well have been stronger.

**23** *Op. cit.* ii, p. 203. The passage is cited for its main idea: we demur, of course,

to some of its implications.

**24** In Num. xiv. 24 we are told that Caleb followed the LORD fully, "because he had another spirit in him," from that which animated his rebellious fellows.

Possibly the Spirit of the Lord may be intended.

**25** Exceptions are found, of course; such as the cases of Balaam, Samson, etc. Cf. H. G. Mitchell, "Inspiration in the Old Testament," in *Christian Thought* for December 1893, p. 190.

**26** Cf. F. H. Woods, in *The Expository Times*, July, 1895, p. 462—463: "It may be extremely difficult to say what was the precise meaning which prophet or psalmist attached to the phrases, 'the Spirit of God' and 'the Spirit of Holiness.' But such language, at any rate, shows that they realised the divine character of that inward power which makes for holiness and truth. 'Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not the Spirit of Thy holiness from me' (Ps. li. ii). 'And now the Lord God hath sent me, and His Spirit' (Isa. xlvi. 16). 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of Hosts' (Zech. iv. 6). In such passages as these we can see the germ of the fuller Christian thought."

**27** Cf. Psalm cvi. 13.

**28** See such wonder, nevertheless, expressed by Dr. Dale, in a striking passage in his "Christian Doctrine," p. 317.

**29** *Op. cit.* ii. p. 184.

**30** *Op. cit.* pp. 55—56.

**31** "Schriftbeweis," i. p. 187.

**32** Cf. Oehler, *op. cit.* § 65, note 5. He looks on Isa. xliii. 16 as implying personality and reminds us that the Old Testament prepared the way for the economic Trinity of the new. Cf. also Dale, "Christian Doctrine," p. 317.

**33** Cf. Dr. Hodge's admirable summary statement: "Even in the first chapter of Genesis, the Spirit of God is represented as the source of all intelligence, order and life in the created universe; and in the following books of the Old Testament He is represented as inspiring the prophets, giving wisdom, strength and goodness to statesmen and warriors, and to the people of God. This Spirit is not an agency but an agent, who teaches and selects; who can be sinned against and grieved; and who in the New Testament is unmistakably revealed as a distinct person. When John the Baptist appeared, we find him speaking of the Holy Spirit as of a person with whom his countrymen were familiar, as an object of Divine worship and the giver of saving blessings. Our divine Lord also takes this truth for granted, and promised to send the Spirit as a Paraclete, to take his place, to instruct, comfort and strengthen them; whom they were to receive and obey. Thus, without any violent transition, the earliest revelations of this mystery were gradually unfolded, until the triune God, Father, Son and Spirit, appears in the New Testament as the universally recognized God of all believers" (Charles Hodge, "Systematic Theology," i. p. 447).

**34** *Op. cit.* p. 56.

**35** Cf. Redford, "Vox. Dei.," p. 236.

**36** Smeaton (*Op. cit.* p. 49) comments on John vii. 37 *sq.* thus: "But the apostle adds that 'the Spirit was not yet' because Christ's glorification had not yet arrived. He does not mean that the Spirit did not yet exist — for all Scripture attests His eternal preexistence — nor that His regenerative efficacy was still unknown — for countless millions had been regenerated by His power since the first promise in Eden — but that these operations of the Spirit had been but an anticipation of the atoning gift of Christ rather than a GIVING. The apostle speaks comparatively, not absolutely." Compare further the eloquent words on page 53 with the quotation there from Goodwin.

## [Author](#)

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921) is widely recognized as the greatest English-speaking orthodox theologian of the early twentieth century, and perhaps of the whole century.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, he entered Princeton College in 1868 and later graduated from the Seminary in 1876. After a brief spell of pastoral ministry in Baltimore, he taught at Western Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania before succeeding A. A. Hodge as Professor of Didactic and Polemical Theology in 1887.

Warfield was a judicious and gracious preacher ("His words proceeded out of his mouth as if they walked on velvet" said F.L. Patton); but it was through his pen that he gave his lasting legacy to the church. Largely confined to Princeton because of his wife's long-term ill health he devoted his energies to the hundreds of articles and reviews which flowed from the marriage of his fertile mind and monumental scholarship to disciplined study and research.

Always generous in his acknowledgment of God-given scholarly gifts and insights, Warfield was also devastating in his critical analysis of every misuse to which he saw such gifts being devoted. An intellectual of Olympian proportions, he commanded the respect and devotion of his peers: "Nearly everything I have done" (wrote J. Gresham Machen to his mother) "has been done with the inspiring hope that Dr. Warfield would think well if it . . . he was the greatest man I have known".

---

---

### **DISCUSS THIS TOPIC**

Please join others who have commented upon this and other topics in our [Discussion Group](#).

---

**Back to Library**



[Return to the Main Highway](#)



[Calvinism and the Reformed Faith Index](#)



:-) ←