

(Guthrie, extras chapter 5)

The Holy Spirit in Johannine Literature

The Johannine literature

Whereas there are more references to the Spirit in John and more specific information about his coming activities, it is remarkable that most of the material is contained in the more intimate teaching given exclusively to the apostles on the eve of the passion.⁴³ It is best to consider the evidence under two divisions — statements about the Spirit before the passion narratives and statements within those narratives.

THE SPIRIT IN THE EARLIER PART OF THE GOSPEL

In this section there is one narrative passage and five teaching passages. The former has parallels in the synoptic gospels, but there are no parallels to the latter.

The Spirit at the baptism. The main difference between John's account of the baptism of Jesus and the synoptic accounts is that John gives insight into the reactions of the baptizer (Jn. 1:29-34). According to the fourth gospel, he declared that he saw the Spirit descending as a dove on Jesus. He does not actually mention the baptism of Jesus, but this is clearly assumed. The dove is precisely parallel to the synoptics. The verb for seeing used by John (*theasthai*) cannot be construed as a visionary experience, but demands a literal object (*cf.* Lk. 3:22 - in bodily form). Moreover, the descent of the Spirit identified for John the Baptist the Coming One who would himself baptize with the Spirit. Indeed, John the Baptist claims to have had a divine revelation which enabled him to identify the Coming

⁴² R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church* (1938), pp. 70f., argues that the or conception of the Spirit had first to be baptized into the death of Christ before the disciples could grasp the fuller meaning.

⁴³ For studies on the Spirit in John's gospel, *cf.* H. Schlier, 'Zum Begriff des Geistes nach dem Johannesevangelium', *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze: Festschrift für J. Schwid* (ed. J. Blinzler, O. Kuss, F. Mussner, 1963), p. 233; G. Bornkamm, 'Der Paraklet im Johannes-evangelium', *Geschichte und Glaube* 1 (1968), p. 69; R. E. Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *NTS* 13, 1966-7, pp. 126f; G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraklete in the Gospel of John* (1970); F. Mussner, *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St John* (1967), ch. 5; *idem BZ* 5, 1961, pp. 59ff.; E. Bammel, 'Jesus und der Paraklet in Johannes 16', *Christ and Spirit in the NT* (ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley, 1973) pp. 199-216 (hereafter cited as *Christ and Spirit*); C. K. Barrett, 'The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel', *JTS* 1, 1950, pp. 12-15; J. M. Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (1970), pp. 151ff.; E. Kasemann, *The Testament of Jesus* (Eng. trans. 1968), pp. 45f; S. S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (1978), pp. 228ff; H. Sasse, 'Der Paraklet im Johannesevangelium', *ZNW* 24, 1925, pp. 260ff.; H. Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel* (Eng. trans. 1968). For a very detailed recent study, *cf.* F. Porsch, *Pneuma und Wort* (1974).

One as one who would baptize with the Spirit. By the same means he was able to identify him as Son of God.

There are, therefore, both substantial agreements and significant variations between John and the synoptics. They may be said to corroborate each other. John omits the heavenly voice, but gives valuable insight into the meaning of the descending Spirit.⁴⁴ The close connection between the mission of Jesus and the activity of the Spirit is basic to all the records.

The function of the Spirit in Christian regeneration. We turn now from Jesus' experience to his teaching. The well-known saying to Nicodemus has great importance for the doctrine of the Spirit: 'Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (Jn. 3:5). We need not here discuss the meaning of water, whether it refers to baptism or to physical birth, because our present concern is with birth by the Spirit. The focus is undoubtedly on the renewing or re-creative power of the Spirit in believers. This is the germ of regeneration (see the fuller discussion of this later, pp. 585f). The idea is reinforced by the use of an analogy: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (Jn. 3:6). In other words, like begets like. It cannot be argued from these words that there is any moral connotation of 'flesh', in the sense in which Paul sometimes uses 'flesh' in antithesis to 'spirit'. But the main thrust is in the fact that new birth cannot be achieved through 'flesh', only through 'Spirit', in this case the Holy Spirit. This idea is a considerable advance on the promise of the Spirit as a guide or a power for life. It means in short that the believer's whole spiritual existence depends on the activity of the Holy Spirit. It involves a totally new mode of existence. It is not surprising that Nicodemus misconstrued this radical teaching. Spiritual renewal of this kind is bound to affect every part of a man's life, but Jesus does not enlarge on this. It was left especially to the apostle Paul to give a fuller exposition of its implications.

Another factor is the impossibility of tracking down with precision the movements of the Spirit. Jesus used the analogy of wind, which is not only a play on words (*pneuma*), but is a fitting symbol for what is itself invisible, but nonetheless has visible effects. It is also suggestive of considerable power, sometimes boisterous, sometimes gentle.

The unlimited nature of the gift of the Spirit. In all probability the concluding section of John 3 is the evangelist's own comment. If this is so, he makes a significant assessment which is demonstrated fully in the case of Jesus.

⁴⁴ Onjn. 1:33, *cf.* C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 311; R. E. Brown, *John* (AB, 1966), pp. 158f; R. Schnackenburg, *John*, 1 (Eng. trans., 1968 from *HTKNT*, 1965), pp. 399f. C. K. Barrett, *John*, p. 148, argues from the *kai* that Jesus was empowered to be both Lamb of God and Giver of the Spirit.

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'For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit' (Jn. 3:34). It should be noted that an alternative rendering is possible, in which the Spirit is the subject rather than the object of the giving; but the context suggests that the translation quoted is to be preferred. The statement implies that the words of God need the Spirit of God to interpret them and that there would be no stinting of such assistance. The context shows that the sent one is the Son (Jn. 3:35), and thus draws attention to the close connection between the Spirit and the ministry of the Son.

The Junction of the Spirit in true worship. In the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, a statement is made about the spiritual nature of God (Jn. 4:24). The fact that God is Spirit would not be a new revelation to the Jews, nor in all probability to the Samaritans. It is the principle deduced from this that is distinctive. Worship must be in spirit and in truth, and this can hardly be intelligible if it is not an indirect allusion to the Spirit of truth, who would lead the believers in Christ into true worship. It is important to note that it occurs in the context of a discussion of living water, a well known symbol of the Holy Spirit (see comment below on Jn. 7:38-39).

The link between the Spirit and life. It is possible that the word *pneuma* in John 6:63 may refer to the human spirit (as RSV supposes), but it makes good sense to see in it a reference to the Holy Spirit. In this case it would be aligned to the teaching on regeneration in John 3:5. Two other features are important: another antithesis between flesh and spirit, and a reference to the spiritual character of the words of Jesus. Believers are again viewed as belonging to a different order from the natural man (flesh). Faith is linked with Spirit, not with flesh.

The promise of the Spirit. Following the statement of Jesus about the rivers of living waters which would flow out of believers, John adds the comment, 'Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified' (Jn. 7:38-39). John interpreted the living waters as symbolic of the Spirit. Jesus had made allusion to the water ceremonial at the feast of tabernacles.

Yet a problem arises over the quotation from Scripture, for there is no scripture which speaks of living waters flowing out of believers. There are some passages like Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18 and Zechariah 14:8 which bear some resemblance. It has been suggested that the reference is to what Jesus himself had said in John 4:14, and that the present report is at fault.⁴³

⁴³ Cf. Dewar, *The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought*, p. 31. 528

Another suggestion is that the word for belly (*koilias*) may in Aramaic have been confused with the word for fountain, in which case the difficulty would be avoided.⁴⁶ A further possibility is to refer the words of the quotation to Christ himself, (*i. e.* to living waters flowing out of Christ) and to punctuate with a comma at the end of verse 37 so as to attach the words 'he who believes in me' to the previous verse. This would agree with the view that Christ, not the believer, is the source of spiritual life. But 'faith' seems to belong better to the following words than to the preceding, and there is no preparation in the passage for a shift of subject from the believer to Christ.⁴⁷ It is better to regard the ox quotation as an allusion to OT promises relating to the coming of the Spirit, which according to the prediction of Jesus were about to be fulfilled.

The most important aspects of this passage are the direct relation between the Spirit's coming and the glorification of Jesus,⁴⁸ and the view that the purpose of the Spirit in believers is to promote a sharing ministry. The two themes are not unconnected, for when the Spirit is given, he also gives. Since the glorification theme is prominent in John's portrayal of the ministry and passion of Jesus, its connection with the gift of the Spirit is significant. It was at the resurrection that Jesus was glorified and subsequent to the resurrection that the Spirit was outpoured in full measure. The words 'the Spirit was not yet (= had not yet been) given' (Jn. 7:39b) mark a clear line of distinction between the Spirit's activity in the ministry of Jesus and his subsequent work in the church.⁴⁹

THE SPIRIT IN THE PASSION NARRATIVE

Because of the remarkable detail about the Holy Spirit in the farewell discourses given by Jesus to the disciples on the eve of the passion, many scholars have regarded this whole section of John's gospel as a reading back.⁵⁰ In view of the activity of the Spirit reflected in the Acts and epistles

* Cf. C. f. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (1922), p. 109.

⁴⁷ Cf. L. Morns, *John (NICNT)*, 1971, p. 423.

⁴⁸ D. E. Holwerda, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in the Gospel of John* (1959), p. 1, claims that in John's gospel the Holy Spirit is presented primarily as a post-ascension figure. Holwerda (pp. 20ff.) discusses the view that the Spirit was bestowed at Easter because that was the day of Jesus' glorification. H. Strathmann, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes (NTD)*, 1954, *ad. loc.*, considers that in John, Easter and Pentecost coincide. But this view assumes that John is concerned with chronological considerations, whereas it is better to suppose that his concern is to demonstrate that it would be the glorified Lord who would bestow the Spirit.

⁴⁹ H. R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (1961), pp. 76f., discusses the relation between the operation of the Spirit in the OT age and the NT church. He contends that it is the same Spirit who was active: the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit who worked in the OT saints could do so only because He was to come as the life-giving Spirit indwelling the New Testament church' (p. 87). Boer supports his view from Acts 7:51, 52a; 1 Cor. 10:1-4, 9a; Gal. 4:28, 29; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11. He cites F. Buchsel, *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* (1926), p. 469, for the view that the 'not yet' was intended to mean not in the glorious present manifestation in the church age.

⁵⁰ For a careful examination of the relation of the Paraclete sayings to the rest of the gospel, cf. G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (1970). He is critical of the view of H. Windisch (*The*

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it is supposed that the evangelist, in the light of his own experience of the Spirit and that of others, has attributed the teaching to Jesus. But this would leave the extraordinary activity of the Spirit at Pentecost and after without sufficient explanation, if Jesus had not prepared the disciples in the manner that John's narrative supposes. It may not unjustly be claimed that the Paraclete sayings in John provide the key for the right understanding of the Spirit's activity in Acts. The sayings are contained in the following passages: John 14:15-17; 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:5-11; 16:12-15. We shall consider what information these passages give about the character of the Spirit, about his various functions and about the manner in which the Spirit is given.

The character of the Spirit. Apart from the title 'Holy Spirit' used once in John 14:26, there are two distinctive titles used in these passages which both convey some aspect of his character. The first is the word Paraclete (Jn. 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7) which is notoriously difficult to translate into English. It is variously rendered Comforter, Advocate, Counsellor, or simply Helper.³¹ Since its root meaning in Greek is 'One called alongside', there is no doubt an element of truth in all these suggestions. It should be noted that the word also occurs in 1 John 2:1, where Advocate would be the most appropriate translation. The main characteristics conveyed by the name Paraclete are more precisely seen in the functions attributed to the Spirit.⁵²

The other title, the Spirit of truth, speaks for itself. Truth is a recurrent theme in the gospel of John and it is not surprising, therefore, that the Spirit is described as the embodiment of truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).⁵³ In the prologue, grace and truth are seen to come through Jesus Christ (1:17). The whole message of the gospel exalts truth above error. The Spirit is therefore seen as the custodian of truth. In these passages there is a close connection between the Spirit and the Word, which may be regarded

Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel, Eng. trans. 1968) that the sayings are interpolated into John's text. Cf. also R. E. Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', NTS 13, 1966-7, pp. 113-132.

³¹ See pp. 513f. for comments on the view that Paraclete should be understood against the background of the Qumran evidence.

⁵² I. de la Potterie, in a brief report of a SNTS seminar on the Holy Spirit in John's gospel, notes the view expressed by H. Riesenfeld that the origin of the Paraclete title is to be found in the wisdom literature, the verb *parakaleo* being often applied to wisdom (NTS 18, 1971-2, p. 490).

³ Mention has already been made on p. 514 above of the occurrence of the term 'Spirit of truth' in Qumran literature. A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and its Meaning* (1966), p. 53, maintains that this expression is an already existing concept which the author of the fourth gospel has taken over and deliberately identified with the Holy Spirit. Yet there is a wide difference between the concept of the Spirit in Qumran and in the NT. In view of the strong emphasis on truth in John's gospel in relation to the ministry of Jesus, it seems quite unnecessary to trace the origin of this description of the Spirit to Qumran. It should be noted that in Qumran 'spirit of truth' like 'spirit of holiness' does not occur in a personal sense.

as an important characteristic of the gospel. Not only does the Spirit share the nature of truth, but he also communicates truth. Moreover this function of testimony and also that of guidance demand a quality of absolute dependability.

There is one statement which asserts that the Spirit 'proceeds from the Father' (Jn. 15:26). Whatever this means, it suggests that the Spirit shares the same nature as the Father. This is in line with the character of the Spirit as seen elsewhere in this gospel. Not only does the Spirit come from God, but he is sent by both Father and Son (cf. 16:7; 14:26). The Paraclete is seen to be both one with God and 'at one' with man.⁵⁴

One other feature is the personal character of the Spirit.⁵⁵ This comes out clearly in the variety of functions he performs, many of which would be unintelligible if not regarded as personal. In addition to this, the fact that Jesus spoke of *another* Paraclete shows that the Paraclete must be as personal as Jesus himself. These considerations completely override the neuter gender of the noun *pneuma* in Greek. Moreover, they are in full agreement with the striking use of the masculine pronoun (*ekeinos*) of the Spirit in John 16:13 (placed immediately *before pneuma*) which underlines the personal characteristic of the Spirit. By no stretch of imagination can the teaching in these Paraclete sayings be made to refer to impersonal force.

Another characteristic of the Spirit is his indwelling presence in believers (Jn. 14:17). The presence of the Paraclete is said to be for ever (14:16), which suggests that once the Spirit has taken possession, he remains in residence. The indwelling of the Spirit becomes more dominant in Paul's epistles. But it is important to recognize that the idea did not originate with Paul. It was an essential part of Jesus' promise of the Spirit.

The functions of the Spirit. It is under this consideration that a wider spectrum of information is given. Taken together these sayings supply an amazingly varied selection of the Spirit's activities.

(i) We may sum up the major function as glorifying Christ (Jn. 16:14). The Spirit is essentially self-effacing, never speaking on his own authority (16:13). He does not seek his own glory; only that of Christ. This was to prove a valuable test; for any movement claiming the possession of the Spirit, and yet which glorifies the Spirit instead of Christ, would be seen to be alien to the teaching of Jesus about the Spirit.

(ii) Closely allied to this is the Spirit's function in enabling believers to witness to Christ (Jn. 15:26). The Spirit bears witness to Christ, and

³⁴ Cf. S. S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*, p. 230.

⁵⁵ There is a tendency among many scholars to see the Paraclete only in terms of power, not in terms of a person. Cf. G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*. E. Malatesta criticizes Johnston on this account in his article, 'The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *Bib* 54, 1973, pp. 539-550.

believers through the same Spirit bear witness to the same Christ.⁵⁶ Since it was only through witnessing to others that the church developed its missionary movement, there is a direct link between this statement and the experiences in the book of Acts. Without the Spirit the witness to Christ would never have spread.

(iii) Because of the necessity of communicating the gospel, the promise of the Spirit would be indispensable, not only for the task for bearing witness to Christ, but also for recalling and understanding his teaching. John 14:26 is of special importance in this respect: 'He (the Spirit) will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you'. There seems to be here a direct link between the 'all things' and 'all that I have said'. If so the authentic tradition of the teaching of Jesus must be in mind. The preservation of this priceless tradition was not to be left to chance. The Spirit would be the custodian of truth.⁵⁷ This promise is significant for the subsequent history of the canon, at least as far as the gospels are concerned. The traditions did not develop in an uncontrolled way, as some scholars suggest, but under the guidance of the Spirit (see the section on Scripture). It is worth noting that there is some parallel here with the final commission in Matthew's gospel, where those addressed were to teach disciples to observe all that Christ had commanded them (Mt. 28:20). They could not have done that without the special faculty of recall given by the Holy Spirit. Whereas this promise has a continued relevance, in the special sense mentioned above it could apply only to the apostles.

(iv) Another activity of the Spirit is to guide, especially into all the truth (Jn. 16:13). This is akin to, but an extension of, the last promise. 'All the truth' embraces the developing understanding of the meaning of the mission of Jesus, the significance of his death and resurrection, and the application of the newly established faith to life. Indeed, the promise of guidance into all truth accounts for the authority of the epistles. Again the Spirit would prevent haphazard development and ensure the preservation of truth.

(v) There is yet one more aspect of the activity of the Spirit in revelation and that is in the sphere of the future (Jn. 16:13).⁵⁸ The very general 'things that are to come' which the Spirit was to declare is sufficiently comprehensive to include all the eschatological teaching of the epistles and the Apocalypse. It is therefore significant that in his Apocalypse John was in

⁵⁶ J. M. Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John*, pp. 151ff, brings out this function of the Spirit in the witness of believers.

⁵⁷ F. Mussner, *The Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St John* (1967), p. 60, rightly warns against the view that the Spirit is here no more than a prop to the memory.

⁵⁸ Cf. the discussion of this passage by E. Bammel, 'Jesus und der Paraklet in Johannes 16', in *Christ and Spirit*, pp. 199-217. Bammel treats the whole passage as a Johannine construction.

the Spirit when he was commanded to write down in a book what he saw. (vi) All the previous functions of the Spirit have related to believers, but one of the Paraclete sayings is concerned with the world (Jn. 16:8-11). Nevertheless even this would appear to be mediated through believers. This passage predicts the convincing (or convicting) work of the Spirit. The world would be convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment. Some explanations are added to ensure that the three aspects are rightly understood. Sin is defined here as unbelief in Jesus. The Spirit's ministry is both to glorify Christ, and to focus on men's refusal to glorify him through their unbelief. Righteousness is also defined in relation to Christ. His passion would bring a new dimension to the understanding of righteousness, and would show the world its ignorance of what true righteousness means. Judgment is related to the prince of this world. It is the Spirit's task to show how the forces of darkness have been effectively overthrown. This passage suggests that apart from the activity of the Spirit the world would never come to recognize its true condition. This shows the sterner aspect of the Spirit's work.

The reception of the Spirit. It remains to note in these passages any indications of the manner in which the Spirit comes into human experience. Several passages show the Spirit to be a gift from the Father (Jn. 14:16, 26) or from the Son (15:26; 16:7). The initiative is not with man. The Spirit's presence cannot be earned. Moreover, as in John 7:39, so in 16:7, the coming of the Spirit depends on the departure of Jesus. There is a clear cleavage between the world, which cannot receive the Spirit, and the believers who know him (14:17). This would eliminate any suggestion that the Spirit overrules and guides the minds of non-Christians,⁵⁹ at least in the sense in which these Paraclete sayings portray the Spirit's activity. Indeed, as indicated above, the only function at all related to non-Christians is that of bringing conviction in a specifically Christologically orientated way.

The foreshadowing of Pentecost. In his account of the Easter appearances of Jesus John includes an incident in which Jesus breathed on the disciples and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (Jn. 20:22). He then continued, 'If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained' (Jn. 20:23). The two statements are clearly intended to relate closely to each other.

The first problem is the relation this inbreathing of the Spirit has to the outpouring at Pentecost. Three different answers have been proposed.

(i) A distinction is suggested between the form 'Holy Spirit' without the

⁵⁹ L. Dewar, *The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought*, p. 204, sees the Spirit working at two levels, guiding the supernatural community and overruling at the natural level.

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article (as here and in Jn. 7:39) and the form with the article, as at Pentecost.⁶⁰ But it is difficult to attach any meaningful significance to this distinction. It can hardly be maintained that the anarthrous form refers to the gift and the other form to the person. In any case in John 7 both forms are used side by side.

(ii) Another suggestion is that John's account is irreconcilable with Luke's, and the latter must therefore be regarded as an invention. But John's account cannot supplant the historic outpouring at Pentecost. It has even been suggested that Luke has been influenced by rabbinical patterns in his Pentecost narrative.⁶¹ But this is wholly unsupportable in view of the lack of evidence that Luke was susceptible to rabbinical influences. Moreover, such a suggestion would be contradictory to Luke's statement of purpose in his prologue. It is equally unsatisfactory to regard John's account as unhistorical, particularly in view of John 16:7 where Jesus' departure was seen as a prelude to the coming of the Spirit (*cf.* also Jn. 7:39). It is difficult to suppose that John regarded these conditions as having been fulfilled by the time of the resurrection appearance in John 20, since Jesus was not yet glorified (in the sense of being exalted).

(iii) This leads to the third explanation, which is the view that the breathing of the Spirit upon the disciples in John 20 must be regarded as proleptic, a foreshadowing of Pentecost.⁶² No statement is actually made that the Spirit was immediately received, although this in itself would not exclude the possibility. The account of the first sermon on the day of Pentecost contains a promise of the Spirit but no precise statement of the Spirit's descent on the converts. Nevertheless it may reasonably be supposed that it happened. If John 20 also presupposes that it happened, it would suggest that the disciples experienced a double coming of the Spirit. Yet the emphasis falls on the result that will follow in the bestowing of authority to forgive or to retain sins. In other words the action of Jesus was a reminder of the Spirit's function in the disciples' all important task of proclaiming and applying the gospel.⁶³ Peter's sermon at Pentecost was a specific fulfilment of this promise (Acts 2:38).

In 1 John there are four passages which present various aspects of the

⁶⁰ *Cf.* B. F. Westcott, *John* (1887), *ad he.* *Cf.* J. H. Bernard, *John* (ICC 1942), p. 284, for a criticism of Westcott's views.

⁶¹ So A. Richardson, *TNT*, pp. 118f.

⁶² *Cf.* H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (1931), p. 167.

⁶³ For a full discussion of Jn. 20:22, *cf.* D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, pp. 173ff. Some scholars contend that John believed the ascension in some way took place between 20:17 and 20:19; *cf.* R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel* (1941), p. 328; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 442E; F.-M. Braun, *Jean le Theologien* 3 (*EB*, 1966), pp. 225-258; J. Marsh, *John* (1968), pp. 639f. Certainly Jn. 7:39 supports the view that the gift of the Spirit is connected with the ascension. Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 178, considers the proleptic explanation to be an unsupported speculation. He draws a distinction between Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 (Paraclete promises), which point to the Pentecost coming in Acts, and the coming in Jn. 20:22.

Spirit. Christ abides in believers by the Spirit (1 Jn. 3:24). We know that we abide in him 'because he (*i.e.* God) has given us of his own Spirit' (1 Jn. 4:13). This connection between abiding and the work of the Spirit strongly echoes the language of John's gospel. Abiding in this sense is not a natural pursuit and clearly demands the activity of the supernatural Spirit to make it possible.

As in John's gospel, the Spirit's part in witness is clearly expressed. 'The Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth' (1 Jn. 5:7). There are different ways in which the Spirit may be said to witness to the truth. He may do so by witnessing through the life and ministry of Jesus (seen in the gospels). He may further be witnessing in the contribution he makes through the *ot* to our understanding of Christ. John seems to be alluding to a Spirit-directed testimony from the past which is still a present reality.⁶⁴ Moreover, the Spirit is linked with water and blood as witness bearers (1 Jn. 5:8). In spite of the debate over the meaning of this passage, the Spirit's witnessing function is not in dispute.⁶⁵ Where the Spirit abides truth must reign. The Holy Spirit and falsehood do not go together. This is vividly brought out by the strong contrast between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of antichrist (1 Jn. 4:1-6). The sign of the Holy Spirit is his witness to the real incarnation of Jesus Christ. Antichrist denies this. There can be no confusion over this. The distinction is unmistakable.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In the book of *Revelation* one feature is introduced which is unique to this book, the references to the seven Spirits of God (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).¹⁴² It cannot be supposed that John thought of a plurality of spirits, for on other occasions he speaks of the Spirit in the singular. In view of the frequent symbolic use of the number seven in this book, it is reasonable to suppose that the expression draws attention to the perfection of the Spirit. Indeed since the first mention of the number seven occurs in connection with the Spirit, we may go further and suggest that the perfection of the Spirit furnishes the cue for a right understanding of the other symbolic uses of the number. The seven spirits are linked to the seven stars in 3:1, to seven torches of fire in 4:5, and to seven horns with seven eyes in 5:6.¹⁴³ The plurality is therefore that of perfection, not of number.

At the conclusion of all the seven letters to the Asiatic churches, the readers are urged to listen to what the Spirit says.¹⁴⁴ This ties in with the function of the Spirit in revelation. Moreover, since the messages are from the resurrected and glorified Lord, the close link between the proclamation of Christ and that of the Spirit is again unmistakable. What Christ speaks, the Spirit speaks. It is not surprising therefore that early in his book John speaks of being 'in the Spirit' (1:10; 4:2), and that at the conclusion he is carried away 'in the Spirit' (21:10). It is the Spirit who joins with the Bride in urging people to respond

(22:17). In one of the visions John is actually carried by the Spirit into the wilderness in an ecstatic experience (17:3). Furthermore, in another the Spirit is identified with the heavenly voice (14:13). John ensures that his readers are in no doubt that his extraordinary visions were under the direct control of the Spirit of God. The Spirit in this book is essentially the Spirit of prophecy.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Cf. E. G. Selwyn's detailed discussion of this phrase in its context, / *Peter* (1946) *ad lac.* He translates as 'The Presence of the Glory, yea, the Spirit of God rests upon you', which brings out most clearly the reference to the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴² Cf. F. F. Bruce's discussion, 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse', *Christ and Spirit*, pp. 333-344, a concise survey of the evidence in this book. He sees a connection between the seven spirits and Is. 11:2.

¹⁴³ H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the NT* (1909), p. 274, considers that the spirit is sevenfold simply because the churches number seven.

¹⁴⁴ It is significant that each message is said to be a word from the exalted Lord and yet the hearers must pay attention to what the Spirit says. As Bruce, *op. at.*, p. 340, says, 'it is not that the Spirit is identical with the exalted Lord, but that the exalted Lord speaks to the churches by the Spirit'. He is here combating the view-of E. Schweizer, TD.VT 6, p. 440, who supposes an identity.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. D. Hill, 'Prophecy and Prophets in the Revelation of St John', NTS 18, 1971-1, pp. 401-418.

