

A New Start towards a Doctrine of the Spirit

PAUL YOUNGER

I. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND THE SPIRIT

IT IS GENERALLY recognized that the doctrine of the third person of the Trinity has received relatively little attention in Western theology. It is taken as a joke that men who write massive theologies never live to complete this doctrine which happens to come along late in the system. Such flippancy attempts to hide the awkward problem that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit deals with what Western theologians have found a mysterious and perhaps even irrelevant area of the Christian system.

Are Christian theologians obliged to deal with the doctrine of the Spirit? If so, why is it that they have so much trouble making sense of it? The doctrine of the Spirit would seem to be the theologian's way of understanding the Christian's religious experiences and of defining the relationship between those experiences and the rest of human culture. Clearly, these are some of the most important issues in the everyday life of Christian people, and yet the church in recent centuries has had little, if anything, to say about them. The poverty of the church's understanding of these two issues is a clear indication of the uncertainty of its doctrine of the Spirit.

Where did the church lose its grip on the doctrine of the Spirit and in what direction might it look to regain that grip again? One clue that might lend some light is the fact that the Eastern and Western churches have had a markedly different attitude toward the doctrine of the Spirit since they split over the "*filioque* clause" in the Middle Ages. While the West has found this doctrine a puzzle, the East has always given it a central place and as a result its most profound theological works often centre their attention on the nature of religious experience and on the relation between such experience and human culture. There would be little point in resuming the "*filioque*" controversy itself,¹ for it is but a partial symbol of the more general problem of the Western church's fear of what appeared to be autonomous, not Christ-derived (church-derived), religious experiences within the context of a church which had its frontier in the then "barbarian" cultures of Western Europe. It seems clear that the efficient Roman mind was willing to live with the cultural poverty and ill-defined religious experiences implicit in its view rather than risk an "open" frontier. In a different setting the Eastern church—which had from the time of Clement and Origen tended to baptize the Greek culture in the midst of which it

1. Recent attempts to reopen this issue—e.g. George S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965)—have not proved very fruitful.

lived—risked the assimilation implicit in its view and continued to give itself to the interpretation of religious experience and human culture in terms of its understanding of the Spirit.

Those of us who inherit the Western tradition some thirteen hundred years later sense the poverty chosen for us by our fathers long ago. It would be idle to repudiate them, even though without doubt there is a lot we can learn from our Eastern brothers on these issues. More relevant would be the examination of our own situation to see what equipment we can muster with which to go back and rediscover what the early church had in mind when it spoke of the Spirit.

Clearly, we are no longer in the cultural situation of the Western church in the sixth Century. The barbarians of Western Europe have been either converted or assimilated, and, in spite of a nostalgic love of the term which crops up in both political and theological circles, the "frontier" situation is gone.² That which has replaced the "frontier" situation is not easy to define. One of the most popular trends among young theologians in our day is to describe the world in which we live and the role of the church as "secular." If I understand this term at all, it is the churchmen's way of saying in a somewhat oversimplified and negative way that the "frontier" situation is gone. A less dramatic but more accurate way of stating this issue would be to say that the church is no longer standing apart from human culture, and that if it is properly to understand itself it must regain the ability to examine, interpret, support, and criticize religious experience as it takes place within the midst of human culture.

Fortunately the church's long neglect of this task does not mean that the field was left untouched. In an attempt to make a scholarly analysis of all religious phenomena, students from the time of Rudolph Otto have focussed a careful eye on the nature of religious experience, and others in the name of the history of religions have examined the relation between such religious experience and the structure of human culture. To the theologian who is aware of the new situation of the church, the categories developed in this study are now available to set forth a deeper understanding of the nature of the Christian religious experience. The purpose of this paper is to apply these categories in a preliminary way to the early church's experience of the Spirit.

II. THE PAULINE IDEA OF THE SPIRIT

When one turns to the early Christian writings to learn about the Spirit, one is presented with a rich variety of evidence. The term *pneuma* is used with great frequency in the book of Acts, but in that case it is conceptually

2. While some diehards in Western missionary groups still think of Christ as their "frontiersman," leading them out into the ancient cultures of Asia, the churches in Asia have long since recognized that their situation is really akin to that of the Eastern church as it confronted the ancient culture of Greece, and consequently have tackled the relevant and very complex question of the relation between the experience of Christ in the Spirit and the human culture which surrounds them.

subordinate to the idea of God manifesting himself in the history of the early Christian community. Described religiously, the term *pneuma* in Acts appears to have an "animistic" character, as if it referred to a strange external being who moved in and out of the life of the church, giving it direction at crucial points. In the Gospel of John, the "Paraclete" is set forth primarily in relation to a *Logos*-Christology. As a result it appears to have a "distinct personality,"⁸ but is not set forth in terms of its own place within the religious structure of John's thought. It is only in Pauline thought that it is possible to observe the full development of the religious idea of *pneuma* and to see this idea used as a keystone in a consistent religious structure.

Paul uses the term *pneuma* 139 times⁴ in a great variety of ways. These uses may be grouped under three categories. The term is used in describing the nature of man, in speaking about the presence of God in the life of man, and in referring to the new medium or context in which life can be lived free of the old traditional barriers. We will first of all look at some of the Pauline texts which illustrate these three uses and then, with the help of the Hebrew and Hellenistic background, we will attempt to interpret the underlying character of this conception.

Paul sometimes speaks of man as if the whole personality were to be understood as *pneuma* (1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 7:13; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Philemon 25; Rom. 1:9), but at other times he distinguishes the *pneuma* from the *soma* (body) (1 Cor. 6:19f.; 5:3), from the *nous* (mind) (1 Cor. 14:14), and from both *psyche* (soul) and *soma* (body) (1 Thess. 5:23). In addition to speaking of *pneuma* as if it were the whole personality or an aspect of the personality, Paul seems to use the term in a third sense to refer to the seat of religious experience (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 14:2, 15, 16; 5:5), which when committed in a given direction gives an inclination and specific character to the whole personality (Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 2:12; 4:21; Gal. 6:1).

The largest number of Pauline uses of *pneuma* refer to the Spirit of God which "dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16). Usually this phenomenon is spoken of without a qualifying adjective,⁵ but on eight occasions it is qualified as "of God,"⁶ and on twelve occasions as "holy";⁷ on five occasions it is associated with Christ. In three cases this latter association appears to be an ordinary use of a qualifying adjective (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Phil.

3. This point, which is important for Roman Catholic dogma, is carefully noted by J. Goetia, "La noción dinámica del *pneuma* en los libros sagrados," *Estudios Bíblicos*, 15 (1956).

4. Most of these instances occur in Romans (34) and Galatians (18), where the doctrine of the Spirit is at the heart of Paul's theology, and in 1 and 2 Corinthians (57), where it becomes the basis of his solutions for the numerous practical problems of the Corinthian church. Other letters, while they presuppose the same religious structure, deal with other problems and make only minor use of the term *pneuma*; cf. Philippians (5 instances), Colossians (2), 1 and 2 Thessalonians (6).

5. It appears 50 times with the definite article and 40 times without.

6. Usually in problematical contexts; cf. 1 Cor. 12:3; 7:40.

7. Usually in ethical contexts; cf. 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:6; Rom. 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 16.

1:19), but in the other two the *pneuma* appears to be understood as identical with the Risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17).

In addition to using *pneuma* in describing the nature of man and pointing to the divine in man, Paul also uses the term to refer to a new medium which does away with the barrier between man and man (1 Cor. 12:4,8, etc.) and between man and the Risen Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). Those who live in this medium may be said to share in a pneumatic way of life (Gal. 5:25; 1 Cor. 2:4; Rom. 8:2), which is opposed to life according to the *gramma* (letter) (Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 3:6 and life according to the *sarx* (flesh) (Rom. 8:12-14).

The relation of the Pauline religious ideas to those of the Hebrew Scriptures is a very complex question. Some recent scholars act as if Paul were an antique dealer, dealing in old Hebrew heirlooms, which he pulls out of the rabbinic dust here and there and presents to the eager Hellenistic and Roman mind.⁸ Such scholarship is justified only as a reaction to the "old liberal" interpretation which thought of Christianity as a "new reasonableness," begun by Jesus and developed into the Greek theology of the second-century church. In such a picture of early Christianity Paul played a relatively minor role and, while he was embarrassing in many ways, he could be fitted into the scheme once he was seen as a converted (and hence anti-Jewish) Jew.⁹ Since the work of Schweitzer¹⁰ at the turn of the century, it has been generally recognized: (1) that Paul was not a systematic theologian of an unknown era but a great religious figure of the first-century Mediterranean world, and (2) that the most important background for the understanding of Paul is the Jewish religious world in which he spent most of his life and in the context of which he had his formative religious experiences. Schweitzer himself, while acknowledging these experiences in the term "mysticism," subordinated them to the religious idea of apocalyptic eschatology, which he thought he saw in the life of Jesus and tried to use to tie Jesus and Paul together. Later scholars¹¹ tried dropping the "apocalyptic" and concentrating on the "mystical," but under their hand Paul again became a pale reflection of the Hellenistic religious spirit—with a strange touch of Jewish morality added. Recently Johannes Munck,¹² in a brilliant re-thinking of the whole Pauline situation, has gone back to restate Schweitzer's critique of the Tübingen school and then has gone on to reinterpret the apocalyptic influence in terms of Paul's concept of "apostleship." Munck, like Schweitzer, fails to complete his task because, believing that mystical experience must somehow be Hellenic, he interprets "apostle-

8. I find a conspicuous example of this in W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948).

9. Cf. the views of Harnack and of the Tübingen school.

10. Cf. A. Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters* (London: A. & C. Black, 1912); *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: A. & C. Black, 1931).

11. Cf. A. Deissmann, *Paul*, 2d ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926); J. S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938).

12. Cf. J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959).

ship" as a kind of arbitrary enterprise, and is not able to find the fundamental religious experience underlying this mode of Pauline life. What Paul experienced on the Damascus road and what he was "sent" to bear was the "mystery" of "Christ in you," of "life in the Spirit." The problem that remains in Pauline scholarship is to discern what these phrases could have meant to that first-century Jew.

In the Hebrew Bible the term *ruach* (Spirit) is used about 500 times in four fairly distinct ways. It refers (1) to the wind, (2) to the breath in man or animal, (3) to the basic inclination of the personality of a man, and (4) to the purposive aspect of the divine personality. While some evolution of the concept is evident in the history of the literature, all four uses are found both at the beginning and the end, and each usage appears to bear the latent imprint of the other three.

The ancient Hebrew knew the "wind" as a gentle breeze that might spring up toward evening (Jer. 2:24; 14:6; Hos. 8:7) and as a strong east wind (Hos. 13:15) which might scorch his vineyard (Ezek. 17:10), drive the chaff off (Job 21:18), bend trees (Isa. 7:2), darken the sky with a cloud of locusts (Exod. 10:13), bring the house down on his head (Job 1:19; Ezek. 13:11, 13), or wreck the mightiest of ships (Ezek. 27:26; Jon. 1:4). The Hebrew saw in the character of the wind a natural variation whose uncharted and wilful freedom produces a wonder in the human heart, which Jesus vividly expressed in the phrase "you do not know where it comes from or whither it goes" (John 3:8).

The natural variation in the life of the wind was seen by the Hebrew as carried over into the life of both man and God. Thus the ebb and flow of human life was described in terms of the presence or absence of *ruach*. For example, the Queen of Sheba had the wind knocked out of her on seeing the riches of Solomon (1 Kings 10:5); Elijah at his peak was a man full of *ruach* (2 Kings 2:9, 15); and waverers such as Jacob and Samson could have their *ruach* restored (Gen. 45:27; Judg. 15:19).¹³ In a similar way the life of the divine is experienced as an uncharted alternation between an awesome absence and a flowing presence which came sweeping down at the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:10) or at other times in an overflowing (Isa. 30:28) or rushing (Isa. 59:19) stream. This dynamic image of the divine can be expressed in the revelation to Moses at the burning bush, by translating the crucial phrase as "I will be present as I will then be present" (Exod. 3:14). Certainly the vital character of the wind was in the mind of the later theologians who discussed the nature of the divine in terms of the character of *ruach*, the wind (Ps. 104:4; Job 40:6; John 3:8).

13. H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Harper, 1928), p. 12, describes the "original idea" of *ruach* animistically as "an invasive energy, used to explain the abnormal in man's conduct." This interpretation has had a wide influence. Aubrey Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964), pp. 23-37, makes it clear that this is not the main use of the term *ruach* in the Hebrew Bible; he rightly contends that *ruach* more often characterizes normal human life, which the Israelite understood as a wilful, fluctuating, and almost external force.

The second Hebrew use of the term *ruach* occurs in the relatively small number of contexts (thirty-three in all) where it is best translated as "breath." Here it would be tempting to jump from the obvious way in which the breath is a sign of life in the body to thinking of it as a kind of steady, pulsating "life-force." The Hindus, among others, have done just that, and the concept of *prāna* (breath or life-force), depicted in art as the sap of the coursing vines or the swelling of the earth-bound torso, is one of the more profound ideas of their tradition. There is no evidence that the Hebrews held the same idea, for the *ruach* in the nostrils is a gift of God (Job 27:3; Zech. 12:1; Isa. 42:5), which comes in its own time, remains ever dependent on the will of God (Job 10:12; Num. 16:22; Prov. 16:2; Gen. 6:3), and departs unexpectedly again (Ps. 78:39; Isa. 38:16; Ps. 146:4; 104:29 f.; Job 17:1; 34:14). In this sense the presence of breath in man is a sign, not only of life, but also of liveliness (Gen. 6:17; 7:15; Ezek. 37; Eccles. 3:19). When used of God, *ruach* in the sense of breath almost always appears in the dynamic expression "breath of his nostrils" or "breath of his mouth"; like a snorting horse blasting forth in power, God by his *ruach* piles up the waters of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:8), lays the foundations (Ps. 18:15; 2 Sam. 22:16) or creates the heavens (Ps. 33:6).

In by far the largest number of instances in the Hebrew Bible, *ruach* refers to an aspect of the personality of man. Any of the other three uses, taken alone, might tempt the observer into too quickly taking the key form of Hebrew spirituality as signifying the invading spirits of animism, the life-force of naturalistic mysticism, or the visionary capacities of the specially endowed prophet. But the fact that *ruach* is primarily used to refer to an aspect of the normal personality of man makes it necessary to understand the spiritual life of the Hebrew as some kind of transformation of the normal centre of the personality.

The Hebrew word that comes closest to the whole range of our modern idea of "personality" is *nephesh*. This concept does not involve dualism of body and soul (as do the Greek and Sanskrit ideas of *psyche* and *ātman*), but describes what is actually a plurality of separate "living beings" (*nepheshim*) which are distinguished by family, name, *basar* (body), *leb* (heart), etc. In this conception, *ruach* is not so much an added part but rather an "inclination" of the whole *nephesh*. In this sense it can be just another distinguishing feature, but more often it is that which links this particular *nephesh* with other *nepheshim* and, more important, with the *nephesh* of God, whose *ruach* or purposive inclination it may share.

In normal times the *ruach* is the seat of the psychic tendencies, whether they be emotional,¹⁴ intellectual (Exod. 31:3; Deut. 34:9; Isa. 29:24; Job 20:3), or volitional (Ps. 51:12; Exod. 35:21). But for the Hebrew life is seldom "normal," and the windiest inclinations of the personality make it appear that the personality is "possessed" by strange "spirits" of "whoredoms" (Hos. 4:12; 5:4), "jealousy" (Num. 5:14), "confusion" (Isa.

14. For desire, cf. Isa. 26:9; for sorrow, cf. Job 7:11; for trouble, cf. 1 Sam. 1:15.

19:14), "deep sleep" (Isa. 29:10), "evil" (Judg. 9:23), or, on the other hand, of "prophecy" (1 Sam. 10:6, 10; Num. 24:2), "judgment" (Isa. 28:6), "wisdom" (Exod. 28:3; Deut. 34:9), and "Yahweh" (Isa. 11:2). The Hebrew welcomes these "possessions" of his spirit as risky but normal, but fears above all that his balloon-like *nephesh* will cease to have bounce and vitality, as the *ruach* leaves him altogether. Too often his *ruach* is missing, and "spirit" is replaced by lifeless "flesh" (Gen. 6:3; Num. 16:22; 27:16; Job 10:12; 12:10; Isa. 31:3). When man recognizes his *ruach* as a gift, he stands before Yahweh with a "willing" (Ps. 51:12), "broken" (Ps. 51:17), and "lowly" (Isa. 57:15) *ruach*, but "dwelling" thus in Yahweh (Isa. 57:15), he becomes "roused" (1 Chron. 5:26), "committed" (Isa. 26:9), and "steadfast" (Ps. 51:10), and capable of the offices of "prophet", Ezek. 11:5; 2:2, 3:24, 14), "messiah" (Isa. 11:2), or "craftsman" (Exod. 31:3).

Finally, the Hebrew scriptures use the term *ruach* frequently to refer to the "Spirit of God." The *ruach* of God is active in creating (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 18:15; 33:6; Isa. 42:5), and sustaining (Ps. 104; 29f.) the world. It is also active in the life of Israel, as it lifts the people up and enables them to share in the purposes and inclinations of God, and so to transform existence into a "history" or a "prophecy" (spoken-forthness) manifesting the inner life of God. Moses, aware that he is not only the oracle, but the vehicle, of God, describes the consciousness of the *ruach*, the purposing God within, as a "burden" (Num. 11:11).¹⁵ This conception of men as "burdened" with God's purposes because his spirit is upon them continues down through the tradition both in the kingly (1 Sam. 10) and the prophetic (Mic. 3:8; Isa. 30:1; Isa. 61) lines, and it forms a basis for the offices of the "Christ" and the "apostles" in Christianity. Finally, the Hebrew conception of the *ruach* of God always includes a futurist element,¹⁶ and the Israelite longed that this "gathering" (Isa. 34:16), "guiding" (Isa. 30:1), and "empowering" (Zech. 4:6) *ruach* might be "poured out" (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 39:29).

The influence of these Hebrew ideas on Paul's conception of the Spirit is obvious. The other influences which pervaded the Hellenistic world in which he lived are much harder to trace. Some in the Hebrew tradition during this period apparently used *ruach* to refer to a plurality of animistic beings¹⁷ or to a characteristic of some future age,¹⁸ but Paul carefully avoids either use, though both are found in a modified form in Acts. It would appear that Paul, while a devout Jew and very Hebraic in his conception of the Spirit, was not interested in the "current" rabbinic innovations. However, we must

15. I am indebted for this exegesis to Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* (New York: Harper, 1948). Buber points out that in this chapter *ruach* refers (1) to the wind (v. 31), (2) to the ecstatic spirit "put upon" the elders (v. 17), (3) to the "burden" on Moses (v. 11), and (4) to the foundation of an eschatological hope (v. 29).

16. At times the spirit was very nearly identified with a future age.

17. Cf. J. Bonsirven, *Le Judaïsme palestinien au temps de Jésus-Christ* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1934-35), Vol. I, pp. 225, 242.

18. Cf. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 215 f.

ask whether his thought about the Spirit was influenced in any way by the Hellenic ideas in his environment. It is very difficult to answer this question, because our understanding of the complex Hellenistic religious world is very incomplete—in spite of its obvious interest and importance. Earlier attempts to see Paul as one overwhelmed by the vitality of Hellenic religious ritual,¹⁹ or as the first of the theologians who sold Christianity to the Greek philosophical tradition,²⁰ seem to miss the main point—namely, that Christianity emerged as the strongest force in the Hellenistic religious situation and that Paul was its central figure. Clearly, Paul was a religious genius and is not to be explained in terms of his environment. However, despite the fact that his spiritual life was based on Hebrew piety, he was undoubtedly ready to learn also from the devout Greeks whom he knew.

One element of the Greek religious world that Paul could not have missed was Stoicism. A strong tradition in Greek thought had assumed that there was a rational divine law permeating and governing the universe. Stoicism identified this law with the *logos*, which it conceived as a vital force, fire, or *pneuma* resident within man. The *logos* was a power possessed by man which related him to the rational world about him.²¹

Another set of Hellenistic religious ideas which is still hard to evaluate, in spite of recent scholarship, is the teaching of the Gnostics. As a religious system Gnosticism appears to be a passionate quest for salvation, which grows out of a radically dualistic view of the universe and conceives of salvation in terms of a participation in the divine through *gnosis*. While the dualistic cosmology of the Gnostics has intrigued students of this subject, it is the features of their religious doctrine that should be emphasized: their notion of the spiritual centre of man as a spark of the divine, their view of the total incompatibility of this spark of the divine with the world in which it is trapped, and their conception of salvation as a "call from beyond" which "awakens" the spark to *gnosis* and eventual release from the entrapping world. These "awakened sparks" are the *pneumatikoi* of Gnosticism, the people who are still in this world but no longer of it.

Paul was certainly a Hebrew man. When he thought of the Spirit he thought of the wind in all its "power" (1 Cor. 2:4; Rom. 15:19) and "freedom" (2 Cor. 3:6). When he thought of the spirit of a man he thought of it as the "inclination" of the whole personality (1 Cor. 16:18; Rom. 8:15)—the personality at times being distinguished from the "body" or the "body" and "mind." A man may be without spirit and thus nothing but

19. Cf. the theories of Bousset and Reitzenstein.

20. Cf. the views of Harnack.

21. I can see no point in the arguments of Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 183–85, to the effect that the Stoic conception is "material" (the notion of a "living and thinking gas"), while the Hebrew is "personal." Nor does it seem necessary to argue, with C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), pp. 216–19, that the Greek conception, as expressed in the *Hermetica*, is strongly non-material. It is simpler to point out that, for Paul too, *pneuma* is a power more than a personality (cf. J. Goetia, "La noción dinámica del *pneuma*"). For this reason, Roman Catholic theologians have frequently placed the Pauline below the Johannine doctrine; cf. J. M. T. Barton, "The Holy Ghost," in G. D. Smith (ed.), *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1948), Vol. I, pp. 143–79.

flesh, or possessed by a strange spirit and in a state of ecstasy, but his normal state should be that of being indwelt by the Spirit of God. He who is indwelt by the Spirit become an "apostle," one "burdened" with the purposes of this Spirit until all mankind and all creation are brought into one.²²

While Paul was a Hebrew, he was profoundly aware of the Greek religious spirit. For Paul, the *pneuma* was a power possessed by man which formed the medium through which he was related to the universe. Unlike the Stoics, he thought that this power was not discovered through discipline, but was revealed from beyond, releasing us from the bonds of this world, that we might live the new life as *pneumatikoi*. To be an apostle was to bear about in the body the mystery, which is "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27). The Spirit was the risen Christ, a power possessed by men which makes them new spiritual beings and manifestations of redemptive power in and beyond the world.

While Paul, as a man of his time, expressed his understanding of the Spirit in the categories of the Hebrew and Hellenistic religious worlds, he was expressing a profound religious truth of enduring significance. Clearly, the centre of Paul's religious life was neither an obsession with eschatology²³ nor the holy history expressed in his "apostleship" nor the "new community." Nor was he overwhelmed with the ritual or the philosophy of his Greek friends. He had had an experience—an experience of a mystery, as he said—and he interpreted this experience as an experience of the Spirit, of "Christ in me." It was from this centre then that Paul went on to his understanding of human personality and human culture (Rom. 1-3). It was from this centre also that he approached the problem of human history and human destiny (Rom. 9-11; 8).

III. THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

What are some of the implications for theology of this Pauline view of the Spirit? The first implication seems to be that theology needs to rediscover its roots in religious experience. This rootage is lost when theologians teach theologians for generation after generation—whether they are in the "kataphatic" tradition and consciously allow for the development of new dogma from previously established propositions, or whether, in the tradition of "Biblical theology," they assert the "independence" of theology for other reasons. Theology divorced from religious experience may, over a short period, serve useful organizational or polemical purposes, but it is also in grave danger of either losing its vitality or becoming irrelevant. There is good reason to believe that in our day both "rational theology" and "Biblical theology" have lost most of their life and relevance.

Theology is essentially the logical formulation of the experience of the

22. While J. Munck reached this point in his interpretation of Paul, he failed to see the inner content of Paul's religious structure, and so interpreted apostleship exclusively in terms of historical activity.

23. N. Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), pp. 41-52, 83-90, seems to me to follow Schweitzer too closely here.

divine. It would appear that all men have known something which may be called religious experience and that they have expressed their experiences in actions (rituals), thoughts (myths), and social forms. The logically articulated myths (theology) have played a very important role in giving meaning to the actions, preparing men for more mature levels of religious experience, and providing a religious basis for the social forms. Theology, therefore, must at times *appear* to be "independent," since it must have the authority to regulate the religious society (the Roman Catholic emphasis) and enjoy the confidence of the men whom it is preparing for more mature levels of religious experience (the Protestant emphasis). But it is not therefore "independent" of its rootage, or free to be irrelevant to the religious experience of men.

In the light of our awareness that theology must be rooted in experience, we must start again with the doctrine of the Spirit, which is theology's way of describing the religious experience. Rational theology was theocentric. It felt, with Aristotle, that it knew something about the cosmos, and hence about the Prime Mover of the cosmos. It tried, with limited success, to come down from that height and speak about God's love in Christ and about man's experience of God in the Spirit. Biblical theology was Christocentric. It felt, with Hegel, that it knew something about history, and hence about the Lord of History. It tried to go back from the "centre" of history to creation itself. It seemed to take the position that religious experience—and, by implication, the Spirit—was irrelevant to theology. What we appear to learn from Paul however—who also had access to cosmos-centred and history-centred theologies—is that we must be pneumatocentric and once again recognize the mystery of "Christ in me." Recognizing, in the midst of our technological round and multicultural environment, that we have experienced a "mystery," let us begin our interpretation, our theological system, from there. If this is indeed an experience of "the Christ," if it has the quality of "apostleship" or of "suffering with him," then we, like Paul—and with no greater difficulty—have reached back to the Christ to give meaning to our present vitality. And if our experience proves to be experience of an ultimate Purpose or Order, then perhaps we can meaningfully use the word "God" and find again that we are indeed "theists."

The second implication of an analysis of the Pauline idea of the Spirit for theology is that religious life must be understood more clearly in terms of its rootage in the whole life of man. Recent theology has tended to confuse this issue, by seeing theology as little more than an interpretation of history. In that perspective, the obvious alternatives are either to reject the course of events and establish a separate "holy history" (the option favoured in Germany) or to sanctify all events in the name of the Lord of the "secular" (the alternative widely adopted in North America). The traditional picture of theology as "Queen of the Sciences" at least acknowledged both a distinction and a relatedness between theology and the rest of human

culture, even though it suffered from the disadvantage of a hierarchical and authoritarian framework.

What the Pauline idea of the Spirit makes plain is that whatever is said about the religious experience of man must be said in terms of the normal cultural understanding of the nature of man. For Paul, man was a "purposefully inclined personality" and also a "lost spark of the divine." Western man is finding new mysteries in his own consciousness and in the new social forms which the technological revolution in communications has made possible. How men will express the experience of the divine, when it is met in these contemporary forms of selfawareness, is not easy to say. But one cannot read Paul without being aware that our theology must grow out of a cultural milieu, in whose framework the experience of the mysterious takes place.

Finally, the Pauline example indicates that our theology of the Spirit must be an expression of that which transcends and transforms life. This is the branch of theology which not only describes that which is, but also speaks about that which might be—in other words, about the dimension of salvation. Theological movements, such as Gnosticism and Pentecostalism, which have placed their emphasis here, have indeed been suspect, and reasons to discredit them have been found. Berdyaev, who had reason to believe that he lived in an eschatological age, chose to exaggerate the distinction and to set Spirit sharply over against Nature. But men of the Spirit have too easily been dismissed for exaggeration, and it may be better if we say very simply that the theology of the Spirit is that branch of theology in which we say how we long for a new world, and how the pains and anguish of this life evoke a "groaning" within us. In the origins of the great religious traditions (Buddhism, Platonism, Gnosticism, Christianity, and others) this note was dominant, only to be lost in "rational theology" and replaced with a crude distortion in Protestantism's stepchildren: Marxism and the "Great Society." Religion is rooted in the awareness that salvation is possible. Such an awareness, when it is properly expressed in the doctrine of the Spirit, should enable us to live with our pain, and should lead us beyond the "despair" or the "temporary salvations" that characterize our day.

These comments make no pretence to be a theology of the Spirit; rather, they are intended to be a call for such a theology. When we rediscover the real function of the doctrine of the Spirit, the implications for religious experience, for human culture, and for human hope (traditionally defined in terms of the doctrines of the church and the sacraments, and of eschatology) will soon become clear. When this happens, theology may again prove that it can be vital and relevant to life.