

so much as lifting a finger when His people are threatened by ungodly enemies and His plans appear to be thwarted by the minions of the Evil One? Others may worship such a God, but I do not. The God I worship, the God of the Bible, is a God who will do battle for His people in every moral crisis; whose Spirit is not only the Spirit of love and grace, but the Spirit of power as well; the God who endowed His chosen leaders in ancient times with extraordinary intellectual and physical powers to be exercised in the preservation of His chosen people from the evil designs of their idolatrous neighbors, who were themselves vessels fit only for destruction. There is nothing unnatural, nothing immoral, in the presentation of the Spirit and His operations that is given in the book of Judges. What our generation needs is to rid itself of some of its flabbiness of both thought and deed.

3. The Spirit and the Early Kings

In the days of Samuel, the first of the great prophets and regarded by some as the last of the Judges, conditions in Israel changed for the better. In 1 Samuel 3:1, we read: "And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision." In fact no frequent vision was needed. The people who had hitherto neglected God's law, disregarded His ordinances, prostituted the established forms of worship, and become enfeebled by sensualism and idolatry, were, under Samuel, transformed into a godfearing nation. Samuel was an effective reformer and leader. He led the nation into the paths of righteousness; frequent visions and operations of the Spirit were no longer necessary.

The time came, however, when the people, in order to emulate their worldly and more prosperous heathen neighbors, clamored for a king. Jehovah, foreseeing the disasters that would come upon them through a monarchy (*vide* 1 Sam. 8), finally though reluctantly yielded to their demand, in order that they might learn from actual experience. And when the people themselves had selected Saul, the son of Kish, as their first king, God authorized Samuel to anoint him, that is, formally set him apart to the office for which he had been chosen. Immediately upon his anointing, Saul was numbered

among the prophets. In the course of the anointing ceremony, Samuel said to him: "Thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall be prophesying; and the Spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man" (1 Sam. 10:5-6). Reading on, we find that it all turned out precisely as Samuel had said: "When they had come thither to the hill, behold, a band of prophets met him [Saul]; and the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that has come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? . . . Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam. 10:20-12). And so we read that on other occasions "the Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul" (1 Sam. 11:16), endowing him with the gift of prophecy, and transforming him from an awkward peasant lad into a dignified and courageous prince. Saul proved to be a good king for a few years following his coronation, until jealousy got the better of him and brought him to his downfall. And as he plunged deeper and deeper into the mire, disobeying God and then attempting to lie out of his sins, God finally turned His back upon him (1 Sam., chs. 15 and 28); and we read that "the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil [punitive] spirit from Jehovah troubled him" (1 Sam. 16:14). Only on one occasion thereafter was Saul temporarily endowed with the gift of prophecy: "And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to the great well that is in Secu; and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah. And he went

thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night" (1 Sam. 19:20-24). This, however, was only a temporary endowment: the Spirit in the capacity of an ever-present Companion had already departed from him. That is indeed a tragic hour in any man's life when the Spirit of God leaves him to take up His abode elsewhere, and nothing will drive the Holy Spirit out of the human heart as quickly as the spirit of pride, jealousy, or revenge.

On departing from Saul, the Spirit of God entered the heart of David, the shepherd boy and the son of Jesse, protecting him from his enemies, and finally elevated him to the throne of a united Israel after the death of Saul. 1 Sam. 16:13—"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward." And among "the last words of David . . . the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel," we find the following declaration: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:1-2). The Spirit inspired David to give utterance to many of the Psalms, which not only became the inspired hymnody of the Jewish people, but also, in many instances, pointed forward to the life and work of the Messiah. Many of the Psalms are clearly Messianic in import, and are therefore of great evidential value to Christians. Thus, in the Spirit, David foretold the circumstances of Christ's ministry, death, resurrection and glorification; and predicted, in glowing imagery, the universal scope of His kingdom.

[*It was David who first proclaimed the omnipresence of the Spirit*]: Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me [Psa. 139:7-10]. [*It was David who first proclaimed the 'goodness' of the Spirit*]: Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; Lead me in the land of uprightness [Psa. 143:10]. [*It was David who emphasized the work of the Spirit in Creation and Providence*]: By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. [Psa. 33:6, 9]. [*And*

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concerning the whole creation with its myriad forms of life, David said]: Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground [Psa. 104:30]. [*And it was David who prayed so eloquently for the abiding presence and companionship of the Spirit*]: Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit [Psa. 51:10-12].

That David wrote by inspiration of the Spirit is expressly declared by many of the New Testament preachers and writers. For example, in Acts 1:16, Peter says: "Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus." This is a direct allusion to Psalms 69:25 and 109:8. In Matthew 22:43-45, Jesus quotes the words of David as found in Psalm 110:1, saying, "How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord?" Again, the writer of Hebrews, ch. 3, vv. 7-11, quotes Psalm 95:7-11, and introduces the quotation with these words: "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit sayeth," etc. These and other Scriptures which might be cited all of which serve to prove that David was inspired by the Spirit, that the Psalms which he wrote were Spirit-breathed. Incidentally, too, these passages definitely identify the Spirit of God of the Old Testament with the Holy Spirit of the New.

Again, we are told that David received the pattern of the structure of the Temple by the Spirit. 1 Chron. 28:11, 12 — "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper rooms thereof, and of the inner chambers thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat; and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, for the courts of the house of Jehovah, and for all the chambers round about, for all the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things" etc.

There is also a clear intimation, in Proverbs 1:23, that Solomon, at one time in his life at least, was inspired by the Spirit. Solomon, last of the three great kings of Israel, was the author of much, if not all, of the material contained in the book of Proverbs. The book opens with the following statement: "The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: to know wisdom and instruction; to discern the words of understanding," etc. Then, in verse 23, Wisdom is repre-

sented as saying: "Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you." These promises were addressed, of course, to Israel, but the instrumentality through whom the promises were to be realized was Solomon, the writer of the book. This being true, Solomon undoubtedly wrote by inspiration of the Spirit.

The more we study the lives of these ancient heroes of the faith the more we are inclined to wonder at the fact that the Holy Spirit of God associated Himself with them. Some of them lapsed at times into the grossest forms of iniquity, yet they were still God's chosen leaders. The explanation is obvious: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked" (Acts 17:30). In those primitive times, when ideals were low, when society was organized upon a very low plane of social intercourse, when God's people were surrounded on all sides by sensualism and idolatry, the Spirit was obliged to select the best material He could find available; and some of it turned out to be very poor indeed. Saul, for instance, started out so auspiciously, then failed so miserably. David permitted himself to become a victim of his own lust and perpetrated a crime which brought disgrace and ruin upon his whole family, and from which he extricated himself only by genuine repentance. Solomon started out with everything in his favor; his day opened with a glorious sunrise, but the sunset was obscured by clouds which, as far as we know, did not clear away. The point is that *the Holy Spirit did the best He could with the material at hand*. It is the old, old story of the potter and the clay. If the clay is of poor quality, no matter how skillful the potter may be, it is liable to be marred in his hands. *The defects are not in the potter, but in the clay*. Then if the vessel becomes marred on the wheel, the potter is obliged to work it over into another vessel—an inferior vessel, true, but the best that the potter can make out of the material with which he is compelled to work (Jer. 18:6-10). Men may rest assured that the Divine Potter will always do the very best He can with the material which they place in His hands. He will eventually turn out a vessel meet for the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12); but the quality of the finished product will depend largely upon the quality of the material that goes into it. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one

star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:51). Moreover, the quality of the material that goes into the finished product—the fully redeemed and glorified individual, redeemed in body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23)—depends largely on individual human beings themselves. If they will but give the best they have and are to God; if they will but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Phil. 2:5) and thus become partakers of the Divine nature (1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Pet. 1:2-4, 3:18; Gal. 5:22-25); if they will but present their bodies a living sacrifice from day to day (Rom. 12:1): in short, if they will but live the life of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17); then indeed in the finality of things they shall see God face to face and shall shine as the stars of the firmament for ever and ever (Dan. 12:3). For God's ultimate goal in Creation, Providence and Redemption is, I believe, the calling and perfecting of a holy redeemed race fit to have fellowship, unbroken and everlasting, with our holy God. And the all-embracing work of the Holy Spirit in all ages, is, as Kuyper puts it, that of "leading all creation to its destiny, the final purpose of which is the glory of God."¹

4. The Spirit and the Hebrew Prophets

We have learned by this time that the Old Testament does not feature the work of the Holy Spirit as prominently as the New Testament. The Old Testament Dispensations were primarily those of the Father and the Son respectively. The Dispensation of the Holy Spirit began with the establishment or incorporation of the Church of Christ.

In both Testaments, however, God is represented as working in and through His Spirit. In the Old Testament the Spirit is designated in most instances "the Spirit of God" or "the Spirit of Jehovah." In the New Testament He is commonly designated "the Holy Spirit."

Now when we come to the prophetic books of the Old Testament, we find a distinct advance in the operations of the Spirit. Peter tells us that the Spirit is the source of all prophecy, that is, in its twofold sense of revelation and prediction. "For no prophecy ever came by will of man; but

1. A. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. by Henri de Vries,