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Veni Creator Spiritus

Dedicated to the work of Frank McCloin¹

“Though Christianity’s theology is trinitarian,
it may not have appeared so in its original context.
For one thing, Christian mention of the ‘Holy Spirit’
would neither have been considered unique nor
heretical by the rabbis.” Alan F. Segal²

Prolegomena

This essay is the first chapter in a monograph on the theology of the Holy Spirit until the time of Tertullian and Origen. The thesis of the book is that early Christian pneumatology continues and develops Jewish pneumatology; for “the first two hundred years of Christianity”³ Jewish pneumatology is the accepted theological idiom for Christian reflection upon the nature and characteristic work of the Holy Spirit. A further point made in the book is that it is more accurate to speak of early Christian pneumatologies derived from Jewish pneumatologies: there were a variety of understandings of the nature, work (or effect), and significance of the Holy Spirit in Judaism and this variety continues in the first two hundred years of Christianity. The book’s division of chapters follows the identification of these different pneumatologies in Judaism and Christianity: thus the book covers Creator Pneumatology, Wisdom Pneumatology, Angelomorphic Pneumatology, Consort Pneumatology, etc., in their original Jewish expressions and their continuing presence in Christianity.⁴ The final component of the book’s thesis is that Jewish pneumatology as the accepted theological idiom for Christian reflection on the Holy Spirit – the fact of a dominant Jewish-Christian pneumatology – comes to an end with the generation of Tertullian and Origen. This chapter ends, as so many of the chapters in the monograph will, with the writings of Irenaeus. The last two chapters of the book cover the critiques and rejections of Jewish-Christian pneumatology by Tertullian and Origen and describe the alternative pneumatologies that each offers.⁵ The early third century pneumatologies of Tertullian and Origen become typical and normative in Latin and Greek theology until the second half of the fourth century, when, in both traditions, there is again a change in the dominant paradigms for Christian

¹ McCloin, an American Roman Catholic scholar, was “Barker before Barker;” his book, published in 1916, made extensive use of targumim, Talmud, Zokar, and other non-MT Jewish writings as resources for reading the OT. McCloin also made very effective use of carefully reading the original text for what it actually said, as opposed to what it was supposed to say. He may have foreshadowed a structural reading by his insistence that the written text be regarded as the result of the author’s choice of wording – that the author said it *this* way and not *that* way for a reason

² “‘Two Powers in Heaven’ and Early Trinitarian Thinking,” in *The Trinity*, Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall and Gerald O’Collins, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 73-95; here, p. 79.

³ Whenever I use the expression the “first two hundred years of Christianity” I mean Christianity during the first and second centuries

⁴ The reader of this present version of chapter one should keep in mind, then, that in each chapter (including this one) I am trying to keep to the form of treating only one specific “kind” of pneumatology.

⁵ The first volume of my history of the theology of the Holy Spirit in the Patristic Church stops at this point in time.

theology of the Holy Spirit. In several important ways the new pneumatological paradigm of the second half of the fourth century “remembers” the theology of the first Jewish-Christian paradigm.

Over the last fifteen years the fact that pre-Christian Judaism had “pneumatologies” has been documented in the work of Jon Levinson; however, Levinson rather steadfastly declines to pursue the ways in which Jewish pneumatologies become Christian pneumatologies: that is not his interest. There has also been recent work on the ways in which Jewish reflections on the Spirit affected New Testament pneumatologies, principally those of Luke-Acts and Paul.⁶ As the reader will discover, I have a particular judgment on the significance of “*New Testament pneumatologies*” that limits the relevance of these recent studies for my work. As the reader already knows, there has been in English-language scholarship of the last thirty years an interest in the Jewish roots of Christology that has grown from the small SBL clique of “early high Christology” adherents to a field with many workers. European scholarship (especially English, Dutch and Scandinavian) on Jewish mysticism – “apocalyptic” – and apocryphal works has supported and dovetailed with work on the Jewish roots of early high Christology. This present study is related to that scholarship, and depends it in some fundamental ways that I can only allude to here.

There is another trajectory in scholarship that is important – even decisive – for my thesis that early Christian pneumatology continues and develops Jewish pneumatology. One effect of the work of the SBL “early high Christology” studies group has been to revise our understanding of what “Jewish monotheism” was really like in the late Second Temple period. This revision has been pushed back into earlier Judaism most visibly by the work of Margaret Barker, an author much criticized and belittled among those who have not read her. There is, however, a large spectrum of biblical scholars and archeologists who have attempted to go behind the monotheistic Judaism of the rabbis and their theological predecessors, the Deuteronomists. As a historical theologian trained to read ancient texts *for their theology* this attempt by some biblical scholars and archeologists has appealed to me. I am of the opinion that the identification of YHWH as the sole God, not simply of the Jews but at all, is a development that occurs during the period of the reforms of Josiah, the Deuteronomists, and Deutero-Isaiah, and not during the time of Solomon and the establishment of the First Temple. More importantly, I am not convinced that the alternate titles for God and variety of divine agents in First and Second Temple literature are simply circumlocutions or “buffers.” Scholarly attempts to explain the “memra” of the later targumim as such can hardly be regarded as convincing if one does not presuppose that something like the “circulocation” thesis *must be* true because Jewish monotheism was always as pure and total as we now understand it to be. Scholarly attempts to explain in this same way Jewish theologumena centuries earlier than the targumim require an even more ruthless version of this presupposition.⁷ I tend,

⁶ See, e.g., Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology: With Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTS 54 (1991) and Edward J. Woods, *The ‘Finger of God’ and Pneumatology in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

⁷ It should be remembered, I imagine, that I cut my scholarly teeth fruitfully rejecting the presuppositions (1) that the Nicene creed is basically what early Christians always believed, and (2) that the

rather, to think in terms of what might be called the long term or “deep” existence of something like sectarian theologies of God in First and early Second Temple Judaism (the existence of sectarianism in *late* Second Temple Judaism is a given.)⁸ The “documentary” source thesis for the Pentateuch has actually served to deflect investigation into the different ancient theologies in Judaism(s) in the same way the “documentary” source thesis (with its various “criticisms”) for the NT gospels served to deflect investigation into “NT” theologies as late Second Temple Jewish theologies.⁹ Twenty years ago the only mainstream “NT Studies” Christology with scholarly credibility was “low” Christology that built upon the twin hypotheses of “High Christology takes time to develop” and “Rabbinic Judaism is Judaism.”¹⁰ This old monopoly no longer holds in “NT Studies” Christology – which is why, I take it, low Christologies in liberal Systematics are no longer wrapped in the flag of NT “academic scholarship,”¹¹ and why contemporary arguments for an “original low” Christology are based upon biblical scholarship that is not less than thirty years old.

All this is to answer the dangling question, how is it that I take First and Second Temple literary references to the “Spirit of” God (etc.) as referring to something like an entity separate from JHWH. I start by not presupposing the absolute accuracy of the rabbinic account of what very early “Jews” believed; most notoriously, this lack of presupposition expresses itself in my not regarding the MT as the normative or “canonical” text of the OT for the time period under study in my monograph.¹² There are a number of reasons why one cannot simply identify the MT as the historical text of the “OT,” but I will not walk through them here and now. It is more useful to provide the reader with an illustration of what the theologian historian faces when trying to reconstruct the theology of pre-rabbinic Judaism via the MT: Deuteronomy 32.8 begins this way:

When the *Most High* gave to the nations their inheritance,
When he separated the sons of Adam,
He lifted the bounds of the peoples

The closing line of this passage is, in the MT,

According to the number of *the sons of Israel*.

which is an innocuous line. The LXX for the line has, however,

“orthodox” Athanasian account of what happened in fourth century Trinitarian theology is true and historically accurate. From this encounter with meta-narratives I learned an important methodological point: it is bad scholarship to present as tidy what is in fact confused or messy.

⁸ For example, Robert Murray postulates a “disaffected” Judaism that begins with the First Temple in Jerusalem and the centralization of worship there.

⁹ Here I refer to an anecdote told by my colleague, Dr. Andrei Orlov, about a conversation he had with Daniel Boyarin, in which Boyarin remarks that his “favorite Second Temple writing” is the Gospel of John.

¹⁰ When the old “critical” and History of Religions NT scholarship took any serious interest in Judaism, period.

¹¹ To marginalize Quispel was easy; to forget Hengel is astonishing.

¹² See especially James E. Bowley and John C. Reeves, “Rethinking the Concept of ‘Bible’: Some Theses and Proposals,” *Henoch* XXV (2003), 3-18.

According to the number of *the angels of God*.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls Deuteronomy 32:8 is given as

According to the number of *the sons of God*.

The antiquity of the MT is a presumption with varying degrees of credibility; the antiquity of the LXX and the DSS is not. In a general way, the LXX and DSS agree with one another against the MT: they both depict God counting out according to the number of heavenly beings.¹³ The text and the point of the MT passage are different from the LXX and DSS -- and in a theologically significant way. DSS and LXX are to be preferred over the MT. The Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 32:8 during the Second Temple most probably spoke of heavenly beings, and the DSS and LXX are to be preferred as texts against the MT, which likely represents a later emendation.

The problem of textual authority in reconstructing ancient Jewish theology is not answered, however, by simply turning aside the MT as a later construct. The Hebrew text preserved by the MT contains a variety of embedded theological perspectives. It is possible, for example, to discern older Elyon material through the later “only YHWH” redaction. More important for my purposes here, the MT text sometimes presents a theology of the Spirit where the LXX does not. In one case, the testimony of the MT is significant: the LXX rendering of Isaiah 63:9 says

“...not an ambassador, nor an angel, but he himself saved them....” “

He himself” is God, and the text is emphatic that God saved Israel directly. The MT, however, says:

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them”

The MT version of Isaiah 63:9 is widely regarded by contemporary scholars as a key expression of Jewish angelomorphic pneumatology, and I will not here belabor the significance of the MT Hebrew text in this case.¹⁴ I will, however, offer two notes: first, the LXX version of Isaiah 63:9 is cited explicitly by Tertullian as his authority for rejecting angelomorphic theology; and second, the rabbis read MT Isaiah 63:9 as if it said what LXX Isaiah 63:9 says.¹⁵

¹³ I regard “the angels of God” and “the sons of God” as synonyms but I will not insist that DSS and LXX are saying the *exact* same thing.

¹⁴ Charles Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 116-119; Jon Levinson, “The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism,” *SBL 1995 Seminar Papers*, 464-493, pp. 470-71 especially.

¹⁵ See Judah Goldin, “Not by Means of an Angel and not by Means of a Messenger,” in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, Jacob Neusner, ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 412-424. The verse that is actually being commented upon in Sifre Deuteronomy 42 is Deut. 11:14., which reads:

Finally, my thesis that early Christian pneumatology continues and develops Jewish pneumatology is an alternative to received narratives in Patristic scholarship that have emphasized the early Christian association of the Holy Spirit with “sanctification.” There has also been a widespread presumed narrative in scholarly histories of doctrine that early Christians had a “weak” pneumatology, weak if only because the status of the Holy Spirit was not at that time controversial. In this old scholarly narrative, theology of the second half of the fourth century finally turns to a subject that had been previously ignored in Christianity, and the “strong” pneumatology of the late fourth century is without significant precedent in the previous history of Christian doctrine on the Holy Spirit. The least offensive version of this narrative attributes early weak pneumatology to the “mysterious” character of the person of the Holy Spirit Who is encountered only in the “experience” of that Spirit. I am offering not simply a different account or narrative, but the fundamental assertion that in early Christianity, pneumatology was every bit as based on exegesis and doctrinal heritage as was Christology. My case rests on the fact that early Patristic authors -- such as those treated here -- speak of the Holy Spirit in the same way as they speak of the Son.

My research for this chapter has led me to understand that the judgment that *knowledge of the Holy Spirit is by nature more subjective than that of the Father or Son* is directly and silently dependent upon not treating the Holy Spirit as creator. When the Holy Spirit is acknowledged as Creator the idea that knowledge of the Holy Spirit is by nature more subjective never arises. Only after Origen denies that the Holy Spirit is creator does a notion of the distinctly “mysterious” character of knowing the Spirit arise. In short, early Christian pneumatology starts strong,¹⁶ is weak in the third and early fourth centuries, and is re-invigorated in the late fourth century. These are three distinct doctrinal epochs of pneumatology. The character of the first is determined by its Jewishness; the character of the second is determined by the loss of that Jewishness. The character of the third is a separate story.

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(If ye hearken diligently to the commandments), ‘then I will give the rain of your land in its season’... ‘Then I will give’: I -- not by means of (by the hands of) an angel and not by means of a messenger.’” [Goldin is citing Finkelstein (p. 88), p. 412.]

One more illustration may be useful (again Goldin quoting Finkelstein):

“And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt,’ not by means of an angel, and not by means of a seraph, and not by means of a messenger. On the contrary, the Holy One, blessed be He, by His own glorious self (did it) [see Exod. 12:12].” Goldin, p. 414.

Amazingly, at no point does Goldin refer to the LXX. In any case, it seems clear that in the reading of Isaiah 63:9, the LXX represents the proto-rabbinic position, and the MT preserves the older, more theologically problematic, reading.

¹⁶ Strong enough that I have had to coin the term “hyper-pneumatology.”

Chapter One

The Spirit Creator

The Jewish Doctrine of the Spirit Creator

The first reference to the "Spirit of God" appears in the second line of the first book of the Bible. We remember these first few words, sometimes only vaguely, but they are worth saying again here.

(1) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (2) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.¹⁷

(3) And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.¹⁸

If one reads this passage with the question of sources or original literary units in mind, then Genesis 1:1-2 has the appearance of having previously "stood alone" without being part of the "And God said" literary tradition that begins at Gen. 1:3. If, on the other hand, one reads this passage from the perspective of the literary unit Genesis 1, then what is striking is that "Spirit of God" does not appear again in the creation account in the first chapter of Genesis, and that the clause referring to the Spirit could be deleted and there would be no apparent loss of sense or continuity in the narrative, i.e., "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Perhaps the "Spirit of God" is part of an ancient oral religious tradition of the Spirit that, for example, linked but contrasted Spirit with the primal waters (its echo reappearing in Gen. 8:8 ff. with the dove above the flood waters.) If this saying was originally the starting-point in another account of creation and was brought into the "Elohim said... and there was" account then what we have in Genesis is but the textually visible tip of a larger, more substantial, religious understanding of the Spirit as creator. From purely literary-historical concerns about the original "bits" of different older theologies that make up Genesis One we are led to the more relevant interest -- for the purposes of this chapter -- about how later Jewish exegesis "rewrites" Genesis 1:1-3. As we shall see, the beginning of Genesis is later typically understood in Judaism as though

¹⁷ The Hebrew verb modifying the noun spirit – ruah – is well known among Scripture readers as distinctive and rare: pjr, to hover. The only other time this verb occurs in the Pentateuch is at Deuteronomy 32:11, "As a eagle that stirreth up her nest, Hovereth over her young," where it clearly does not mean "blowing" (as in "wind blowing"). Perhaps the most famous articulation of the sense of the Hebrew verb as it modifies the noun is expressed in *Genesis Rabbah*: "The spirit of God hovered like a bird... the wings barely touch [the nest]." I will return to the *Genesis Rabbah* material shortly.

¹⁸ In each case, the Hebrew translated by "God" is "Elohim" while in each case the LXX is "Theos." This English translation is a slightly modified version of the translation in *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Texts*, The Jewish Publication Society of America. All English translations of the Masoretic text, the MT, are from this edition except where noted as from the RSV (not the NRSV.) For the purposes of this essay, the LXX very quickly becomes the most significant version.

the mention of God's [W]ord comes immediately, preceding the mention of [S]pirit.¹⁹ Genesis 1:1-3 is exegeted as though it says:

In the beginning God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The association of the Spirit with the divine act of creation is very important for both Jewish and Christian theologies of the Spirit; in retrospect any doctrine of the Spirit creating is clearly the most important religious statement one can make about the Spirit of God. For the time period covered by this book, one could almost write a history of pneumatology by simply writing a history of how (or *if*) the Spirit was understood to be associated with the first act of creation. Such an account would reveal the ways in which the Spirit was understood to be related to the God who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth by speaking his word.

The second example of a Spirit-creator text is found in Job: "The *Spirit* of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4) The passage may be seen as a condensed reference to the creation tradition expressed at Genesis 1:2b and Genesis 2:7.²⁰ Clearer echoes of these Genesis spirit expressions can be found in two other passages in Job 26:4:

With whom have you sent your words?
Whose breath-of-life has come forth from you?

which echoes the description of Genesis 1:1-2b and 2:7. The final Job passage is 27:3, "...as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils," which again echoes the description of Genesis 2: 7.

There are two psalms from First Temple Judaism that seem to associate the Spirit of God with creating: Ps. 33 and Ps. 104.

By the *Word* of the Lord
the heavens were spread out,
And by the *Spirit* of His mouth
all their *power*. (Ps. 33:6)

When thou sendest forth thy *Spirit*,
they are created;
and thou renewest the face of the ground.
(Ps. 104:30)

¹⁹ Bereshet (or Bre'shiyth)-mysticism may be an expression of this underlying exegetical judgment, and an attempt to justify it by finding the equivalent of "And God *said*" in the word, "In the beginning." The "reversal" is so common that one wonders about a possible manuscript basis; in any case the "Genesis reversal" represents a widespread exegetical tradition within Ancient Judaism.

²⁰ The important thing for my point here is that the author of Job may be referring either to a written version of Genesis, or to the oral tradition(s) behind the Genesis text. In any case, the author knows the Bereshet tradition with the two descriptions (represented in "two documents") of creation already unified, whether in an oral or a written form. Or perhaps *parts* of the two accounts were merged before *all* of the two accounts were joined? In any case, the reader is left to her or his own judgment in deciding when any such merger occurred and what that means for dating parts or all of Job.

The more influential of these two psalms is Psalm 33 (LXX 32).²¹ The psalm re-states Genesis 1:1-3; the creation account is retold with an emphasis on the moral implications of God as demiurge (not unlike the way creation is approached in Job.) The subject of verses 6-9 remains that of Gen. 1:2-3; there is no momentary turning to the subject of the heavenly *hosts*, i.e., the angels. The “Word of the Lord” refers to “And God said”; “the Spirit of His mouth” refers to “the Spirit upon the face of the waters.” This is the earliest example of Gen. 1:1-3 being exegeted as in the form of “In the beginning God said...The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.” -- that is, with God’s Word being at the beginning and immediately followed by the Spirit of God (Gen. 1:3,2b couplet.) At verse 6A, the word which appears in a verb form as “spread [out]” is the same word which appears in a noun form – the “firmament” - in Genesis.²² At 6B, “*their power*” refers back to “the heavens” (i.e., the power of the heavens) but the Greek δύναμις is singular not plural; the Hebrew seems to be a plural form, and in Ps. 26 (LXX) δύναμις (sing.) also evidently corresponds to a Hebrew plural.²³ Psalm 104 is a bit more complicated in its overtones.²⁴ The first phrase (When thou sendest thy Spirit, they are created) could refer to Gen 1:2, but the second (with “face of the ground”) could be a reminder of Gen 2:7 (Adam made from dust = face of the ground.) A third option is that one or both lines of Ps. 104:30 refer to the story of Noah since Gen 5:7 refers to the “face of the ground” being destroyed, and Gen. 8:13 says that the “face of the ground was dry.”²⁵ These three passages are all related theologically: Genesis 1:1, 2b, Job 26:4 and Ps. 33:6.²⁶ If we could order the texts chronologically we would be able to speak of

²¹ There is no significant difference between the DSS version of this psalm and the MT version, nor is there any significant difference between the LXX version and the two Hebrew versions. I prefer the more literal “all their power” instead of the conventional “all their hosts [of angels].”

²² “Spread out” also appears in Ps. 136/5:5-6. That descriptor of creation refers only to God’s “understanding” making the heavens -- στερησίς -- and there is no reference to the Spirit of God.

²³ Helmer Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1947), p. 164, cites an interesting Talmudic glossing of this passage: "From each word that proceeded from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, there was created an angel, for it is said: 'By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made; and all their hosts by the breath of his mouth.' [bHagiga 14 a.] The first part of the psalm remains familiar, but the second half has a significantly different sense. Does "power" refer to properties of "the heavens" -- that is, the power[s] of the heavens-- or does it refer to the angels in the heavens? Whatever other differences these two interpretations represent, there is this: in the Talmudic glossing the Word makes the heavens (echoing Gen. 1:3) while the Spirit makes the angelic hosts. We would be right to suspect in this rendering the influence of a doctrine that the angels were created on the first day, similar to what we find in Jubilees, and the Talmudic interpretation seems intended to unite the Gen. 1:1-3 account with the Jubilee 2 account. The better known MT-dependent rendering in the RSV resembles more the echo of the psalm in Second Baruch 21:4.

²⁴ Psalm 104 brings to mind the DSS psalmic “Hymn to the Creator” of 11QPs., which, as the DSS Bible editors note, “has clear affinities with Psalm 104.” (p. 582.) The Hymn says: “Blessed be he who has made the earth by his power, who has established the world in his wisdom.” Although the DSS hymn refers explicitly to Wisdom and Power, and not to Spirit, both these titles (or theogonies) are often used of the Spirit. Jewish and Christian Wisdom and Power pneumatologies will be discussed in later chapters.

²⁵ We need not decide whether the flood account restates Gen. 1:2b or whether Gen 1:2b is meant to foreshadow the flood and dove episodes in the Noah story. It does no harm to my thesis to decide that Psalm 104 is “about” Noah and the receding of the waters, which is itself “about” Genesis 1&2.

²⁶ “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... and the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:1, 2b); “With whom have you sent your words? Whose breath-of-life

exegetical relationships amongst the three passages. In all these texts we see an ancient Jewish description of the creation of the cosmos in terms of the word and spirit of God, but the relative isolation of each passage²⁷ prevents us from saying with any certainty what the “word” and “spirit” of God mean in each case. We are lacking the literary context necessary to draw certain theological conclusions using a historical method.²⁸ Questions of agency -- in what way do the instrumental causes *word* and *spirit* exist? -- remain unanswerable. It is as difficult to exclude a hard monotheistic interpretation of “Elohim making via word and spirit” as it is to exclude a softer, more “polytheist” interpretation -- *and vice versa.*²⁹

Second Temple examples of the divine Spirit being associated with creation and life-giving include Isaiah 42:5, although it is not clear how to order the different testimonies for the passage. The MT says, “Thus says God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched forth, He that spread forth the earth and that which comes out of it, He that gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.” The LXX says, “Thus says the Lord God, who made the heaven and established it; who settled the earth and the things in it, and who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk upon it.” The LXX has the advantage of certain antiquity, on the one hand, and verbal overtones of Genesis 1:7 and 33:2:6,³⁰ on the other. The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) testimony to Isaiah 42 likewise has the advantage of certain antiquity, and comes from a community whose doctrine of the Spirit has already been shown by scholars to have strong resemblances to NT understandings of the Holy Spirit. However, most striking is the fact that the DSS testimony has Isaiah 42:5 as a two powers text,³¹ and not a YHWH-ist text, as the LXX and MT are. This is striking because Deutero-Isaiah is generally thought to be at the heart of Jewish monotheism and the theological reforms of the Deuteronomist. The usual biblical-studies guild rule of “The more troublesome

has come forth from you?” (Job 26:4); and “By the Word of the Lord the heavens were spread out, And by the Spirit of His mouth all their power.” (Ps. 33:6).

²⁷ The “relative isolation” of each of these passages is encountered in trying to answer this question: exactly what other First Temple texts can be considered a contemporary to any one of the three passages? One can obviously situate psalm 33:2 vis a vis other psalms, but how does one compare the date of a specific psalm to the date of the pericope Gen. 1:2b, much less the oral form of “P” and the “P document”? One comes to the literary frontier of Solomon’s Court or Joshua’s reforms (depending upon your OT hypothesis), and past that is....

²⁸ If we allow, as an intelligent presupposition, that there is a piece of archeological evidence that is “roughly contemporary” to a given passage, then that evidence seems to suggest a pluralist, “courtly” understanding of divinity. The same understanding seems also to be suggested by a “Semitic literatures” approach (e.g., comparing the OT to other “El” literature.) The problem with making such statements is that in the field of OT Studies judgments about the theological content of a specific text are connected to judgments about what is recognized as the correct literary context of a specific text; judgments about the correct literary context of a specific text are connected to judgments about what is recognized as the theological content of a specific text; and so on.

²⁹ That is, it is as difficult to exclude a softer, more “polytheist” interpretation of “Elohim making via word and spirit” as it is to exclude a hard monotheistic interpretation.

³⁰ See my comments on page 2.

³¹ The DSS Isaiah 42:5 is not literally a two “powers” text, since “powers” are not referred to, but God is described in pluralistic language, there seeming to be at least two entitled ones, ha-el and elohiyim. In any case, where the LXX and the MT are each “YHWH-ist” in the classical monotheistic or exclusivist sense, the DSS testimony is not. See Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977.)

manuscript is to be preferred” would lead us to give preference to the DSS witness, but I am not a member of that guild and I prefer it on the basis of its certain antiquity: the DSS witness to Isaiah is, without doubt and with no presuppositions, a Second Temple manuscript.³² DSS Isaiah 42:5 says:

Thus says the God (ha-el) and God (Elohiym)
the creator of the heavens
and the earth, and that which comes out of it,
the Giver of breath (neshamah) to the people upon it,
and *spirit* (ruah) to those walking in it....

The reference to Elohiym is a literal and unreconstructed echo of Genesis 1:1;³³ the gift of ruah seems to be a reference to Gen. 2: 7.³⁴

My next Second Temple example of a text speaking of the Spirit as creator is Judith 16:14, “Let all your creatures serve You, for You spoke, and they were. You sent forth your *Spirit*, and it made³⁵ them....”³⁶ This passage seems to be a midrash on Genesis 1:1-2, perhaps via Ps. 33/2:6: the Greek verbs in “You spoke, and they were” are the same as the Greek verbs in Genesis 1:3. There is once again, however, the inverted form of Gen. 1:1-3 in Judith’s midrash: first God spoke and He sent out His Spirit. Judith 16:14 thus uses parallel expressions to make the actions *by two agents* -- Word, Spirit -- explicit. That parallelism is clear in a third example of a Spirit as creator passage, Fourth (or Second) Esdras 6:38-39:

I said, "O Lord, thou didst speak at the beginning of creation, and didst say on the first day, 'Let heaven and earth be made,' and thy Word accomplished the work. And then the Spirit was hovering, and darkness and silence embraced everything; the sound of man's voice was not yet there."³⁷

Again we see in the midrash of Gen. 1:1-3 the revision of the sequence from how it is originally articulated: now, in the beginning God speaks His Word and the Spirit of God hovers over the face of the waters.” (the Gen. 1:3, 2b couplet.) My final example of a midrashic statement of the Spirit as creator is from Second Baruch 21:4 , which is

³² I will return to the “two-power”-like language of DSS Isaiah when I treat Luke’s pneumatology.

³³ Job 33:4 uses a similar (but not identical) two-title/power construction, “The spirit of God [El] has made me, and the breath of the Almighty [Shadday] gives me life.”

³⁴ The connection between “Adam walking” and “Adam having [a] spirit from above” – specifically, a life-giving spirit – figures significantly in the Jewish Gnostic text (very lightly Christianized), *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, preserved as NHL II.86,20-97. At line 88 ff. the Archons make Adam from soil and breathe into him a soul, but he remains unable to stand and walk until “the spirit descended and came to dwell within him, and that man became a living soul.” Adam later loses his spirit when it is taken from him to vivify Eve. See also my later comments on 4 Esdras 3:4-5 in the discussion of Irenaeus’ doctrine of God’s “Two Hands.”

³⁵ The exact same form -- ωκοδομησεν -- appears at Genesis 2:22, when God took a rib from Adam and *made* Eve.

³⁶ απεστειλας το πνευμα σου, και ωκοδομησεν. Ringgren, p. 166, says that here in Judith the Spirit is “clearly a demiurge.”

³⁷ Fourth (or Second) Esdras 6:38-40 (RSV.)

probably post-Second Temple in origin. Again, like the previous passages from Judith and Fourth Esdras, Second Baruch revizes the “God’s spirit and word” sequence originally found in Genesis 1:1-3, so that the theological content is understood as if it followed the order, “God’s word and spirit.” Other echoes of Genesis are 1:1-8 are apparent (and italicized):

“O you that have made *the earth*, hear me,
that have fixed *the firmament* by the *Word*,
and have made firm the height of the *heaven* by the *Spirit*,
that have called *from the beginning* of the world
that which did not yet exist, and they obey you.”

The significance of these late Second Temple texts is this: we see in them a pattern of midrash on Genesis 1:1-3 in which Genesis 1:3 and Genesis 1:2b are understood to be parallel actions on God’s part. In Genesis 1:3 God sends forth His Word, and things come to be; in Genesis 1:2b God sends forth His Spirit, and things are made. The parallel is already there in Job 26:4, “With whom have you sent your words? Whose breath-of-life has come forth from you?” The importance of Psalm 33:6 is that (so far as we can tell) it begins: (1) the exegetical tradition of reading Genesis 1:1-3 with the Word of God being in the beginning and next follows the Spirit of God; and (2) the “parallel” reading of Genesis 1:3 and 1:2b -- “By the *Word* of the Lord... And by the *Spirit* of His mouth.” Psalm 33:6 is the “deep” authority for the parallel readings of Genesis 1:3 and Genesis 1:2b, just as Psalm 104:30 is the deep authority for speaking of the *Spirit* as being “sent” in/to creation: “When thou sendest forth thy *Spirit*, they are created...”³⁸

Most if not all of these examples of a Spirit-creator theology take as their point of departure the creation tradition represented in Gen. 1:2b, and many of these examples seem related to the Genesis material as midrashim. The authority, credibility and familiarity of these expressions of Spirit-creator theology depend upon the normative status of what is commonly known as the Genesis account(s) of creation, that is, principally Genesis 1 and 2. However, not all of Second Temple Judaism regarded the “Genesis story” as the normative account of the creation of the cosmos, and even the strands of Judaism that did accept the unified Genesis story did not necessarily accept all the terminology and theology of the account regarded as primary in the LXX and rabbinic (MT) textual traditions. (The differences between the LXX and MT textual traditions are nothing compared to what is common between them.) Genesis was not the only story of creation out there in Judaism. The origins tradition associated with I Enoch and which leaves a tiny, smudged footprint in Genesis (at 6:2) is a conspicuous example of an alternate account of the beginning of the cosmos. There are others in Second Temple Judaism, constituted either as stories other than Genesis or as restatements of Genesis in a new theological idiom. These are other Jewish *books of cosmic origin*. The story of

³⁸ One is reminded at this point of Ringgren’s comment -- via Voltz -- regarding the hypostatization of the Spirit: “As Voltz remarks, we can here follow the development step by step from Yahweh’s Holy Spirit, through which Yahweh acts and which he uses as his instrument, via a half independent entity with a sphere of activity of its own, to the purely personal spiritual being of later Judaism.” Ringgren, p. 167.

creation in the book of Genesis is not missing from these alternatives, but what is consistently missing from these alternatives is a statement of the Creator-Spirit. What disappears theologically from these Second Temple texts is the creative “Spirit of God.” In these texts we see a different “Spirit of God” tradition or trajectory than the one(s) that associate the “Spirit of God” with the divine act of creation.

The first example of another book of creation is Jubilees, a privileged text in, e.g., Pharisaical and Essene judaism.³⁹ The creation account in Jubilees begins this way:

1. And the angel of the presence spoke to Moses according to the word of the Lord, saying: Write the complete history of the creation, how in six days the Lord God finished all His works and all that He created, and kept Sabbath on the seventh day and hallowed it for all ages, and appointed it as a sign for all His works.
2. For on the first day He created the heavens which are above and the earth and the waters and all the spirits which serve before him -- the angels of the presence, and the angels of sanctification, and the angels [of the spirit of fire and the angels] of the spirit of the winds, and the angels of the spirit of the clouds, and of darkness, and of snow and of hail and of hoar frost, and the angels of the voices and of the thunder and of the lightning, and the angels of the spirits of cold and of heat, and of winter and of spring and of autumn and of summer and of all the spirits of his creatures which are in the heavens and on the earth, (He created) the abysses and the darkness, eventide <and night>, and the light, dawn and day, which He hath prepared in the knowledge of his heart.⁴⁰

The story is recognizably that of Genesis 1 with the priestly context and theology made more explicit. Later in Jubileees the numerology is more elaborated than in Genesis 1 and there is a discernibly greater emphasis on the sabbath. Here in the Jubileees account of the first day the emphasis is obviously on God’s creation of angels, a topic left untreated in Genesis 1 and 2, although some commentators discerned the angels in the “heaven” created in Genesis 1:1. Psalm 33:6 is sometimes understood to be a statement of the creation of the angels, i.e., by the Spirit of His mouth the powers – the angelic hosts -- of the heavens were spread out. What is missing entirely is any mention of the Spirit of God: whatever spirits there are are elemental forces identified with specific kinds of angels: the angels of the spirit of the clouds, and of darkness, and of snow and of hail and of hoar frost, for example. Nor is the Spirit mentioned in the later verses of Jubileees 2 that describe the establishment of the firmament and the separation of the waters. The angels have displaced the Spirit of God.⁴¹

³⁹ I am assuming that the sectarian Judaism based at Qumran and revealed in the DSS was the essenes.

⁴⁰ Compare Jubileees 2 with Ps. 148 and Daniel 3:52-90 (LXX). Daniel clearly shows dependence upon Ps. 148, but Jubileees may also have been written with Ps. 148 in mind. The cosmological elements listed in Ps. 148, where they praise God, also appear in Jubileees (albeit in an abbreviated form): the “worship” performed by the elements in the psalm now settles upon the angels associated with the cosmological elements.

⁴¹ Perhaps if the Spirit is said to have left Israel and the temple then at least the angels remain, not as the presence of God – as the Spirit was – but as fellow priestly worshippers.

Another important example of Jewish restatements of Genesis in new theological idioms appears in the targum. Dating the targumim is a dangerous scholarly endeavor, and I will hedge my bets, as it were, by simply saying that I regard the works of the genre as dating from roughly between 200 BCE and 200 CE. The targumim are late Second Temple Jewish texts – vernacular Aramaic translations of important Hebrew writings -- written in a theological idiom that has remained largely opaque to many modern biblical scholars. Happily, the passages I am concerned with here are relatively straight-forward and controversy-free. What follows are three vernacular translations or amplifications for Genesis 1:1-2:

At the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth...
a merciful wind from before
God was blowing over the
the surface of the water.

Tg Ps.-J Gen. 1:1-2

From the beginning with wisdom the Memra
of the Lord created and formed the heavens
and the earth... and a spirit of mercy from
before the Lord was blowing over the surface
of the water.

Tg Nf Gen. 1:1-2

In antiquity the Lord created
the heavens and the earth...
[and a wind] from before the
Lord was blowing on the
surface of the water.

Tg Onc Gen. 1:1-2

Some modern translations of Genesis 1:2b show the result of a theological judgment: the “ruah” of Genesis 1:2b is translated simply as “wind.” The targumim translators did something similar, except that they left ruah intact: they changed the verb to make the reading of ruah as “wind” more patent. While in each case the nouns remain *jwr*, the verbs in the Genesis Targumim are no longer “hovering,” but “blowing.” In response to the verbal change, the patent sense of ruah in the Targums is thus “air/wind” instead of “spirit.”

This change in the targumim later provided the occasion for one of the more well known episodes in *Genesis Rabbah* when a rabbi of great honor discovers the Hebrew text of Genesis that the targumim “translate.” *Genesis Rabbah* II.IV.4.E tells of Rabbi Simeon ben Zoma saying, “‘The Spirit of the water blew’ is not what is written, but rather, ‘The spirit of God hovered’ like a bird which is flying and flapping its wings, and the wings barely touch [the nest].” What this means to b. Zoma is that “... the space between the

upper and the nether worlds is no more than the breadth of two or three fingers." When ben Zoma says this to another rabbi, his colleague remarks that Zoma has left this world, and indeed a few days later Zoma died.⁴² As in Jubilees, what disappears in these targumim is the Spirit of God, or as ben Zoma's ecstatic discovery makes clear, what disappears in the targumim is a theology of the Spirit of God.⁴³

Philo

Much has been written in recent scholarship on Philo's understanding of the "Spirit of God." This scholarship indirectly reveals that Philo belongs among those trajectories in late Second Temple Judaism that did not include the Spirit in their account of creation; Philo's interest in the Spirit lay elsewhere.⁴⁴ I say "indirectly reveals," because Philo's lack of interest in the Spirit as creator is not the subject of this scholarship; it is concerned rather with Philo's positive interest in the Spirit regarding other questions in the theology and anthropology of late Second Temple Judaism. Philo is not much interested in the Spirit of God spoken of in Genesis 1:2b; for Philo the key Genesis "spirit" passage is 6:3 – "And the Lord said: 'My spirit shall not abide in man for ever....'" The spirit of God is the presence of *true reason or wisdom*, as it comes upon a human, remains for some period of time, and then leaves -- as it must leave any material creature. It is this indwelling of the spirit that most interests Philo. The limits of Philo's exegesis of Gen. 1:2b are revealed in the following:

But the *Spirit of God* is spoken of in one manner as being air flowing upon the earth, bringing a third element in addition to water. In reference to which, Moses says, in his account of the creation of the world, "The *Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters." {5} (Gen. 1:2.) Since the air, as it is very light, is raised

⁴² Neusner thinks that the point of the story is that mystical things should not be said aloud (and so b. Zoma was punished); the pericope may mean, rather, that the realization of certain spiritual truths sends one on one's way to heaven, for one cannot remain here below with that knowledge. Whatever the point may be of Rabbi ben Zoma dying after revealing his discovery, the story is about the substantial theological difference between the Spirit *hovering* over the waters and the spirit *blowing* over the waters. Enough of a difference to die from – or for. (Perhaps what was hidden in the targum translation was not so mystical, but simply forbidden and best forgotten.)

⁴³ I have already alluded to the Jewish tradition, found in *Genesis Parashah II:IV*, that recognizes the Spirit of Gen 1:2b as the pre-existent Messiah. In my opinion this reading of "Spirit as Messiah" represents another example of a Jewish polemical attempt to diminish the theological significance or content of Spirit – "ruah." I have presented Jewish exegetical examples of a "diminished pneumatology" as incidents in a polemic that occurs within Judaism prior to Christianity. (The case of Philo that follows below is another example.) I am less certain that the identification of the Spirit of Gen 1:2b with the pre-existent Messiah is pre-Christian, although I do not mean to suggest that this identification is made with Christian theology in mind. If the identification of the Spirit of Gen 1:2b with the pre-existent Messiah were pre-Christian one would expect to see some sign of this same exegesis in early Christianity, and one does not. (Such an identification is what one would expect to find if there really were a primitive Spirit Christology.) See Manns, *Le symbole eau – esprit*, p. 252 for the Jewish exegetical connection made between Gen. 1:2b and Isaiah 11:2.

⁴⁴ See, especially, Jon Levinson, "The Debut of the Divine Spirit in Josephus' *Antiquities*," *Harvard Theological Review* 87 (1994), 123-138; "Josephus' Interpretation of the Divine Spirit," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 47 (1996), 234-255; and "The Prophetic Spirit as an Angel According to Philo," *Harvard Theological Review* 88 (1995), 189-207. The most important subject of the pneumatologies of Josephus and Philo is, according to Levinson, the Holy Spirit as the source of inspiration/ecstasy. A broader approach is taken by Levinson in his previously cited "The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism."

and borne aloft, having water, as it were, for its foundation; and, in another manner, unalloyed knowledge is said to be so, which every wise man naturally partakes of. (23) And Moses shows us this, when speaking of the creator and maker of the holy work of the creation, in these words: "And God summoned Bezaleel, and filled him with his *Holy Spirit*, and with wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to be able to devise every Work."^{6} (Ex. 31:1.)

If Genesis 1:2b is read literally, then, the spirit is “a third element in addition to water” – a judgment that demythologizes not just spirit but primal water as well. According to Philo, the proper sense of Gen. 1:2b lies in its description of the movement of knowledge upon the sage – or more precisely, how the gift of this knowledge is what makes someone into a sage or “wise man.” I must emphasize that it is not the case that Philo has no interest in divine spirit – he does – but that interest has nothing to do with the spirit as creator, except insofar as Stoicism might provide spirit with a cosmological role (which it certainly does.) From the perspective of Stoicism,⁴⁵ however, what is noteworthy about Philo is that while he will speak of the cosmological role of spirit, he makes very little of it as the fundamental “stuff” of the universe. Even when stoicism would lead him in another direction, Philo always returns to the *local* presence of the spirit.

But now, the *Spirit* which is upon him [Moses] is the wise, the divine, the indivisible, the undistributable, the good *Spirit*, the *Spirit* which is everywhere diffused, so as to fill the universe, which, while it benefits others, it not injured by having a participation in it given to another, and if added to something else, either as to its understanding, or its knowledge, or its wisdom.

Philo’s silence on the spirit as creator is especially significant because for Philo what we mean by “God” is “creator.” The status of the Logos as a “second God” is due to the role the Logos has in creating: it is the cause of creation formally and efficiently; it is the principle of creation, the plan of creation, the agent of creating, and the source of the continued existence of creation. The Logos does not share this creative act with other causes, although he does act through his powers. If for Philo either Job 33:4 or Psalm 33:6 were literally true or in any way decisive for his theology of creation, the Spirit, like the Word, would have to be called God, since those texts speak of creation by the Word and Spirit. Perhaps the strongest reason why Philo could not accept such a claim for spirit lies in the fact, for Philo so strikingly testified to in Scripture, that the spirit of God comes into someone: for a period of time the spirit dwells in this cubicle of matter in ways in which the Logos does not; the way in which God could not.

Some recent scholars, notably Menzes, have documented the elimination of previous references to the Spirit of God in texts edited or translated during the late Second Temple

⁴⁵ Philo associates Spirit with fire and air, as one would expect in a Stoic intellectual milieu; he describes Spirit as permeating the cosmos, again Stoic; and he equates Spirit with the rational principle, again Stoic. Similarly, Philo’s understanding of the cosmological role of water is scientific and follows the Stoics. For an overview of spirit in Stoic philosophy, see chapter #.

period of Judaism.⁴⁶ It is the judgment of such scholars that in late Second Temple Judaism the action of the divine spirit is understood by Jews to be principally that of indwelling and prophecy. I agree that there were strands of the Judaism(s) of this era – including major ones represented by Philo and Josephus – that limited the action of the divine spirit to effects associated with indwelling. However, I see this identification of spirit with the action of indwelling as a theology polemically engaged with another major strand of in Judaism, namely, a theology of the Spirit as creator. In short, the fact that at this time some Jews identify the Spirit of God with the indwelling spirit and minimize (by various strategies) other theologies of the Spirit should be understood within the context of the sectarian character of Judaism of the late Second Temple. There are multiple “Judaisms” with multiple theologies of the Spirit of God, and with multiple influences upon early Christianity. (It would be equally true to substitute the word “conflicting” for each case of “multiple.”)

One key example of a strand in late Second Temple Judaism with a strong theology of the Spirit as creator is the Qumran community: the DSS manuscripts retain the language of the Spirit Creator in all the texts where mention of the Creator Spirit is found “traditionally” (i.e., in the MT).⁴⁷ The continuing presence of this Spirit language – a kind of “high pneumatology” in Judaism – in a community that also has a strong theology of the indwelling Spirit should not go unnoticed, and the scriptural texts of the DSS may be usefully contrasted with the scriptural texts of the targumim. Finally, during the period of time in Judaism that scholars such as Menzes treat, mainstream Judaism(s) restricts the theological significance of several other traditional hypostatic theologomena, including Wisdom, Angel of the Presence (or of the Lord), Michael, Gabriel, Metatron, and the Son of Man, as well as the Spirit of God.⁴⁸

Christian Writings in the First Century

When we turn to the writings of the New Testament⁴⁹ we encounter two problems: the first specific, the second more general; the first having to do directly with the content of the NT texts, the second having to do with the meaning of those texts for the interpretation of the history of Christian doctrine. The first problem, then, is this: the NT texts nowhere describe the Holy Spirit as creator, or an agent in the creation of the cosmos. As a general rule, references to the Holy Spirit in the writings of Luke and John are claims for correctly naming or recognizing the time at hand. For example, the fact that the Holy Spirit is “upon” Jesus in Luke’s gospel communicates the fact that the promised time, foretold by the prophets, is now here; the fact that the Holy Spirit is “given” to the Apostles in John’s gospel communicates the fact that Christ has ascended and that now is the time of His glorification. This idea -- that references to the Holy Spirit in the Gospels are claims for correctly naming or recognizing the time at hand -- does not

⁴⁶ Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology: With Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTS 54 (1991).

⁴⁷ We could say, provocatively but for sound historical reasons, that the MT retains mention of the Creator Spirit in all the texts where the Creator Spirit is found in the DSS manuscripts.

⁴⁸ See chapter # for my interpretation of one set of changes in the Jerusalem Targum.

⁴⁹ Here I use this title anachronistically to mean “those specific writings (eventually) collected under this name.” No strict chronology of NT texts is observed in this section; e.g., my present purposes are better served by beginning with the gospels rather than with Paul.

diminish other content in passages where the Holy Spirit is mentioned, but sets them within the proper theological context.

We can say something more about the purpose of the gospels as a whole, each one individually and the four of them collectively: they are written to identify Jesus as the Christ, to record and interpret key events in His life, and to preserve those of His teachings that follow from His presence as Messiah. (This purpose applies equally to canonical and non-canonical gospels with Jewish-Christian origins.) Such a summary of the Gospels probably sounds trite or arrogant; I can point to precisely what I mean by this summary by noting one fact about what the gospels say, or rather, *don't say*: from the gospel texts alone it would not be possible to say that the Father, the unseen God who sent his Son to do His will, was the creator of the universe.⁵⁰ Marcion to the contrary, I have no doubt that both the authors and the early readers of the Gospels believed that the Father was the creator of the universe; but, giving Marcion his due, if one cuts away the basis of that belief -- a basis which is external to the literary gospels, and is found only in the OT -- then the Gospels would be directionless on this point. The reader may now see where I am going with this line of thought, for the first specific problem that has to do directly with the content of the NT texts and for the second, more general, problem in the writings of the New Testament that has to do with the meaning of those texts for the interpretation of the history of Christian doctrine For the first: if the Gospels nowhere speak of the Holy Spirit as creator they also do not identify the Father as creator, but the content of the latter is supplied through continuity with the Jewish Scriptures -- which are the Christians' Scriptures, too. Similarly, the content of the former -- that the Holy Spirit is creator -- is supplied through continuity with the Jewish Scriptures if those earliest Christians accepted as Scripture the books of the "Old Testament" we have identified as expressing a doctrine of the Creator Spirit: i.e., Genesis, the psalms, Job and Isaiah, etc.

The second problem we encounter when we turn to the New Testament to gain an understanding of the earliest Christian theology of the Holy Spirit is a problem with the meaning of those texts in the history of Christian belief and doctrine. In this paragraph I will speak bluntly: for approximately the first two hundred years of Christianity, Jewish Scriptures are *the vehicle* of Christian beliefs, not writings by Christians (later collectively known as the New Testament). Richard Norris made this point neatly in a discussion of Second Century Christian authors: "Like Justin and Irenaeus, Melito was one of those who used the 'ancient books' *as the explicit sources of his proclamation and teaching*, but tended to refer to the Christian Gospels and other authoritative writings more allusively, even though *it was they that determined for him the sense of the Law and Prophets.*"⁵¹

⁵⁰ The prologue to John comes very close to saying that the unseen God is the creator of the universe, but doesn't. Luke 10:21 explicitly identifies Jesus' Father with the Creator, briefly and in passing: that Jesus' Father is the Creator is not the point of the pericope.

⁵¹ *Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, p. 41, emphasis added. A similar conclusion is offered about Justin specifically in a recent monograph written within the context of "NT Studies." "... Justin's governing narrative appears to be the Jewish Scriptures, and he refers to Christian accounts concerning Jesus only where those accounts may be taken to fulfill the Jewish Scriptures." Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke-Acts in the Period before Irenaeus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), p. 296. There seems to be an assumption operating at a very basic level in Scripture Studies methodologies

The NT -- its content as described above, or the very events themselves (see Peter's sermon at Acts 2:14-36) -- is the interpretative guide for a proper understanding of the Christian theology articulated in the Jewish Scriptures (LXX). More precisely, given the period for the development, collection, and recognition of the writings of "the New Testament," the interpretative guide for a proper understanding of the Christian theology articulated in the Jewish Scriptures is the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the Christian and gives her or him insight into the truth of the Scriptures, that is, the Jewish Scriptures. The realities behind the Gospels, and eventually the written Gospels themselves, provided the interpretive key for the proper understanding of Scripture (i.e., Jewish Scriptures, almost exclusively the LXX), but the theology that was "unlocked" was the theology expressed in the Jewish Scriptures.⁵²

In order to make clear what I mean when I say that the realities behind the Gospels provided the interpretive key for the proper understanding of the theology expressed in the Jewish Scriptures I will provide a few examples that illustrate this dynamic.⁵³ The first example is taken from Ignatius of Antioch's *Letter to the Philadelphians* c8: Ignatius has argued earlier in the letter, as he does in all his letters (but one) for the primacy of the bishop and the episcopal structure. Some Christians objected to Ignatius' claim for the necessity of a bishop-led community by saying that they do not find any warrant for this in the sacred books. Ignatius' reply is amazing and revealing: "For my part, my records are Jesus Christ; for me, the holy books are His cross and death and resurrection, and the faith that comes through Him."⁵⁴ As a recent scholarly description of this exchange between Ignatius and his critics puts it: "Against them, Ignatius simply insists, 'It is there' and those who know Jesus Christ will see it.... The cross, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the 'faith that came by him,' provide the interpretive key. To know him is to know the content of the scriptures."⁵⁵ The Scriptures are the Jewish Scriptures, whose interpretive key is the life of Jesus: from the perspective of the revelation of the Christ the meaning of the holy books is understood.⁵⁶

that the NT writings would have very quickly been cited as "proof" and have been the subject of Christian exegesis. Such an assumption seems to divorce the early Christian writings from their religious-historical context.

⁵² If one thinks in a liberal fashion that there were in fact no "realities behind the Gospels" then one has to show that the Gospels themselves, the very literature, individually or collectively, were the "the explicit sources of ... proclamation and teaching" in the early church -- and that cannot be done, for there is no evidence of this in the early patristic literature. Similarly, if one thinks that the Gospels themselves were "the explicit sources of ... proclamation and teaching" in the early church then one has to show evidence that this was so in Christian literature of the first two hundred years, but this too cannot be done, and for the same reason as with the previous supposition.

⁵³ Two key notes: first, all of my examples are taken from literature written by Christians to Christians; and second, whenever I refer to "the Gospels" I include Luke's Acts (or *Ad Theophilus II.*)

⁵⁴ *Early Christian Writings*, Penguin, p. 114

⁵⁵ *Sanctified Vision*, p. 28.

⁵⁶ The same problem is handled by Clement of Rome in a related way. At *Epistle to the Corinthians* 42 Clement replies to those who resist the authority of the bishop, which they see as an innovation. Clement responds with a quotation from Isaiah 6x.17: "I will confirm their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith." Whatever anyone may have thought that passage meant, now, after Jesus, Christians know that it was declaring the authority of the bishops.

My second example is from Clement of Rome's *Letter to the Corinthians*. At one point Clement develops an argument for Christian humility by pointing to the example of Christ Himself who was "born without pomp – which he could have been – but in self-abasement...." Then Clement turns to a long description of the Lord's humility and abasement that has been provided by the Holy Spirit Who "said of Him [Christ]": "For we proclaimed before the Lord that he resembles a babe in arms, or a root in waterless soil; there is not a trace of shapeliness or splendor about him...." and so on, continuing the passage from Isaiah 53:1-12 and then from Psalm 22:6-8. Scholars recognize that here Clement is drawing upon selected passages collected as a kind of proof text – the *Testimonia* – but we must be careful about what Clement of Rome is saying with these passages. He is a Christian writing to Christians; his point is not the conversion of his readers, proving to them that Jesus fits the prophetic *testimonia*. Justin uses the *testimonia* in this way in his argument with Trypho. Clement is using Isaiah 53:1-12 and Psalm 22:6-8 to *describe* Jesus' humility, a description provided by the Holy Spirit Who said these words about Jesus in the first place.⁵⁷ Clement does not use a gospel pericope to illustrate Jesus' humility, which is what a later Christian would do. Clement knows some basic history of Jesus' life – He was born without pomp but in self-abasement – which is enough for Clement to know that Jesus was indeed humble, although this knowledge may come not from knowing of a "humble" episode in the story of Jesus but from a theological insight like Phil. 2:5-7. In any case, for Clement the Isaiah and psalm material describe Jesus the same way Luke or Matthew would be thought to describe Jesus by later Christians. But in Clement's case, the gospel material is not descriptive: it is the hermeneutic needed in order to recognize the descriptions in the OT, descriptions that were there all the time, but unrecognized and unrecognizable. To repeat my main point in a different fashion: in the earliest church the gospel stories ("kerygma") were not preserved in order to be the object of theological interpretation; they are instead, to those who have the faith, the key to the proper theological interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures (the "Old Testament.")⁵⁸

My final example is from Irenaeus. For brevity's sake, I will simply quote the observations of a recent translator of the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching*.

"Most striking, however, is that in recounting this history [of Christ], the New Testament writings are not utilized by Irenaeus as the foundation of his presentation..... that Jesus was born from the Virgin and worked miracles is shown from Isaias and others; while the names of Pontius Pilate and Herod are known from the Gospels, that Christ was bound and brought before them is shown by Osee [Hosea]; that he was crucified, raised and exalted is again shown by other

⁵⁷ Clement is one of several early Christian authors who conclude from Isaiah 53:2b -- "there is not a trace of shapeliness or splendor about him" -- that Jesus was an ugly man. The Gospels, of course, say nothing about his physical appearance.

⁵⁸ The Gospels were written as the last legitimate books of the (old) Testament, and they may be said to stand to the rest of Scripture as the last verse of a poem stands to all that has gone before in the poem: the sense of the previous lines is completed by reaching their telos, and their meaning is somehow transformed by the reorganization that the last line imposes upon all that has gone before. When one reads Dylan Thomas' "Refusal to Mourn the Death by Fire of a Child in London" the sense of every preceding verse is changed by the very last one: "After the first death there is no other."

prophets. The *whole content of the apostolic preaching is derived*, for Irenaeus, from the Old Testament, which, in turn, implies a recognition of the scriptural, that is, ultimate authority of the apostolic preaching.”⁵⁹

To return, then, to my chronological treatment of the theology of a Spirit Creator: the NT texts nowhere describe the Holy Spirit as creator, or an agent in the creation of the cosmos. Paul and John do speak of the Son and Word as creator -- and John’s explicit testimony to that effect will become very important at the beginning of the third century. Only John’s description of the Word as creator owes to Gen 1:1-3, and neither Paul’s nor John’s description of the Son and Word as creator utilize any of the Spirit creator OT passages I have identified here. Paul and the authors of the Gospels are not concerned with proclaiming the Spirit as creator: three of the four gospels are not interested in proclaiming the Son as creator. Creation is not the proper subject of proclamation for the NT authors; redemption is. As we shall see in other chapters of this book, the work of the Holy Spirit in that redemption is not left unannounced. However, until the middle of the second century, there are no explicit acknowledgments of the received theology of the Spirit as creator; over the same period there are very few acknowledgments of the received theology of the Word-Son as creator, for that matter.⁶⁰ What proclamations of the creator there are centered upon the Father -- the “one God” -- as creator.⁶¹ My point for now is that Christian silence on the Spirit as creator travels side by side with Christian silence on the Word-Son as creator, and when Christians begin to speak of the Word-Son as creator,⁶² they tend to begin to speak also of the Spirit as creator.

⁵⁹ John Behr, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons On the Apostolic Preaching*, pp. 7-8, emphasis added. The opening of Behr’s paragraph is worth providing: “Most striking, however, is that in recounting this history, the New Testament writings are not utilized by Irenaeus as the foundation of his presentation. He clearly knows these writings, and regards them as Scripture, as is amply demonstrated by his other work, *Against the Heresies*, and by the fact that when, in the *Demonstration*, he cites a verse from the Old Testament, attributing it to its Old Testament source, it is often, nevertheless, given in the form used by the New Testament (e.g., the passage attributed to Jeremias in Mat 27:9-10, cited in chp. 81 [of the *Demo.*]). However, in the *Demonstration*...”

⁶⁰ How much time passes, then, between the writing of the apostolic witnesses and the mid-second century writings that speak explicitly of the Son and/or Spirit as creator (e.g., Athenagoras’)? Something between sixty years and a century, depending on the specific “NT” writing.

⁶¹ Two important early and specifically Christian texts that name God as the Creator are *First Clement* 3:2-3 “For the Creator and Master of the universe Himself rejoices in His Works For by His exceeding great might He established the heavens, and in His incomprehensible wisdom He set them in order. And the earth He separated from the water that surrounds it, and He set it firm on the sure foundation of His own will; and the living creatures which walk upon it. He commanded to exist by His ordinance. Having before created the sea and the living creatures therein, He enclosed it by His own power”; and *Shepherd of Hermas* Mandate 1: 1[26]:1 “First of all, believe that God is One, even He who created all things and set them in order, and brought all things from non-existence into being, Who comprehends all things, being alone incomprehensible.”

⁶² There is one conspicuous and significant exception to this statement: the prologue to the Gospel of John, which includes the statement “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.” (John 1:3.) This passage in John is an exceptional one in many ways, for it speaks of the Word-Son in a rare way: the Word-Son is an agent of creation. I do not think that this belief is unique to John; what is unique is that this is said explicitly and not simply presumed from the content of Jewish scriptures. (The reader must understand that “scriptures” is not meant here in any canonical sense, and the candidates for such “Jewish scriptures” are not limited to the MT canon, or even to the contents of the LXX. First Enoch, e.g., is a Jewish scripture, as are the targumim.) That John should be the exception to my generalization that

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Athenagoras: The Two axis of his Pneumatology⁶³

Athenagoras' theology of the Holy Spirit can be understood more accurately if we imagine it as built along two doctrinal axes: the “x axis,” as it were, is the Holy Spirit as creator; and the “y axis” is the Holy Spirit as an effluence from God.⁶⁴ To talk about Athenagoras' theology of the Holy Spirit in this way allows us to recognize the important ways Athenagoras speaks of the Holy Spirit without confusing them, or setting them in competition to one another. Moreover, these two concepts describe the Holy Spirit in such a way that the role of the Holy Spirit in cosmology functions also as a mark of the Holy Spirit's separate or distinct existence.⁶⁵ My subject here remains principally Athenagoras's theology of *the Holy Spirit as creator*, but this theology is “filled out” (to continue my topological analogy) Athenagoras' understanding of the Holy Spirit's nature and identity in this precise way: if the Holy Spirit is the (or *a*) creator then he is not to be counted among those things created. If the Holy Spirit is not created, then what is His origin?

(1) *the Holy Spirit as creator*

Athenagoras' first statements about the Holy Spirit occur in his description of the Christian belief that there is a God who is the creator of the cosmos. Athenagoras emphasizes the Christian belief in a creator God in order to rebut pagan claims that Christians are “atheists.”⁶⁶ Three things are worth noting about Athenagoras' expression of this belief: that he keeps the Trinitarian character of creation central to the Christian account of the origins of the cosmos; that his statements about the Holy Spirit are continuous in kind with his statements about the Word; and that he has a clear – if here unelaborated – notion of how the Logos and Spirit act in creating.

“Christian silence on the Spirit as creator travels side by side with Christian silence on the Word-Son as creator, and when Christians begin to speak of the Word-Son as creator, they tend to begin to speak also of the Spirit as creator” will be seen to fit in with John's pneumatology overall. (See my **chapter x.**)

⁶³*Athenagoras – Legatio Pro Christianis*, Miroslav Marcovich, ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990). The *Legatio* dates from circa 177-180.

⁶⁴ I take this order from the sequence in which Athenagoras himself introduces such ideas about the Spirit. The content of the second axis, Athenagoras' description of the Holy Spirit as an “effluence,” has received the most scholarly attention hitherto. In my chapter on angelomorphic pneumatology I will add a third z axis, as it were, on the Holy Spirit as the first among governing spirits according to Athenagoras.

⁶⁵ I should also emphasize that Athenagoras has a clearly stated understanding that the Holy Spirit acts to inspire prophets and through them to give revealed knowledge, and I do not mean to diminish that understanding (or that role of the Spirit) in Athenagoras' theology by not discussing it here in my model of the “three axis” where my guiding criterion is the creative activity of the Holy Spirit

⁶⁶ This charge circulated because Christians refused to worship the “civic” gods, a very visible act with possible political implications. “Religion” for the Romans was primarily a matter of civic order; the subjects we normally associate with religion – the immortality of the soul, the relationship between this life and the next, whether the universe is ordered by providence, what is true virtue – all belonged to the field of philosophy and not religion. Religion was public cult, and the benefits of that cult belonged to the social or political order. See Justin Martyr's defense against the charge that Christians are “atheists,” and his point that the “kingdom of God” is not a kingdom of this world (*Apology I.*)

“If, therefore, Plato is not an atheist for conceiving of one uncreated God, the Framer of the universe, neither are we atheists who acknowledge and firmly hold that He is God who has framed all things by the Logos, *and holds them in being by His Spirit.*”

“.... but Him he did see by means of His works, considering with an eye to things unseen the things which are manifest in air, in ether, on earth. Him therefore, from whom proceed all created things, *and by whose Spirit they are governed*, he concluded to be God”

Abraham J. Malherbe said of Athenagoras' pneumatology that he “... conceives of the function of the Spirit in creation along the lines of the Middle Platonic World Soul. In this respect the Spirit corresponds to the Logos, with the exception that the Logos is the agent through which God created the world, while through the Spirit he maintains and controls it.”⁶⁷ Malherbe invoked the Middle Platonic doctrine of the World Soul as a way of explaining Athenagoras' conception of the creative function of the Holy Spirit in part because of the specific activities Athenagoras attributes to the Spirit – to hold in being, and to govern, creation – but also in part because Athenagoras speaks so directly about what the Spirit does, convinced that his readers will recognize these activities for what they are and for what they say about the Holy Spirit. Athenagoras spoke in a short hand: his contemporary readers recognized the conceptual idiom; his modern readers are less fluent with the philosophical concepts. We face a distinctive problem when trying to read and comment upon Athenagoras' *Plea*: because of the subject matter we rightly seek for a scriptural (LXX) background for the things Athenagoras says (since he himself invokes the prophets and their inspired words as his sources),⁶⁸ but given the intended audience of the *Plea* (not to mention the author's evident skill as a rhetor), Athenagoras could only have sought out language which his audience would recognize – and moreover, recognize as worthy of true philosophical discourse.

Malherbe's argument is worth considering in detail -- his short article is the only one in English devoted to Athenagoras' pneumatology -- and it runs as follows. The two key descriptions that Athenagoras gives of the Spirit's creative activity is that the Spirit holds all things in being (*πνευματι συνεχεται τα παντα*) and governs (*ηνιοχεισθαι*) all created things. The Greek terminology that Athenagoras uses in these two descriptions has been studied by a previous generation of scholars. Peuch suggested in 1912 “that *πνευματι συνεχεται τα παντα* shows that Athenagoras has a Stoic conception of the Spirit's cosmic function.”⁶⁹ Malherbe nuances Peuch by saying that this “Stoic conception” need not have influenced Athenagoras directly: “Athenagoras may have acquired this description of the Spirit from Middle Platonic speculation on the World

⁶⁷ “The Holy Spirit in Athenagoras,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 ns (1969), 538-542.

⁶⁸ David T. Runia remarks in his *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, p. 107, “... that Athenagoras hardly refers to the OT. This means that, unlike in the case of Justin, it is impossible to place him in relation to anterior exegetical traditions.” (The “interesting” exception is Athenagoras' explicit mention of the Enochian understanding of Genesis 6:2 – angels having sexual relations with human women.)

⁶⁹ Ibid., 540.

Soul.”⁷⁰ Malherbe continues: “The use of ηνιοχεισθαι [by Athenagoras] calls to mind the myth of the charioteer in Plato’s Phaedrus.... This myth, too, figured in Middle Platonic discussions of the World Soul.”⁷¹

The philosophical background to Athenagoras description of the Spirit’s role in creation is important to recognize. We gain both a sense of the meaning of the language employed as well as a glimpse of Athenagoras’ use of terminology that his audience would understand and appreciate. The language of Athenagoras description of the Spirit’s role in creation sets that description within the context of Middle Platonic speculation on the World Soul. By so doing, however, the limits of the influence of Middle Platonic speculation on the World Soul upon Athenagoras’ doctrine of the Holy Spirit become clear. Recent scholars – from, e.g., Dillon (1977) to Frick⁷² (1999) – have documented the various questions that were an essential part of the Middle Platonic discussion of the World Soul. These questions mark out the School Platonic philosophical doctrine of the World Soul: to be a “philosopher” during this period of time is to have an opinion on the set piece questions on, e.g., the *Timaeus* and the *Phaedrus*. Such school questions include whether the world is inherently imperishable and did creation occur in time or before time. Athenagoras offers no opinions on these questions. He does not locate himself within the field of recognizable school options on the questions of the world’s imperishability and (a)temporal creation. (By contrast, these questions do occupy Philo.⁷³) I take Athenagoras’ silence on these set piece questions to mean that Athenagoras is not a “professional” philosopher and that he is not using Middle Platonic doctrine as a philosopher would have.⁷⁴ Athenagoras is influenced by Middle Platonic doctrines of the World Soul, but he is not, by training or profession, a participant in the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Malherbe is building off the 1931 work of Baudry on Atticus. The relevant bit of “Middle Platonic speculation” turns upon interest in Timaeus 41a.

⁷¹ We know this, Malherbe points out, from Atticus, who says that “the view that the World Soul orders the universe is based on Phaedrus 246c, and [- a second witness -] Phaedrus 245c occurs in Plutarch’s treatment of the same subject.” *Ibid.*, 541. ηνιοχεισθαι is a peculiar word, indeed: it means “govern,” but its original sense was connected to a rider – or charioteer – controlling the horse by means of reins. By the Second Century the general application of the word ηνιοχεισθαι had had almost five hundred years to become a figure of speech, but the continuing philosophical interest in the Phaedrus and the myth of the charioteer kept alive the foundational Platonic use of the word.

⁷² *Divine providence in Philo of Alexandria* (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

⁷³ Documentation for this observation may be found in Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*. Runia argues in *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, pp. 105-109, that Athenagoras had not read any Philo. (Indeed, as we shall see, Philo’s influence among the Apologists as a whole seems almost non-existent: this generation of Christians knew other texts of Hellenized Judaism.)

⁷⁴ Joseph Hugh Crehan, trans., with notes, *Athenagoras – Embassy for the Christians and The Resurrection of the Dead*, Ancient Christian Writers No. 23 (New York: Newman Press, 1956), p. 15, says that one cannot claim that “with Athenagoras Christianity was a veneer upon a Platonic habit of thought” and in particular cites Athenagoras’ rejection of the transmigration of souls as proof. (Crehan then provides a useful summary of Athenagoras’ relationship with Platonism; see pp. 15-21.) The spectre of Harnack looms darkly here, as it also does for Leslie Barnard in his *Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic* (1972). My point is slightly different than Crehan’s strong statement that Athenagoras’ Christianity was not a veneer upon his Platonism (a description Cherniss has given of Gregory of Nyssa’s Christianity): I am saying that Athenagoras’ Platonism – indeed, the philosophical character *en toto* of his thought – is not technical in nature. Athenagoras is not a philosopher – of any school.

technical philosophical discussion of such doctrines.⁷⁵ Barnard has remarked upon the highly literate character of Athenagoras' writings,⁷⁶ and Grant spoke of Athenagoras as a "grammarian".⁷⁷ If we keep these characterizations in mind, and also recognize what is *not there* in Athenagoras' use of philosophy (i.e., engagement with "school" questions), then we can avoid the danger of reductionist tendencies in our reading of Athenagoras' theology and its "sources." Even without being a "school" philosopher with a pattern of thought formed by the received debating questions and hot topics, Athenagoras can nonetheless have a working literacy in philosophy and see a kind of parallelism between philosophical and Christian doctrines, as well as understanding the apologetic utility of such parallels. With such an understanding of Athenagoras' relationship to philosophy, we can, moreover, better appreciate how Athenagoras can move freely through a variety of kinds of descriptions of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

The best examples of the philosophical literature that Athenagoras drew upon to express the creative activity of the Holy Spirit date from the mid second century of the Common Era. The proximity in time of this literature to Athenagoras' own writing makes it excellent testimonies with which to compare Athenagoras' statements. Like Athenagoras himself, some of these Middle Platonic authors are associated with Athens (e.g., Apuleius), which makes it more likely that such pagan authors either reflect what Athenagoras learned, or that they were themselves his sources. Some treatment of these authors and their doctrines will, I think, better enable us to better appreciate what Malherbe is thinking of when he says that Athenagoras conceives of the creative function of the Spirit along the lines of the creative function attributed to the World Soul in Middle Platonism. I offer three selections from Middle Platonic authors: they are ordered chronologically, but, as the reader will observe, the order also reflects an increasing potential relevance for a Christian pneumatology.

ATTICUS: Further, Plato says that the Soul organises the Universe, penetrating throughout all of it, ... and that Nature is nothing else but Soul – and obviously rational Soul – and he concludes from this that everything happens according to Providence, as it happens according to Nature. With none of this is Aristotle in agreement.⁷⁹

ALBINUS: [God] is Father by reason of the fact that he is cause of all things and orders the heavenly Mind and the Soul of the World in accordance with himself

⁷⁵ It thus makes good sense that Philo receives substantial treatment in John Dillon's *The Middle Platonists 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* while Athenagoras is untouched: the former is indeed a Middle Platonist school philosopher (whatever other loyalties he may also have), the latter is not.

⁷⁶ "Athenagoras' works show a marked literary excellence which places them in a class by themselves in the apologetic literature of the second century. His *Legatio* is far and away the best piece of literature of its type which the Antonine age can boast." Barnard , p. 179.

⁷⁷ "Athenagoras has studied philosophy, but he is essentially a grammarian, proud of his erudition." Robert Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (1988;1999), p. 103.

⁷⁸ Lebreton emphasizes the need, while interpreting Athenagoras' theology, to understand that he was a "platonic philosopher" and also an apologist, and, "above all, he was a Christian." Jules Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la trinité -- des origines au concile de Nicee*, in two tomes (5th edition: 1928; Beauchesne: Paris, 1910), II:503.

⁷⁹ Dillon, p. 252.

and with his thoughts; for by his own will he has filled all things with himself, rousing up the Soul of the World and turning it towards himself, as being the cause of its Mind. And this latter, being set in order by the Father itself sets in order the whole of Nature within this world.⁸⁰.

APULEIUS: But that celestial Soul, source of all other souls, Plato declares to be supremely good and wise, and endowed with generative power and that it serves the will of the creator God and is at his disposal for all that he desires.⁸¹

Atticus' (or Plato's) understanding is that "the Soul organises the Universe, penetrating throughout all of it." "Penetrating" seems too immanent a description to apply to God, but one purpose of such a description of the World Soul is to support a theology of the Father's complete transcendence. The overall thrust of Atticus' remarks is to show that God's providence acts in the universe through the World Soul (also known as Nature.) This quotation from Atticus is especially useful for revealing the "school" context for questions on the world's origins and providence: "With none of this is Aristotle in agreement."

Albinus' comments can be read as referring to a threesome of causal agents: the Father, the Mind, and the Soul of the World. In point of fact, Albinus may have identified "the Mind" with "the Soul of the World" but other Middle Platonists (e.g., Numenius) need not have understood him that way. Some Jews as well as most Christians could read with sympathy Albinus' remark that the Father "orders the heavenly Mind and the Soul of the World in accordance with himself and with his thoughts." The idea that the Father has to *rouse up* the World Soul (moving it from potential to actual, as it were) – a recurring doctrine among generations of Middle Platonists – might have less appeal. However, the notion that the Father and a "roused" or active Holy Spirit are the cause of Mind (or Word) need not be alien to all Christian sensibility. (It might indeed seem like Luke 1:35 "Atticized.")

Apuleius description of the World Soul seems the most hospitable to pneumatology, for it is easy, given LXX descriptions of God's Spirit or Wisdom, to apply to the Holy Spirit what Apuleius says of the World Soul -- that it is "supremely good and wise, and endowed with generative power and... serves the will of the creator God and is at his disposal for all that he desires."

Nothing that I have said about these three Middle Platonic descriptions of the World Soul *proves* that Athenagoras conceived "of the function [of the Holy Spirit] in creation along the lines of the Middle Platonic World Soul."⁸² The three quotations do lend some content and context to Malherbe's judgment on the connection between Athenagoras' conception of the function of the Holy Spirit in creation and the function of the World Soul in creation. The most important idea to keep in mind is this: Middle Platonists describe the World Soul in terms of God's providence -- it is a key part of their argument

⁸⁰ Dillon, pp. 283-84.

⁸¹ Dillon, p. 316.

⁸² Malherbe, p. 541.

(against, e.g., the Aristotelians) that there is divine providence at work in the cosmos. The role of the World Soul is to preserve the cosmos in existence and to order that cosmos in accordance with “the will of the creator God.” Jewish writings -- especially, e.g., Psalm 104:30 -- have much the same thing to say about the role of God’s Spirit. For some Jews and most Christians the Spirit of God -- His Holy Spirit -- is a key part of their faith that there is divine providence at work in the cosmos; indeed, that the cosmos itself is a providential work given life by the Holy Spirit. In Athenagoras’ own words, Christians “acknowledge and firmly hold that He is God who has framed all things by the Logos, and holds them in being by His Spirit.”

Finally, I want to return to a remark I made at the beginning of my discussion of Athenagoras’ statements on the Holy Spirit and creation: Athenagoras keeps the Trinitarian origins of creation central to his account of the origins of the cosmos; and he has a clear notion of how the Logos and Spirit act in creating. We saw at the beginning of this chapter that many important Jewish statements on the creative work of God’s Spirit are coupled with parallel statements on the role of the creative work of God’s Word: Psalm 33:6, Judith 16:14, and Second Baruch 21:4, and these precedents figure in Athenagoras’ parallel formulations (as they will more clearly figure in Irenaeus’.) The Middle Platonic notions of God the Father, Mind and World Soul offer a triadic account of creation that Athenagoras can echo -- that, indeed, Athenagoras can exploit. The same Middle Platonic notions provide specific terminology for the actions in creation of the Mind and the World Soul -- language that, again, Athenagoras can echo and exploit in his descriptions of how the Logos and Spirit act in creating.

(2) The origin of the Holy Spirit: an effluence from God

The second “doctrinal axes” I am proposing for understanding Athenagoras’ pneumatology is his teaching that the Holy Spirit is an “effluence” from God: i.e., Athenagoras’ description of the origin of the Holy Spirit. This aspect of Athenagoras’ pneumatology is important Athenagoras’ description of the origins of the Holy Spirit makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is not Himself a creature. As the following passage makes clear, the Holy Spirit is “one in power” (i.e., one in nature) with God the Father and God the Son:⁸³

... for from the beginning, God, who is the eternal mind [vous], had the Logos in Himself, being from eternity instinct with Logos [λογικός]; but in as much as He came forth to be the idea and energizing power [ἰδεα καὶ ενεργεία] of all material things.... The prophetic Spirit also agrees with our statements. ‘The Lord,’ it says, ‘made me, the beginning of His ways to His works.’⁸⁴ called atheists? Leg. 10

⁸³ For the Christian use of “one power” language in Trinitarian theology, and the strong statement of unity connoted by “one power” statements on the Trinity, see my “One Nature, One Power: Consensus Doctrine in Pro-Nicene Polemic,” *Studia Patristica* XXIX (1997), 205-223.

⁸⁴ Malherbe, p. 539, offers a detailed argument based upon a close reading of the Greek that Athenagoras’ Greek makes better sense grammatically if Prov. 8:22 is understood as referring to what follows -- i.e., the Holy Spirit -- rather than what precedes -- i.e., the Logos. Barnard repeats Malherbe’s argument.

For, as we acknowledge a God, and a Son his Logos, and a Holy Spirit, united in essence, the Father, the Son, the Spirit, because the Son is the Intelligence, Reason, Wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit an effluence [ἀποπέπει], as light from fire....⁸⁵ Leg 24

Athenagoras' description of the Holy Spirit as an "effluence" from the Father is an important place to begin to understand the non-created origin of the Holy Spirit. Barnard remarks that Athenagoras was "the first to apply the image of 'effluence' or 'outflow' to the Spirit."⁸⁶ With this observation in hand, we can turn to the important questions of *Where is Athenagoras taking the word from?* and *What does the word mean?* Malherbe sees the term as indicative of Athenagoras' debt to Middle Platonism, but Barnard thinks the evidence for Middle Platonic use of the term is scant. Barnard prefers to see the influence of Wisdom 7:25 in Athenagoras' use of "effluence" to describe the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷ With these scholarly judgments, we see a kind of inadvertant polarization of the "source" question for Athenagoras: *either* a philosophical *or* a scriptural background for Athenagoras' theology.

The word in question is **aporroia** (ἀπορροία), usually translated (as in these passages from the *Legatio*) as "effluence" (or sometimes "emanation.") Again, Athenagoras' readers probably had a keener sense than modern readers of what such a action or thing as an effluence/emanation might be. As we shall see, English-language translators regularly turn to such abstract (if not artificial) words as "effluence," "emanation" or "effluvium" to name a concept that does not seem to be a part of modern experiences of causality. A few key examples from ancient authors will give us the means to recognize what **aporroia** refers to.

But of beauty, I repeat again that we saw her there shining in company with the celestial forms; and coming to earth we find her here too, shining in clearness through the clearest aperture of sense. For sight is the most piercing of our bodily senses; though not by that is wisdom seen; her loveliness would have been transporting if there had been a visible image of her, and the other ideas, if they had visible counterparts, would be equally lovely. But this is the privilege of

⁸⁵ Many scholars have recognized the similarity between Athenagoras and Justin in their language of effluence and light, as well as the difference between them: Duchesne, Lebreton. As these scholars all remark, Justin applies it to the Logos-Son, Athenagoras to the Spirit. Justin says: "... since He [the Word] was begotten of the Father by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves: for when we give out some word, we beget the word; yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word [which remains] in us, when we give it out: and just as we see also happening in the case of *a fire*, which is not lessened when it has kindled [another], but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled." *Dialogue With Trypho* LXI, ANF translation – emphasis added.

⁸⁶ Barnard, p. 108.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* In the body of the text Barnard says "it is just possible that" (emphasis added) Athenagoras' use of "effluence" reflects Wisdom 7:25, but in the footnote (# 7) Barnard says that it "seems more likely" that Athenagoras drew on the Wisdom text than on Middle Platonic sources. Malherbe tries to nuance his position: "Although the description of the Spirit as an emanation is supported by a reference to the current Wisdom tradition, Athenagoras' conception of the Spirit's cosmic function seems to be more basically influenced by Plato's treatment of the World Soul...." "Holy Spirit in Athenagoras," p. 542.

beauty, that being the loveliest she is also the most palpable to sight.... for, as he receives the *effluence* of beauty through the eyes, the wing [of the soul] moistens and he warms. Plato, *Phaedrus* 251B

“Why are things of unpleasant odour more unpleasant when they are hot than when they are cold? Is it because odour is a vapour and an *effluvium*? A vapour, then, and an *effluvium* is caused by heat; for a movement takes place, and heat is the source of that movement. Cold, on the contrary, is a source of stagnation and contraction and downward movement; but heat and all odours have an upward tendency, because they are in the air....” Aristotle, *Problems* XIII.5 (908a20-25), J. Barnes v2:1411

Again, even if it is very difficult to ascertain and very hard properly to comprehend, we must still, as far as it is possible, investigate the nature of his essence; for there is no employment more excellent than that of searching out the nature of the true God, even though the discovery may transcend all human ability, since the very desire and endeavour to comprehend it is able by itself to furnish indescribable pleasures and delights.... (40) And so in the same way, though we cannot attain to a distinct conception of the truly living God, we still ought not to renounce the task of investigating his character, because even if we fail to make the discovery, the very search itself is intrinsically useful and an object of deserved ambition; since no one ever blames the eyes of the body because they are unable to look upon the sun itself, and therefore shrink from the brilliancy which is *poured upon* them from its beams, and therefore look down upon the earth, shrinking from the extreme brilliancy of the rays of the sun. Philo, *Special Laws* I VII.(36) -- Yonge translation

Two of these examples speak of an **aporroia** in the context of light or sight, but the word is more general than that, for it can refer to a water stream or, as in the Aristotle selection, a vapor.⁸⁸ **Aporroia**, then, names a thing (or existent) produced by a certain kind of cause. The word names a thing, but what is distinctive about the thing and which justifies the application of the word is the character of its specific origin (or cause.) Water that flows from a spring is an **aporroia**: it is a *stream* because it *streams* from its source. Aside from the mechanism of production -- a stream streaming -- implicit in **aporroia** is that the causality imparts a kind of continuity of nature between the cause and its product. An “aporretic” cause produces a product that is like the cause; in some fundamental way, the product is the same as the cause, as light is like its source.⁸⁹ There is another causality in which the cause produces a product that is like its source: generation or reproduction.

⁸⁸ Crehen’s remarks on Athenagoras’ use of light-related language to describe the origin of the Holy Spirit are significant, as Barnard has already noticed. Crehan says, pp. 22-23, “The Spirit is described as an outflow from God, coming forth and returning like a ray of light. Elsewhere it is said [by Athenagoras] that God *is* light.... Had Christianity developed a metaphysic in terms of light rather than of being, the language of Athenagoras would easily have fallen into place.” I would only add that in fact Christianity did develop a Trinitarian metaphysic of light, one that traveled parallel to, and without conflict with, the Trinitarian metaphysic of being certainly until the late fourth century: Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus are two proponents of both kinds of Trinitarian metaphysics.

⁸⁹ An “aporretic” cause is thus of the same kind as a power or as an image-maker.

Reproduction, however, tends to suggest a causality that is biological, volitional, and -- most importantly -- *discrete* (it starts and it stops); an aporretic causality suggests something more “physics-cal,” natural (i.e., following from the nature of the cause), and -- most importantly -- *continuous* (the cause must continue if the product is to continue, and if the cause ceases the product ceases to be.)

The fundamental Jewish-Christian mention of a divine **aporroia** is in *Wisdom of Solomon* 7:⁹⁰

[25] For she [Wisdom] is a breath of the Power of God,
and a pure *emanation* of the glory of the Almighty...

[26] For she is a reflection of eternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.

Aporroia, then, takes its place alongside causal language like breathing (forth), power, reflection, mirroring, and image. In each of these the product is, in some fundamental way, the same as the cause. In each case, the causality is physical in kind, natural, and continuous. The fact that **aporroia** names a kind of material or physical process has led to questions being asked about whether, then, anything described as being produced “aporrettically” must then be impersonal (i.e., not a person) in nature. This question appears independently in scholarship on Athenagoras’ understanding of the Holy Spirit and in scholarship on Wisdom-Spirit in the Wisdom of Solomon.

Barnard agrees with the judgment that Athenagoras takes his description of the Holy Spirit as an **aporroia** of God from Wisdom 7:25, Malherbe does not: “Although the description of the Spirit as an emanation is supported by a reference to the current Wisdom tradition, Athenagoras’ conception of the Spirit’s cosmic function seems to be more basically influenced by Plato’s treatment of the World Soul....”⁹¹ Grant says simply, “Here ‘emanation’ echoes what Wisdom 7:25 says about Sophia....”⁹² while Lebreton remarks only that the trinitarian use of **aporroia** by Athenagoras was sanctioned by its scriptural appearance in Wisdom 7:25.⁹³ In my opinion the immediate source for Athenagoras is indeed Wisdom 7:25.⁹⁴ Despite the surprise of some modern scholars, in Christian theology before the end of the second century there are communities and trajectories of exegesis that identify the Wisdom figure of Wisdom 7:25 (etc.) with the Holy Spirit. We should not flinch from this recognition.⁹⁵ One source for the hesitation among some scholars to admit without reservation the reality of such an

⁹⁰ The most useful discussion of the theological use of **aporroia** in Wisdom of Solomon and elsewhere is by David Winston in his commentary on that scriptural text, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday & Company: 1979; 1981), pp. 184-186.

⁹¹ Malherbe, p. 542.

⁹² Grant, p. 108.

⁹³ Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la trinité*, II:504.

⁹⁴ However, saying that the immediate source for Athenagoras describing the Holy Spirit as an **aporroia** of God is probably Wisdom 7:25 is not the same thing as saying that there is no philosophical background for this description, as Winston makes clear.

⁹⁵ I will return to this fact in my treatment of Wisdom pneumatology in chapter #.

identification is the presence of a Wisdom Christology in some NT texts, most notably 1 Cor. 1:24 and Heb. 1:3 (where Wisdom 7:25 is applied to the Son).⁹⁶ The question remains, however, as to whether the Wisdom Christologies of Heb. 1:3 and 1 Cor. 1:24 were regarded as definitive or universally normative (“canonical”) by Christians of the second century. Indeed, we must ask – and not assume -- whether these texts are even known by a specific author of the second century.

My opinion is this: there was a Wisdom pneumatology in early Christianity carried over from Judaism that found its exegetical expression and scriptural authorization in scriptural (LXX) passages like Wisdom 7:25. This opinion can be pushed further: the Wisdom Christologies of Heb. 1:3 and 1 Cor. 1:24 are not, at this time (*if they are known*), functioning as definitive or normative. Even where the texts are known and read, the “NT” texts themselves are not yet functioning as definitive and normative Scripture. The gospel associated with “NT” writings remains as the rule or perspective through which Jewish writings, especially the OT (LXX), are understood and exegeted as the content of Christian belief. We have no reason to believe that in the year 175 Heb. 1:3 or 1 Cor. 1:24, where they were known, would override or exclude received Jewish pneumatologies (or received Jewish sophiologies) in which the Holy Spirit was understood to be Wisdom⁹⁷ (or Wisdom was understood to be the Holy Spirit).⁹⁸

Barnard’s judgment that Athenagoras was “the first [Christian author] to apply the image of ‘effluence’ or ‘outflow’ to the Spirit.”⁹⁹ has not been contested by scholars. Given that after Athenagoras the description of the Holy Spirit as the aporroia of God either falls into disuse or is explicitly replaced by identifying the aporroia of God (spoken of at, e.g., Wisdom 7:25) with the Son, Barnard’s judgment has the effect of presenting Athenagoras’ application of effluence to the Holy Spirit as an isolated and irregular event in Christian exegesis. However, I will argue below that in fact Athenagoras was not the

⁹⁶ It is indeed true that whatever sophiologies there may be in New Testament writings, they are consistently Wisdom *Christologies*.

⁹⁷ The earliest case of explicit references to Heb. 1:3 and 1 Cor. 1:24 in order to show the identification of the Logos with Wisdom is Clement of Alexandria. *The Teachings of Silvanus* has some precedence over Clement in identifying the Logos with Wisdom, but that identification is based upon Wisdom 7:25: neither Heb. 1:3 nor 1 Cor. 1:24 are cited. Indeed, so far as I can tell, there is only one clear citation to a NT text in *The Teachings of Silvanus*, and to that is to a passage from Paul. (The statement by some scholars that Silvanus knows both OT and NT writings as “canonical Scripture” is so tendentious as to be bizarre.) I cannot accept that any early fourth century text would omit referring to passages from the NT, and thus I am convinced that *The Teachings of Silvanus* is a second century text produced by a Christian for whom the OT (LXX) is still the sole Scripture to be exegeted. How different is Clement’s use of Scripture – which deploys NT passages in great number and with the assumption of their authority. See Lebreton, “La théologie de la Trinité chez Clément d’Alexandrie,” pp. 162-164. For a good example of Clement’s strong use of 1 Cor. 1:24 and the identification of the Word with the Divine Power, see *Strom.* VII.II. R. P. Casey remarks, “The view that Christ was a δυνάμις of the Father is not uncommon, but was a special favourite with Clement.” *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto*, p. 29.

⁹⁸ In all such cases, we are referring primarily to the theologoumena of exegetical identification. A good example of such a theologoumenon is Isaiah 63:10-11, in which the Exodus figure of the “Angel of the Lord” is called the Lord’s Spirit – indeed, His “Holy Spirit.” In Wisdom 7, the identification of Wisdom as Spirit is explicit, since both “Wisdom” and “Spirit” are named.

⁹⁹ Barnard, p. 108.

only early Christian author¹⁰⁰ to apply the image of outflow to the Holy Spirit, and quite possibly Athenagoras was *not the first* Christian author to do so. Before I can do that, however, I must say something directly about the theology of describing the Holy Spirit as the aporroia of God.

While **aporroia** is regularly translated as “effluence” – a stilted word in English – the sense of the term is something more plainly along the lines of “flows forth.” Whatever is an aporroia is something flows out from or pours forth from its source. What forces upon the translator so tedious a word as “effluence” are two facts: English seems to lack a general word for “that which flows forth” (“stream” and “beam” and their verbs “streaming” and “beaming” are about as close as we get); and second, “aporroia” does include the sense of a specific kind of causality over-against other kinds of causalities. I made this last point before: “aporroia” bespeaks a certain mechanism of production and has to be regarded as terminology belonging to a specific kind of aetiology. Crehen makes this point implicitly when he remarks famously that “Had Christianity developed a metaphysic in terms of light rather than of being, the language of Athenagoras [i.e., aporroia] would easily have fallen into place.”¹⁰¹ Allowing for the fact that “aporroia” bespeaks a certain mechanism of production, I think that Crehen moves too quickly to identify the aetiology with the language of one example of that aetiology, light.¹⁰² Aporroia – that which flows forth – is a broader notion than simply “beam/beaming” or “radiation/radiating.” The broadness of the notion is important given the LXX descriptions of the Spirit being poured out [$\epsilon\kappa\chi\epsilon\omega$] like water.

Athenagoras understands aporroia language as describing the very generation and nature of the Holy Spirit viz. the Father. This is clear from the way in which he describes the origins of the Word and the Spirit in *Legatio* 10:

... for from the beginning, God, who is the eternal mind [vous], had the Logos in Himself, being from eternity instinct with Logos [λογικος]; but in as much as He came forth to be the idea and energizing power [ιδεα και ενεργεια] of all material things.... The Holy Spirit Himself also, which operates in the prophets, we assert to be an effluence [απορρεου] of God, flowing [επωναφερομενον] from Him, and returning back again like a beam of the sun. Who, then, would not be astonished to hear men who speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and who declare both their power in union and their distinction in order....¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ “Early” equals pre-third century.

¹⁰¹ Crehen, p. 23.

¹⁰² Crehen does this understandably, having Wisdom 7:25 in mind as the paradigmatic example of the use of aporroia. He may also have the Nicene phrase, “light from light” in the back of his mind.

¹⁰³ δυναμιν και την εν τη ταξει διαιπεστν. This is not the same as the later taxis trinitarian theology of Tertullian and Origen (discussed in **chapter x**) because Athenagoras draws no conclusions about the ontological nature from the order. For a discussion of this passage, see Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1996), pp. 42-44.

The Logos, the Son, is God's Logos come forth from God's Mind. If the Holy Spirit is an *effluence* of the glory of the Almighty, then the Holy Spirit streams out from or pours forth from the glory of the Almighty.¹⁰⁴ The Holy Spirit is not a Thought Come-to-be, or a Word spoken, or a Son generated. The language of "streams out from or pours forth from" is material, but no more so than "Son" or "begotten." Like "Son," "emanation" invokes a causality in which there is a continuity of nature between originating source and that which is produced.¹⁰⁵ Like "Son," "effluence" names a kind of produced separate existent that is not simply to be identified with its source, as though no distinctions can apply.¹⁰⁶ How does the Holy Spirit exist? He flows from God such that the Three are one in power ($\delta\upsilon\omega\mu\pi\sigma$) and three in order ($\tau\alpha\xi\varsigma\sigma$). Athenagoras' concern here is to describe the Trinity, how God is one and three, and this "Trinitarian" application of aporroia must not be misunderstood or passed over.

If aporroia is a word for the Holy Spirit in relation to God, it also suggests other scriptural descriptions of the Spirit that speak of the Spirit's relation to humanity. There is a conceptual continuity between the Trinitarian word aporroia and other soteriological descriptions of the Spirit: this continuity turns upon the common type of imagery used for the Holy Spirit, namely fluidity. The use of fluid – water – imagery for the Spirit is ubiquitous in the Old Testament.¹⁰⁷ Two or three reminders of texts that speak of the soteriological "pouring" out of the Spirit may be useful here.¹⁰⁸

Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations any more; and I will not hide my face

¹⁰⁴ I will not worry to parse conceptually "the *glory* of the Almighty."

¹⁰⁵ Emanation is, in other words, a strong "X from X" type causality.

¹⁰⁶ The scholarly suggestion has sometimes been made that Athenagoras was a modalist. However, there has been little question that Athenagoras regarded the Logos-Son as a "personal" being; the question, when it has occurred, has been whether the Holy Spirit was also regarded this way: the alternative being that He existed in some impersonal way. (The understanding that the Holy Spirit had an "impersonal" nature figures in the pneumatological debates of the late fourth century. See, e.g., Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or. 31.*) Answers to this question have largely turned upon the symmetry of language that Athenagoras used to describe key aspects of the Logos-Son and the Holy Spirit. Athenagoras' parallel articulations of the Logos-Son and the Spirit in his descriptions of (1) their actions in creation and (2) their generations from God the Father have been seen by scholars as evidence that he regarded both Logos-Son and Spirit as "personal" beings. In the first case Athenagoras says, "[W]e... who acknowledge and firmly hold that He is God who has framed all things by the Logos, and holds them in being by His Spirit." In the second case he says, "because the Son is the Intelligence, Reason, Wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit an effluence." Lebreton's old statement at *Histoire du dogme de la trinité*, II:505 to this effect can still stand as paradigmatic: "We will remark finally that the parallelism that was established by the apologist [Athenagoras] among the three persons, when he affirmed the [divine] unity and distinction, is the best guarantee of the personal nature of the Holy Spirit." Lebreton himself quotes the English scholar Mansel: "That two divine Persons and an impersonal emanation should be thus enumerated together, by so philosophical a writer as Athenagoras, is not conceivable."

¹⁰⁷ See Frederic Manns, *Le symbole eau -esprit dans le judaïsme ancien* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1983).

¹⁰⁸ In Zechariah 12:10, Sirach 24:33 as well as Joel 2:28-32, the verb is $\epsilon\kappa\chi\epsilon\omega$. Images of the Spirit being "poured out" appear also in Isaiah 32:15 and 44:3, but in those texts other verbs are used.

any more from them, when I *pour out my Spirit* upon the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD. Ez. 39:28-29

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will *pour out my spirit* on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will *pour out my spirit*. Joel 2:28-29

I am suggesting then, that speaking of the Spirit as *flowing from* God has the strength of conceptual continuity with speaking of the Spirit as *poured out* upon God's people. We remain with "fluid" terminology like "streaming" or "pouring" as well as the broader field of "water" associations of the Spirit in Jewish literature.

Athenagoras' use of OT citations is so sparse, that we cannot test if he made such exegetical connections (his only clear scriptural text for the Holy Spirit is Prov. 8:22.) Associations of Spirit and water will figure prominently in Theophilus, as we shall see. However, we can return to the point I earlier promised to make: namely, that Athenagoras was not the *only* early Christian author to apply the image of outflow to the Holy Spirit, and quite possibly Athenagoras *not the first* Christian author to do so. I turn now to the *Odes of Solomon*, a text which is either late first century in origin, or approximately contemporary to Athenagoras (depending upon which of two scholarly judgments one accepts.)

The Sixth *Ode of Solomon* says:

- (6) The Lord has multiplied his knowledge, and He was zealous that those things should be known which through His grace have been given to us.
- (7) And His praise He gave us on account of His name, our spirits praise His Holy Spirit. (8) For there *went forth* a stream, and it became a river great and broad; indeed it carried away everything, and it shattered and brought it to the Temple.

In this passage, the Holy Spirit is described as "went forth as a stream" and "becoming a river." Charlesworth says of this passage, "[In] Coptic; 'a flowing off,' 'an emanation,' 'a stream.' In the *Pistis Sophia* this Greek loan word (*απορροια*) is used repeatedly...."¹⁰⁹ Moreover, in my opinion verse six, "The Lord has multiplied his knowledge, and He was zealous that those things should be known which through His grace have been given to us," echoes the theology of, e.g., Ez. 39:28-29 and Joel 2:28-29. In short, emanation language is used with pouring language, and both sets of terms are used of the Holy Spirit. Depending, then, on when one dates the *Odes of Solomon*, Athenagoras may not have been the first to apply the image of effluence or outflow to the

¹⁰⁹ *The Odes of Solomon The Syriac Texts*, James Hamilton Charlesworth, ed., trans. and ann. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 31, n. 10. I have looked at the work *Pistis Sophia* in the NHL and I cannot find apporoia in the text. I assume that Charlesworth mis-identified the relevant NHL work. However, Charlesworth may be referring to another another text also entitled *Pistis Sophia* of which I am ignorant.

Holy Spirit: if one accepts the early, end of first century, dating then the *Odes of Solomon* provide a very early example of the doctrine that the Holy Spirit “effluences” or “flows forth.” If one does not accept the early date for the *Odes of Solomon*, then that text nonetheless supplies another example of the Holy Spirit described as flowing out. Given the provenance of Athenagoras and *Odes of Solomon*, the possibility that (1) the two came out of the same theological circle, or (2) that either of the two influenced the other can be regarded as extremely unlikely. The two texts are independent witnesses, possibly separated by a significant period of time, and certainly widely separated geographically (and thus linguistically.) Whether Athenagoras is the first to “to apply the image of ‘effluence’ or ‘outflow’ to the Spirit” or not, his application is not an isolated event.

My last comment on Athenagoras’ pneumatology foreshadows my detailed treatment of Irenaeus in **chapter x** as well as my discussion of prophecy in **chapter x**. A number of previous scholarly treatments of Athenagoras’ theology of the Holy Spirit have evaluated that theology by implicitly comparing it to Paul’s pneumatology. In much scholarship Paul is the always-present but largely unacknowledged standard by which a given patristic author’s pneumatology is measured: there is often a strongly operative assumption that Paul’s pneumatology was available to the author at hand; that assumption can bleed off into the further assumption that Paul’s pneumatology had a clear authority for the patristic author that the author either accepted or rejected. In point of fact, there is no historical reason to think that Paul’s pneumatology had some primacy in the early church, or that it was even widely known. (I will discuss this question in detail in my chapter on Irenaeus.)

Given the presence of Paul’s pneumatology in the minds of modern historical scholars, it is interesting to find two opposite appraisals of the extent to which Athenagoras’ pneumatology contains features of pauline pneumatology. On the one hand there is Swete, and on the other, Barnard. Swete remarks that Athenagoras “does not seem to realize the work of the Spirit upon the members of the living Church, either in Christian prophecy, or in the inspiration of thought and life. His interest in the subject is intellectual rather than practical....”¹¹⁰ By contrast, Barnard says, “Athenagoras’ main emphasis however falls on the place of the Spirit in biblical inspiration.”¹¹¹

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Theophilus of Antioch¹¹²

Theophilus was likely the sixth bishop of Antioch, which enabled Newman to contrast him with the “Alexandrian” Athenagoras. For many scholars the most striking feature of his pneumatology is its confusing terminology: in particular, Theophilus sometimes speaks as though the Word and Spirit are one and the same. A different order of confusion is found in Theophilus’ tendency to identify Wisdom with the Spirit. R. M. Grant, who once wrote an article on Origen’s christological application of the Wisdom of

¹¹⁰ Swete, p. 45.

¹¹¹ Barnard, p. 107.

¹¹² *Theophili Antiocheni – Ad Autolycum*, Miroslav Marcovich, ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995). The English translation used here is the ANF’s. Theophilus died circa 189-92.

Solomon (and Wisdom 7:25 specifically),¹¹³ finds Theophilus' language "loose" when he sometimes treats the Logos *as different from* Wisdom.¹¹⁴ At one point Lebreton offers to resolve the confusion of Theophilus' puzzling terminology in a formal way: Theophilus' theology is both chronologically and logically situated between Athenagoras' and Irenaeus', and in the transitional moment it occupies Theophilus' trinitarian theology contains elements of the theologies of both Athenagoras and Irenaeus. However, whatever heuristic value Lebreton's formal hypothesis has to offer, it is useless as a historical account.¹¹⁵ For my part, I regard Theophilus' identification of the Holy Spirit with Wisdom as the outcome of the vigorously Jewish perspective of his exegesis, and, moreover, as "normal" for the period. (See my discussion of Wisdom Pneumatology in chapter X.)

The most significant effect of Theophilus' fluid terminology is that it produces among scholars of trinitarian doctrine the suspicion that his trinitarian theology is in fact modalist.¹¹⁶ At one point Theophilus does indeed seem to deny any real distinction between titles – as if titles such as Word or Spirit refer only to aspects or operations of God. The similarity between Theophilus and Philo that Lebreton and Grant see in other features of Theophilus' thinking probably occurs on this matter, too: like Philo, Theophilus will periodically insist on God's unity in ways which seem inconsistent with his descriptions of the separate Logos (and in Theophilus' case, the separate Spirit).¹¹⁷ Unlike Philo, however, Theophilus gives us so little to work with that the logic of his doctrine of God escapes us. I am less worried than some by Theophilus' lack of clarity about the divine titles, since this area is a difficult one in early Christian trinitarian theology generally, and there are few patristic theologians indeed who have a wholly coherent use of these titles.¹¹⁸ There is in this period of Christian exegesis no commitment to a consistent one-to-one correspondence between scriptural titles and divine persons.¹¹⁹ We may speak of a tendency in a given author's exegesis or a preponderant reference, but nothing more.

The passage that Swete (and others) cite as possibly expressing modalism is in chapter 3 of book I of *To Autolychus*. It reads:

¹¹³ "The Book of Wisdom at Alexandria: Reflections on the History of the Canon and Theology," *Studia Patristica*, VII (1966), 462-472.

¹¹⁴ "It is hard to tell why Theophilus' language is as loose as it is when sometimes he treats Logos as different from Wisdom." Grant, p. 169.

¹¹⁵ Elsewhere Lebreton calls the identification of Wisdom with Holy Spirit an "orientale" (i.e., from Asia Minor) Christian tradition, which he contrasts with the Alexandrian identification of Wisdom with the Word. See Lebreton's "La théologie de la Trinité chez Clément d'Alexandrie," *Recherches de Science religieuse* 34 (1947), 55-76, 142-179; here, p. 160.

¹¹⁶ Swete put it this way: "Nor is it clear that Theophilus realized the distinction of the Persons as it was realized [previously] by Athenagoras." p. 47.

¹¹⁷ Philo's confusion is usually resolved in favor of his putative "Jewish monotheism," which somehow means that he can neither be a modalist or a binitarian. Is it truly impossible for Philo to have a trinitarian (or binitarian) theology? The possibility that the writings of Philo directly influenced Theophilus is discussed at length by Runia in *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, pp. 110-116.

¹¹⁸ In the early fifth century Augustine will, in *de Trinitate* VI and VII, spend considerable energy in an attempt to articulate a proper theology of the titles.

¹¹⁹ For the sake of clarity I use the anachronism divine *persons* in this sentence.

You will say, then, to me, "Do you, who see God, explain to me the appearance of God." Hear, O man. The appearance of God is ineffable and indescribable, and cannot be seen by eyes of flesh. For in glory He is incomprehensible, in greatness unfathomable, in height inconceivable, in power incomparable, in wisdom unrivalled, in goodness inimitable, in kindness unutterable. For if I say He is Light, I name but His own work; if I call Him Word, I name but His sovereignty; if I call Him Mind, I speak but of His wisdom; if I say He is Spirit, I speak of His breath; if I call Him Wisdom, I speak of His offspring; if I call Him Strength, I speak of His sway; if I call Him Power, I am mentioning His activity; if Providence, I but mention His goodness; if I call Him Kingdom, I but mention His glory; if I call Him Lord, I mention His being judge; if I call Him Judge, I speak of Him as being just; if I call Him Father, I speak of all things as being from Him; if I call Him Fire, I but mention His anger. You will say, then, to me, "Is God angry? "Yes; He is angry with those who act wickedly, but He is good, and kind, and merciful, to those who love and fear Him; for He is a chastener of the godly, and father of the righteous; but he is a judge and punisher of the impious.¹²⁰

The primary subject of Theophilus' book(s) is that there is one God, who is the uncaused cause of the cosmos.¹²¹ The major theological emphasis among all the Apologists is that Christians believe in an uncaused, single and immaterial God who created the cosmos. It is important to keep this in mind and to distinguish the Apologists' concern for God the creator from the concern later expressed by Irenaeus and Tertullian, who argue for a creator God against the dualisms of Marcion, the gnostics, and the manichees. The point of Theophilus' statements here about the relationship between the words he uses for God and how they name God (what they name of God) is that the titles all refer to the ways in which God acts as creator and source of providence. (The argument about the existence of divine providence was already emphatic in Athenagoras.) Thus at the very beginning of his engagement with the pagan Autolychus – chapter three, book one -- Theophilus expresses strongly the Christian (and Jewish) belief in a providential creator God.

In the very next “chapter” Theophilus turns to a different set of titles for God and sets about explaining their meaning.

And He is without beginning, because He is unbegotten; and He is unchangeable, because He is immortal. And he is called God [θεος] on account of His having placed [τεθεικέναι] all things on security afforded by Himself; and on account of [θέειν], for θέειν means running, and moving, and being active, and nourishing, and foreseeing, and governing, and making all things alive. But he is “Lord,” because He rules over the universe; “Father,” because he is before all things; “Fashioner and Maker,” because He is creator and maker of the universe; “the

¹²⁰ ANF II.89-90.

¹²¹ Grant, p. 166, remarks that “Theophilus’ whole work is concerned with creation but not redemption.” I will return to this observation shortly.

Highest,” because of His being above all; and “Almighty,” because He Himself rules and embraces all.¹²²

The titles Theophilus explains here in his chapter four are “Without beginning,” “unchangeable,” “God,” “Lord,” “Father,” “Fashioner and Maker,” “the Highest,” and “Almighty.” This set of titles is different from those in chapter three.¹²³

Theophilus on the Holy Spirit

Theophilus is a very good illustration of the principle that until roughly the turn into the third century Christian pneumatology was the continuation of Jewish pneumatology. Theophilus is widely regarded by scholars as the most “Jewish” of all the Apologists -- he is a mirror image of Philo, as it were. Theophilus’ deep devotion to the Jewish Scriptures (LXX) and his almost single-minded recourse to them and them alone as the source of and authority for his theology has puzzled and worried scholars. Grant knows that he has to describe Theophilus as a “Christian,” but this seems to be a judgment he is forced to make and it is clearly unsatisfactory: such a description can miss the essential character of Theophilus’ theology and exegesis.¹²⁴ “Like Philo of Alexandria, Theophilus sets forth a doctrine of God [that is] essentially Jewish in nature even though expressed in the language of Middle Platonism.”¹²⁵ Lebreton had already noted that Theophilus’ engagement was with the Old Testament and not the New Testament.¹²⁶ Most importantly for our purposes, Lebreton saw that although (in his opinion) Theophilus cites John and perhaps Luke, “It is in the reading of Genesis that he [Theophilus] loves to contemplate the Trinity....”¹²⁷ The driving dynamic of Theophilus’ theology is *God as creator*, and it is this that shapes his account of salvation¹²⁸ -- and his theology of the Holy Spirit. As Swete put it, “Theophilus mentions the Holy Spirit by name only in

¹²² *To Autolychus* I.IV. [ANF II.90]

¹²³ If we return briefly to the summary of divine titles in chapter three and pause over a few lines in that long list. At one point Theophilus says: “... if I call Him Mind, I speak but of His wisdom; if I say He is Spirit, I speak of His breath; if I call Him Wisdom, I speak of His offspring.” To speak of God’s “Mind” is to speak of His “Wisdom,” and to speak of His “Wisdom,” is to speak of His Offspring. Between the two identifications of wisdom is “if I say He is Spirit, I speak of His breath.” Spirit is not God’s nature – as it will be for Tertullian and others: to call God “spirit” is to refer to his the life that streams out of Him.

¹²⁴ “Clearly Theophilus is a Christian, as the many parallels with Justin show. He is also a Hellenistic Jewish theologian.... References to the Gospels and the epistles confirm his Christianity, but his teaching is essentially Jewish in tone and is based on the Old Testament as understood by Hellenistic Jews....” Grant, p. 165

¹²⁵ Grant, p.167, and also, p. 157: “Theophilus’ exegesis of the Old Testament is primarily Jewish and even rabbinic.” It is not clear, however, how anything in the late second century CE can truly be said to be “rabbinic” in character

¹²⁶ Lebreton, p. 512.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* Not only his Trinitarian theology, but, according to Grant, Theophilus’ christology is developed out of reading Genesis: “His Christology... is based on exegesis of Genesis in the light of the Gospel of Luke, not on Paul or indeed John.” Grant, p. 164.

¹²⁸ Grant says, p. 166, that “Theophilus’ whole work is concerned with creation but not redemption” and this is true but somewhat misleading: Theophilus is not much interested in “redemption” because he does not see it as a significant theological category in the story of creation, Adam and the fall. It may indeed be true that without the influence of Paul’s theology the story of Adam and the fall does not play out against the category of redemption (sin, yes; redemption, no) -- and Theophilus is certainly an un-Pauline reader of Genesis.

connection with Creation and Inspiration.”¹²⁹ I am concerned here only with the connection Theophilus makes between the Holy Spirit and Creation.

The best way to examine Theophilus’ theology of the Holy Spirit as creator is to consider carefully each passage in which such a theology is expressed. The first mention Theophilus makes of the Spirit of God appears as he moves from the question of God as creator to God as invisible and unknowable. God, Theophilus says, can only be seen in His works, chief of which is the entire cosmos. He goes on:

“... so we must perceive that God is the pilot of the whole universe, though He be not visible to the eyes of the flesh, since He is incomprehensible....For as the pomegranate, with the rind containing it, has within it many cells and compartments which are separated by tissues, and has also many seeds dwelling in it, so the whole creation is contained by the Spirit of God, and the containing [S]pirit is along with the creation contained by the ‘hand of God’.”¹³⁰

There are two points to note here in this brief quotation: first, “the whole creation is contained by the Spirit of God;” and, second, “the containing [S]pirit is along with the creation contained by the ‘hand of God’.” That the cosmos is “contained” by the Spirit is something that Theophilus could easily say early in his discourse to Autolychus, since it is a philosophical notion in common circulation. The idea is originally Stoic, but during the Middle Platonic era it was, like the idea of the Logos, appropriated in ways which stripped away the materialist connotations. Examples of the Stoic understanding include:¹³¹

“The Stoic Balbus said that it is a fact that all things which undergo nurture and growth contain within themselves a power of heat [*vim caloris*] without which they could not be nurtured and grow. For everything which is hot and fiery is roused and activated by its own movement; but a thing which is nourished and grows has a definite and regular movement; as long as this remains in us, so long sensation and life remain, but when the heat has been chilled and extinguished, we ourselves die and are extinguished.... [According to Cleanthes] every living thing, whether animal or vegetable, is alive on account of the heat enclosed within it. From this it must be understood that the element heat has within itself a vital power [*vitalem*] which pervades the whole world.... It follows from this that, since all parts of the world are maintained by heat, the world itself too has been preserved over so long a time by a comparable and like element.... So it must be the case that the element which contains the commanding faculty [*εγεμονικον*] of the whole of nature is the best of things and the most worthy of having authority and power [*potest*] over everything [*esse*].” Cicero, *On the Gods* 2.23-5

“The chief proponents of the sustaining power [*δυναμις*], such as the Stoics, make what sustains one thing, and what is sustained something different: the

¹²⁹ Swete, p. 46.

¹³⁰ *To Autolychus* I.V.

¹³¹ All fragments are from Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols., section 47.

breathy substance [πνευματικὸν οὐσίαν] is what sustains, and the material substance what is sustained. And so they say that air and fire sustain, and earth and water are sustained.” Galen, *On Bodily Mass* 7

“[The Stoics] say that earth and water sustain neither themselves nor other things, but preserve their unity by participation in a breathy and fiery power [πνευματικὴ καὶ πυρωδὸν δύναμεως], but air and fire because of their tensility can sustain themselves, and by blending with the other two provide them with tension and also stability and substantiality.” Plutarch, *On Common Conceptions*

“[A question to the Stoics:] What too is the tension of breath [τὸν τοῦ πνευματοῦ] which binds bodies together so that they both have continuity in relation to their own parts and are connected with the bodies adjacent to them?” Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture*

An important Jewish precedent for Theophilus is Philo, who says in *On the Giants* 6 (27):

But now, the Spirit which is upon him is the wise, the divine, the indivisible, the undistributable, the good Spirit, the Spirit which is everywhere diffused, so as to fill the universe, which, while it benefits others....

The second points to note from *To Autolychus* I.V is the statement that “the containing [S]pirit is along with the creation contained by the ‘hand of God.’” How should we understand the phrase or title, “Hand of God”? The best clue to what Theophilus means is provided by him in book II of *To Autolychus* when he quotes a *Sibylline Oracle* (which he considers to be inspired by the Holy Spirit just like the Jewish prophets):¹³²

Who ever keeps those whom His hand first made,
Puts His sweet Spirit into all His works,
And gives Him for a guide to mortal men.

This is a Trinitarian passage. The one who “keeps” and “gives” is the Father. The “sweet Spirit” is the Holy Spirit. The “Hand” who is the first-maker of mankind is the Word. The Oracle is, I suggest, taken by Theophilus to be a divinely-inspired pagan statement of the Trinity at work in creation. In this way, it fits in with the Jewish descriptions of creation that were significant for Theophilus (as we shall see soon): namely that God acts through two agents. Indeed, what we readers of Theophilus can do that he could not is to

¹³² The quotation by Theophilus of a Sibylline Oracle is recognized by scholars as a “fragment” – fragment #1 -- possibly from what is called Book Two of the *Sibylline Oracles*. Charlesworth summarizes the scholarly judgments at *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* I: 360-61 and 469. The original provenance is probably the community of hellenized Judaism at Alexandria; the other Oracles that are proposed by scholars as the original literary context for this fragment are thought to have been written soon after Cleopatra’s defeat. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* I:470 provides another translation of fragment #1. One important fact to remember is that while scholars now regard the Oracle that Theophilus quotes as Jewish in origin, Theophilus himself thought of it as pagan in origin -- God’s gift of the prophetic Holy Spirit to the Greeks.

recognize the Sibylline Oracle fragment as a Jewish statement about creation similar in form to Judith and Second Baruch. My reasons for invoking a Jewish tradition of “God’s dual agents” will become more clear immediately below, but I do not want to lose in the meantime specifically what I am saying about Theophilus statement that “the containing [S]pirit is along with the creation contained by the ‘hand of God.’” The Holy Spirit is “contained” -- however we understand that -- by the Word-Son.¹³³

The next passage in which Theophilus speaks of the Spirit of God is at *To Autolychus* I.VII.

This is my God, the Lord of all, who alone stretched out the heaven, and established the breadth of the earth under it; who stirs the deep recesses of the sea, and makes its waves roar; who rules its power, and stills the tumult of its waves; who founded the earth upon the waters, and gave a spirit to nourish it; whose breath giveth light to the whole, who, if He withdraw His breath, the whole will utterly fail.... Entrust yourself to the Physician, and He will couch the eyes of your soul and of your heart. Who is the Physician? God, who heals and makes alive through His Word and Wisdom. God by His own Word and Wisdom made all things; for .’By the *Word* of the Lord, the heavens were spread out, And by the *Spirit* of His mouth all their *power*’¹³⁴

In this passage Theophilus uses Wisdom and Spirit to refer to the same Person, although this fact becomes clear only as one reads along. God’s Word and Wisdom/Spirit are the instruments of human salvation *just as* -- or *because* -- they were (and continue to be) the instruments of cosmic creation.¹³⁵ The text Theophilus provides as anchor is the familiar Psalm 33:2:6-7. Theophilus’ quoting of this psalm is important. Theophilus’ use of the psalm puts him clearly in that Jewish tradition I outlined earlier in this chapter in which the Spirit figures in creation (unlike the understandings of creation one finds in Jubilees and the targumim). Like the psalm, Theophilus exeges Genesis 1:1-3 in the sequence of Word-Spirit: as in the majority of Jewish midrash on Gen. 1:1-3, the Word of God precedes the Spirit. It goes almost without saying that the psalm thus supports Theophilus’ reading of Genesis 1:1-3 as involving two agents, the Word and the Spirit. This last effect of the psalm is important for providing a key to Theophilus’ use of the titles “Mind,” “Word,” “Spirit,” “Wisdom” and, as we shall soon see, “Beginning.” The key to the proper understanding of a creation account is: the Father and two Others are involved. There is, as has already been observed, a fluidness to the specific names Theophilus uses for the first and second of the Other Two. But however the terminology may wander, Theophilus nonetheless consistently articulates creation as involving *two Agents of God*.¹³⁶ When Theophilus exegetes Genesis 1:1-2, the Word and Spirit are

¹³³ If it is true that for Theophilus the Holy Spirit is “contained” in the Word then it should be possible to understand better those statements Theophilus sometimes makes that seem to confuse Word and Spirit.

¹³⁴ THE ANF translation gives the psalm as “by His Word were the heavens *made*” but that is a misleading translation.

¹³⁵ This passage provides a good illustration of the character of Theophilus’ approach to salvation.

¹³⁶ Such an approach is consistent with Middle Platonic accounts of creation that read the *Timaeus* as involving God, the Demiurge and the World Soul.

there as the two agents of creation, in which Genesis 1:1 is a Word passage. “The beginning” -- $\alpha\pi\chi\eta$ -- of Genesis 1:1 is the Word Himself: “He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called ‘governing principle’ [$\alpha\pi\chi\eta$], because He rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him.”¹³⁷ At *To Autolychus* III:IV Theophilus turns to Genesis 1:2.¹³⁸

And by the Spirit which is borne above the waters, he [Moses] means that which God gave for animating the creation, as he gave life to man, mixing what is fine with what is fine. For the Spirit is fine, and the water is fine, that the Spirit may nourish the water, and the water penetrating everywhere along with the Spirit, may nourish creation.¹³⁹ For the Spirit being one, and holding the place of light,¹⁴⁰ was between the water and the heaven, in order that the darkness might not in any way communicate with the heaven, which was nearer God, before God said, "Let there be light."

As Manns has described at length,¹⁴¹ there is in Jewish theology a profound connection between the Spirit and water, and Theophilus’ description of Spirit “penetrating” like water penetrates probably comes out of such Jewish sources. In *De Opificio Mundi* XI. (38) Philo speaks of the waters of creation penetrating the earth: “And after this, as the whole body of water in existence was spread over all the earth, and had penetrated through all its parts...”¹⁴² Philo compares the earth filled with life-giving water to a mother’s breasts, providing life-giving milk:

For this sweet liquid, in due proportions, is as a sort of glue for the different substances, preventing the earth from being utterly dried up, and so becoming unproductive and barren, and causing it, like a mother, to furnish not only one kind of nourishment, namely meat, but both sorts at once, so as to supply its offspring with both meat and drink; wherefore he filled it with veins, resembling breasts, which, being provided with openings, were destined to pour forth springs and rivers.

¹³⁷ The equation of “governing principle” or ruler with “Lord” may not be as casual as it seems: Philo identifies the divine as ruler is what is properly denoted by the divine name, Lord. See *On the Change of Names* 18-23.

¹³⁸ Note that there is no difference in the types of discourses on the Word and on the Spirit.

¹³⁹ This amplification of the Gen. 1:2 connection between the Spirit and water suggests an analogous amplification found in, e.g., *Genesis Rabbah* II.IV.2.A: “On account of what merit will the Messiah come? [It will be on account of the merit presented by the verse:] ‘... over the face of the water.’ 2.B: It is, specifically, on account of the merit of repentance, which is compared to water: ‘Pour out your heart like water.’ [Lam. 2:19]”

¹⁴⁰ There are similarities between this and the *Fourth Esdras* passage just quoted: “And then the Spirit was hovering, and darkness and silence embraced everything; the sound of man’s voice was not yet there. Then thou didst command that a ray of light be brought forth from thy treasures, so that thy works might then appear” (emphasis added.)

¹⁴¹ In the previously cited *Le symbole eau -esprit dans le judaïsme ancien*.

¹⁴² See David Runia’s very helpful comments on this passage in his *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses*, trans. and commentary (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), pp. 182-83.

Theophilus' point in the passage from *To Autolychus* III:IV quoted previously is that the Spirit is the source of the nourishment that water has to provide. The congruent characters of Spirit and water -- the mixing of what is fine with what is fine -- allows the two to co-exist in such a way that the life-giving nature of the Spirit exists in a true mixture with the nature of water. The Spirit, then, hovering about the waters, is sharing its life-giving capabilities with those waters, and enabling the waters, in turn, to be the agent of life for all the growing things it will nourish. One could push this notion further and speculate that the fact that the waters are separated after the Spirit has hovered above them means that the higher waters -- that *above* the firmament - are life-giving or nourishing as well. Perhaps that water nourishes the angels; perhaps that water is the life-giving water that flows from Christ according to the Gospel of John or the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. Perhaps the presence of the Holy Spirit at baptism -- such as Christ's baptism at the Jordan, but all baptisms -- transforms that water into the water from above the firmament. Indeed, something like this last idea may be found in one manuscript tradition of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* 18:7. Speaking of the anointing of the new priest God will raise up (which a Christian redactor understood be the baptism at the Jordan), it says:¹⁴³

And the Glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him.
And the Spirit of understanding and sanctification
Shall rest upon him in the water.

Irenaeus

After reading Theophilus' extended exposition of Genesis One, one is stunned to discover the almost complete lack of interest on Irenaeus' part in Genesis One. The only passage in the Genesis One account that receives any serious attention, or figures with any significance, in Irenaeus' theology is Gen. 1:25-26; that passage – it cannot be denied – is very important for Irenaeus. It is, as we shall see, Gen. 1:25-26 that is the occasion for the well known Irenaean description of the Word and the Holy Spirit as the “Two Hands of God.” In the first three books of the *Against Heresies* (AH) Irenaeus' subject matter, including the scriptural passages he exegetes, are determined by the driving polemical motive of the work. The last two books of the AH have a different character to them, and in them Irenaeus seems to turn more freely to topics (and Scripture) that express his own theological agenda. In this way, the last two books of the AH foreshadow Irenaeus' theology in the *Demonstration*. Most of what I will have to say about Irenaeus' theology of the Holy Spirit as creator owes to passages in either AH books Four and Five or the *Demonstration*. It needs to be remarked that there is a strongly voiced scholarly opinion that Irenaeus was acquainted with the LXX principally through *Testimonia*, and that these are his sources for OT proof texts regarding Jesus as the Christ.¹⁴⁴ Scholars studying early Christian use of *Testimonia* have focused on

¹⁴³ Charlesworth, POT I:795, slightly altered.

¹⁴⁴ For an excellent treatment of *Testimonia* see, ‘*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*’: The Form & Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections, Martin Albl (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999); on Irenaeus, see pp. 112-118.

Chistological collections: the question of “Holy Spirit Testimonia” seems not to have occurred.¹⁴⁵

The first passages from Irenaeus that I will discuss, however, include one from AH II, at one of the rare occasions in which Irenaeus does cite Genesis One. AH II.2.4-5¹⁴⁶ has an early articulation by Irenaeus of thought that he will treat again in *Demo* I.1.5. The two passages are clearly related to each other in subject matter (creation) and in scripture citations; the theological differences between the two I find remarkable. The first passage does not contain a pneumatology; the second one does. I can also remark that I do not think that the phenomena of these two passages is convincingly explained by a version of the testimonia hypothesis that denies that Irenaeus used some OT writings directly.

5. For this is a peculiarity of the pre-eminence of God, not to stand in need of other instruments for the creation of those things which are summoned into existence. His own Word is both suitable and sufficient for the formation of all things, even as John, the disciple of the Lord, declares regarding Him: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.” [John 1:3] Now, among the “all things” our world must be embraced. It too, therefore, was made by His Word, as Scripture tells us in the book of Genesis that He made all things connected with our world by His Word. *David also expresses the same truth [when he says]* “For He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created.” [Ps. 33/2:9] Whom, therefore, shall we believe as to the creation of the world -- these heretics who have been mentioned that prate so foolishly and inconsistently on the subject, or the disciples of the Lord, and Moses, who was both a faithful servant of God and a prophet? He at first narrated the formation of the world in these words: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” [Gen. 1:1] and all other things in succession; but neither gods nor angels had any share in the work.

Now, that this God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul the apostle also has declared, “There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and through all things, and in us all.” [Eph. 4:6] I have indeed proved already that there is only one God.... AH II.2.4-5

These OT and NT passages are clearly referred to by Irenaeus: Gospel of John 1:3, Psalm 33/2:9, Genesis 1:1 and Epistle to the Ephesians 4:6. The first two passages -- John 1:3,

¹⁴⁵ *Testimonia* differ from what I call “constellations of scripture [passages]” in that by hypothesis the *Testimonia* are regarded as *written* documents that gather together scriptural (OT) passages. The hypothesis covers OT passages and often deals with continuities in citations among Christian authors of OT passages that vary from the LXX. By contrast, I do not regard “constellations” as written documents, but rather simply as scriptural passages that are used together in mutually interpretive ways in the process of exegesis. It is the recurring use of a group or set of specific scriptural passages that marks a *constellation* of scripture passages. Moreover, over time a constellation can be modified by the addition of new (i.e., NT) passages to the received core.

¹⁴⁶ See *Irenee de Lyon - Contre les Heresies Livre II*, Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau, eds. and trans., SC 293 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1982), pp. 38-41. English translations of AH passages are from the ANF.

and Psalm 33/2:9 – are used to support the statement that God’s “own Word is both suitable and sufficient for the formation of all things;” in particular, the world (in its cosmic not local sense.) Genesis 1:1 excludes the teaching that God was aided in the act of creation by gods or angels: it is this teaching by the Bythian dualists that is the nominal reason for Irenaeus’ statement at AH II.2.4-5 that the world was created by God alone using His Word. The passage ends with Irenaeus referring Ephesians 4:6 to God the Father as he identifies the one Creator God with the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is no mention whatsoever of the Holy Spirit. Irenaeus leads with a NT Logos passage (Gospel of John 1:3 -- one of the very, very few NT passages that speak at all about creation), and then cites OT material that supports a doctrine of the Word active in creation (Psalm 33/2:9). There is then similar testimony (i.e., both testaments) to support belief in one creator God (Gen. 1:1 and Ephesians 4:6.)

Now we turn to what I am identifying as a related passage by Irenaeus in his later work, the *Demonstration*:

In this way, then, it is demonstrated that there is One God, the Father, uncreated, invisible, Creator of all, above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God. And as God is verbal, therefore He created things by His Word; and God is spirit, so that He adorned all things by the Spirit, as the prophet also says, *By the Word of the Lord, the heavens were spread out, And by the Spirit of His mouth all their power.* [Ps. 33/2:6] Thus, the Word “establishes,” that is, works bodily, and confers existence, while the Spirit arranges and forms the various “powers,” so rightly is the Son called Word and the Spirit the Wisdom of God.

Hence, His apostle Paul also well says, “One God, the Father, who is above all, and through all and in us all” [Eph. 4:6] – because “above all” is the Father, and “through all” is the Word – since through Him everything was made by the Father – while “in us all” is the Spirit, who cries “Abba, Father,” [Rom. 8:15] and forms man to the likeness of God. Thus, the Spirit demonstrates the Word, and, because of this, the prophets announced the Son of God, while the Word articulates the Spirit, and therefore it is He Himself who interprets the prophets [Luke 24:27] and brings man to the Father.¹⁴⁷

Sometime between the writing of AH II and AH IV, between the writing of AH II and *The Demonstration*, Irenaeus found a reason to change his theology. The OT and NT passages clearly referred to by Irenaeus in *The Demonstration* are: Psalm 33/2:6, Epistle to the Ephesians 4:6 and Rom. 8:15; Behr finds Luke 24:27, but I think that citation is of a different order than the first three. The scriptural citations that are in common with AH II.2.4-5 are Psalm 33/2 and Ephesians 4:6, although this time Irenaeus cites verse six of Psalm 33/2 rather than verse nine. Psalm 33/2:6 is, of course, a key *Holy Spirit as creator* text with its signature “In the beginning the Word, and the Spirit” understanding of

¹⁴⁷ *Demo* I.1.5, Behr, p. 43. The passage is not separated into two paragraphs by Behr or any other editor/translator; I do it here only for clarity.

Genesis 1:1-3.¹⁴⁸ Also, in this quotation Irenaeus refers Ephesians 4:6 to all three Persons of the Trinity: “because ‘above all’ *is the Father*, and ‘through all’ *is the Word* – since through Him everything was made by the Father – while ‘in us all’ *is the Spirit*.” John 1:3, cited in the AH II passage, does not appear at all in the *Demonstration* passage, and indeed could be said to be *replaced* by Rom. 8:15, a quote that highlights the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Genesis 1:1 passage drops away, seemingly superfluous to Irenaeus’ argument. Irenaeus has found a suitable authority in the new, Christian, “Scriptures” for the doctrine that God is the creator, and quotes the passage at both AH IV.20.2 and *Demonstration* I.4: “Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, ‘First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence....’” The quoted passage is from *Shepherd of Hermas*.

As I said earlier, the theological differences between the two passages by Irenaeus are remarkable. The first passage is an account of creation that identifies the role of the Word in the divine creative act. This account of creation that speaks only of God and His Word seems complete with only these Two; mention of the Word seems necessitated by the testimony of John 1:3. The second passage is an account of creation that identifies the roles of both the Word and the Holy Spirit in the divine creative act; the centering of creation on the Word that comes from John 1:3 is gone, and a passage (Eph. 4:6) that was referred only to God the Father is now referred to the Three. The least that can be said about what happens in *Demo* I.1.5 is that Irenaeus has felt the effects of, first, a theology of the Holy Spirit as creator centered on Psalm 33/2:6; and second, a “two agent” exegesis of creation, particularly the creation of man (at Gen. 1:25-26). Irenaeus’ theology is marked by his assimilation and unification of these two theologies of creation. This assimilation and unification may be observed in AH IV and V, for the theology expressed in these two books is not determined simply by an easing of genre limitations but by developments in Irenaeus’ theology. Throughout this process, throughout his writings, Irenaeus remains, however, either disinterested or unaffected by Genesis 1:1-2. The scriptural (LXX) passage that figures more decisively in Irenaeus’ strong statement of the Holy Spirit as creator is Psalm 33/2:6. In the two passages just compared, where a statement of the Holy Spirit as creator is lacking, so is any reference to Psalm 33/2:6; where there is a statement of the Holy Spirit as creator, there is also the testimony of Psalm 33/2:6. Alternately, where Psalm 33/2:6 appears there is a statement of the Holy Spirit as creator; where it does not, there is no statement of the Holy Spirit as creator.

Virtually every scholar who has written on the subject judges that Irenaeus believed the Holy Spirit participated in the act of creation. However, if this fact about Irenaeus’ pneumatology is largely uncontested, it is nonetheless one that is somehow puzzling for many scholars, who have felt that Irenaeus’ doctrine required particular attention and explanation in order to make sense of it.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ However, while Psalm 33/2: 6 supports Irenaeus’ understanding that God created through the Two, the Word and the Spirit, in Irenaeus there is no association of the passage with Gen. 1:2b, as there is in Theophilus’ writings.

¹⁴⁹ This dynamic is especially evident in treatments of Irenaeus’ “Two Hands” account of creation, as the reader will see below.

Irenaeus' identification of the Holy Spirit with Divine Wisdom (from, e.g., Proverbs) causes the same (or more) consternation or confusion among scholars that it causes among Theophilus' commentators.¹⁵⁰ The greater authority of Irenaeus, compared to Theophilus, makes his Wisdom Pneumatology all the more puzzling and problematic for these scholars. While this is not the place to discuss Wisdom Pneumatology with any substance,¹⁵¹ the fact needs to be stated clearly that one important way Irenaeus has for speaking about the Holy Spirit as creator is through the identification of the Holy Spirit with the Divine Wisdom.¹⁵²

3. I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father; and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation....¹⁵³

4. There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things....

In this way, then, it is demonstrated that there is One God, the Father, uncreated, invisible, Creator of all, above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God. And as God is verbal, therefore He created things by His Word; and God is spirit, so that He adorned all things by the Spirit, as the prophet also says, “By the *Word* of the Lord, the heavens were spread out, And by the *Spirit* of His mouth all their *power*.” [Ps. 33/2:6] Thus, the Word “establishes,” that is, works bodily, and confers existence, while the Spirit arranges and forms the various “powers,” so rightly is the Son called Word and the Spirit the Wisdom of God. [*Demo I.1.5*, Behr, p. 43.]

These passages, along with IV.20.1 quoted just below, show Irenaeus' identification of the Holy Spirit with Divine Wisdom. Beyond this basic remark, the most important comment to make initially about these passages is their traditional and familiar content: in particular, the appeal to Ps. 33/32, the exegetical reversal of Word and Spirit in Genesis 1:1-3, and the articulation of a doctrine of a “two-agent creation” by Word and Spirit. It is worth noting that at AH II.2.4-5 Irenaeus says, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made,” quoting John 1:3, while in the later book IV of the AH Irenaeus says, “one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things.” Like Athenagoras, Irenaeus keeps the Trinitarian origins of creation central to his account of the origins of the cosmos. Again like Athenagoras, Irenaeus has a clear

¹⁵⁰ Swete introduces this identification simultaneously as Irenaeus' loyalty to tradition and as his development of that tradition: “Irenaeus, however, while loyally accepting tradition, does not limit himself to it. Like earlier teachers of the second century, he identifies the Holy Spirit with the Divine Wisdom of the book of Proverbs, and assigns to Him a place with the Divine Word in the cosmogony.” Swete, p. 87

¹⁵¹ See chapter X.

¹⁵² Lebreton offers that Irenaeus may have identified the Spirit with Wisdom in order to import, as it were, a kind of Trinitarian superstructure to strengthen an OT theology of the Holy Spirit which is otherwise vague and without vigor. Lebreton, p. 569.

¹⁵³ Here Irenaeus quotes Prov. 3:19, 20; Prov. 8:22-25; and Prov. 8:27-31.

notion of how the Logos and Spirit act in creating. The textual motif that in Irenaeus' theology supports this parallelism is that of "God's [two] hands."

It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess *His own hands*. *For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit*, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things.... [AH IV.20.1]¹⁵⁴

This notion of the Word/Son and Wisdom/Spirit as God's hands has been commented upon often, and is a regular feature of scholarship on Irenaeus. Little has been added in twentieth century treatments to what was said in the nineteenth century by scholars on this subject in Irenaeus, and I cannot claim to have something new and substantial to say. I do have a few small observations to make, but I think it would be useful first to share with the reader the passages in Irenaeus that have fascinated scholars for at least the last two hundred years. To the passage quoted just above may be added:¹⁵⁵

Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and *molded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit*, to whom also He said, "Let Us make man." This, then, is the aim of him who envies our life, to render men disbelievers in their own salvation, and blasphemous against God the Creator. [AH IV. pref. 4]

... so also, in [the times of] the end, the Word of the Father and *the Spirit of God*, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam's formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive. For never at any time did Adam escape the *hands of God*, to whom the Father speaking, said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." [AH V.1.3]

Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modelled after, His own Son. *For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit*, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God. [AH V.6.1]

¹⁵⁴ See *Irenee de Lyon - Contre les Heresies Livre IV*, Louis Doutreleau, ed. and trans., SC 100 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1965), pp. 624-27. In her "reader's guide" to Irenaeus, *One Right Reading?* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1997), Mary Ann Donovan does not speak about the Trinitarian content of this passage. See her pp. 116-123.

¹⁵⁵ Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la trinité*, II.579-83, provides a list of all the occurrences of "creation by Two Hands" in Irenaeus' writings: AH IV, pref 4; IV, 20, 1; V, 1, 3; V, 5, 1; V, 6, 1; V, 15, 3-4; V, 16, 1; V, 28, 3; and Demo 11. Lebreton credits J. A. Robinson for identifying and commenting upon these passages in his *The Demonstration*, pp. 51-53, and then adds that the Armenian for IV.7.4 speaks of "two hands." Lebreton further remarks upon the fact that the expression does not appear in the first three books of the AH, unlike its frequent appearance in books IV and V of AH.

And therefore throughout all time, man, *having been molded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit*, is made after the image and likeness of God: [AH.V.28.4]

First we note that in all cases the occasion for Irenaeus speaking of *creation by the Hands of God* is Gen. 1:25-26, the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. As several scholars have pointed out, Irenaeus understands God to be speaking to the Son and of the Spirit – the “Two Hands” – when He says, “Let us make....” The use of “God’s hands” language in referring to Gen. 1:25-26 is found earlier in *First Clement* 33:4

Above all, as the most excellent and exceeding great work of His intelligence, with His sacred and faultless hands He formed man in the impress of His own image.

A similar midrash of Genesis 1:25-26 (with Genesis 2:7) is offered in 4 Esdras 3:4-5,

O sovereign Lord, did you not speak at the beginning when you formed the earth - - and that without help -- and commanded the dust and it gave you Adam, a lifeless body? *Yet he was the workmanship of Your hands*, and You did breathe into him the breath of life, and he was made alive in Your presence.¹⁵⁶

There is a tradition, then, antedating Irenaeus (antedating Christianity), that associates “made by God’s hands” with Gen. 1:25-26. However, all that Irenaeus taught about the total creative activity of the Holy Spirit is not contained in what he says about the work of God’s Hands. The passages from Irenaeus that I quoted earlier from AH IV.20 and *Demo* I.1.5 to illustrate his understanding that the Word and Wisdom/Spirit are God’s agents of creation at a cosmological scale do not use “Hands of God” nor are they concerned with Gen. 1:25-26. One must look beyond Irenaeus’ deployment of that motif for a full appreciation of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit as creator.

Second we note that although the language of “the Hands of God” seems scriptural in origin, Irenaeus never actually quotes any Scripture (LXX) to support the phrasing. It is the case, however, that a number of psalms refer to the “work(s) of God’s hands”: e.g., Ps. 8:3-8; Ps. 104: 28-30; Ps. 111:6-7; Ps. 138:8; and Ps. 139:7-10.¹⁵⁷ These psalms are not used by Irenaeus. That neither psalm 104 nor 139 is used by Irenaeus is especially striking given the reference to the Spirit of God in both these texts. I can illustrate for the reader an occasion in his Irenaeus’ writing where one would expect to cite Psalm 139, but he does not.

¹⁵⁶ RSV, emphasis added.

¹⁵⁷ I suspect that the original exegetical point of departure for joining “made by Hands” and Gen. 1:25-26 was Isaiah 45:12a, “I made the earth, and created man upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens....” What suggests the additional exegetical role of psalms is the language “work of [my Hands].” Historically speaking, however, the Isaiah 45 passage could be dependent upon the older psalms.

In AH V.15. 3 Irenaeus speaks of God's creative activity extending to the minutest and most interior part of our body – for God's creative work in the Word and Spirit is not limited to cosmology, but is especially present in the creation of man (i.e., Gen. 1:25-26 again.) Irenaeus says:

Now, that the Word of God forms us in the womb, He says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee; and before You went forth from the belly, I sanctified thee, and appointed thee a prophet among the nations." And Paul, too, says in like manner, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, that I might declare Him among the nations." As, therefore, we are by the Word formed in the womb....

The scriptural authorities are explicit: Jeremiah and Paul. Not cited or alluded to by Irenaeus is the following portion of Psalm 139

[13] For You didst form my inward parts, You didst knit me together in my mother's womb. [14] I praise thee, for You art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works! You know me right well; [15] my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. [16] Your eyes beheld my unformed substance; in Your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

In my judgment, Irenaeus intentionally avoids bringing in the psalms as scriptural statements of the “the work of God’s Hands.” He makes no recourse to the psalms because Irenaeus wants to use the phrase “*the* work of God’s Hands” for the creation of man exclusively. Although no part of the phrase “the work of God’s Hands” appears at Genesis 1:25 ff., Irenaeus uses this theologoumenon only for the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. The psalms, by contrast, use this expression --- *τα εργά των χειρών σου* – for a wider variety of created things. Psalm 8, for example, says:

[3] When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
the moon and the stars which You hast established;
[4] what is man that You art mindful of him,
and the son of man that You dost care for him?
[5] Yet You have made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honor.
[6] You have given him dominion over *the works of Your hands*;
You hast put all things under his feet,
[7] all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
[8] the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

Similarly, Ps. 92:4 says, “For You, O LORD, hast made me glad by Your work; at *the works of Your hands* I sing for joy” and Ps 111:7 “*The works of his hands* are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy....” In all these cases, the works of the Lord’s Hands refer not to humanity but to something else. By contrast, Irenaeus restricts the phrase “*the work of God’s Hands*” to the creation of man; the psalms will not help him.

The final point to make about the significance of Irenaeus’ “Hands of God” expression is that scholars have used this theologoumenon as a means of identifying the “logic” of Irenaeus’ Trinitarian theology, and that such identifications have tended to restrict the activity of the Holy Spirit to the realm of “sanctification” while leaving cosmological creation *per se* to the Word alone (almost as though AH II.2.4-5 were Irenaeus’ final pronouncement.) This reading of Irenaeus’ pneumatology takes from the Spirit the full creator-status It/He/She actually enjoys in Irenaeus’ theology.

For Swete, Irenaeus’ understanding of the Word and Spirit as the “Hands of God” constitutes his Trinitarian theology. Swete says: “As the Hands of God, they are Divine and coequal....”¹⁵⁸ He goes on to say: “He [Irenaeus] does not speak of an eternal procession of the Son or the spirit from the Father; his strong antagonism to the Gnostic doctrine of emanations leads him to think of the Son and the Spirit as inherent in the life of God rather than as proceeding from Him; as the ‘Hands’ of God rather than His προβολαι. His controversy with Gnosticism leads him to dwell especially on the work of the Son and the spirit in the creation and in man.”¹⁵⁹ Lebreton understands Irenaeus’ “two hands” language to express the Spirit’s role in certain sanctifying functions, and he quotes approvingly from de Regnon to make this very point:¹⁶⁰ “with one [hand] He makes, He models; with the other he polishes, perfects, brings to completion....” The theology of Irenaeus’ “two hands” language is thus understood to distinguish the *creative* activity of the Word from the *sanctifying* activity of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶¹ Even if this were a satisfactory and tenable reading of the way Irenaeus uses the “Hands of God” – and I do not think it is – it ignores those statements by Irenaeus in which the Holy Spirit is creative at a cosmological level. The judgment that Irenaeus’ “two hands” theology means that in his pneumatology the principal and characteristic activity of the Holy Spirit is sanctification (“polishing, perfecting, bringing to completion”) follows from the presupposition that Paul’s pneumatology is the standard by which early Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit are to be interpreted. While it is indeed true that Irenaeus is influenced by Pauline pneumatology – in fact, that Irenaeus is the *first* patristic author who shows any clear signs of Paul’s pneumatology – this does not mean that Irenaeus’ pneumatology follows the “logic” of Paul’s pneumatology. Or what modern scholars have regarded as the logic of Paul’s pneumatology.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Swete, p. 88. Whether the “two hands” language supports a positive judgment that Irenaeus has a theology of the co-eternity of the Three is a debated issue in recent scholarship on Irenaeus. The position in older scholarship was that Irenaeus had a theology of the eternal, separate existence of the Word and Holy Spirit, i.e., he was not a modalist. I agree.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁰ Lebreton, p. 583.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Irenaeus is, in my opinion, the first post-NT Christian author to show any clear signs of the influence of Pauline pneumatology. See **Chapter X** for my treatment of Irenaeus’ utilization of Pauline

Conclusion

There is in ancient Judaism an association of the Spirit of God with the act of creation: this may be seen in the First Temple Writings of Genesis 1:1-2b, Job, and especially Psalms 33 and 104. Explicit attention to the role of the Spirit in creation appears in late Second Temple writings: Judith, Fourth (or Second) Esdras, and Second Baruch. This theology of the Spirit as creator is a Jewish theology, pre-dating Christianity. Indeed, none of the important Second Temple texts that express Jewish reflection upon the Holy Spirit creating are of interest to early Christians:¹⁶³ for Christians who continue to understand the Spirit of God as acting in the original creation the important texts are Genesis 1:2b and Psalm 33:6.¹⁶⁴ I have also argued that the late Second Temple texts constitute midrashim on Genesis 1:1-3 in which Genesis 1:3 and Genesis 1:2b are understood to be the parallel actions of God's Word and God's Spirit (enunciated in that order.) This understanding of God the Most High acting through two divine agents is there in Judaism and is taken over by Christianity, where it is explicitly attached to the language of God's "two Hands," language itself taken over from Jewish Scripture. Jewish "parallel" exegetical speech about God's Word and Spirit acting in creation provides the basis for later Christian speech about not only God's Word and Spirit acting in creation but about the very existence of the Word and Holy Spirit. The theology that is clearly expressed in Judith, Fourth Esdras, and Second Baruch may have already existed in the First Temple literature (especially Ps. 33), but one cannot be certain. The dominant scholarly model for understanding pre-Common Era Jewish pneumatology remains "development" (for which Ringgren is the paradigmatic case of the articulation of this understanding), but the monopoly in scholarship of the "development of hypostazation in Judaism" is not what it used to be, and a history of the Christian theology of the Holy Spirit does not depend upon presupposing the development model.¹⁶⁵ The late Second Temple theology of early Christianity contains an understanding of the existence of the Holy Spirit who created and is not created. The Judaism that Christianity was born into, and the theology it received from Judaism and continued to profess, expressed belief in a hypostasized Holy Spirit who acted in creation: this Jewish-Christian pneumatology continued in Christianity through to Irenaeus of Lyons.

However, nothing that is found in Irenaeus' theology of the Holy Spirit as creator should be assumed to carry over into third century Christian pneumatology. A similar statement

pneumatology. See also Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus*, who argues that Irenaeus is the earliest source of clear quotations from Luke-Acts.

¹⁶³ That is to say, these texts are not cited in any recognizable way by early Christian authors.

¹⁶⁴ The fact that the key pneumatology passages from Judith, Fourth Esdras, and Second Baruch are not cited by early Christians may have contributed to a certain fragileness in the Christian trajectory of Jewish Creator Pneumatology. In retrospect, Irenaeus' writing in AH II.2.4-5 foreshadows Origen's position, i.e., a subordinationist pneumatology.

¹⁶⁵ I do not even consider what might be called the "steady state" theory of Jewish monotheism in which Jewish theology is always unambiguously and rigorously monotheist. McGloin expresses this point in the idiom typical of nineteenth century Catholic trinitarian theology: "Were the ancient Jews unitarians?" A good meditation of patristic trinitarian theology is by Robert Wilken, "Not a Solitary God: The Triune God and the Bible," in Remembering the Christian Past (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 63-93.

can be made for all second century Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit as creator. As this book proceeds, we shall see that Irenaeus is the last to express many of the old descriptions of the Holy Spirit. With Irenaeus we come to the end of the early Christian teaching that the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as creator. Indeed, Irenaeus himself provides a glimpse of what will replace the old Jewish-Christian theology. At AH II.2.5 Irenaeus invoked John 1:3 -- “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made” – and described the act of creation solely in terms of Father and Word. No mention is made of the Spirit. John 1:3 will become, with Origen, the authority not simply for passing silently over the creative Spirit, but for identifying the Spirit as one such creature made by the Word. Not until the second half of the fourth century will the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as creator and not creature return to theologies of the Trinity. At that time, as at *Demo I.1.5*, Psalm 33/2:6 will again figure significantly in statements of the creative activity of the Spirit.

The early Christian doctrine that the Holy Spirit is creator was articulated through exegesis and propositions: as Irenaeus says, “I have also largely *demonstrated*, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father; and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him.” There is no evidence among these Christian authors of a sense that the Holy Spirit cannot be spoken of directly and descriptively, or that Scripture (LXX) somehow fails to provide the means by which the Holy Spirit is known or recognized. Effluence, in particular, seems to be a scriptural way of speaking of the Spirit’s origins in the Father. If Irenaeus consciously declines this terminology, as Swete thinks he did, then he does it for both Spirit *and Son*. (Irenaeus quotes some passages from Wisdom of Solomon, but he never cites 7:25.)

In some cases, as in Irenaeus, “effluence” language is simply no longer applied to the Spirit; in other cases, like Tertullian, emanation ($\pi\rho\beta\omega\lambda\eta$) language will be used equally of Son and Holy Spirit. *The Teachings of Silvanus* and Origen appropriate both “effluence” language and Wisdom 7:25 for the Son exclusively. In all these cases, the result is to deprive the Holy Spirit of a scriptural (LXX) description of His origin from God. As such, the loss of effluence language – the aetiology of “flowing-forth” – is of major consequence for Christian pneumatology, and contributes significantly to a diminished theology of the Holy Spirit. I can point out in particular that the loss of effluence language dissolves the previous continuity that had existed between the language of the Spirit’s divine generation -- “flowing-forth” – and His mission – “poured upon.” This loss and its negative effect upon a theology of the Holy Spirit takes place within a larger context of a “diminishing pneumatology,” for it is a strange fact that Christian pneumatology “falls” as the existence of a NT canon “rises.”

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