

THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

I. *Primitive Salvific History: Ruach as Wind*

TREATISES of old testament theology never fail to remind us that *ruach*, the Hebrew word for 'spirit', also means 'wind' or 'breath'. Of these three meanings, that of wind appears to have been the most primitive. One can see how natural it is to think of the wind as an act of God. Invisible, immensely powerful and sometimes catastrophic in its effects, it is also of mysterious origin, transcendent and quite uncircumscribed in its activity. This 'wind symbolism', primitive though it is, is of permanent theological value. It is to be found in the late and developed theology of Ecclesiastes. 'Going southwards, turning about northwards, about and about goes the wind' (i, 6) '... you know not what the way of the wind is' (xi, 5). In the new testament it is taken up in the teaching of our Lord himself. 'The wind blows wherever it wants, and you hear its voice; but you do not know whence it comes or whither it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit' (John iii, 8). The 'mighty rushing wind' of Pentecost is of course a further instance of wind conceived of as directly emanating from God.

In Israel's earliest traditions however, it was not wind as such, not any sort of wind, that was conceived to be, in this peculiarly direct sense, divine activity. God's revelation of himself to Israel during the nomadic phase in which these traditions were wrought out was adapted to her own nomad mentality. She knew him, that is to say, as a destroyer God, a God of burning catastrophe, storm and thunder, earthquake and fire. Among the other storm portents associated with Yahweh at this time was that searing, withering south-east wind peculiar to Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries, and nowadays known as the sirocco. It was this burning east wind that was appropriated to Yahweh. Here, as in so many other respects, Israel was inspired to see that powers and prerogatives falsely attributed to pagan gods by her neighbours, belonged in reality to Yahweh alone. Heathen gods were believed by their worshippers to be equipped with 'burning whirlwinds' and 'evil winds'. It is just such a wind, for example, that Marduk

is related, in the Babylonian epic, to have launched into the gaping jaws of the chaos-monster, Tiamet. There are many other instances. But to Israel Yahweh demonstrated once and for all by his salvific acts in her own history, that in reality it was he who was master of the fiery wind. He used it primarily to destroy her enemies, and secondly to sustain her with food in the desert. It was by an 'east wind' that he brought the plague of locusts upon the Egyptians (Exod. x, 13). By this same 'mighty east wind' he thrust back the waters of the Red Sea for them to cross (Exod. xiv, 21). It seems to have been by the east wind too that he blew quails into the Israelite camp to feed the people (Num. xi, 31; cf. Ps. lxxvii, 26). The burning east wind of Yahweh is a vital element in these formative traditions of the exodus and the desert wandering, every detail of which was cherished in the memory of the people. And so the idea that the east wind is Yahweh's chosen weapon survives and achieves a permanent place in old testament thought. 'The east wind will come, the *ruach* of Yahweh' (Os. xiii, 15), 'I will scatter them with an east wind' (Jer. xviii, 17). 'He has chased him with his cruel wind, namely the east wind' (Is. xxvii, 8: cf. Ps. xlvi, 8, Ezech. xvii, 10; xix, 12; xxvii, 26; etc.).

It is only a slight development from this conception of the east wind as Yahweh's weapon in salvific history, for wind in general to be regarded as his special instrument. Not only does he blow the locusts into Egypt by an *east* wind, he also blows them out again by a *west* wind (Exod. x, 19). He manipulates the wind in whatever direction he likes, to achieve his will. This in itself is a manifestation of Yahweh's glorious power. He 'commands and raises a stormy wind' (Ps. cvi, 25), 'brings out the wind from his store-rooms' (Ps. cxxxiv, 7), 'flies on the wings of the wind' (Ps. xvii, 10; cf. Ps. ciii, 3), 'makes winds his messengers' (Ps. ciii, 4). In the wars of David the 'sound of marching' (undoubtedly the rushing of the wind) 'in the tops of the mulberry trees' is a sign to David that 'Yahweh has gone out before him to smite the Philistines' (2 Kings v, 24). In the invisible yet palpable force of the wind Israel experiences the impact of Yahweh's will upon her. It is the *ruach* sent by her covenant-God to destroy all that is harmful to her, to sustain her and strengthen her. Thus the doctrine of the Spirit of God as sustainer, strengthener, *Paraclete*, is rooted remotely but unmistakably in the most ancient traditions of salvific history.

II. 'Presence Theology': Ruach as Charism

We may pass now to a distinct tradition, that of the Sinai theophany (Exod. xix ff., etc), and to the further theological development that derives from it, the theology of Yahweh's presence among his people. Not only does Yahweh save and sustain his people; at this specific point in space and time he descends and dwells in their midst. What effect does the old testament 'presence theology' that grows out of this fact have on the idea of God's *ruach*?

Hitherto Yahweh has presided over the lives of his people from afar. From his dwelling in heaven he has sent out his *ruach* against their enemies, and blown quails into the camp to feed them. But henceforward the source of the *ruach* is located in the very midst of the community. And just as Yahweh becomes immanent in the community, so his *ruach*, the perceptible embodiment of his divine activity, becomes immanent in the persons of the community's leaders. It is at the door of the 'tent of meeting' that the seventy elders of Israel receive a share of Moses' *ruach* (Num. xi, 24 ff). In this episode we encounter for the first time the idea of the *ruach* of Yahweh as *charism*, as divine activity working in and through the bodily faculties of men, and it is immensely important to realize how directly and immediately this idea grows out of 'presence theology', the conception of God dwelling in the midst of a community of men. Henceforward Yahweh will direct the course of history in and through the persons of the men among whom he has chosen to dwell. He will do this by sending his *ruach* into them to possess their bodies and use their faculties of speech and action. Light, the divine word first uttered at Sinai, continues to be uttered through the charismatic messenger, the prophet. Strength, the divine life-force first manifested in the storm and earthquake and fire of Sinai, continues to manifest itself in the warrior strength of the charismatic chief, the 'judge'. The prophet and the 'judge' are the two primitive charismatic figures. In them the divine *wind* of primitive salvific history becomes, at first intermittently and then more and more continuously, the *indwelling spirit* of 'presence theology'. In this way the Christian doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit, and especially St Paul's formulation of it, '... your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost' (I Cor. vi, 19), grows out of old testament

'presence theology' and can be traced back ultimately to Sinai, where 'presence theology' really begins.

We may pause at this point to notice that in the fusion of these two traditions of primitive salvific history and of 'presence theology', the embryo of what we call 'gospel' is already constituted. For the gospel is the prophetic proclamation of God saving his chosen community by dwelling in the midst of it and extending his own divine life—his grace and truth—into its members. This imposes on those members the duty of reproducing God's 'glory' (or, as one tradition has it, his 'holiness'), in their own lives, by conforming to his 'righteousness'. Hence the idea of *law*, God's will revealed from his theophanic fire, is added to the two others, and divine *salvation*, divine *presence*, divine *law* are the three basic constituents of 'gospel' as such. The Word is made flesh and *dwells* amongst us (literally 'pitches his tent' amongst us) in order to utter the gospel and perform the act of salvation. Then he breathes on his chosen men and sends them the Spirit so that the gospel shall continue to be uttered, and the salvific act shall continue to be performed in and through them. Just as the 'sending of the spirit' in the old testament grows out of the 'presence theology' of Sinai, so the 'sending of the Spirit' in the new testament grows out of the 'presence theology' of the incarnate Word.

We must now consider the way in which the spirit as charism works in the men whom it possesses. The fullest, and perhaps the most revealing story of a primitive charismatic chieftain or 'judge' is that of Samson (Judges xiii-xvi). In this story we find a calculated contrast between the *natural* activity of Samson's own weak and compliant personality, and the *supernatural* activity of the spirit within him. Samson's natural instincts lead him to seek the company of the Philistines. He chooses a Philistine woman for his wife, Philistine companions and a Philistine harlot to revel with. But the burning spirit of Yahweh seizes him suddenly in the very midst of his usually dissolute activities and uses him miraculously to destroy the base associates he has chosen. Here the spirit of the destroyer God is clearly thrusting out the 'soul' and personality of Samson, and using his body to achieve its destructive purpose on behalf of the chosen people.

This then is the charism of the spirit in its most primitive form: miraculous physical strength which suddenly possesses a man's

body and uses it to destroy the enemies of Israel. As the theology of the charism develops, it takes the form not merely of physical strength in war, but of warlike *skill*. 'He teaches my hands for war' (Ps. xvii, 34; cxliii, 1). At this stage the spirit works not merely by taking possession of the chieftain's body and using his physical faculties, but by teaching his mind and endowing it with supernatural cunning. It is the difference between possessing a man's *body* and possessing his soul. Thus the *teaching* function of the Paraclete is foreshadowed in the warlike skill traditionally attributed to David 'taught by the spirit'. This emphasis on *skill* as distinct from strength leads in turn, under the influence of the humanistic movement of the Solomonic era, to the concept of charismatic *wisdom*, the gift which Solomon himself asked of God (3 Kings iii, 9). This conception of the charism of the spirit as wisdom finds its full development in the oracles of Isaias, supremely the 'wisdom' prophet of the old testament. 'The spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh' (Isaias xi, 2). These are precisely the qualities of wisdom in Hebrew thought, and the Book of Proverbs in particular rings the changes on these qualities, in inculcating the love of wisdom.

The special function of the spirit in the institution of the monarchy must also be noticed. What the 'David-Sion' tradition stresses above all is the notion of permanency. Yahweh has chosen the house of David to rule over Israel *for ever*; he has chosen Sion as his dwelling-place *for ever*. In the same way the spirit comes upon David at his anointing *permanently* and rests upon him continuously—not intermittently as with the judges. 'The spirit of Yahweh came mightily upon David *from that day forward*' (1 Kings xvi, 13).

Having seen something of the working of the spirit in the charismatic chieftain, we must also consider its activity in the prophet. The charism of prophecy, like that of warrior strength, is in its primitive form a phenomenon of possession. The spirit takes control of a man's power of speech and manifests its presence in him by causing him to babble incoherently. When the *ruach* of Yahweh comes upon the seventy elders (Num. xi, 25), or upon Saul (1 Kings x, 10; xix, 24), it causes them to prophesy. But what they say is not of the least importance. The spirit is at this stage

merely manifesting its presence in them as a prelude to using them to perform miracles of salvation and enlightenment on behalf of Israel. Prophecy as a manifestation of the presence of the spirit is therefore another element of permanent theological value. In the old testament it reaches its climax in the post-exilic message of Joel: 'And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am Yahweh your God and there is no other: and my people shall never be put to shame. And what shall happen after this is that I will pour out my *ruach* on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions, and I will pour out my *ruach* on the servants and serving maids as well in those days' (Joel ii, 27-29). We should notice that in this oracle the charism of the spirit is immediately associated with 'presence theology', and also with cosmic portents which are certainly meant to recall the theophany of Sinai. Indeed this is 'presence theology' pushed to its ultimate possible extreme. What Joel means is that the charism of prophecy as a manifestation of Yahweh's benign presence is to achieve an unprecedented intensity in the last days. Yahweh's spirit will take possession of every individual in Israel from greatest to least, and will manifest its presence by every conceivable form of charismatic visitation. This particular oracle is of course taken up in St Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts ii, 17-21). The Person of the Holy Spirit manifests his presence in the individual members of the primitive Church by possessing and using their faculty of speech. In its undeveloped form this is the phenomenon known in the new testament as *glossolalia* (babbling) or the gift of tongues, and referred to once by St Paul as the 'wordless groaning' of the Spirit within us. (Rom. viii, 26; cf. also Acts ii, 4, 11, 13; x, 46; xix, 6; 1 Cor. xii-xiv). It is the transition in the old testament from frenzied *glossolalia* to the coherent prophetic oracle that we must now consider.

In its most primitive form the prophetic oracle seems to consist of an inspired explanation of something which the prophet has been forced by the *ruach* to say or do in the course of his prophetic ecstasy. The nakedness of Isaias (Is. xx, 2 ff) and the symbolic actions of Ezechiel are examples of ecstatic deeds the significance of which is explained in the subsequent oracles. But more frequently the kernel of the oracle consists not of an act but of a word. Out of the prophet's incoherent *glossolalia* a 'word' wells

up in his consciousness which seems to him of overwhelming significance. It emerges in the form of a brief enigmatic sentence, a phrase, or even a single word. The children's names in Osee and Isaias are obvious examples: *Lo-ruhamah* (You have not been granted mercy), *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (Spoil-hastens-plunder-speeds), etc. Oracles grow up as explanations of the significance of these names. Or else the 'pregnant word' which subsequently forms the kernel of the oracle may take the form of a pun. Amos sees 'summer fruit' (*qayits*) and the inward significance is that the 'end' (*qets*) is come upon my people Israel' (Amos viii, 2). Jeremias sees an 'almond tree' (*shaqed*), and the significance of this turns out to be that Yahweh is 'watching' (*shoqed*) over his words, to put them into action. The same word-play is to be found in Isaias v, 7: 'He expected judgment (*mishpat*) and behold bloodshed (*mishpach*), justice (*tsedaqah*) and behold a cry of fear (*tse'aqah*); or in Isaias vii, 9: 'If you will not hold firm (*im lo ta'aminu*), then you will not be confirmed (*ki lo te'amenu*). A marked preference can be discerned in these 'embryonic' oracles or 'pregnant words' for sibilant or guttural sounds. They are in fact usually the sort of words that one might have expected to burst from the lips of a frenzied man.

As the prophetic charism develops in Israel, this ecstatic element diminishes and gives way increasingly to the rational element. This corresponds to the increased emphasis on the 'rational' element in the warrior or chieftain charisms. The prophet becomes more and more a wise teacher, less and less a man beside himself. The sheer wisdom and eloquence of the prophecies of Deutero- and Trito-Isaias mark the culmination of this process. In these prophets the resources of human eloquence become the perfect vehicle of the charismatic message. The frenzied or ecstatic element completely disappears.

Initially then the charism of the spirit takes possession of a man's body and uses his physical faculties. It is easy to see that this conception of prophetic seizure and possession has its dangers. In the earliest biblical accounts the *ruach* of Yahweh behaves almost like a *daemon*. It clothes a man (Judges vi, 34, 1 Paralip. xii, 8), falls on him (Ezech. xi, 5), leaps violently on him (Judges xiv, 6; 1 Kings x, 6, 10; xviii, 16), etc. It changes the individual concerned into another man (1 Kings x, 6). The *ruach* in fact seems at times to have a quasi-personal existence. Micheas'

prophecy before Achab and Josaphat (3 Kings xxii, 19 ff.) provides a striking instance of this 'personification' of the prophetic *ruach*.

'Who will beguile Achab?' said Yahweh, 'so that he marches against Ramoth-Galaad and falls?' And one said one thing, and one said another. Then the *ruach* came forward and stood before Yahweh. 'I am the one to beguile him', said he. 'How?' said Yahweh to him. 'I will go out and be a lying *ruach* in the mouth of all his prophets', said he.

Contemporary pagan thought has undoubtedly exercised a certain material influence at such points, and notions of 'daemonic' possession derived from pagan theology have been absorbed into the developing theology of the *ruach*. Just as the powers and activities attributed to pagan gods are ascribed by the Israelites to Yahweh alone, so the functions and activities of pagan *daemones* are ascribed exclusively to Yahweh's *ruach*. Nevertheless it was not without perceptible uneasiness that these notions were absorbed into Israelite thought. It is most striking for instance that in Deuteronomy there is no mention whatever of Yahweh's *ruach* except remotely in one late and uncharacteristic passage (Deut. xxxiv, 9). Jeremias too, the Deuteronomist prophet *par excellence*, adopts a consistently distrustful attitude on this point. It has been plausibly concluded that the Deuteronomist school viewed with considerable suspicion this *ruach* theology, with what must have seemed to be its inherent tendency to become 'daemonic', and that this school was acutely aware of the risks entailed in admitting pagan conceptions of charismatic possession into Israelite religious thought. It is in Ezechiel and Deutero- and Trito-Isaias, prophets associated far more closely with the Priestly tradition, that the theology of the *ruach* achieves its greatest development. And we encounter the charism of the spirit in its plenitude in that oracle of Trito-Isaias which is taken up by our Lord himself: 'The spirit of Lord Yahweh is upon me; because Yahweh has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to all that are fettered, to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God' (Is. lxi, 1-2). The preaching of the gospel, the consoling of Israel, the rebuking of her oppressors, all the essentially *Paraclete* functions are gathered together into this oracle; and they are brought to Israel through the Messiah, the anointed one.

III. *The New Humanistic Movement: the Ruach as the Breath of God*

The reign of Solomon marks a crisis in the religious thought of Israel. A combination of political, social and economic circumstances compelled her at this stage in her development to absorb not only new religious ideas (often of Egyptian provenance), but actually a new humanistic culture and mentality within the existing framework of her sacred tradition. This new humanism is characterized above all by a quite unprecedented interest in *personality*. Hitherto the Israelite's thought has turned exclusively on miracles and wonders, on cult, shrines and holy wars, on the God-given fertility of his land, on the miraculous powers charismatically conferred on his people's leaders. Now for the first time he becomes deeply conscious of himself as a *person*. Human qualities, courage, wisdom, prudence, and the like, are reflected upon with a new earnestness. Human relationships achieve a new importance. A new interest is taken even in such factors as a man's physical appearance. David was ' . . . ruddy, and also beautiful of aspect and handsome in appearance . . . skilful in playing, a champion in strength, a man of war, prudent in speech and a handsome man, and Yahweh is with him' (1 Kings xvi, 12, 18). Jonathan 'loved him as he loved his own soul' (1 Kings xx, 17). We find this preoccupation with personal qualities, personal beauty and friendship in many other passages, notably in the stories of Absalom (xiv, 25; xv, 2-5) and Adonias (3 Kings i, 6f).

The same interest in persons and personal relationships is extended to Yahweh with the most striking results. He is now conceived of in terms that are vividly human, and his personal relationships with those whom he has chosen are of a startlingly intimate kind. For example he walks in Paradise in 'the daytime wind', makes skin tunics for Adam and Eve, shuts the door of the ark upon Noe, holds human conversations with Abraham and even accepts a meal from him. Most significant for our subject, he moulds man in the creation like a potter, and then breathes into him the breath of life. These examples are all taken from the earliest of the four tradition-strands of which the Pentateuch is composed, and this particular strand is now believed to have been composed precisely during the reign of Solomon. It reflects most vividly the humanistic preoccupations of that period. These

examples of Yahweh's 'human' qualities, so far from being, as used to be thought, 'naïve anthropomorphisms', relics of an antique and undeveloped theology, are actually the product of this *relatively sophisticated* Solomonic humanism, with its new emphasis on the *intimacy* of Yahweh with man. Such a conception would have been inconceivable to an earlier age, for hitherto Yahweh had been thought of as a terrifying God, enveloped in fire, smoke and thunder.

The interest taken in personal appearance in this new humanistic culture is applied to Yahweh too, and the actual features and expression of his face become important. From this time onwards we hear increasingly of Yahweh's eyes (Amos ix, 4; 1 Kings xxvi, 21; Deut. xi, 12, etc.), and even once of his eyelids (Ps. x, 4), of his mouth (Jer. ix, 11, etc.), nostrils (Ps. xvii, 16, etc.), lips and tongue (Is. xxx, 27, etc.). The classic form of blessing becomes: 'May Yahweh make his *face* shine upon you and be gracious to you; may Yahweh lift up his *face* to you and grant you peace' (Num. vi, 25-26, etc.). It is to this new preoccupation with the face and features of Yahweh that we should relate the new conception of the *ruach* as the breath of his nostrils. The *ruach* now becomes not merely a divine instrument, not merely a charism in man, but *the attribute connected most intimately of all with the very person of Yahweh, his breath*. It is true that at any period from the thirteenth century B.C. onwards Israel might conceivably have adopted this idea of the divine breath as life-principle from her pagan neighbours. Long before the time of the exodus the idea was already common and stereotyped, certainly in Babylonia, probably in Phoenicia and Canaan, but above all in Egypt and countries subject to Egypt's influence. Among innumerable examples which one might take from Egyptian texts three may be given: 'Thou nurse in the very womb, giving breath to sustain all that thou dost make!' (From the fourteenth-century hymn to Aten), 'The breath of life and heat comes from your nose', '... air for every nose by which men breathe'. It seems overwhelmingly probable that it was during the Solomonic period, when Israel was peculiarly *open* to Egyptian influence, and peculiarly *interested* in the intimate and personal nature of her own relationship with Yahweh, that these ideas were first allowed to enter deeply into her religious thought. Confronted with this new emphasis in Egyptian culture on the function of the divinity as

creator and life-giver, Israel feels compelled to assert that it is Yahweh alone who exercises this function, and to consider his *ruach*, formerly conceived of as divine wind or divine spirit, now as divine breath, the life-principle of all creation.

Thereafter belief in the 'breath of life' (another expression which occurs repeatedly in profane texts long before the exile) enters deeply and permanently into the religious thought of Israel. 'You take away their *ruach*; they die and return to their dust; you exhale your *ruach*, they are created, and you renew the surface of the earth' (Ps. ciii, 29-30; cf. Gen. vi, 17; vii, 15, 22; Num. xvi, 21; xxvii, 16; Is. xlii, 5; Job xxxiv, 14-15, etc.). Perhaps it is in the post-exilic book of Job that it finds its most vivid formulations. 'The *ruach* of God has made me; the breath of Shaddai has brought me to life' (Job xxxiii, 4). 'If he draw in to himself his *ruach* and his breath, all flesh shall perish at once' (Job xxxiv, 14-15 etc.).

It is as a further projection of this same idea that we should understand the reference to the *ruach* of God in the post-exilic first creation narrative (Gen. i, 2). In this passage, as a recent commentator has shown, the divine breath is conceived of as one of the raw ingredients out of which the world was made and into which it would resolve itself if God were not upholding it every instant in being. It is the element of life and movement as opposed to the formless and lifeless waste, which it penetrates and quickens. The same idea of death as a relapse of the creature into its original constituents, the 'breath of life' and the 'dust of the earth' is to be found in Ecclesiastes. 'The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the *ruach* returns to God who gave it' (Eccles. xii, 7; cf. iii, 20).

To be alive therefore is to be 'nostril to nostril' with Yahweh, breathing in his holy exhalations. This conception survives all subsequent reactions and vicissitudes and becomes the traditional image for expressing man's intimacy and dependency on Yahweh as life-giver. The face of Yahweh is thought of as suffused with unspeakable graciousness and kindness, and simultaneously as the source whence flows the breath of life. Hence to 'seek the face of Yahweh' becomes the whole aim of the pious Israelite's life. 'My heart said of you: Seek his face; it is your face, Yahweh, that I seek' (Ps. xxvi, 8; cf. Os. v, 15; Ps. xxiii, 6; civ, 4, etc.). We may contrast this new humanistic mentality with the older

conception, in which to see the face of God was to die (Exod. xxxiii, 20, etc.).

But the humanism we have been considering had its baser side. The new tolerance towards pagan peoples led to the most terrible betrayals of the true Yahweh worship. Solomon himself built a 'high place' for Chemosh on the Mount of Olives, actually overlooking the temple he had built for Yahweh (3 Kings xi, 7). Again the exclusive emphasis on Yahweh's kindness and mercy led to an attitude of deluded complacency among the people. 'Yahweh is too tolerant, too benign, ever to be angry.' Thus from the earliest prophets onwards an *anti-humanistic reaction* sets in. The pre-exilic prophets strive to re-awaken in their fellow Israelites the ancient conception of Yahweh as a destroyer-God, the God of the desert wanderings, filled with furious burning jealousy, and ready to consume with fire all who are unfaithful to him. These 'nomadic' attributes are now resuscitated. But now, because the people are preoccupied with Yahweh's face, these 'nomadic' qualities become the *features* of that face. The face is suffused with the burning fury of the desert theophany. The divine breath becomes the *burning east wind*, Yahweh's destroying weapon. 'An east wind shall come, the breath of Yahweh coming up from the desert; and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up' (Os. xiii, 15). '... his lips are full of indignation and his tongue a devouring fire, and his breath is an overflowing stream that reaches to the very neck . . .' (Is. xxx, 27-28).

It is in the post-exilic prophets, and especially, as we have said, in Ezechiel and Deutero- and Trito-Isaias, that the theology of the *ruach* reaches its plenitude. It has often been said that what we encounter in these post-exilic prophets is a *total renewal ab initio* of Yahweh's saving act. The 'Last days' (*Endzeit*) become the symmetrical complement to the 'First days' (*Urzeit*). There is to be a new covenant (Jer. xxxi, 31), a new temple (Ezech. xl-xlvi), a new exodus (Is. xl, 3-4; xli, 18 f; xlii, 15f; xliii, 2, 16 f; xlv, 3; xlviii, 21; xlix, 9 f; li, 9-10; lv, 12), a new creation (Is. xli, 22; xlii, 5, 9; xliii, 1, 7, 15, 19, etc.), new heavens and a new earth (Is. lxv, 17; lxvi, 22, etc.), which in their miraculous fertility and harmony constitute a new paradise (Ezech. xlvii, 1, 6 f; Is. lxv, 17-25), and all this is to be achieved by Yahweh's 'holy Spirit', the very same (this is particularly emphasized) that Yahweh 'put

in the midst of' the people, when he 'caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses' (Is. lxiii, 10-14, etc.). It would be valid to say that we have here a new 'salvific history' and a new 'presence theology' in which the 'new exodus' of Deutero-Isaiah, and the return of Yahweh to the new temple in Ezechiel, could be considered as the two focal points.

But what is really startling in this new conception of the spirit is that we find ourselves suddenly only one short step away from the theology of St Paul. It would be so very nearly true to apply to Israel as the post-exilic prophets conceive of her, his *mystique* of 'life-in-death': '... as dying and behold we live' (2 Cor. vi, 9). 'For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace. . . . but you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' (Rom. viii, 6, 9).

In the pain and ruin of the exile Israel dies. And the new spirit that is put into her (Ezech xi, 19; xviii, 31; xxxvi, 26), that quickens the dry bones (Ezech. xxxvii, 9 ff), that is poured out so lavishly on the seed of Jacob (Is. xlv, 3; Joel ii, 28), is the holy Spirit by which Yahweh plans and creates (Is. xl, 7 ff). It is in that spirit that Israel comes to life, and she is now so intimately and so mystically 'living unto God' that to be of Jacob necessarily means to be of Yahweh. 'One will say: "I belong to Yahweh", another will call himself by the name of Jacob. Another will write on his hand Yahweh, and will be surnamed Israel' (Is. xlv, 5).

So Israel dies and lives again, and finds at last the mystical union with Yahweh which it has cost her her life to come to. Her light is the unspeakable graciousness of his face. Her life is the sweetness of his holy breath blown into her. There is nothing left in all the world for her to want. 'O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold I will set thy stones in fair colours and lay thy foundations with sapphires' (Is. liv, 11). 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting love will I have compassion on thee says Yahweh thy redeemer' (Is. liv, 7).