

JOHN W. YATES

The Spirit and Creation in Paul

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*
251

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

Herausgeber / Editor

Jörg Frey (München)

Mitherausgeber / Associate Editors

Friedrich Avemarie (Marburg)

Judith Gundry-Volf (New Haven, CT)

Hans-Josef Klauck (Chicago, IL)

251



John W. Yates

The Spirit and Creation
in Paul

Mohr Siebeck

JOHN W. YATES, born 1974; 2007 PhD; currently he is an Anglican clergyman serving on the staff of Church of the Good Samaritan, Paoli, Pennsylvania.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-151594-1

ISBN 978-3-16-149817-6

ISSN 0340-9570 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

© 2008 by Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, Germany.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that permitted by copyright law) without the publisher's written permission. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.

The book was printed by Laupp & Göbel in Nehren on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Nädele in Nehren.

Printed in Germany.

Acknowledgements

The present volume represents a minor revision of my doctoral thesis, accepted by the University of Cambridge in 2007. I wish to thank Prof. Jörg Frey for including this monograph in the *WUNT II* series. Special thanks are due to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, Tanja Mix and the entire editorial team at Mohr Siebeck for their conscientious work in seeing this project through to publication.

During the course of my doctoral research I had the privilege of working under the supervision of two superb scholars. Professor Markus Bockmuehl proved a model of scholarly integrity, combining rigorous supervision with warm hospitality. Dr. James Carleton Paget graciously took over supervision of this research during my final year in Cambridge. His humour, candour and insight paved the way to final submission.

I am grateful to the former Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, Graham Stanton, for the invitation to present some of this material at the Senior New Testament Seminar in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge. The collegial atmosphere and critical engagement there were a vital encouragement.

Over the course of three years of research I also benefited greatly from the help of many friends. To list them all would be embarrassing for the author and overwhelming for the reader. Those who have interacted with portions of my work, providing thoughtful feedback and insight, must be singled out for special thanks. These include: Charles Anderson, Wayne Coppins, Rodrigo F. de Sosa, Simon Gathercole, Jonathan Moo, Ashley Null, James Palmer, Kavin Rowe, Michael Ward, Todd Wilson and Stephen Witmer.

Most of the research for this book was undertaken at Tyndale House Library, Cambridge. The accumulated resources of Tyndale House, both physical and human, are extraordinary, and I am grateful to the staff and my fellow readers with whom I was privileged to share several years. I am also particularly grateful to Clare College, Cambridge, where I had the privilege of serving for three years as the Decani Scholar, assisting in the worshipping life of the community alongside the Dean, the Rev'd Roger Greeves.

My studies at Cambridge would not have been possible without the generous financial support of Trinity School for Ministry, The Falls Church, Clare College, the funds of the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, the Doughty Family, Joe and Pam Ponzi, and John and Susan Yates. The work of preparing this book for publication would not have been possible without the generous support of Simon and Lucy Barnes, Andy and Catherine Crouch, Rich and Lucia Englander, Chuck and Mary Ernst, David and Nancy Filkin, Andy and Leah Krider, and Peter and Erin Lima, who, in the months since leaving Cambridge have made it possible for me to spend a quarter of my time in ongoing research and writing. Members of the Church of the Good Samaritan have been wonderfully supportive of this wayward member of the clergy who hides away to read and write on a regular basis. Without the vision of the Rev'd Greg Brewer my attempt to lead a double life as a pastor and scholar would have remained an aspiration. I am extremely grateful to all those who have been willing to invest in this venture.

Final thanks are reserved for my wife and children. Sylvia, Isabel and Jack have filled these years with laughter and the refreshing (though often sleepless) reality of life with toddlers. Alysia, you have been unstinting in your support and fierce in your determination to see this project through to a successful conclusion. Thank you.

John W. Yates III
August 2008

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	V
Table of Contents	VII
Abbreviations	XI
<i>Chapter 1. Introduction</i>	1
1.1 Method of investigation	2
1.2 Experience and expectations in Pauline pneumatology	3
1.3 The ‘development’ of Pauline pneumatology	4
1.4 The origins of modern discussion	6
1.5 Dunn and Fee on Romans 8	9
1.5.1 Fee on the life-giving spirit	10
1.5.2 Dunn on the life-giving spirit	11
1.5.3 Critique of Dunn and Fee	13
1.6 Governing questions of this study	17
Part I: The Jewish Background	
<i>Chapter 2. The Spirit and Creation in Jewish Literature</i>	24
2.1 Hebrew Scripture	24
2.1.1 The ‘breath of life’ tradition: vocabulary and appropriation	25
2.1.2 The creative spirit: a divergent tradition?	28
2.1.3 Spirit and new creation in Ezekiel 36–37	31
2.1.4 Summary	34
2.2 The LXX	35
2.2.1 The ‘breath of life’ tradition: vocabulary, use and development ..	35
2.2.2 Spirit of the new creation in Ezekiel	38
2.2.3 Summary	41
2.3 The Dead Sea Scrolls	42
2.3.1 Spirit and creation	42
2.3.2 Renewal and resurrection: the influence of Ezekiel 37	43
2.3.3 Summary	45
2.4 Other Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period	46
2.4.1 Wisdom of Solomon	46

2.4.2	2 Maccabees	48
2.4.3	Philo	49
2.4.4	Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum	51
2.4.5	Joseph and Aseneth	53
2.4.6	Texts of debated origin	54
2.4.7	Summary	56
2.5	Targums and Rabbis	56
2.5.1	The Targums	57
2.5.2	Rabbinic Literature	59
2.6	Conclusion	61
 <i>Chapter 3. The Spirit and Creation in the Hodayot</i>		64
3.1	Introduction	64
3.2	Preliminary issues	65
3.3	New covenant, new creation?	67
3.4	The spirit and life in 1QH xvi	72
3.5	Spirits of creation and new creation	76
3.6	Conclusion	82
3.7	Turning to Paul	83
 Part II: The Pauline Letters		
 <i>Chapter 4. The Spirit of New Creation in 1 Corinthians 15</i>		88
4.1	Introduction	88
4.2	From death to life: 1 Corinthians 15:35–49	89
4.3	Paul’s new creation narrative in 15:42–49	93
4.3.1	Resurrection and new creation in 15:42–44a	94
4.3.2	1 Corinthians 15:45 and Genesis 2:7b&c	95
4.3.3	1 Corinthians 15:47 and Genesis 2.7a	98
4.4	Christ and the spirit in 1 Corinthians 15:45	99
4.5	Conclusion	105
 <i>Chapter 5. The Life-Giving Spirit of 2 Corinthians 3–5</i>		106
5.1	Introduction	106
5.2	2 Corinthians 3:3–6	107
5.3	The spiritual logic of new creation	114
	<i>Excursus: The spirit and new creation in Galatians 5–6</i>	120
5.4	Re-reading 2 Corinthians 3–5	122
5.5	Conclusion	124

<i>Chapter 6. Death and Life in Romans 5–8</i>	125
6.1 Introduction.....	125
6.2 The relationship between Romans 7 and 8	127
6.3 The argument of Romans 5–8.....	129
6.4 Romans 8:1–2 and ‘the law of the Spirit of life’	135
6.5 Conclusion	142
 <i>Chapter 7. The Life-Giving Spirit in Romans 8</i>	 143
7.1 Introduction.....	143
7.2 Ezekiel in Romans 8	143
7.3 The spirit who raises the dead.....	147
7.4 The spirit and new creation of the cosmos.....	151
7.5 Conclusion	155
 <i>Chapter 8. Spirit-Given Life: Present and Future</i>	 157
8.1 Introduction.....	157
8.2 Future spirit-given life	158
8.3 Present spirit-given life.....	159
8.4 The nature and quality of present life.....	163
8.4.1 What does life have to do with righteousness?.....	165
<i>Excursus: The spirit, life and righteousness in Galatians 5–6</i>	170
8.5 Conclusion	172
 <i>Chapter 9. Conclusion</i>	 174
9.1 Overview.....	174
9.2 Implications.....	176
9.3 The life-giving spirit and divine identity	177
 Bibliography of Works Cited.....	 181
Index of Ancient Sources	199
Index of Modern Authors	212
Index of Subjects and Key Terms	216

Abbreviations

Whenever possible abbreviations follow *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen, 1999) and *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992, 2nd ed.). Other abbreviations are as follows (for full information see bibliography):

BDF	Blass, DeBrunner and Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BaJS	Biblical and Judaic Studies
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CTSRR	College Theological Society Resources in Religion
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSSSE	Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (Martínez and Tigchelaar)
EJL	Early Judaism and its Literature (SBL)
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Vols. 1–5)
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik (Handbook of Oriental Studies)
HM	Heythrop Monographs
ISFCJ	International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism
JSJS	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
LDSS	The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PSVT	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graeca
SDSSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SiBL	Studies in Biblical Literature (Peter Lang)
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Vols. 1–10)
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Vols. 1–14)
TEG	Traditio Exegetica Graeca
TGST	Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia
TLOT	Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (Vols. 1–3)

Chapter 1

Introduction

‘[I]n the New Testament the Spirit is the breath of *new* life – the bringer of eternal life. Nothing could be more important than this new life. It is not, however, so distinctive of the Spirit in particular as might be expected, and it is doubtful whether one should regard it as a particularly significant function of the Spirit as such.’¹

In his introductory text, *The Holy Spirit*, C.F.D. Moule articulates a widespread understanding of the New Testament description of the spirit as ‘life-giving’.² While Moule states in no uncertain terms the importance of the *life* that the spirit brings, he does not believe this description tells us much about the *spirit* who brings that life.³

The goal of this thesis is to test Moule’s conclusion in the context of the study of Paul’s epistles, asking if perhaps Paul’s description of the spirit as ‘life-giving’ not only affirms the importance of the life the spirit brings but also tells us something about how Paul understood the spirit. I will examine this possibility through an investigation into the likely sources of Paul’s thought and through close study of the texts in which this description is found.

The spirit is connected to life or the giving of life in a number of passages within the Pauline corpus: Romans 7:6; 8:2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; Gal. 5:25 and 6:8.⁴ Three texts in particular will serve as the exegetical foundation of this study. In Romans 8, 1 Corinthi-

¹ Moule (1978:27).

² Outside the Pauline corpus the spirit is associated with the giving of life in John 6:63; 1 Peter 3:18; 4:6; and Rev. 11:11. The spirit also has a significant role in the birth narratives of Luke and Matthew (Mt. 1:18, 20; Lk. 1:35), which appear to reflect the life-giving power of the spirit. Limitations of time and space prevent me from examining these non-Pauline passages in any detail during the course of this study. For a brief study that examines related themes in John and reaches similar conclusions see Thompson (2004).

³ Throughout this thesis I have elected to spell ‘spirit’ with a lower-case ‘s’ regardless of the type of spirit (divine, human, angelic) being discussed. Although my preference would be to refer to the divine spirit with a capital ‘S’, in keeping with Christian tradition, there are too many instances, particularly within the Jewish literature, where a distracting and debateable judgment would be necessary. Where others refer to the spirit with a capital ‘S’ I maintain their usage; this includes textual translations.

⁴ Note also Titus 3:5–7 in which renewal by the spirit leads to eternal life.

ans 15 and 2 Corinthians 3 Paul describes the spirit as life itself or as the giver of life.⁵ There are two main reasons for focusing on these passages. First, these are texts in which the clearest connection is made between the spirit and the giving of life. Secondly, these are texts that address issues that are central to Paul's portrayal of 'the gospel'. They speak of the nature of new life 'in Christ' (Rom. 8), the centrality of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15) and the uniqueness of Paul's ministry (2 Cor. 3). As I will argue, in each of these passages the collocation of 'spirit' and 'life' language is not incidental, but central to the argument. As such it is reasonable to ask what this juxtaposition means, where the idea comes from, and whether or not it tells us anything about Paul's view of the spirit.

Part of the purpose of this thesis is simply an attempt to shift discussion from a focus on the *life* that the spirit gives to a focus on the *spirit* who gives life. While much of the present discussion related to this topic is concerned with the nature and quality of life in the spirit, I am more concerned to ask whether or not this description tells us anything about how Paul understood the spirit himself.⁶

1.1 Method of investigation

As an investigation into the likely background to Paul's thought accompanied by close study of Pauline texts, this work combines a limited history-of-traditions analysis with historical-critical exegesis. The only explicit citation of a scriptural text made by Paul in the immediate context of describing the spirit as 'life-giving' is to Genesis 2:7. This occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:45. The examination of possible backgrounds to Paul's language will therefore focus on the use of this text and the development of traditions that depend on it in Jewish literature up to the end of the Second Temple period. Occasionally, reference will be made to later works in order to demonstrate the application or development of an earlier concept.

I have chosen to leave non-Jewish sources to one side. This is primarily due to the observation, to be defended in some detail in the course of this

⁵ Whether or not the spirit is in fact mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:45 is the subject of debate and will be addressed in Chapter Four. Although Galatians 5–6 refer to the life-giving work of the spirit I do not treat them in an independent chapter. I have elected to discuss these texts in two excursuses in Chapters Five and Eight.

⁶ In keeping with well-established Christian tradition I prefer the masculine pronoun when referring to the spirit; this is simply the best of available options. Avoidance of personal pronouns makes for awkward repetition of 'spirit'. Use of the feminine pronoun, though sometimes justified by the feminine רוח is problematic and ignores the neuter πνεῦμα and the masculine *spiritus*. Finally, the use of 'it' unnecessarily de-personalizes the spirit without adequately conferring hoped-for gender-neutrality.

thesis, that when Paul speaks of the life-giving work of the spirit he does so in conversation with specifically Jewish texts and traditions. Similar traditions are found outside the Jewish world; indeed the idea that life is found in the breath is nearly ubiquitous in the ancient world. For our purposes, however, because of the specific rootedness of Paul's thought in the language, imagery and traditions of his Jewish background, we refrain from more than passing reference to non-Jewish traditions.⁷

1.2 Experience and expectations in Pauline pneumatology

Within the specific field of Pauline pneumatology it is necessary to defend the rather basic idea that the concepts and expectations of the era prior to the Christian experience of the indwelling of the spirit are relevant to our study. Since the publication of Hermann Gunkel's, *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes*, in 1888,⁸ emphasis has been placed on the importance of personal and community *experience* for the development of the conception of the spirit within early Christian communities. In some quarters, however, this emphasis has been taken to an extreme, as evidenced by Gunkel himself when he says, 'the theology of the great apostle is the expression of his experience, not of his reading. The Old Testament might suggest to him the one or other idea, but it is not the basis for his teaching'.⁹

F.W. Horn, among others, has argued against this basic assumption of Gunkel's work.¹⁰ A major thesis of his book, *Das Angeld des Geistes*, is that there are identifiable backgrounds to Pauline thinking about the spirit, discernible in early Christian formulations imbedded within the Pauline letters, in Acts and in the Jewish literature. In his effort to correct Gunkel's extreme position, however, Horn moves nearly to the opposite pole, arguing that early Christian pneumatology is *primarily* the result of

⁷ See Martin (2006) for a comparison of Paul's pneumatological language with ancient medical texts. This study is illuminating, but does not, in my mind, ultimately further our understanding of Paul.

⁸ The full title is *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus*. The book underwent two subsequent editions, the last of which was published in 1909. An English translation was made available in 1979 under the title, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), and it is to this translation that reference will be made.

⁹ Gunkel (1979:100).

¹⁰ Gunkel himself anticipates some of Horn's later criticism in his introduction to the re-publication (2nd edition) of his book in 1899. There Gunkel notes his neglect of non-scriptural Jewish works, and remarks that he no longer believes Paul's speculation about the spirit arises solely from his experience of the spirit (1979:4, 8).

theoretical conclusions about the spirit based on early interpretation of texts, and not based on experience.¹¹

The basic understanding of the present work can be located somewhere between Gunkel and Horn. In Part II it will be argued that Paul's understanding of the spirit was heavily influenced by his belief that with the indwelling of the spirit the promises of Ezekiel 36–37 have been fulfilled. This coincides with Horn's general conviction that specific expectations regarding an eschatological outpouring of the spirit shaped early Christian understandings of the spirit. At the same time, and in keeping with Gunkel's conviction, it is abundantly clear from the existential nature of the descriptions of the spirit's work that personal experience played a part as well. There was a textual and theological background voicing the Jewish anticipation of an eschatological indwelling of the spirit to which Paul and others turned in order to explain the indwelling of the spirit they had received; this background, in turn, shaped how they received and experienced the spirit.

1.3 The 'development' of Pauline pneumatology

It is also important at the outset of a project such as this to address the question of the possible development of Paul's thinking about the spirit, and to attempt to justify a pan-Pauline exploration of this particular theme.

Horn's work represents the most important recent effort to demonstrate and account for development in Paul's thinking about the spirit. He sees Paul's thought developing in three distinct stages.¹² These are: 1) early proclamation, seen in the teaching of 1 Thessalonians; 2) teaching that results from a dispute with pneumatic enthusiasm, seen in 1 Corinthians; and 3) teaching that results from disputes with Jewish-Christian nomism, seen in 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians. Romans, according to Horn, represents the most complete expression of Paul's pneumatology, incorporating Paul's early thought on the spirit with reflections based on aspects of both later disputes.

According to Horn, in 1 Thessalonians Paul associates the spirit with the empowering of God for mission, ethics and prophecy.¹³ Already, Horn notes, Paul viewed the spirit as an eschatological gift, a permanent indwelling (4:8), and not merely an occasional source of empowering.

¹¹ Horn (1992:13–24).

¹² The three stages are described in detail in Horn (1992:119–383). They appear in a condensed version in Horn (1992b:271ff.). For useful overviews see Turner (1996:104ff.) and Rabens (1999).

¹³ Horn (1992b:272), cf. Horn (1992:119–133).

Paul's view of the spirit here is essentially functional, 'as the power of proclamation and sanctification'.¹⁴ In his engagement with 'pneumatic enthusiasm', which followed the first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul encountered a material conception of the spirit, as a sacramentally endowed, divine substance that effected salvation. In some quarters this understanding of the spirit ultimately led to a denial of the need for future resurrection (1 Cor. 15). According to Horn, Paul absorbed the material conception of the spirit, but reaffirmed the need for resurrection, protecting against the 'pneumatic enthusiasm' of the Corinthians through this eschatological reservation. At the same time, Paul associated the spirit with Christ for the first time (1 Cor. 15:45), drawing a direct correlation between Christian experience of the spirit and the lordship of Christ over the Christian. In his later dispute with Jewish-Christian nomism Paul developed the contrasts that mark his mature pneumatology, namely the contrasts between the spirit and the law, the flesh and the letter. In this series of contrasts the spirit replaces the law as the effective power of the Christian life. Here Paul develops and emphasises the distinction between the historical ages set apart by the sending of the spirit.

In spite of the brilliance with which Horn marshals evidence and constructs a theory, problems abound. At a methodological level these include: 1) his total dependence on a chronology that believes 1 Thessalonians to be 'removed in time from the later Pauline letters',¹⁵ and assigns Galatians a late date; 2) a heavy dependence on his ability to identify accurately 'pre-Pauline' formulas within Acts and the Pauline corpus; 3) his minimizing of the importance of experience in theological reflection;¹⁶ and 4) his overall preference for explaining the new expression of ideas as signs of development over against the possibility of contextual application and refinement.

More extensive analysis and critique of Horn's portrayal of Pauline development are available elsewhere.¹⁷ For the purposes of the present investigation it will be enough to emphasise a single point.¹⁸ Horn's developmental hypothesis rests on the assumption that the spirit/letter contrast in 2 Corinthians 3 marks a new stage in Paul's thinking brought about by a dispute with Jewish/Christian nomism. This contrast is then developed in Galatians and thoroughly applied in Romans. If we allow Horn's late date for Galatians then one can argue that 2 Cor. 3:3–6 reveals

¹⁴ Horn (1992b:272).

¹⁵ Horn (1992b:271).

¹⁶ See Philip (2005:20) for criticism related to this point.

¹⁷ See the discussions in Turner (1996:104–109), Wedderburn (2004) and Rabens (1999).

¹⁸ What follows relates closely to Turner's observation (1996:108–09).

at least a new *expression* of Paul's thought. But this is by no means necessarily a new *thought*. The supposed newness of the thought comes into doubt when one recognizes that Paul appears to root the contrast of 2 Cor. 3 in a specific reading of Ezekiel 36–37. These prophetic oracles have already, as Horn himself argues, informed Paul's early pneumatology in 1 Thessalonians 4:8.¹⁹ Paul's use of Ezekiel in 2 Cor. 3, therefore, probably shows, as Turner has argued, that 'the Spirit/Law antithesis spelt out in 2 Corinthians 3 does not mark a radical new stage or phase in his *pneumatology*; it merely contextualizes the antithesis inherent in Ezekiel 36:26, 27'.²⁰

In the course of this investigation I will argue that Ezekiel 36–37, and the broader tradition in which these oracles can be located, have influenced Paul's understanding and portrayal of the spirit in 1 Thessalonians 4, 2 Corinthians 3 and Romans 8. The repeated presence of the language of these oracles in multiple letters appears to indicate a strand of continuity in Pauline pneumatological reflection. This raises serious questions about Horn's thesis. While the epistolary nature of Paul's writing necessitated varying contextual application of his thought, perhaps requiring a change or inspiring a development, Paul is remarkably consistent in associating the language of 'life-giving' with the spirit. Although development is possible, even likely, within Paul's thinking about the spirit, it will not be a focus of this study. Instead, this study will focus on the consistent use of a certain description, seeking to understand its contextual application in order to ascertain whether or not a fundamental understanding of the work and identity of the spirit undergirds Paul's expression.

1.4 The origins of modern discussion

The emphasis of the present work is reminiscent of a conversation that preoccupied German scholars in the 1870s and 1880s. It was then that Pfleiderer, Wendt, Weiss, Gloël and Gunkel (among others), debated the uniqueness of Paul's understanding of the spirit.²¹ Gunkel's work on the spirit has proved the most enduring of those produced in this period. In it Gunkel argues that the uniqueness of the Pauline conception of the spirit lay in the fact that while the early Christian community viewed the spirit as 'the supernatural power of God which works miracles in and through

¹⁹ See Horn (1992:123ff.).

²⁰ Turner (1996:109).

²¹ See Pfleiderer (1877), Wendt (1878), Weiss (1879), Gloël (1888) and Gunkel (1888).

the person',²² Paul ascribed the whole of the Christian life to the supernatural power of the spirit. Gunkel thus concludes that for Paul, insofar as the Christian life is dependent on the spirit, 'Christian existence is something totally new, something absolutely inexplicable in terms of the world at hand . . . In midst of the old world the Christian is newly created by God'.²³ It is in this sense, according to Gunkel, that 'the entire life of the Christian is an activity of the πνεῦμα'.²⁴

Gunkel argues that it is this all-encompassing understanding of the spirit's work that made Pauline pneumatology unique. Arguing against Wendt and Gloël he asserts that no clear trace of this idea could be found in the Old Testament or Judaism.²⁵ Nor, he argues, could the idea be reliably traced to the early Christian community prior to Paul. In proposing this, Gunkel was building on the earlier work of Pfleiderer, who had claimed, '[t]he most general effect of the πνεῦμα appears to be ζωή. As the attribute of living essentially belongs to it, so its effect is essentially ζωοποιεῖν, in the most comprehensive absolute sense of the word'.²⁶

Emil Sokolowski's 1903 monograph, *Die Begriffe Geist und Leben bei Paulus*, is the only extended scholarly work known to me that deals directly with Paul's description of the spirit as life-giving.²⁷ Building on the work of this earlier generation of scholars, Sokolowski's contribution is not insignificant. He establishes, over against Gunkel and Pfleiderer, Paul's indebtedness to conceptions of the spirit's work in the Old Testament and in Judaism.²⁸ He also explores ways in which Paul may have been indebted to Hellenistic thought, focusing on the expectation of immediate life after death and the nature of the relationship between present and future life.²⁹ This is a wide-ranging work that includes both close exegetical readings of the relevant texts and conceptual analysis. It is, however, largely a derivative work that draws on the discussion of an earlier generation while failing to direct future discussion.

The presupposition underlying much of the discussion from Pfleiderer to Sokolowski was a belief in the central importance of the description of the spirit as 'life-giving'. It was essentially taken for granted that this description provides a view into the inner workings of Paul's thinking about

²² Gunkel (1979:35).

²³ Gunkel (1979:95).

²⁴ Gunkel (1979:95).

²⁵ Gunkel (1979:97ff.).

²⁶ Pfleiderer (1877:204).

²⁷ Pfister (1963) treats the subject at length, but in a broader fashion than Sokolowski. Preisker (1933) includes Paul in a wide-ranging survey, but does not focus on his thought.

²⁸ Sokolowski (1903:197–205).

²⁹ Sokolowski (1903:216–222).

the spirit, and hence his thinking about the identity of the spirit. Moule's statement, with which we began this chapter, makes it clear that this is no longer the case. Gunkel's subsidiary argument, however, that the whole life of the Christian is the work of the spirit, still remains dominant within the field. In contemporary scholarship it is commonplace to believe that the association of the spirit with life signifies that all of the Christian life is the work of the spirit, both present and future. This does not mean, however, that contemporary scholars adopt Gunkel's understanding of a complete ontological transformation effected by the spirit.³⁰ It simply means that the spirit is viewed as empowering, guiding and directing the whole of the Christian life, and not merely as a source of miraculous intervention.

One of the difficulties presented by the nature of the present study is the sheer range of scholarly material touching on this topic. Standing in the midst of three important Pauline passages, this description of the spirit receives at least nominal attention in every commentary or article written on these texts. At the same time, however, this description is rarely given the focused attention of independent study in which the various related texts are addressed together.³¹ Most scholarly work that touches on this depiction of the spirit is limited to reflection on single texts, making it difficult to extrapolate from a scholar's specific exegesis in order to arrive at his or her perspective on the general association of the spirit with life. This creates an odd situation: there is a great deal of discussion by scholars of the spirit's association with the giving of life, without there being a clearly defined scholarly discussion. At the same time, to further complicate matters, the language used by various scholars to describe the life-giving work of the spirit is itself vague and often confusing.

Joseph Fitzmyer, in his commentary on Romans, gives expression to a commonly held understanding of the idea that the spirit gives life, one that serves as an example of the often indeterminate language used by scholars. He says, 'If Christ Jesus has brought about the possibility of a new life for human beings, to be lived in him and for God, it is more precisely "Christ's Spirit" that is the dynamic and vital principle of that life. For Paul the Spirit is an energizer, by whose "power" Christians are enabled to live in joy, peace, and hope'.³² Fitzmyer goes on to describe the spirit succinctly as 'the dynamic "principle" of the new life'.³³ He further believes that the spirit is involved in raising the dead to new life, thus bringing to completion his life-giving work, and making clear that all of the present

³⁰ See Meyer (1979:9).

³¹ In recent years Gaffin (1998) is the exception.

³² Fitzmyer (1993:125).

³³ Fitzmyer (1993:482).

and future life of the Christian is spirit derived.³⁴ Unfortunately, Fitzmyer's repeated use of the term 'principle' to describe the spirit in this life-giving role is rather broad. 'Principle' can signify 1) origin or source, 2) norm or law, or 3) element or component.³⁵ Use of the terms 'power' and 'energizer' to describe the life-giving work of the spirit appear to narrow Fitzmyer's possible meaning. In the end, however, this is a vague description that makes it difficult to know if the spirit is to be understood as power, norm, person, constitutive element, or even substance. Fitzmyer is not alone in providing an imprecise description of what Paul means when he claims that the spirit gives life. Other scholars refer to the presence of the spirit as 'power',³⁶ the 'principle' of new life,³⁷ or even as the 'possibility' of new life.³⁸

The need for this study is two-fold. First, no book-length treatment of the subject has been produced in over 100 years. Secondly, although concentrated attention on the subject is lacking, a great deal of general attention has been paid to this description of the spirit without the least glimmer of an emerging scholarly consensus. In an effort to make the current discussion(s) accessible, and locate the present study more precisely within its scholarly context, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the work of two scholars who have contributed more than any others to the topic at hand: James Dunn and Gordon Fee.

1.5 Dunn and Fee on Romans 8

Both Fee and Dunn have given considerable space to describing the life-giving work of the spirit, although neither has treated it as an independent object of inquiry at any length.³⁹ Hence, an attempt to describe their understandings of this work of the spirit requires a broad analysis of a number of writings. This approach is saved from possible confusion by the fact that both authors have written extensively on Romans 8, a passage that stands apart from other relevant passages in the Pauline letters as the most significant and complex on this topic. Their writings on this chapter

³⁴ Fitzmyer (1993:491).

³⁵ These are the first three major definitions listed in the Oxford English Dictionary.

³⁶ Moo (1996:492).

³⁷ Bertone (2005:18).

³⁸ Meyer (1979:7) and Byrne (1981:570).

³⁹ See, in particular, the relevant sections of Fee (1994), cf. Fee (1994b), (1997) and (1987:775–795). For Dunn see, principally, (1998:260–265), cf. Dunn (1973b), (1988:413–464), (1989), (1996) and (1996a). Further works will be noted below as relevant.

open a window onto their view of the life-giving work of the spirit as described by Paul elsewhere. In what follows we will examine and assess the conclusions reached by Dunn and Fee regarding the meaning and significance of Paul's association of the language of life with the spirit in Romans 8, drawing on other material when relevant.

1.5.1 Fee on the life-giving spirit

Gordon Fee has said of Rom. 8:2 that, 'the phrase "the Spirit of life" . . . is perhaps the single most significant designation of the Spirit in the Pauline corpus'.⁴⁰ He goes on to explain his basic understanding of what this means when he says that 'Paul intends "the Spirit of life" to refer to the life that believers now live as the direct result of the Spirit's indwelling'.⁴¹

When Fee describes the life-giving work of the spirit he points to two distinct but inseparable roles. First, he believes that as the life-giving presence of God, the spirit empowers Christians for a life of righteousness here and now. In this sense it is right to say that the life given by the spirit is *fully realized* in the present life of the Christian. The Christian lives under the rule and power of the spirit, and is freed from the tyranny of sin and death. While this life may include struggle it is not a struggle between flesh and spirit, but the natural result of an eschatological tension: the Christian lives the eschatological life of the spirit in a body broken down by sin and destined for physical death. Controversially, for Fee this is a life lived in stark contrast to that portrayed in Romans 7, which describes life apart from Christ while Romans 8 describes life in Christ.

According to Fee, the second role of the spirit contained within this 'life-giving' description is that the spirit acts as the *guarantee* of future resurrection in Christ.⁴² Fee says of v.11: 'With this sentence Paul arrives at the point of the paragraph, that the presence of the indwelling Spirit *guarantees* our future resurrection, wherein the mortal body is "given life"'.⁴³ Fee goes on to explain that 'the role of the Spirit in all of this is not that of agency, but as the surety for our future resurrection'.⁴⁴ Fee concludes, 'This is the second way he is the "Spirit of life," not only as the one by whom we walk "in newness of life", but also as the one who as the source of present life thus guarantees the giving of life to the "dead body"'.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Fee (1994:525).

⁴¹ Fee (1994:526).

⁴² This conclusion is based on Fee's preference for a textual variant in v.11. This will be addressed in Chapter Eight.

⁴³ Fee (1994:552), emphasis added.

⁴⁴ Fee (1994:552).

⁴⁵ Fee (1994:552-53).

In the first sense, according to Fee, the spirit actually gives ‘life’, in that he acts as the instrument of God’s power in bringing about righteousness and fullness of life in the Christian. In the second the spirit is the guarantee of life to come, the assurance that the Christian will rise from the dead. In this role the spirit is not the agent of resurrection, but the grounds for it, the divine presence that ensures future resurrection by the Father. This is essentially a passive role, and Fee is very careful never to attribute the act of resurrection to the power of the spirit, but rather to God the Father. This emphasis on Trinitarian distinction plays an important part in Fee’s understanding of the life-giving work of the spirit.

Although a future component is clearly a part of the spirit’s work insofar as the spirit guarantees future resurrection, for Fee *the effective work of the spirit is wholly realized*. We see this in the concluding lines to Fee’s article on the spirit’s role in Paul’s conversion. He says,

Paul’s concern lies with the freshness of the experienced reality of the Spirit. His language leads him to urge believers to experience again what they experienced at their conversion: the gift of the Spirit . . . All of this, I argue, is best understood as stemming from Paul’s own vital experience of the Spirit as the life-giving Spirit of the living God at his conversion.⁴⁶

Fee’s portrayal of the spirit’s life-giving work has two components: the giving of life and the guaranteeing of future life. These are both part of the spirit’s unified, fully realized, life-giving work.

1.5.2 Dunn on the life-giving spirit

In Fee’s analysis the life-giving work of the spirit is best described as having two present *components*. In contrast, according to Dunn the life-giving work of the spirit is best described as taking place in two *stages*: the first in this present life, and the second at the future resurrection. In the present the spirit enables those who are in Christ to fulfil Torah (Rom. 8:1–4), while in the future the spirit will raise the dead to new life (Rom. 8:9–11).

Like Fee, Dunn believes that Rom. 8:2 refers to the present life of the Christian. However, whereas Fee speaks generally of the spirit empowering for a life of righteousness, Dunn has a more specific understanding of what this means. Dunn believes that the subject of v.2 is the Torah, and because he sees 8:1–4 as the climax of Paul’s defence of the law in chapter 7 he views the phrase, ‘Spirit of life’, as a commentary on the new relationship that the spirit creates between those in Christ and Torah.⁴⁷ Accordingly, Dunn argues that the phrase, ‘law of the Spirit’, in 8:2 is ‘one

⁴⁶ Fee (1997:182).

⁴⁷ Dunn (1996:72).