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PART I
'SPIRIT' IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL:
A GENERAL SURVEY

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[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

THE MEANINGS OF 'SPIRIT'

In the Gospel of John the Greek word πνεῦμα is used variously for *wind*, *breath*, *oneself*, or divine *power*, but also in specific ways as related to *God* or *Christ*. The phrase '*holy spirit*' appears in the narratives of Jesus' baptism and of the commission given to the apostles by their risen Lord. To some extent this usage can be explained from the occurrences of πνεῦμα in Greek literature of many periods up to the middle of the first century A.D. The primary source for understanding it, however, is in the LXX and in the Hebrew meanings of רוּחַ (*ruah*).¹

The original sense of רוּחַ may have been *air in motion*, and so it denotes *wind*,² either gentle or violent, then by an easy transition *breath*,³ that is, the air by which men and women live, the principle of life.

¹ Of special importance are David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings*, pp. 202–300, though he fails to show the historical development in OT passages; and the articles under πνεῦμα in *T.W.N.T.* vi, 357–443—the Jewish material mainly by F. Baumgärtel, W. Bieder and E. Sjöberg, the NT material by E. Schweizer. παρακλήτος is dealt with in *T.W.N.T.* v, 798–812, by J. Behm, and vi, 441–3, by E. Schweizer. See also 'Spirit' in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson (1950); and the valuable listings in D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, pp. 402–5, and J. E. Yates, *The Spirit and the Kingdom*, pp. 238–51.

² E.g. Amos 4: 13; 1 Kings 18: 45; Gen. 3: 8; Exod. 14: 21; Hos. 4: 19; Isa. 7: 2; Jer. 2: 24; 4: 11 f.; 14: 6; Ezek. 1: 4; 5: 10, 12; Isa. 41: 16, 29; 64: 6. Cf. 1QH 7: 23 (this seems to be a rare usage in the Qumrân scrolls). In the LXX, Wisd. Sol. 5: 11, 23; 13: 2; 17: 18; Sir. 39: 28; 43: 17, etc. See too W. A. L. Elmslie, *How Came our Faith* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 123 f., and E. A. Speiser on Gen. 1: 2 (Anchor Bible), citing H. M. Orlinsky, *J.Q.R.* XLVII (1957), 174–82. There is an older view which denies that *ruah* in Gen. 1: 2 means 'a wind sent from God', for רוּחַ מִן־פֶּה does not suit this rendering (G. J. Spurrell, *Notes on the Text of the Book of Genesis* (1896), p. 4).

³ E.g. 2 Sam. 22: 16; Pss. 18: 15; 135: 17; Isa. 25: 4; 30: 28; 42: 5; Hab. 2: 19; Jer. 10: 14 (51: 17); Lam. 4: 20; Ezek. 37: 5–14 (a passage full of *double entendre*); Gen. 6: 17; 7: 15, 22; Eccles. 3: 19. 'Breath' is a possible meaning in 1QH 1: 27–9. On 1QM 6: 11 f., horses 'sound of wind', i.e. of breath, see Y. Yadin's edition of the War Scroll, p. 287 (E.T.). In the LXX, Wisd. Sol. 2: 3; 15: 11, 16; 16: 14; Sir. 38: 23; Tobit 3: 6, etc.

Cambridge University Press

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

'SPIRIT' IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Behind man himself and behind all natural phenomena the ancients divined mysterious powers that could be either kind or malevolent. God stands as it were at the apex of these spiritual beings. At one stage he may be simply the mightiest One among many deities, at another (in monotheism) he is the all-powerful One who alone creates and grants vitality. The forces of Nature are almost always regarded as the instruments of the divine. It is God that orders the stars in their courses, sends the wholesome rains, and influences seers, prophets and the leaders in every walk of life. God controls the rise and fall of nations; and as Yahweh he covenants only with Israel, the seed of Abraham. It is God the Creator who endows bird and beast with life and blows the vital breath into the man made in his image (Gen. 1: 1 ff.; Isa. 40: 26, 28; Matt. 5: 45; 6: 26; Luke 12: 6 f.).¹ Man's own years, said a psalmist, 'come to an end like a sigh' (Ps. 90: 9), but to the existence of God there is no end.

'Spirit' in the Old Testament primarily means the active agent of divine work in nature, history, and chosen servants like the prophets. It is the *energy* or *power of God*.²

In his very significant volume on the Old Testament teaching about *ruah* Daniel Lys shows that, as the centuries advanced, the Jews concentrated this word less on natural processes and less even on so-called supernatural or godlike realities. More and more it described the *moods* and *dispositions of man*, his very self.³ They did not, of course, cease to believe that man is the creature of God in whose will is peace, from whom alone will come lasting blessings in the freedom of national life.

The humanist emphasis continued in the apocalyptic

¹ In *The Hunter and the Whale* (1967), p. 76, Laurens van der Post refers to prayer in the ancient Amangtakwena way: 'They greet the day by breathing into the palm of the right hand until it becomes damp and warm, holding it up to the dawn till the morning air has fanned it cool and dry, taking that as a sign that the breath of their lesser life has been made one with the breath of a greater.'

² Judges 6: 34 (on Gideon); 13: 25; 14: 6 (on Samson); 1 Kings 10: 6, 10; 11: 6 (on Saul); 16: 13 (on David); 18: 12 (on Elijah); Isa. 31: 3; 44: 3; 63: 7-14; Ezek. 11: 4 f.; 39: 29; Hag. 2: 5; Zech. 7: 12; Joel 2: 28; Job 12: 9 ff. Cf. Ps. 62: 11; 66: 5 ff.; 78: 104-7 on the *magnalia Dei*.

³ E.g. Ps. 51: 10, 12, 17; 142: 3; Ezek. 3: 14; 36: 26; Isa. 57: 15; 65: 14; 66: 2; Zech. 12: 1; Job 7: 11; 17: 1; 27: 3; Dan. 2: 1; 5: 12, 14; 7: 15. D. Lys, «RŪACH». *Le Souffle dans l'Ancien Testament* (1962).

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George Johnston

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE MEANINGS OF 'SPIRIT'

writings and it is noteworthy in several of the Dead Sea Scrolls. *Spirit* is man's vital power or capacity; sometimes it may be translated by our word 'person'.¹ Frequently the reference is to the emotional tone of one's inner being.²

Occasionally *spirit* refers to the ongoing life of a human being after death, e.g. in relation to a 'resurrection body' (Jub. 23: 31; 1 Enoch 67: 8 f., and more than a score other examples) or to 'translation' beyond this world (1 Enoch 71: 1, 5 f., 11). In view of Qumrânian and later Christian use it is of some interest that the phrase 'holy spirit' seems to be applied to man in Jub. 1: 21, 23. Several investigators agree that it is hard to distinguish in the intertestamental literature references to human spirit, divine spirit, or the invisible 'spirits' of the air both good and wicked.³

This is particularly true of the material in the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the *Manual of Discipline*, the *Thanksgiving Hymns*, and the *War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*, which provide information that is fascinating to the New Testament student and essential for understanding the background of the Gospels and St Paul. A. A. Anderson writes:

One of the most frequent uses of *Ruah* is to denote the spirit of man either as a 'constituent part' of man and often practically equivalent to 'self', or as expressing the varied behaviour of men, their different characteristics and moods... The spirit of man may be destined for the days of eternity and it may share in the lot of God's angels, but in itself it is neither eternal nor indestructible.⁴

¹ E.g. Dan. 5: 12; Jub. 1: 21; 12: 3; 20: 8; 1 Enoch 56: 5; 60: 4; 71: 11; 98: 7; Pss. of Sol. 17: 42.

² Russell, *loc. cit.* quotes from Dan., Jub., 2 Esdras and Tests. XII Pat. to illustrate man as affrighted, distressed, faint, grieved, groaning, hardened, hasty, inflamed, longing, patient, perturbed, refreshed, reviving, small, sorrowful, troubled, vexed, weak, wearied.

³ Interesting information on the 'spirits' in modern Africa is collected by F. Kaigh, *Witchcraft and Magic of Africa* (London, 1947), e.g. pp. 80–90. This casts light on ancient ideas.

⁴ 'The Use of "Ruah" in 1QS, 1QH and 1QM', *J.S.S.* vii (1962), 294. Cf. J. Coppens, 'Le Don de l'Esprit d'après les textes de Qumrân et le Quatrième Évangile', *Recherches Bibliques*, iii (1958), 209–23; J. Licht, 'An Analysis of the Treatise of the Two Spirits in DSD', *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, iv (1958), 88–100; George Johnston, "'Spirit" and "Holy Spirit" in the Qumran Literature', in *New Testament Sidelights*, ed. H. K. McArthur (1960), pp. 27–42; W. Foerster, 'Der Heilige Geist im Spätjudentum',

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

'SPIRIT' IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The poet speaks of himself as 'a perverted spirit', and even as 'a spirit of flesh' (1QH 3: 21; 13: 13). Some passages in the *Manual of Discipline* suggest that a man's spirit may have been understood as the *measure* or perhaps the *quality* of his entire being as one who is advancing in godliness and angelic communion because he is an elect 'son of the Light', or as one who becomes increasingly the slave of Belial, Prince of Darkness, a man ungodly and unwholesome like the *gollum* and other vicious servants of 'the Enemy' in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. For the enlightened the end will be joy in the divine realm, but for the darkened it will be wrath and the awful desolation of death. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to perceive how the struggle within a man is shaped and how far anyone can grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth; whether indeed each man is fated to belong for ever to the Light or to the Darkness.

Inevitably attention has been focused in recent research on the 'essay' contained within the *Manual of Discipline* (1QS 3: 13–4: 26).

There it is said that men are divided by divine decree (for the God of their Old Testament tradition always remains in ultimate control of everything in earth and heaven) into two classes or 'lots' governed respectively by a *spirit of truth* and a *spirit of error*, 'walking in their ways' to produce the fruits of their obedience in marked traits of character: the parallel to Gal. 5: 19–23 was soon remarked. It is not yet agreed by scholars, however, how *spirit* in the essay is to be interpreted. There is much to be said for the view that it refers generally to the human person as endowed with a given portion of good and evil elements.¹ On the other hand, *spirit* sometimes alludes to an *influence* or *power* exercised from without man by the Prince or

N.T.S. viii (1961–2), 117–34; F. Nötscher, 'Geist und Geister in den Texten von Qumran', in *Vom Alten zum Neuen Testament: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (1962), pp. 175–87; J. Schreiner, 'Geistbegabung in der Gemeinde von Qumran', *Bibl. Zeit.* (N.F. 1965, Heft 2), pp. 161–80.

¹ On this see now J. M. Allegro, 'An Astrological Cryptic Document from Qumran', *J.S.S.* ix (1964), 291–4, esp. Col. ii, lines 7 f., 'He has six (parts) spirit in the House of Light, and three in the Pit of Darkness', and Col. iii, lines 5 f., 'He has [ei]ght (parts) spirit in the House of [Darkness] and one (part) from the House of Light'. Does man consist of nine spiritual elements?

Cambridge University Press

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George Johnston

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE MEANINGS OF 'SPIRIT'

Angel of Light in one case and by Belial, the Angel of Darkness, in another. The 'spirit of error' seems to be identified with 'angel of darkness', but it is not so clear that 'spirit of truth' should always refer to an angel; if it does not, then 'spirit of error' too may be ambiguous. A third interpretation is possible: that *spirit* in the essay should be taken primarily as referring to one of the angelic chieftains himself. For it is abundantly evident that the two Princes are engaged in a deadly and relentless struggle for the allegiance of those who are predestined (!) to adhere to either the party of the Light or the party of the Darkness.¹

One may point to two rather distinctive features in the usage of *spirit* in the intertestamental literature as a whole, including the Qumrân scrolls:

First, the concentration of interest on man's spiritual nature did not mean that the spirituality of God himself was lost sight of, even at a time when divine transcendence seems to have removed him from intimate communion with the saints. There are numerous references to the spirit of God as *creative* power; as that which *inspires* certain persons, for example the anointed priest or prophet or king, thus the source of wisdom and strength; as a way of speaking about the *presence* in time and space of the almighty One, the 'Lord of spirits', Israel's everlasting Hope.² As such, this spirit is 'holy'.

Debate continues on the question of the sources for what is undoubtedly a dualistic theology. Some allowance must surely be made for Iranian influence, as Kuhn and others argue. But it may well be that the chief influences are rather to be found in a piety nourished on Ps. 51: 11; Isa. 63: 11 and the teaching of 'second Isaiah' as a whole; and especially on Ezekiel (e.g. 11: 19 f.; 18: 31; and 36: 25 ff.).³

¹ This problem will engage us later in this volume (see below, pp. 103–5). Wernberg-Møller tends to the psychological interpretation of *spirit* except where it obviously refers to God or to an angel (see his Commentary on 1QS and also his 'A Reconsideration of the two Spirits in the Rule of the Community (1Q Serek III, 13–14, 26)', *R.Q.* 3 (1961–2), 413–41).

² E.g. Pss. of Sol. 8: 15; 17: 42; 18: 8; 2 Baruch 21: 4; 23: 5; 2 Esdras 6: 39; 1 Enoch 68: 2; 106: 17; Tests. of Jud. 24: 2 f.; Levi 18: 7, 11; 1QS 3: 6; 4: 21; 8: 16 (revelation to prophets, as in CD); 1QH 7: 6 f.; 9: 32; 12: 12.

³ In the article cited earlier I examined the use of 'holy spirit' as applied to God in QL. Menahem Mansoor's edition of 1QH and Y. Yadin's

Cambridge University Press

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George Johnston

Excerpt

[More information](#)

'SPIRIT' IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Second, *spirit* very frequently refers to angelic beings.

There are good spirits that serve the high and holy God as messengers and warriors. There are also wicked demons that seek to pervert the inclination even of the righteous and are allowed by God to wage war against the saints. Much of this too may indeed reflect Iranian and other Eastern sources.

But here also we must reckon with a native tradition in the long development of post-exilic ideas among both the Samaritans and the Jews. Note in particular: Job 1: 6; Ezek. 40: 3 ff., where the man-like guide is also a revealer of the divine truth; Zech. 1: 9 ff.; 2: 3 ff.; 3: 3 ff.; 4: 1 ff.; Dan. 8: 15 ff., referring to Gabriel the interpreter; 10: 13, 21; 12: 1, referring to Michael the guardian angel of Israel, who must do battle against the guardian angels of Persia and Greece as the ally of Gabriel. The examples of *spirit* for angel or demon in 1 Enoch, Jubilees and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are too numerous for citation here. In the Scrolls we may note 1QS 3: 24; 1QSa 2: 8 f.; CD 12: 2; 1QH 3: 18, 22; 8: 12; 11: 13; 13: 8; 1QM 10: 12; 12: 9; 13: 2, 4 f., 10, 12; 14: 10; 15: 14. The good angels are *spirits of truth*, or *spirits of knowledge*, or *holy spirits*.¹

The great wealth and range of these meanings for *spirit* must have been accessible to John the Baptist, to Jesus of Nazareth, and to the early apostolic Church, though in what degree one cannot guess. *Spirit* in its Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek form was available for any who chose to speak about the mystery of the God who made heaven and earth, who elected and disciplined Israel, who made his mysterious presence and will felt amid the clash of empires, who raised up defenders of the ancient faith first known to Abraham and the patriarchal age and then to Moses, to Samuel and David and the first prophets, who inspired the hopes for a new age with fresh messiahs.

The Fourth Evangelist, if we may provisionally set his *floruit* about A.D. 50–90, must also have fallen heir to traditional

edition of 1QM should also be consulted. Cf. A. Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance* (1963), pp. 239 ff.; Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1958), p. 291; Sir G. R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls* (Oxford, 1965); M.-A. Chevallier, *Esprit de Dieu, paroles d'homme*, p. 87; the Two Spirits are discussed in an unpublished dissertation by my former student, Miss Phyllis N. Smyth (St Mary's College, University of St Andrews).

¹ See M. Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns* (1961), pp. 77 ff.

Cambridge University Press

0521020506 - The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John

George Johnston

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE MEANINGS OF 'SPIRIT'

Hebrew and Christian ways of thinking about divine and human 'spirituality' and about angelic or demonic activity. For we know from the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline letters that John lived in an age when vast redemptive and sanctifying energies of the spirit were at work in the congregations of Jesus' disciples; when, as leading rabbis at Jamnia would have claimed, the synagogues of Judaism too were seeking and finding new modes of survival and divine service, to sustain life and to face the future with hope in the face of Christian schism and all the disasters of a Roman war.

Here, then, we may turn to the evidence of the Gospel of John.

First, to conclude this chapter, we examine the few examples that employ πνεῦμα in the meanings of *wind*, *breath*, and *self*.

There is one verse where *spirit* is clearly related to *wind*:

3: 8: τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει· οὕτως ἔστιν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος.

The saying belongs to the speech which mystified Nicodemus, 'Israel's teacher' (3: 10). Its formula about 'coming and going' will appear again to describe the otherworldly element in Jesus' mission (7: 27; 8: 14, 23 echoing the 'from above' of 3: 3; 13: 33; 14: 4; 16: 5). Here the mystery applies to all others who experience the second birth, the begetting 'from above', that is from God (cf. 1: 13).

Spirit had been employed already at 3: 6 in opposition to 'flesh', the merely mortal and creaturely in man. Hence in 3: 8 we are faced with a typical Johannine *double entendre*. 'The spirit blows' means:

(a) *The wind blows*. We are meant to think of the strange freedom (as it was understood in that early time) of east wind or west wind, in its invisible impulsion above the land, over the deep wadis, on the face of the lake. For this is parabolic of the free and mysterious action of God himself in the re-creation of his people who will see and enter his new order ('kingdom') if only they come to understand what is afoot in the ministry of Jesus.

(b) *The divine spirit is blowing*. It is active in the world at that very moment of Nicodemus's interview, and in John's own community; and it never ceases to blow so long as God's purpose here is incomplete.

Cambridge University Press

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George Johnston

Excerpt

[More information](#)

'SPIRIT' IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

'Born of spirit' (3: 8) corresponds to ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν of 1: 13 and γεννηθῆναι ἀνωθεν of 3: 3, and ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος of 3: 5. All this is in sharp contrast to normal human generation, ἐκ τῆς σαρκός (3: 6), ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός (1: 13). The article with σάρξ and πνεῦμα is not to be pressed. *Spirit* in these passages, except the wind example, refers to the divine will and power, the act beyond human control and comprehension that renews human life through discipleship to Jesus, the incarnate Logos. In such a paragraph, therefore, *pneuma* may also be translated as the *breath of God*. H. B. Swete may be quoted:

That the wind is at work we know by the familiar sounds of breeze or gale, but its origin and its destination are hidden from us. Such as the manner of the Spirit's working... there is the same mystery surrounding it, the same ignorance on man's part of the laws by which it is governed, the same certainty that its existence and its presence are matters of fact, since its effects fall within the range of observation, even within the cognizance of the senses; the Spirit's voice is heard *in human utterances* and the Spirit's power felt *in human actions*, though the Spirit itself is inaudible and invisible.¹

There are two or three places in John where *pneuma* probably denotes *breath* (apart from the possible example in 3: 8; cf. Ezek. 37: 1 ff.).

1: 33: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

It is true that 3: 22 describes a baptizing ministry of Jesus that parallels John the Baptist's, and presumably then it was also a baptism with water, rather than 'baptism in, or with, *holy pneuma*'. Hence, this can hardly be the fulfilment of the oracle reported at 1: 33.² For that surely comes at 20: 22: καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον. The peculiar form of 'baptizing' prophesied by John the Baptist must be similar to what is intended in 4: 14 by the promise to give men and women who become disciples 'a spring of water that gushes up to life eternal'.³ The tenses implied are all future, as we see from 4: 14; 6: 51 and 7: 38. Consequently at 1: 33 the

¹ *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 134 (my italics).

² I take 4: 2 to be an editorial addition by someone who did not accept this as genuine Johannine or historical tradition.

³ Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (I–XII)*, pp. 178–80.

Cambridge University Press

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George Johnston

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE MEANINGS OF 'SPIRIT'

present participle should be translated of action about to happen: 'This is he who is going to baptize with holy spirit.' Since this agent is, for the Evangelist and his Church, in fact the Logos-god (1: 1), such a 'baptism' will be a gift of his own divine 'breath' (20: 22).

Now John 1: 1 is quickly followed by the statement that 'everything was created through him and apart from him was nothing made. What came into existence in him was life' (1: 3 f.). John is narrating a new genesis which is to be understood only in the light of the incarnation of the Logos-Christ and his death on the cross. The old Genesis of scripture had spoken of *ruah*, 'spirit', as active in the divine creation of the universe and man (Gen. 1: 2; cf. Pss. 33: 6; 104: 29 f.): the new speaks rather of the divine Logos or 'word', as in Ps. 33: 6. It is manifest from the literature of the intertestamental period that *spirit*, *word* or *wisdom* could be used in descriptions of God's dynamic work as the Creator. See especially Ps. 104: 24; Prov. 8: 22–31; Wisd. Sol. 9: 7 ff.

So at the dramatic close of his Gospel John shows us this Logos-Christ, incarnate in Jesus and now 'raised' to fresh glory as the Victor over death and over the Devil, making this new genesis an effective reality. He 'breathed into' the disciples, as God had 'breathed into' the nostrils of man the 'breath of life' (Gen. 2: 7, LXX: ὁ θεὸς... ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς). It was, naturally, a 'word' of creative power that Jesus uttered: 'receive holy spirit', i.e. receive the breath of God.¹

At 19: 30 also *spirit* means breath: καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα. Matthew and Mark in the parallel passages here speak simply of Jesus' death. Luke adds a citation of Ps. 31: 5 (LXX 31: 6), 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit', quite possibly an authentic cry of Jesus from the cross. 'My spirit' also means 'me', myself. In the Johannine text, however, there is the unusual verb, παρέδωκεν. This too, it has sometimes been thought, is a case of *double entendre*:

¹ The text is not λάβετε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, 'receive the Holy Spirit', as if *pneuma* were intended to denote the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. 'Spirit' means the *vital power* that springs from God. In this book it will be printed 'spirit' in lower case in order to keep this primary sense in the foreground.