

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Natural Psychological Growth

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I develop the thesis that the Holy Spirit works as the perfecting cause within creation bringing creatures to their divinely ordained telos, and sometimes uses the natural process of growth in therapy toward that end. First, I consider reasons why the work of the Holy Spirit in creation and natural psychological growth processes has sometimes been obscured for us. After clearing the ground, I develop a theology of the work of the Holy Spirit in the natural world and a theological interpretation of significant passages. I identify ten attributes of the work of the Holy Spirit within the natural created realm. In the final section, I use these ten facets to draw out implications for the therapeutic process.

Christian therapists wish to invite the power and presence of the Holy Spirit into the process of therapy with their clients. Yet, spiritual interventions or goals are not introduced without prior consent and discussion of spiritual topics is not typically the primary purpose. Christian therapists will only infrequently pray with their clients, and the evangelization of their clients is not likely to happen, nor is it the goal. Spiritual growth of clients is not the main objective of therapy. Several other studies have explored aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit that can be subjectively accessed by a believing client or therapist in whom the Spirit dwells, such as subjective sense of presence (Parker, 2008), praying for the outcome of therapy, and the guidance of the therapists or clients themselves (see, for example, the survey in Decker, 2002). I will argue that the process of therapy itself, whether done in any of the combinations of Christian or non-Christian therapist or client, bears the marks of the working of the Holy Spirit, even without subjectively soliciting the Spirit. Put differently, the process of therapy is not spiritualized only by adding activities to it that would not be done by a non-Christian; what makes it spiritual is the therapeutic growth itself.

The Holy Spirit is a worthy focus for this investigation rather than the entire Godhead since, for reasons I will consider below, our frequent

assumptions concerning the nature of the activity of the Spirit seem to make it very dissimilar to the process of psychological growth. Moreover, the Spirit is the paraclete, the comforter and counselor who comes alongside to help analogous to the ways that earthly counselors do (John 14:16, 26; 16:7; Oden, 1992). This paper extends and adds to the insights of a recent paper by Kim-van Daalen (2012) on the Holy Spirit and common grace.

We have good theological reasons to think that the Holy Spirit is involved in the growth process of therapy. The order and structure of the created world defines the features of natural psychological growth. Therefore, determining the work of the Spirit in psychological growth requires understanding how the Holy Spirit works in creation. In this paper, I develop the thesis that the Holy Spirit works as the perfecting cause within creation bringing creatures to their divinely ordained telos, and uses the natural process of growth in therapy (alongside other processes) toward that end. That is, the Spirit finishes the work of creation by bringing the created world to the wholeness and completion originally intended by God. Secondarily, I will show why we have not been inclined to think that the Holy Spirit would be involved in psychological growth in this way. First, I will consider reasons why the work of the Holy Spirit in creation has sometimes been obscured for us. After clearing the ground, I will develop a theology of the work of the Holy Spirit in the natural world and a theological interpretation of significant passages in the second part of the paper. I will identify ten attributes of the work of the Holy Spirit within the natural created realm. In the final section, I will use these ten facets to draw out implications for the therapeutic process.

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Clearing Away Obscurity From the Holy Spirit's Work in Creation

There are several interrelated reasons why the work of the Holy Spirit in creation has been obscured for us. The first concerns the quality of action we expect from the Holy Spirit and how that intersects with our expectations of therapy. Frequently, these two expectations stand in sharp contrast with one another. We must also disentangle whether these expectations have been culturally or theologically shaped.

Conception of Natural Activity

Culturally, the problematic assumptions of modern science create an obstacle to bringing science and theology together, particularly with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit. The quality of the Holy Spirit's work appears to be strongly contrasted with the kind of activity we associate with the natural processes studied by scientists, hence setting up a potentially conflictual relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and the natural process of growth in therapy from the outset. For example, that which is natural is often contrasted with the supernatural. The supernatural is the realm of God's action; the natural is often conceived as the realm of its absence. C. S. Lewis (1947, 1967) illustrates some of these problems of terminology regarding the word "nature." Lewis (1947) explains that one way to access the meaning of the word "natural" is by considering its opposites. Among its opposites are "the Artificial, the Civil, the Human, the Spiritual, and the Supernatural" (p. 81). Depending upon which of these opposites we have in mind, we will end up with very different accounts of what we mean by "natural." Apart from the meaning of artificial, the other meanings tend to suggest the following notions in our mind:

Nature seems to be the spatial and temporal, as distinct from what is less fully so or not so at all. She seems to be the world of quantity, as against the world of quality: of objects as against consciousness: of the bound, as against the wholly or partially autonomous: of that which knows no values as against that which both has and perceives value: of efficient causes (or, in some modern systems, of no causality at all) as against final causes. (p. 81)

Lewis continues by explaining that when we analyze something or when we dominate it to bring it under our control, we remove the evaluative or qualitative aspects to reduce it to "mere nature" and side-step potentially adverse reactions we may otherwise have, when, for example, we dissect something (Lewis, 1947, 1967). Although Lewis does not put it in quite this way, modern science has largely approached the world in this restrictive fashion: turning the features of the world into Nature, thereby to distinguish it from value-laden human concern and enable a very different kind of treatment of it. The supernatural may be mysterious (Lewis, 1967), but nature is comprehensible and open to investigation.

In many ways, modern psychology has approached the world as mere nature (in Lewis' characterization above), especially in its research-oriented branch. As is commonly noted, modern, Western psychology favors the analytical, atomistic, and reductionistic approach shared by the natural sciences (Coe & Hall, 2010). These observations hold less true of the clinical side of psychology, dealing as it does with human persons. The last distinction in Lewis' quotation above is particularly important for clinical psychology, since humans cannot be reduced to a bundle of efficient causes, but must be understood in terms of goals, purposes, and meaning, that is, in terms of final causes. Insofar as the field of psychology treats the human person as "mere nature," no room for the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of psychological growth can be found.

Cultural expectations concerning the natural world also have the potential to affect our theological affirmations. Kim-van Daalen (2012) has recently considered the role of the Holy Spirit in secular psychotherapy through the work of common grace. Despite the many valuable contributions of her article, the frame of her question illustrates the conceptual issue at hand. Her article considers "secular psychotherapy," which obscures some things that are helpfully distinguished. First, although she primarily means by this phrase knowledge and skills of therapeutic techniques that are gained from non-Christian sources, she also sometimes means therapy done by non-Christians (e.g., p. 237). The second of these meanings has a stronger claim to being "secular," since, arguably, knowledge and truth do not come in Christian and non-Christian versions. However, insofar as a non-Christian therapist uses knowledge of psychological growth,

the therapy itself should not be labeled secular. As illustrated by Lewis, the word secular takes the connotation of a realm that is devoid of God's presence and activity. Once we have framed the problem as secular versus Christian, we will naturally miss God's activity within the natural realm. Further, we may be tempted to think that linking the work of the Spirit to psychological processes is reductionistic (Parker, 2008), which would only be true if the Spirit were nothing but those processes (Lewis, 1949).

Consider another example. Burgess (1984) structures his study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the church around what he calls the major and minor traditions of traditional doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The major tradition emphasizes the work of the Spirit in the order and structure of the church, while the minor tradition emphasizes prophecy. Burgess contrasts the two traditions concerning the Holy Spirit's action in this way:

By the prophetic, He has been seen to move in a wind-like manner, difficult for most to discern, impossible for anyone to control or to limit. Prophets have viewed themselves as instruments of the Spirit as He breaks into this world, superseding natural laws or processes, allowing man to experience God's revelation and grace in forms foreign to the institutional Church. By those defending the established order, the true operation of the Spirit is always orderly—He is present in figures of authority, acknowledged in creeds, liturgies, hymns, and doxologies, having already led man into all truth. (p. 4)

Burgess' characterization of this tension captures well the confusion concerning the quality of the work of the Holy Spirit, and it also illustrates the potential problem besetting the work of the Holy Spirit in psychological growth. Many conceive of the work of the Holy Spirit as punctiliar, immediate, decisive, unexpected, manifest, and dramatic. Such action is frequently described as supernatural in contrast to natural. By contrast, psychological growth through therapy is process-oriented, slow, frequently halting, intentional, hidden, and pedestrian. Thus it would seem that the process of growth through therapy is largely contrary to the kind of work the Holy Spirit does.

Burgess mentions that one source of this conflict stems from a truncated theology of the Spirit's work. For example, adherents of the prophetic tradition sometimes limit the scope of the Spirit's work to giving gifts in certain periods of the church. Given his description of these traditions, the major tradition of order also has a truncated theology of the Spirit's work, since the ordering process seems only to involve the governance and structure of the church and not the natural world.

The Christian perspective is that nature is not mere nature, but is the creation, which means that "all reality is spiritually implicated, insofar as its origin and design is from the Creator" (Coe & Hall, 2010, p. 205). Spiritualizing the realm of nature is familiar territory, yet necessary to cover in order to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in creation.

Relationship Between Redemption and Creation

The second obstacle arises from the tendency to link the post-Pentecost work of the Holy Spirit primarily or solely with the work of redemption and to contrast this work strongly with the operation of the Spirit prior to the Incarnation as described in the Old Testament. The view that emerges is that the locus of the Spirit's activity is within the company of the redeemed in the church. This generates an obstacle to seeing the work of the Spirit in therapeutic growth since redemption is not primarily in view there and since Christian psychologists frequently contend that one central theological grounding for psychological knowledge is the doctrine of creation (Coe & Hall, 2010). The biblical grounding for a transformative Christian psychology comes from the role of the sage in ancient Israel, who, through observation and reflection, came to discern the working of the creation order with respect to human functioning. "Humans were made with certain natures by God's wisdom, such that living according to that nature results in wisdom for living well in God's created order" (Coe & Hall, 2010, p. 144).

Theological justification for the work of the Holy Spirit in creation illuminates the role the Spirit may have within the therapeutic process to bring healing. Assumptions about science and about nature work their way into Christian interpretations of Scripture and of theological concepts. Consider: "when we seek psychic healing from the secular precepts of worldly counseling,

we are, in effect, denying the sufficiency of God" (Bulkley, 1993, pp. 267-268). In considering whether God might provide for our psychological needs through a therapy relationship, Bulkley contends that God could, but that there is no biblical evidence that God does. This contention does not arise merely from a faulty view of science and of the created world, but from a truncated conception of the work of the Holy Spirit's work. The Holy Spirit is believed only to have an impact on the application of saving grace through the atonement of Jesus Christ in regeneration and sanctification. Interpreters see this same pattern at work within the Bible, pitting the Holy Spirit's work in human history against that of the realm of nature. Frequently, the concern is that attribution of divine action in nature may degenerate into a form of idolatry and contravene the conflict between the heavenly and the earthly (Wallace, 2002). Curiously absent is any conception of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and how that may be relevant to or may connect to the work of the Holy Spirit as it is revealed in the New Testament. On the other hand, just as we ought not jettison creation in our emphasis on the work of the Spirit in redemption, so we ought not reduce redemption into a universal, purely material process. Doing so would degrade the personality of the Spirit, turning the Spirit into a force similar to gravity. Redemption is a distinct act of God in a creation that has fallen away from God, not something that the world can generate on its own. Proposals by some proponents of ecological nature theology appear to go to extremes that need not be followed when discerning the work of the Spirit in the natural world. For instance, Wallace (2002) contends that since every life form is animated by the Spirit of God, each one has equal claim to rights and value. Claiming otherwise becomes a form of specieism.

The truncation of the work of the Spirit may owe in part to an excessively chronological approach that neglects the work of the Holy Spirit prior to the new covenant, implying that that work has been superseded and is no longer operative (Cole, 2007). A rigidly chronological approach, that sees the old covenant era as the age of the Father, Christ's earthly ministry as that of the Son, and the church after Pentecost as that of the Spirit, contains an implicit Sabellianism (Kuyper, 1900). The ancient heresy of Sabellius was a form of modalism that denied the Trinity, affirming instead that God had shown three different faces during the course of human history.

The Father, Son, and Spirit were different modes of the one God, but not distinct persons. Such a view tends toward anthropocentrism in judging God's works by reference to the human person and experience, threatens to eliminate the personality of the Spirit, and neglects the frequently hidden character of the Spirit's work (Kuyper, 1900; John 3:8). Linking the Holy Spirit to the creative activity of the one God rebuts a Gnostic impulse to deny full divinity to the Spirit and its belief that God would not get God's hands dirty with a material world. In his combat against Gnostic heresies, Irenaeus (1885/1994, p. 463) affirmed that God created by God's two hands, the Son and the Spirit, which "provides a memorable metaphor for their distinctness but inseparability from God" (Thiselton, 2013, p.174). The New Testament explicitly discusses involvement of the second person of the Trinity in the creation of the world (Kuyper, 1900), and this forms important evidence for the full deity of Jesus and for the Trinity. Although the New Testament is not similarly explicit about the role of the Holy Spirit in creation, theologically, we have good reasons for believing that the Spirit was involved and for describing the Spirit's activity therein. This, in turn, will enable a theological interpretation of Old Testament passages that presage Trinitarian affirmation of the Holy Spirit.

The Work of the Holy Spirit In Creation as Perfecting Cause

In this section, I develop a theology of the Holy Spirit as the perfecting cause of the created order. The basic idea is that the Spirit brings the creation to its intended completion and goal. I begin with the theological concept of the Spirit as perfecting cause and then use this concept to discern a pattern of the Spirit's work in the creation of the world by examining evidence from the Old Testament.

Methodological Excursus: Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament

Before diving into the theological ideas themselves, a brief methodological point will clarify why examination of the biblical evidence comes after the theological concepts. The New Testament unambiguously declares the role of the second person of the Trinity in creation (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:2); the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this regard in the New Testament. All references in the Old Testament that may relate to the role of the Holy Spirit in creation are

potentially ambiguous since the range of meanings of the Hebrew word *ruach* includes several legitimate translations other than "spirit." Only two OT passages use the exact phrase "Holy Spirit" (Ps. 51; Is. 63; Goldingay, 1996). Unless explicitly connected to God, interpreters must decide whether uses of *ruach* refer to wind, breath, or spirit (whether human or divine) (Cole, 2007). Incidentally, this same issue bedevils the translation of the Greek word *pneuma* in the New Testament. For example, Psalm 51 contains four instances of the term *ruach*. Three of these clearly refer to the human spirit (51:10, 12, and 17; Cole, 2007). The fourth instance is one of two places containing the phrase "Holy Spirit." While many translations capitalize both words in this verse to signal the third person of the Trinity, some, such as the NRSV, use lower case for both words. Neither ancient Hebrew nor Greek used capitals the way we do.

The difficulty can be further illustrated by comparing translations of Genesis 1:2; translations are a first interpretation of meaning of the text. The ESV renders the passage as: "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Similar wording can be found in the NIV, NLT, and HCSB. By contrast, the NRSV reads "a wind from God swept over the face of the waters." The translators of the NRSV decided that *ruach* should be interpreted as wind rather than as the Spirit of God, removing the role of the Spirit from this passage entirely. It is possible that some of the cultural expectations concerning the natural world that we considered above have made it difficult to discern that passages such as these refer to the Holy Spirit.

Cole (2007) distinguishes between minimalists and maximalists in the theological interpretation of these potential references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Minimalists tend not to see these passages (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6; 104:29-30; Job 27:3; 33:4; 34:14-15) as referring to the Holy Spirit, preferring instead translations such as wind or breath on exegetical grounds (Cole, 2007). By contrast, maximalists are willing to use these passages to inform a theology of the work of the Holy Spirit. Kuyper (1900), for example, contends that these passages belong to the church, and that since they speak of God, they speak of the triune God. Given that the works of the Trinity are undivided, the Spirit was involved in creation, too. The central role of the Spirit in re-creation, where the Spirit recapitulates the original purposes for creation, would suggest the

Spirit's had a role in the original creation (Green, 2004). Even though the hints are scant, therefore, the development of a theology of the work of the Holy Spirit in the act of creation is justified. Identification of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament should be seen as more tentative than other theological affirmations (Cole, 2007; Green, 2004). Combined with the theological reasoning in the previous section, it is reasonable to infer that the Spirit was active in the creation of the world. The Old Testament is Christian Scripture and should be interpreted in light of the Trinitarian reality revealed in the New Testament (Packer, 1984). Therefore, the next sections will first develop a theology of the Holy Spirit's activity, and then use this as a heuristic guide to discern the pattern of the Spirit's work in creation. The results of that work will provide a foundation for understanding the role of the Spirit in natural psychological growth.

The Holy Spirit as Perfecting Cause

Theologians have often made use of the concept of appropriations among the triune persons to explain the particular roles of the members of the Godhead despite the unity of all their actions (Cole, 2007). It is not as if the Father alone creates, the Son alone redeems, and the Spirit alone sanctifies. Each member of the Trinity acts in a united fashion in all of these domains. Nevertheless, certain activities may be fittingly appropriated as particularly characteristic of one member of the Trinity over and against the others. Appropriation links one of God's actions or one facet of God's actions in a special way to one of the members of the Trinity, even though the entire Godhead acts in that work. In the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea (1895/1994) suggested that the particular, appropriated work of the Holy Spirit in the creation of the world is the perfecting of creation. For Basil, all the members of the Trinity are engaged in the work of creation, yet the originating cause is the Father, the mediating or creative cause is the Son, and the perfecting cause is the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings creation to its intended end, goal, or telos. The Spirit completes the work of creation by aligning it with that-for-the-sake of which it was done. Basil (1895/1994, 9.22) describes the characteristics of the Holy Spirit (in part) as follows: "generous of Its good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by Its inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end:

perfecting all other things, but Itself in nothing lacking: living not as needing restoration, but as Supplier of life" (p. 15). According to Basil the difference of operation of the Spirit in the believer as opposed to the unbeliever is the degreed capacity to receive; the believer is able to receive more of the life-giving power of the Spirit.

Several theologians in the Reformed tradition employed the notion of the Holy Spirit as perfecting cause to develop an account of the role of the Holy Spirit in the created world. Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper (1900) notes that the work of creation is not completed in the initiation of the Father or the mediation of the Son: "everything [was] created with a purpose and a destiny; and our creation will be complete only when we have become what God designed . . . thus to lead the creation to its destiny, to cause it to develop according to its nature, to make it perfect, is the proper work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 21). According to Owen (1965), the Holy Spirit preserves and cherishes the creation so that "it might be carried on towards that form, order, beauty, and perfection, that it was designed unto" (p. 98). After the initial work of creation, God does not abandon creation, but providentially preserves for, cares for, and guides the world by the Holy Spirit.

Although we are focusing on the role of the Spirit in creation, the completing, perfecting, and ordering work of the Spirit continues in new creation and redemption. Many theologians view most or all of the works of the Holy Spirit as encompassed by perfecting activity. Since sin keeps humans from achieving their destiny, the Holy Spirit must work contrary to the power of sin in salvation. "Redemption is therefore not a new work added to that of the Holy Spirit, but it is identical with it. He undertook to bring all things to their destiny either without the disturbance of sin or in spite of it" (Kuyper, 1900, p. 24). Although redemption can be emphasized at the expense of creation, as seen above, it need not be. It is a greater work of God, but it is also a continuation of God's work in the creation. The activity of the Holy Spirit is more apparent in redemption and less visible in creation (Kuyper, 1900).

The Pattern of Perfecting in Creation

Interpreting the Old Testament passages using the methodology of the theological maximizers, we are now in a position to discern the pattern of the perfecting activity of the Holy Spirit in the

creation. In this section, I identify ten features of the work of the Holy Spirit in the natural, created world that will comprise facets of the Spirit's work in natural psychological growth.

First, as perhaps implied by the future-oriented action of the Spirit, creation is a process that includes steps and stages (Gunton, 2002). Theologians regularly affirm God's continuous creation, preservation, and upholding of the world after the initial creative event (Cole, 2007). However, the successive days of the initial creation show "that God creates a world which requires time both to be and to become what it is created to be" (Gunton, 2002, p. 191). Genesis 1:1 can be seen as a summary statement of the entire process, and perhaps an affirmation of creation *ex nihilo*.

Second, the Spirit superintends the process of forming and filling the created world. The first part of Genesis 1:2 gives the famous description of the newly created world as *tobuwobobu*. That is, it was without form (or chaotic) and void (or empty). These same words are later used in Scripture to describe the results of judgment, wherein the earth returns to chaos (Jer. 4:23; Is. 34:11; Kidner, 1967). The status of the created world as formless and empty shows the need for process and a progression to a better state. The role of the Spirit is to bring creation from the forces of chaos into structure and completeness, that is, to form and to fill the world. The work of the Spirit provides the pivot between the chaos described in the beginning of verse two and the progress of creation beyond these two negative features (formlessness and emptiness) in the remainder of the first chapter (Gunton, 2002; Kidner, 1967). The first three days form the world by giving order and structure through the separations of light and dark, sea and sky, and earth and sea. The second three days fill the domains that were structured by the first three days in a parallel sequence to the forming of the first three days: creation of lights for night and day, creation of birds and fish for sea and sky, and the creation of land animals for the earth.

Third, the sixth day culminates in the creation of the human person and the giving of the creation mandate for humans to partner in the process of forming and filling. Humans are given two key commands: to have dominion and to fill the earth. Arguably, these are continuous with the same two processes considered previously, now, with humans being called upon to participate in the creative process through the founding

of human culture (Wolters, 2005) and to partner with the Holy Spirit in doing so. The second creation account in Genesis two describes the lack of plant life without the creation of the human person to work the ground (2:5-6). The human person is formed (from the dust) and filled (with the breath of life) in verse seven. God plants a garden in verse eight, signaling cultivation and order that is not present beyond the garden's boundaries (Gunton, 2002). The creation mandate given to humans to have dominion (1:26, 28) and to fill the earth (1:28) is given its first concrete expression in the human task of cultivating the garden. The remaining chapters of the Genesis prologue (1-11) describe the filling of the earth through the growth of the human family and the development of its resources through burgeoning technologies.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit both forms and fills by giving life (John 6:63; II Cor. 3:6). The Holy Spirit is, in the words of the Nicene creed, "lord and giver of life." The Spirit is vital or living power (Oden, 1992). Psalm 33:6 sets up a parallel structure sometimes interpreted in a Trinitarian manner: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host." Most translations render *ruach* as breath in this passage. It has been thought that word and breath correspond to the second and third persons of the Trinity. Words are carried by our breath. God speaks the world into existence (Gen. 1) with breath, creating the universe (Ps. 33:6), the human person (Gen. 2:7), and Scripture (II Tim. 3:16).

Fifth, giving life is an ongoing work whereby the Spirit preserves, upholds, and provides for what the Spirit has made. Job 33:4 has Elihu stating "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." The tenses seem to indicate both past and present creative activity. Likewise, Psalm 104:29-30 describes the ongoing activity of the Spirit to preserve the life of the animal world:

29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

The idea expressed here with respect to the work of the Holy Spirit, as shown throughout

the Psalm, is the necessity for God's continuing providential upholding of everything that exists and the continuing (secondary) creation and shaping of the things God has made (Cole, 2007). Without this ongoing activity, the creation would not continue to exist (Job 34:14-15). The uniqueness of the Spirit's work resides in the shaping of a creation that is already in existence. God's ongoing and intimate activity with creation through the Spirit is contrary to a God of deistic indifference; hence nature is not *mere* nature.

Life is not merely categorical, a distinction between something that has it and something that does not. It is also qualitative, expressing the kind of life plants, animals, and humans have. So, sixth, the Spirit not only preserves life in existence, but also nurtures and fills it up with enablement for a robust form of existence. Dallas Willard (1988) states that "life is always and everywhere an inner power to relate to other things in certain specific ways. The living thing has an inherent power that contacts what is beyond it, drawing from this 'beyond' to enhance and extend its own being and influence" (p. 57). In addition, "life" is "the ability to contact and selectively take in from the surroundings whatever supports its own survival, extension, and enhancement" (1988, p. 57). Life has an inherent power within it, but it must also receive its ongoing life through contact with nurturance outside of it. As Psalm 104 vividly illustrates, animals and humans must receive their food from outside of themselves (14-15, 21, 27-28). Plants make their own food, but like animals, receive their water from God (10-11, 16). Life is inherently relational. Its inner dimension is the structure that enables it to draw sustenance from its environment. Human life involves freedom in its exercise, and its needs extend beyond food, water, and air to love, relationship, and care.

Several translations describe the Spirit as hovering over the nascent world. This is an image of a mother bird protecting and nurturing its young (Kidner, 1967). The image is repeated in the creation of the nation of Israel by the hand of God. God discovers Jacob wandering in the "trackless waste," which is the same word for formless (*tobu*) in Genesis 1:2. In the midst of the chaos, God "encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, the LORD alone guided

him" (Deut. 32:10b-12a, ESV). God nurtures the life of God's people in the midst of a frequently hostile environment. In a sense, the Spirit hovers over Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22). Jesus uses the mother bird image in weeping over the obstinacy of Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37-39).

Seventh, although we rightly see the fruit of the Spirit as a product of redemption (Gal. 5:22-23), growth in virtue and character prior to conversion may be attributed to the enabling and nurturing activity of the Spirit as well. Owen (1965) contends that the moral virtues such as wisdom and courage are inculcated by the work of the Holy Spirit, apparently independently of regeneration. Kuyper (1900) likewise affirms the continuity of character between pre- and post-conversion persons. Both creation and new creation aim toward growth in virtue. John Goldingay (1996) explains:

I take it that a further implication of the link between God's Spirit and creation is that when God's Spirit comes to fill the Christian Church or the Christian believer and comes to produce the moral fruit of the Spirit or to release gifts of the Spirit, these are not some bolt-on additions to human nature as created by God. They are not essentially novel enlargements of this human nature, but the fulfillment of what created human beings are intended to be and have the inherent potential to be. In this sense the life of holiness or the utterance of tongues or the ministry of healing are the most natural things in the world, even if they become actual only through supernatural release and would never become fully actual without that. (p. 16)

The parallel themes between Galatians 5:22-23, which discusses the fruit of the Spirit, and James 3:17, which considers heavenly wisdom, may provide indirect support for the empowerment of the Spirit in the inculcation of virtue, even among the unredeemed (Moo, 2000). Jewish literature prior to the New Testament linked God's wisdom with God's Spirit (Heron, 1983). This is one of the more controversial themes considered here, but space considerations prevent further development.

Eighth, since God preserves the world and shapes it through the activity of the Holy Spirit,

the products of culture in art and science may be seen to derive as a nurturing and enlivening gift of God to humanity as a whole (Calvin, 1559/1845); this is called common grace by many Reformed theologians. "Calvin traces whatever art, science, or skill fallen humanity shows to the work of the Holy Spirit" (Cole, 2007, p. 111). For example, through the products of human cultural knowledge, the Spirit empowers leaders by providing them with skill and with knowledge of the art and science of governance (Calvin, 1559/1845). The judges, Saul, and David were all described as exercising their leadership through the enablement of the Spirit (Judges 6:34; I Sam. 10:6; 16:13). Similarly, Basil (1895/1994) and Owen (1965) describe the work of the Spirit in commanding the angels of the heavenly host. As applied to an army, a host is "a number of men put into a certain order, for some certain end or purpose" (Owen, 1965, p. 96). This ordering gives power, beauty, and efficacy. Without such ordering, the group as such does not exist, but is simply "a confused multitude" (Owen, 1965, p. 96). In these instances, ordering and empowerment are given to the individual, but are for the sake of service to the community (Thiselton, 2013). Therefore, the pattern of kings and judges in the Old Testament is continued with the gifts of the Spirit for the building up of the church in I Corinthians 12. The Holy Spirit is not "mine," but "ours" (Thiselton, 2013). The Spirit gives an individual the ability to govern by means of cultural knowledge; those governed achieve goals for the good of all that they could not have attained alone.

Ninth, the Holy Spirit enables and nurtures by providing knowledge. The Holy Spirit empowered Bezalel and Oholiab for their task of shaping the tabernacle in Exodus 31:1-5 and 35:30-35. Calvin (1559/1845) concludes from this that God "fills, moves, and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit, and that according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation" (p. 236, II.2.16).

Consideration of an objection to this general empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the discovery of knowledge will clarify the significance of this point. Cole (2007) contends, contrary to Calvin, that these passages do not support the idea that the Spirit imparts knowledge to everyone, since the tabernacle was built for the religious purposes of Israel in accordance with the covenant and according to God's specification for worship. The Exodus passages describe Bezalel as being

“filled with the Spirit of God.” Cole insists it is unwarranted to generalize from this special action of the Spirit in a believer to human artistry and knowledge in general. Kuyper (1900) provides a response to this objection based on the link between the Spirit’s purposes in creation and in redemption. Noting the development of human culture in Genesis 1-11, Kuyper suggests that special inspiration is needed in this instance, as it was needed by the judges and the kings. This is because sin has caused the absence of knowledge of art and craft that humans were meant to have and that in other, less corrupt circumstances, they do have. Bezalel is filled with the Spirit for “the restoration of what sin had corrupted and defiled” (Kuyper, 1900, p. 42). Since the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt for 430 years and then wandered in the desert, they presumably possessed little, if any, knowledge of art and craft.

The manner of God’s inspiration of these two workmen may have been direct instruction, but most other instances of craft knowledge arise through observation and reflection on the structures of the natural world. An interesting parallel in this regard is Isaiah 28:23-29, which describes the technical knowledge of the farmer as coming from God. It seems reasonable to suppose that the farmer and the craftsperson (in most instances) receive knowledge through observation and reason rather than from direct speech from God (Wolters, 2005). Theologians rightly associate the Holy Spirit with special revelation (II Peter 1:21; II Tim. 3:16), yet we should also affirm that there is no knowledge or skill apart from God for both believer and unbeliever alike (Kuyper, 1900). As Colin Gunton (2005) puts it, all knowledge is a species of revelation, and hence a realm of the Spirit’s activity. If we despise the gift, we insult the Giver; therefore, we ought not dishonor the Spirit’s work in the learning of humankind (Calvin II.2.15).

Finally, the Spirit adorns and beautifies the creation. Owen (1965) cites Job 26:13: “his Spirit made the heavens beautiful” (NLT). Although many translations render *ruach* as wind or breath in this verse, the adornment of creation is supported as a natural by-product of filling and ordering it. The wonders of creation are not functional (Rogers, 2005), in the sense of serving a human instrumental purpose, but simply bring glory to God through their beauty (Job 38; Pss. 19, 104, 147, 148).

In summary, the Holy Spirit perfects the created world through 1) the process of 2) forming and filling the earth. Humans are 3) both instances of and partners with the Spirit in the process of forming and filling. The Spirit forms and fills by 4) giving life and 5) preserving and providing for the life that has been given. The Spirit 6) nurtures and enables that life by filling it with 7) virtue, 8) order and governance, 9) knowledge, and 10) beauty.

Implications for Natural Growth in Therapy

Each of these aspects of the Holy Spirit’s perfecting work within the created world finds application and expression within the natural growth process of therapy. Although psychological scientists have frequently failed to provide an overly robust concept of psychological health, clinical practice aims for healthy psychological functioning, or at least the alleviation of problematic symptoms. Prescription in general has been avoided by social scientists (Coe & Hall, 2010). However, the process of therapy is teleological, directed toward wholeness and well-being. The birth of positive psychology has raised anew questions concerning final causal explanation within the modern scientific paradigm. Since the particular role of the Spirit is to direct creation toward its purpose, we may infer that the Spirit guides and empowers the process of movement toward psychological well-being as one aspect of bringing every facet of creation toward its intended telos.

The work of the Spirit in creation is a process (1), rather than a dramatic, discrete change; this coheres well with the nature of growth in therapy. Moreover, therapy is life giving (4). It enables the person to overcome destructive patterns and experience a greater fullness of life (2). The outcome of therapy and the suffering that may have occasioned it can be opportunities for growth in virtue (7): compassion, courage, wisdom, etc. The therapist, whether Christian or non-Christian, inhabits knowledge of the growth process and guides his or her client through that (9). That knowledge is not human invention, but discovery of the God-designed nature of the human person.

God made humans to fill the earth and to partner with the Spirit in the process of bringing the world to its divinely ordained telos (3) (Bacote, 2005). This process in human history is not limited to God’s people. God providentially used the

pagan king Cyrus to accomplish divine ends even though Cyrus did not know God nor did he know that his actions served the divine purposes and God's people (Is. 45:1-6). Cyrus is described as the "anointed," a word closely related to messiah. Kings, priests, and prophets were anointed by God and empowered with the Spirit to serve God and guide God's people (Oden, 1992). God preserves (5) even the rebellious in existence, including those who oppose God's people: Pharaoh, Herod, those who killed Jesus, and even Satan. Therapists, whether Christian or non-Christian, are enabled by the Spirit to use knowledge (9) of psychological growth discovered by observation of the natural world. They guide (8) and nurture (6) their clients toward health. A natural outcome of this process is the beauty (10) of restoration. The good outcomes produced by psychological researchers and clinicians should be viewed as being given by the Holy Spirit.

Since these facets of growth in therapy are true for both believers and non-believers, what difference does being a Christian therapist make? One need not have heard there is a Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2) to have been impacted by the Spirit's invisible, wind-like movement (John 3:8). So also in therapy, neither clinician nor client need to be acquainted with the Spirit to benefit from the movement of the Spirit in psychological growth. One key difference that conversion makes is becoming personally acquainted with this animating power and being able to name the source of the movement in which one has been participating (Goldingay, 1996). Second, and related to the first, the Holy Spirit points believers to the paradigm of Spirit-empowered living modeled for us by our Lord Jesus. Christian therapists can conceptualize their work as preparing clients for a future encounter with Christ where they will be able to see their growth process as having been animated by the Holy Spirit.

Knowledge of the goal to be achieved furnishes greater potential for attaining it. It is much easier to cooperate when the source of the movement is known. Therapy is not solely a self-improvement project aimed at individual psychological health, but has the goal of healthy relationships. Therapy is not an end in itself, but is subordinate to other goals. Christian therapists recognize that complete healing comes only from salvation in Jesus and will not be complete in this life. Psychological healing in therapy prepares a person for saving relationship with

Christ, but it is not only that. Conversion itself is subordinate to the intention that God has for human persons. Christian therapists may approach therapy as an open-ended process that stirs their clients toward the greater ends and purposes held out for them by God, whether they are aware of these or not. So far as it is up to them, therapists may order and guide (8) the therapy process toward preparing their clients to make meaning of the events of their lives using Christian belief as a global meaning system (Park, 2013). As healing progresses, clients are brought more fully into participation with God's intentions for relationship with others and with God himself. Conversion enables a person to know from whence these goods come and then be placed in a right relationship with the giver (Rom. 1:21; James 1:17). Just as being known by the therapist spurs growth, so will discovering that one is known by God contribute yet further growth (Thompson, 2010).

Unlike their unbelieving counterparts, Christian therapists ground their hope for change on a well-defined agent (the Spirit) and a personal knowledge of that agent. The growth process is not founded on a vague wish, but on hope in a divinely given promise (Rom. 5:3-5). John Goldingay (1996) argues that present-day Christians often view the Holy Spirit as a fulfilled promise rather than as a hope that has been inaugurated but is awaiting more to come. He contends that given significant continuities between the old and new covenants, we should live, as did the Old Testament saints, in hopeful expectation of the work of God in the future. Our present reality is, in some ways, more consonant with that of unbelievers in this regard.

One may object that encouraging psychological growth independent of the goal of salvation is counterproductive since it leads the person farther from understanding his or her need for God. In one sense that is true: greater powers lead to potential for greater evil. In another sense, it cannot be true because God is not divided. The Spirit does not promote something in opposition to the Son and the Father. Psychological growth gives a person more life and greater range of powers and abilities, which may be turned toward idolatrous purposes. However, we are not in the position to decide who receives good gifts from God's hands when God is providentially using us to dispense them. If we presume to withhold good from others, we take the place of God, whose secret purposes and

activities we do not know. God could have simplified things in our world considerably by withholding the good gift of freedom from us, thereby ensuring that we would never deviate from God's plan. God did not withhold this gift, and we cannot either. While increased resources and increased life can cause us to operate from greater autonomy, and in that sense distance us from God, it need not. Since no finite creature has life on its own and is not self-caused, insofar as the creature has life, it is connected to God. Separation from God's life is death and hell.

In the new life, the enlivening Spirit puts us back into personal relationship with the source of our life. Being severed from that relationship ultimately results in death; as Scripture declares: the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Augustine (1958) describes the link between sin and death as follows: "For 'pride is the beginning of all sin.' And what is pride but an appetite for inordinate exaltation? Now exaltation is inordinate when the soul cuts itself off from the very Source to which it should keep close and somehow makes itself and becomes an end to itself" (pp. 308-309, 14.13). Sin tries to find life in autonomy, but cuts itself off from the life that comes from relationship with God (and secondarily with others). If we are designed for relationship with God, and if we exist by God's will alone, then our full flourishing, the completion and perfection of our telos, is found only there. Hence the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit enlivens us. Life in Scripture is relationship (as we saw above), but it is also qualitative. Eternal life is that kind of life that characterizes personal relationship with the triune God. Although therapy is not oriented explicitly toward eternal life, it is life-giving; it is consonant with the purposes of and is empowered by the life-giving Holy Spirit.

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