

# The Spirit in Creation

by G. Campbell Morgan

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*The Holy Spirit is the Director of all order in creation, bringing order out of chaos and maintaining the beauty and precision of nature.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:2, Job 26:13, Psalm 104:30, Isaiah 40:7, Ezekiel 1:20

**Topics:** "The Holy Spirit in Creation", "Divine Presence in Nature"

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## Description

G. Campbell Morgan explores the profound role of the Holy Spirit in creation, emphasizing that His generative work is often overlooked compared to His regenerative role. He illustrates how the Spirit was present at the beginning, brooding over chaos to bring forth order and beauty in nature, and continues to sustain and renew creation. Morgan highlights various scriptures that affirm the Spirit's active involvement in the natural world, portraying Him as the source of life, beauty, and renewal. He concludes that all creation reflects the glory of God, and those who walk in the Spirit can truly appreciate the divine artistry in nature.

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## Transcript

THE work of the Spirit in creation, and His perpetual presence and manifestation therein, are subjects full of fascination, and yet strangely neglected. So much attention has been given to the work of the Spirit in its regenerative aspect, that His generative activities have been in a large measure overlooked. The origin and the preservation of everything in nature are spiritual.

No lily-muffled hum of a summer bee

But finds some coupling with the spinning stars;

No pebble at your foot but proves a sphere,

No chaffinch but implies the cherubim.

.... Earth's cramm'd with heaven,

And every common bush afire with God;

But only he who sees takes off his shoes--

The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.

The sacred Writings abound in statements with regard to this aspect of the Spirit's work.

What magnificent figures are contained in the words of the Psalmist!

Mrs. E. B. Browning.

He bowed the heavens also, and came down;

And thick darkness was under His feet.

And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly:

Yea, He flew swiftly upon the wings of the wind.

He made darkness His hiding-place, His pavilion  
round about Him;

Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.

At the brightness before Him His thick clouds passed,

Hailstones and coals of fire.

It is evident, from a careful reading of this Psalm, that it is a declaration of the perpetual presence of God in all such manifestations. Wherever thick darkness is, it is under the feet of God; whenever the wind passes with swift impetuosity, He flies upon the wings thereof; wherever darkness is, it is God's hiding-place, a pavilion round about Him; whenever the darkness is dispersed, it is before the brightness of His rising. In every gleam of the glory of nature there is the evidence of an ever-present God.

The final words of that great doxology which Isaiah heard from the inner temple are of great interest in this connection: In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple, round Him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. The uplifted Lord is the centre of adoration in the courts of heaven; but not there only is His splendour seen--the whole earth is full of His glory.

A marvellous declaration of the fact of the presence of God in all nature is to be found also in the great Theophany of the Book of Job.

For the purposes of this study, however, it will be sufficient to consider certain definite statements of Scripture, in which the work of the Holy Spirit in creation is clearly set forth in varied aspects.

First compare the earliest reference to the Spirit with one in the prophecy of Isaiah:

And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon [or as the margin gives it, was brooding upon] the face of the waters."

But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the raven shall dwell therein: and He shall stretch over it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness.

Exactly the same Hebrew words are used in each case to describe the desolation. The word translated waste in Genesis is translated confusion in Isaiah; the word translated void in the one case is translated emptiness in the other. This comparison throws light upon the story of creation.

The first picture is that of the Spirit brooding over chaos. Science agrees that the earth must have been in such a condition as this before the appearance of man. How this condition of things arose, whether through some mighty catastrophe whelming a previous order, or through the omnific word of God, no man can tell; both science and revelation are silent. These opening words of the Book of Genesis introduce this planet while yet waste and void, and declare that, for the accomplishment of the change from this condition to that of order, the Spirit brooded over the face of the waters. He acted as the Administrator of the will of God, as expressed by the word of God. The will of God is that order should supersede disorder. The Word of God announces that will, beginning with the first utterance: Let there be light. By the brooding of the Spirit over the chaos the light came. That is the unvarying order of the activity of God in creation.

This is not an account of the first creation of matter. Concerning that, man has no definite knowledge.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was waste and void

How long the interval between these verses no man can tell. Scripture makes no announcement thereupon, and the declarations of science are but surmises. But when the present order was established, it was by the Spirit of God brooding upon confusion and emptiness, as the Power through which the Divine will was realized. The earth as it is to-day is therefore the direct outcome of the action of the Holy Spirit.

Another of the Psalms is full of suggestiveness:-- By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.' The word breath here might with perfect correctness be written with a capital letter--the Breath of God's mouth. Here again is revealed the will of Jehovah, uttered by the Word of Jehovah, and accomplished by the Breath of His mouth; but the sweep of thought is greater than before. It is not a description of the bringing of order to one small planet, but the record in a sentence of the creation of the heavens and all the host of them.

The phrase includes all the myriad wonders of the universe around. By the Word-of God, and by the Breath of His mouth, came the systems of which man is just beginning to learn that in their entirety they are undiscoverable. The point at which astronomical science has now arrived is an acknowledgment, that beyond the utmost reach of anything which can be studied through the agency of the telescope, lie illimitable space and innumerable worlds.

This has been forcefully stated by Dr. Pierson in his Many Infallible Proofs, and the whole paragraph is of such a nature that it is here inserted at length:--

The fact of the vast host of stars is a fact of modern discovery. Hipparchus, about a century and a half before Christ, gave the number of stars as 1,022, and Ptolemy, 'in the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, could find but 1,026. We may on a clear night, with the unaided eye, see only 1,160, or, if we could survey the whole celestial sphere, about 3,000. But when the telescope began to be pointed to the heavens, less than three centuries ago, by Galileo, then for the first time men began to know that Jeremiah was right when he made the stars as countless as the sand on the sea-shore. When Lord Rosse's instrument turned its great mirror to the sky, lo, the number of visible stars increased to nearly

400,000,000 and Herschel compares the multitude of them to glittering dust scattered on the black background of the heavens. When John Herschel, at the foot of the, dark-continent, resolves the nebula; into suns, and Lord Rosse, as with the eye of a Titan, finds in the cloudy scarf about Orion "a gorgeous bed of stars," and the very Milky Way itself proves to be simply a grand procession of stars absolutely without number--how true is the exclamation of Jeremiah, 600 years before Christ, 2,200 years before Galileo; "The host of heaven cannot be numbered!" Who taught Jeremiah astronomy?

All these unnumbered hosts were made by the Word of the Lord and the Breath of His mouth.

Take now. one of the passages in the Book of Job. The words are those of the patriarch himself:--

By His Spirit the heavens are garnished;

His hand hath pierced the swift serpent.

The meaning of the passage is obscure, but light is thrown upon it by the context:--

He stirreth up the sea with His power,

And by His understanding He smiteth through Rahab.

That is a perfect picture, in miniature, of a storm-swept sea, over which the dark clouds hang dismally. Then follow the words: By His Spirit the heavens are garnished. It is a vision of the bringing back of the blue and the light to the heavens, after the sweeping of a storm; and in this strange expression, His hand hath pierced the swift serpent, Job borrows one of the Eastern nature-myths, in illustration of the fact that the calm which follows the storm in nature is--actually and symbolically--the work of the Spirit of God. Job was in fact, or in imagination, looking out upon a storm-tossed sea; he saw it suddenly calmed, the clouds dispersed, and the heavens garnished with beauty. The reference to the flying serpent is difficult of understanding. One says that the reference is to the sign of the zodiac; another that it describes the long train of the cloud, as the wind of the Spirit disperses and drives it away; and yet another that the term has reference to the whole arch of heaven, as pierced by the hand of God. Between these views it is not possible to decide, but certainly it is a figure of speech, most probably indicating the driving away of the storm-clouds like trailing serpents, as the heavens smile in sunlight after the storm is spent. The main statement is, however, perfectly clear--that the transformation of beauty is wrought by the Spirit of God.

Another interesting statement is found in the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the agency of the Spirit in nature: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Breath of the Lord bloweth upon it. This declaration is at first sight almost staggering. That the Spirit of God comes as a genial summer zephyr upon nature is easy to understand; but it is difficult to believe that He comes also as the fierce blast of God. Yet it is certainly true. He brings death as a process, and a necessity. The pitiless east wind has in it the breath of health. Let there be no more east wind, no more northeast wind, no more biting, keen blast of death, and what would become of nature? Surely Kingsley entered into the spirit of this when he sang:--

Welcome, wild North-easter It

Shame it is to see

Odes to every zephyr,

Ne'er a verse to thee.

Through the black fir forest  
Thunder harsh and dry,  
Scattering down the snowflakes  
Off the curdled sky.  
Come; and strong within us  
Stir the Viking's blood,  
Bracing brain and sinew;  
Blow, thou wind of God.

When the east wind blows, and the flowers are nipped, and the blade of grass is curled and shrivelled almost as if by the blast of heat, then the Spirit of God is sweeping the ground and preparing for the springing of life in response to the kiss of His gentler wind. In close sequence consider the words:-- Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; And Thou renewest the face of the ground That which follows the death-wind of the Spirit is His life-wind. The first is Winter; the second is Spring. Nothing ever finds its way to Spring save through Winter. The budding of life and the flowers that blossom upon the sod in Spring-time are the result of the cold east wind that swept the hills and the valleys during Winter days. These are not mere figures of speech. The cold and icy wind blows under the direction of the Spirit of God; and the wind which kisses earth, and makes it smile in flowers, is the messenger of the self-same Spirit.

The prophecy of Ezekiel opens with a magnificent piece of imagery, of which no final nor exhaustive exposition is here attempted. There is, however, no more gorgeous vision of the glory of God to be found in the whole of His Book. To Ezekiel, the bard and prophet, there was granted a vision of that glory in the great chariot of Divine movement and life. The vision embraced the creatures of the earth, and the appearances of the heavens. The colours of earth and of heaven were seen. Beryl is translucent and green as earth and sea; sapphire is blue, as of the highest heavens; and over the amber glory in that vision was the appearance as of a Man occupying the highest position. The wheels that turned and went, and the wings that beat the air, were symbolic of the presence of God in every form of nature. Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went; thither was the Spirit to go: and the wheels were lifted up beside them; for the Spirit of life was in the wheels. Ezekiel was looking at God, so far as man may gaze upon Him. He was beholding the vehicle of the Divine movement, and found that it takes earth and heaven to manifest it. Whether it be in the machinery, the procession, the regular motion of earthly things, or whether it be in the unapproachable and unexplainable light and splendour of the upper world, God is everywhere. Earth's living creatures and heaven's splendours move by the Spirit of God. This is a most inadequate analysis of the vision of that chapter, but it is sufficient to indicate the central truth thereof--that every movement of the wheels of nature, every beat of the wing of created thing, is by the impulse and energy of the Spirit of life.

From the study of these passages it is evident that, as by the power of the Spirit cosmos was produced out of chaos, so by the ever present and active power of the Spirit in the processes of nature cosmos is maintained.

There is yet one more phase of this subject suggested by the apostle Paul: For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Paul had no narrow conception of his Master's work. He saw the regenerative work of Jesus, as administered by the Spirit, passing out, not merely into human lives, but into the whole creation.

We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

We ourselves groan within ourselves

The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The change from creature of the Authorized to creation of the Revised is important. The former word may suggest an individual, the latter embraces all created things.

A trinity of agony is here revealed,--nature groaning and travailing in pain; the child of God groaning and waiting for deliverance; and, most wonderful of all, the Spirit of God making intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Thus it is declared that the Spirit is present in creation, and all through creation as a regenerative Force; and ere the work of the Cross of Christ be completed on this planet, every inch of it will be renewed. The whole creation that to-day groaneth and travaileth in pain together will feel the balm, the healing, and the blessing of the work of Christ. Trees and flowers will again realize what they also in some sense have lost by the fall of man. All the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name. The Spirit Who created, preserves, energizes, and moves through all nature, is in nature as an intercessory Force--as a Force administering, by processes which are beyond analysis, the great work of the Christ Himself; and this ministry will eventuate in the removal of the curse from nature, and its consequent renewal, glorious and perfect.

From these seven scriptures certain deductions may be made.

The Holy Spirit is the Director of all order in creation. He is first seen brooding over the primal chaos, and producing order. He is for evermore the Intelligence and Force of all mathematical precision in nature. The old words are still true: Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. These processions follow with infinite precision, and mathematical regularity, by the direction of the Holy Spirit of God. It is by no mere fortuitous accident that morning succeeds upon night, and that day sinks and nestles into the bosom of darkness. These things follow because there is an everpresent Spirit of intelligence, the Spirit of the living God, at work to the utmost bound of created things.

The Holy Spirit is the Creator of beauty. He is revealed in the garnishing of the heavens, in the blue of day, and in the darkness of night with all the splendours of stars scattered in profusion across it. All these are beautiful, and they appeal to the beautiful in man; for they were born of God, as man is born of God. Not only is this true of the beauty which overawes, but also of the form of every leaf and flower and spire of grass. The stately sweep of the sea and the delicate dome of the dew-drop are alike the outworking of the wisdom and energy of the Spirit 'of God. Man, born of the Spirit, in the grace of transformed life gives evidence of the Spirit's power. So also, in different degree and kind, but none the less certainly, is it with

the flowers of the field. Put them under microscopic test, and their exquisiteness and beauty and precision and regularity reveal the working of the Spirit of God. He in nature not only directs the order, but creates the varied and varying beauty.

Again, the Spirit is the Breath of renewal. Through death He ever leads to life. That fact is revealed even in the death of the Son of God, for it is written that through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without blemish unto God. The Winter wind that beat upon Him in His dying was but the preface to the Summer wind of Pentecost.

These things are to be seen everywhere in nature because the self-same Spirit Who works in regeneration works also in generation. This Spirit, the Breath of renewal through death, comes with manifold glory in the Spring, bringing a renewal of the earth. Winter's cold precedes Spring. Autumn's fire precedes Winter's cold. Through fire and cold the Spirit ever moves to new life; and the new forms of beauty, manifold and wondrous, with which the face of the earth is renewed are His.

To those who live and walk in the Spirit, all creation is seen to be of God. No man can find God through nature; but every man may find nature through God. If man begin with nature, he cannot climb from it to God; but if he begin with God, he may enter into the mystic region, wherein lies true appreciation of the glories and beauties of nature. No man has ever yet seen or understood the beauty of the daisy, save as he has seen that the floweret, blossoming and blooming to-day, to be trodden underfoot to-morrow, is a part of the work of the same Spirit which is transforming human character and life. The Spirit of God brooded over the chaos and brought forth the cosmos. The Spirit of God has, for evermore, been brooding over nature; and every form of beauty, and every form of order, and every manifestation of renewal are parts of the Divine expression of Himself. All creation is of God, to the man who lives and walks with Him.

One Spirit--His

Who wore the platted thorn with bleeding brows

Rules universal nature! Not a flower

But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,

Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires

Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,

And bathes their eyes with nectar; and includes,

In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,

The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.

Happy who walks with Him, whom what he finds

Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,

Or what he views of beautiful or grand

In nature, from the broad majestic oak

To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.

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