

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

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LECTURE I.

The Personality and Procession of the Holy Spirit

I PURPOSE to discuss to-day the DIVINE PERSONALITY of the Holy Spirit. This is a point on which few doubts may be entertained by the vast majority of believing men among us. But it must not be passed over. Nor must attention be absorbed with the WORK of the Spirit so as to forget HIMSELF. All history proves, for instance, that to give exclusive prominence to the work of Christ while the personal Redeemer is left in the background, ends, for the most part, in placing a mere dogma where Christ Himself should be. The divine dignity of the Spirit demands, in like manner, that no obscuring influence shall come between the soul and the agency of the living person; and in the whole investigation on which it is necessary to enter, we must be upon our guard against being swayed either by the sound of words, which decide nothing, or by those refining speculations which are more shadowy than solid.

As to the divine personality of the Spirit, there are two modes by which we prove it. We prove it *a priori*, from the fact of the eternal procession, as we prove the divine personality of the Son from the fact of the eternal generation; for these immanent acts of God underlie respectively the personal distinctions in the Godhead. Or we prove it *a posteriori* from the unquestionable evidences of divine personality which are given in the sacred Scriptures in connection with His works. We shall begin with the latter, and proceed step by step, taking up in order first the PERSONALITY, and then the PROCESSION of the Spirit.

It is clear to every mind that, after His personality is established, no further proof can reasonably be demanded to show that such a Person must be God. If He is not an influence or energy, but a personal agent, it follows on grounds the most conclusive that He is not lower than Supreme God. Hence the objections adduced in opposition to the doctrine of the Spirit mainly turn at present against the proof of His personality. For to no created being can the actions which are ascribed to Him be fitly or competently applied.

My object is to show that the Spirit of God is as truly a Person as the Father or the Son, — a Person in whom mind resides, and to whom men perform actions which are either culpable or acceptable. The divine personality is asserted against two currents of opinion which agitated the Church in early times, — the Sabellian and Arian heresies, which reciprocally evoked each other, and are ever ready to captivate minds which miss the safe middle way. The former is the negation of the Spirit's personality, the latter the denial of His Deity. All

who deviate in our day from the Church-doctrine are led by a strong Sabellian bias to consider the Holy Spirit as a mere influence or divine energy without personality, — a theory called the indwelling scheme by some, but only a form of Unitarianism. The Arian or Macedonian opinion, which described the Spirit as a creature, is little favoured at present, but may at any moment reappear, according to the strange vitality which is the accompaniment of error. At present Sabellianism is the error on the Trinity — an error of wide diffusion and power; and it is adopted by many who come under the spell of German theology. These theologians evade the force of the Scripture proof by treating the passages as rhetorical personifications or figures of speech, even while they dilate on the advantages of using only the grammatico-historical method of interpretation. They speak not of the Holy Spirit, but of the COMMON SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, which, in fact, means nothing more than an *esprit de corps*, and detaches itself from all obligation to accept the doctrine of the personal Holy Ghost. How far modern theology is alienated from this entire domain of doctrine is known only to those whose special studies have led them to institute inquiries as to the German current of theological thought, and as to the multitudes in every land who have come under its influence. The personality of the Holy Ghost is treated by these divines as a dogma, for the acceptance of which no sufficient ground is found either in Scripture or experience.¹

When Scripture alludes to the Holy Spirit, the personal terms conveying the idea of MIND, WILL, and SPONTANEOUS ACTION are so numerous that they may be regarded, not as the occasional, but as the general, nay, uniform and unvaried usage; and it is a usage observed by all the sacred writers, without a single exception. It is observed by the Old Testament writers and by the New Testament writers alike. It is retained as the natural expression of their thoughts, even in passages where the writers, without the slightest trace of emotion or elevation in their style, write and speak as simple narrators of historic facts (Acts ii. 1:5), or convey plain and practical instruction (Eph. iv. 30). To deny that there is any allusion to a person in such references to the Spirit, betrays either deep-seated bias and prejudice, or lack of exegetical aptitude and capacity.

To evade or explain away these proofs of personality, two modes have been adopted, having not even the semblance of probability. The one evasion is, that the expressions mean nothing more than AN ABSTRACT QUALITY; and the other is, that they are instances of TROPICAL LANGUAGE. It may suffice to reply, that few examples of rhetorical personification occur in any history written in simple prose, and that this holds true pre-eminently of the New Testament, where the writers of set purpose make use of a natural, popular style. In these perspicuous narratives, there was neither occasion nor scope in any of the allusions to the Holy Spirit for a highly figurative diction; and when a personal agent is referred to, it is out of keeping with the nature of their composition to understand the terms of a quality or influence. We must understand one in whom intelligence and will reside. It would be the most violent and far-fetched of all conceivable modes of interpretation, to lay it down as a rule — as this theory must do — that whenever the speakers or writers, either in the Old or New Testament, turned their mind toward the doctrine of the Spirit, they instantly abandoned all the plain and easy style familiar to them, and resorted to rhetorical personification, *prosopopœa*, and the most high-wrought figures which language can sustain, when their object was to be understood in the language which they used. To suppose such a thing

is a sufficient refutation of that whole mode of interpretation. If Jesus and His apostles uniformly represented the Holy Spirit as a Person when He is not a Person, it would be the boldest personification ever found in any literature upon any subject.

Not only so; the apostles lived at a time when their assailants, the Gnostics, transmuted divine operations into emanations and persons. We may therefore, with Michaelis, pronounce it impossible — a thing, certainly, not to be believed — that the apostles should so frequently resort to rhetorical personification in reference to the Holy Ghost, and thus give occasion to regard Him as a Person, if, in the use of such terms, they did not think of Him as possessed of a divine personality.

It is not denied that there are passages where impersonal things are so described that at first sight they might seem to be taken as personal qualities. The two instances most frequently adduced are these: “The wind bloweth where it *listeth*,” and “The blood of sprinkling that *speaketh* better things than that of Abel” (Heb. xii. 24). No man of ordinary capacity, however willing to weigh the force of the words, will for a moment doubt that these are figurative expressions, personifications which no man can mistake. The delineation of charity is so given (1 Cor. xiii. 1-8) that we may call it another instance of this personification. Every one sees that it is a vivid way of depicting the various activities of love in the whole conduct of a living Christian. But it is a wholly different case when we can show, in reference to the doctrine of the Spirit, that this mode of speaking is general, unvaried, uniform; that it is adopted by all the sacred writers with one consent; and that it is retained even in the simplest passages where they narrate facts or give plain instruction.

It is common among modern theologians, swayed by a Sabellian bias, to allege that the name “Spirit of God” means no more than God Himself, without reference to a personal distinction which, indeed, they do not believe; that Scripture contains such anthropomorphisms as the face of God, the name of God, the soul of God, as metaphors for God Himself; and that the expression “Spirit of God” is therefore of similar import. To meet this misapprehension, it is not enough to show that the Spirit is possessed of divine properties, but that He is also personally distinct from the Father and the Son. The fact that the Spirit is named as occupying a co-ordinate rank with the other persons of the Godhead, supplies a valid argument against which no objection can be advanced.

It is also urged that the term PERSON is not Biblical, and is capable of being much perverted. But every thoughtful inquirer perceives that the term “person” is only used for convenience’ sake; that it is an ecclesiastical usage, like the words Trinity, Sacrament, and the like; and that it became current in the Oriental as well as Western Church, simply because a generic term was found necessary to point out the three subsistents in the Godhead. It has at the same time been always admitted that the use of this particular term was adopted only to avoid circumlocution; and that if a better term could be substituted for it with a general consent, no one would contend for it as indispensable. But with the doctrine underlying the expression the case is wholly different. That cannot be surrendered. Only remove from the use of the term every notion involving imperfection, as we do without difficulty when eyes, ears, or fingers are applied to God, from the mere lack of vocables to express the fit idea, and it must be admitted that in human language no term can be found better fitted to express

the Church's meaning than the term PERSON. Because we must use intelligible language, no difficulty should be felt in calling the Holy Spirit a Person.

The evidence for the personality of the Holy Spirit, it may be remarked, though often indirect, is not less convincing. For the Scriptures were not written in such a way as to overbear those who challenge every statement till they are subdued by evidence, and who commonly find or make the stumbling-blocks which they wish to meet, but for true inquirers, — for receptive minds and honest hearts, which feel the need of redemption, and can be satisfied with a sufficient amount of evidence. The evidence consists in the uniform teaching of Scripture, and in the fact that no counter statements refute it. It amounts to this: (1) That the Spirit is not the Father or the Son, but distinct from both; (2) that He is an agent possessed of intelligence and will, power and wisdom, which come to light in deeds performed with a design; (3) that the masculine pronouns applied to Him, and the nature of the mission on which He is sent, attest a Person.

The Scriptures distinctly recognise the Spirit as a Person. We have only to recall the language used in reference to THE COMFORTER to be convinced of this. To compensate for the loss incurred by the departure of the Lord Jesus to the Father, He promised that He would send another Comforter, who should take His place as their immediate Teacher, Helper, and Protector, and thus supply the want of His own presence, the anticipated loss of which filled them with trouble and dismay. When we look at the Persons referred to in that promise, it would be a perversion of language to suppose that a mere quality or influence is meant in any of the personal allusions. The sender is certainly different from the person who is sent: for we do not speak of sending a quality on an errand. Nor does ANY ONE SEND HIMSELF FROM HIMSELF, as the Sabellian² must put it when he interprets the words: "When THE COMFORTER is come, whom I WILL send to you FROM the Father" (John xv. 26). Whether we accept one rendering or another of the word Comforter, whether we make it TEACHER with Ernesti, or HELPER, or ADVOCATE, or PATRON with others, it is obvious to every mind that He who was to compensate the disciples and the Church, of which they were the first-fruits, for the loss of Christ's visible presence, was certainly a Person. The refusal to accept the Spirit's personality in that text compels the interpreter, if consistent with himself, TO DENY THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST in whose room He came. That is the alternative before him which no ingenuity can evade. And the absurdity is not less obvious of identifying the title Comforter or Paraclete with the impersonal gifts which the apostles subsequently received. That such a comment is untenable, is clear from the explicit announcements that the Spirit should teach them all things (John xiv. 26); guide them into all truth (xvi. 13); bring all things to their remembrance (xiv. 26); glorify Christ by receiving of His and showing it to His disciples (xvi. 14). It is not possible more explicitly to distinguish a person from the works which he performs. Nor ought we to omit a noteworthy peculiarity in the THREE passages which refer to the Comforter. A change of gender in the use of the masculine demonstrative pronoun (ekeino") forestalls the possibility of putting any other sense than a personal reference upon the words. Thus it is said: "The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He (ekeino") shall teach you all things" (John xiv. 26); "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, He (ekeino") shall testify of me;" "Howbeit, when He (ekeino"), the Spirit of truth,

is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of [better: from] Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He (ekeino") shall glorify me" (xvi. 13, 14).

The unbiased sense of unlettered men, who are beyond the influence of the theological currents, is alive to the fact that the meaning of many passages is lost, unless we think of the Holy Ghost as a Person, and not as a mere influence or energy. To lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts v. 3), to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. iv. 30), are expressions which, as every reflecting mind perceives, imply a Person who is pleased or displeased; and they cannot, with any propriety or fitness, be referred to what is impersonal.

The Book of Acts, specially prepared, as we have seen, to exhibit historically the Spirit's operations in the Church after the Lord's ascension, contains allusions to the personal leading of the Spirit on the mind of all Christ's servants, and in the formation of the various Churches. Thus He said to Philip, who had been directed to the way along which the chamberlain of the Ethiopian Queen was returning home: "Go near and join thyself to this chariot" (viii. 29); and after that mission was successfully accomplished, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip (viii. 39). To Peter, when the deputation from Cornelius arrived at Joppa, the Spirit said: "Behold, three men seek thee" (x. 19). When Saul of Tarsus was set apart to his great Gentile commission, which made him in a peculiar sense the apostle of the Gentiles, the Holy Ghost said to the prophets and teachers who were ministering to the Lord in the Church at Antioch: "Separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (xiii. 2). When Paul and Timothy attempted to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not (xvi. 7). When the members constituting the council at Jerusalem gave forth the result of their deliberations for the guidance of the Churches in reference to the observance of the Jewish rites, they said: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (xv. 28) — language which could not have been used if the Holy Spirit were nothing but an influence. When He commissioned the apostles, and either directed or forbade them to do this or that according to His will, the language attests a free and sovereign agent, unless we are prepared to abandon the literal sense of words and the style of historic narrative. Fritzsche, in his learned treatise on the Spirit,³ correctly maintains — though the treatise is unsatisfactory as a statement of ecclesiastical doctrine — that it is clear as noon-day that Scripture speaks of a Person or subsistence, not of a divine influence or energy; and the Christian Church from the beginning, notwithstanding the deflections of individuals, may be said to have asserted the Spirit's personality, and to have based it on the Scriptures. Collecting the evidence supplied by the survey of Scripture, we may put the arguments for the personality of the Spirit under the six following heads: —

1. The personal actions ascribed to Him abundantly prove it (John xiv. 26; 1 Cor. xii. 11).
2. His distinction from the Father and the Son, and His mission from both, prove it (John xv. 26).
3. The co-ordinate rank and power which belong to Him equally with the Father and the Son prove it (Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14).
4. His appearance under a visible form at the baptism of Christ and on the day of Pentecost proves it.
5. The sin against the Holy Ghost implying a Person proves it.
6. The way in which He is distinguished from His gifts proves it (1 Cor. xii. 11).

The glorification of the Holy Ghost in connection with the Church is still future. Passage after passage might be adduced to show that He occupies a co-ordinate rank with the other Persons. But the completion of the Church opens a vista into the future. The appearance of Christ among men ushered in a full historical revelation of the Son in word and deed; and the abasement to which He stooped was followed by an equally conspicuous exaltation. With the Holy Ghost it is not so as yet. He dwells in redeemed hearts bought with a price. He occupies a co-ordinate rank. *But His work is still unseen.* The personality and Deity of the Spirit are, however, one day to be displayed in conspicuous glory in connection with His work upon the Church, when He shall have completed the marvellous transformation. The final issue in the glory reflected from every redeemed and perfected saint, and from the entire body of Christ now scattered over every country, and visited from hour to hour with new communications of wisdom, grace, and power; but then seen to be united to their glorious Head, will be worthy of the divine workman who is carrying on His transforming work, and raising up a temple in which the Godhead shall dwell for ever. At present the divine personality of the Spirit is less perceptible, because it is not beheld in connection with the accomplished work. The redeemed are not yet perfect; the Church is not yet complete. There is still another stage of revelation, when the Spirit shall be glorified in connection with the work which He shall have finished and brought to its destined completeness.⁴

ON THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The words of Christ on which this discussion largely turns are these: “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father” (John xv. 26). These three things challenge our attention:

1. The mission of the Spirit by Christ from the Father;
2. the essential relation prior to that mission, and on which that mission rests: “who proceedeth from the Father” (ο παρα του πατρο" εκπορευεται); the words “from the Father” corresponding to what is said of the generation of the Son, the Only-begotten “from the Father” (para patro");

(3) the present tense, “proceedeth,” intimates an immanent ever-during present.

Some hold that the name HOLY SPIRIT refers exclusively to His office in man’s salvation. But it is necessary to distinguish when truth and error are confusedly put together. The designation SPIRIT OF GOD is the distinctive name of the third person of the Godhead, denoting a divine subsistent, with intelligence and will, proceeding from another. The epithet HOLY, frequently conjoined with the term SPIRIT, gives us a nearer view of the Spirit’s SPECIAL WORK in connection with man’s salvation, and suggests an antithesis to every unholy spirit, whether human or Satanic. The procession of the Spirit is spoken of by our Lord in connection with a reference to the covenant of grace,⁵ and doubtless the reason is to show that the natural order in the Godhead is also the order in the execution of the covenant of grace. Had we no other word of Scripture through which to think on this matter, the single title “THE SPIRIT OF GOD” shows the relation of two Persons, the one proceeding from the other, just as the title “the Son of God” proves the eternal Sonship. He is called —

1. the Spirit of the Lord (Isa. xi. 2);
2. the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 9);
3. the Spirit that proceedeth from the Father (John xv. 26);

(4) the Spirit of His Son (Gal. iv. 6); and we should grievously err if we believed that these phrases have no significance. We ascribe no such procession to Him as is in any way associated with the idea of imperfection. We acknowledge, however, something fitly represented by the analogy of respiration, for it would be irreverence to imagine that there is no analogy in the terms employed.

The more the matter is discussed, the more is Scripture found to warrant the position that, in the scheme of grace, the acts of the Persons of the Trinity are found to be according to their order of subsistence in the Godhead, and are but the visible manifestation of that order in the divine essence. The Spirit could not be called the Spirit of the Father, or the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead (Rom. viii. 11), unless He proceeded from the Father. He could not be called the Spirit of His Son (Gal. iv. 6), or the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9), because He replenished the humanity of Jesus. Nor does it appear how the Spirit could be sent by Him except upon the footing of that procession by which He is the Spirit of the Son as well as the Spirit of the Father, and which is eternally continued, without a past and without a future. The question is important in every respect, because it lies at the foundation of the MISSION OF THE COMFORTER. And as to its practical results, Church history informs us that it is in the last degree calamitous to ignore it.⁶

Some divines, in other respects orthodox, have recently taken exception to the eternal procession, as they also do to the eternal Sonship. Thus the author of an excellent work on the Spirit, while soundly Trinitarian as to the action of the three divine Persons in the covenant of grace, unhappily says: "The spiration, procession, or promanation of the Spirit from the Father, or from the Father and the Son, are phrases occupying no mean place in the theology of the early ages. Now, we humbly submit — whatever reverence may be due to holy synods and to learned men—that such explanations are founded on an erroneous principle, for they are *analyses of human thoughts or words*, not developments of divine realities" (p. 82).⁷ They whose sentiments are thus re-echoed (viz. Roellius of Holland, Dr. Wardlaw, Prof. Moses Stuart, and the like) dismiss the subject of the procession with summary marks of impatience. But by so doing they cut themselves off from the Patristic literature, as well as from the Reformation, Puritan, and Anglican theology. The Scripture evidence in support of the procession is conclusive; and it is set forth in a mass of solid literature, from the earliest times to the present day. The question of the procession, analogous as it is in all respects to the question of the eternal Sonship, deserves and rewards a full investigation.

They who err in this article depart from the confession of a doctrine which the entire Church of God has taught and enforced from the days of the apostles. And the denial of this truth carries with it the most perilous consequences.

(1) If there be no generation or procession, and if the names FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT have respect merely to the covenant of grace, it would follow that these names are but official names, and have no essential relation underlying them. (2) it would follow that the Father could act in an isolated way without

the Son and Holy Spirit, and that they, again, could act from themselves apart from the Father without any natural and necessary relation of the one to the other. (3) It would follow that the bond of unity between the Persons was really subverted or overthrown. These perilous consequences, especially the last two, may be repudiated; and far be it from me to burden any man or class of men with consequences which they do not themselves accept and avow. But the consequences which are admitted are one thing, and the consequences which follow logically from an opinion are another thing. The consequences may be of potent influence though neither suspected nor acknowledged.

The point to which we have adverted is at the foundation of the unity and distinction in the Godhead. The three Persons have a natural relation to each other, both in subsistence and action. They are one in essence and in operation.

The Biblical foundation of the doctrine that the Spirit is FROM THE SON as well as from the Father is explicit. Thus it is said: "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you" (John xvi. 14). The import is: HE SHALL, in the sphere of divine truth and revelation, DELIVER ONLY WHAT I HAVE TAUGHT, and by so doing, GLORIFY ME as a divine teacher; for it redounds to Christ's glory that no other doctrine should be taught but that which was derived from Him. Christ had declared of His own doctrine that it was not His, but the Father's who sent Him, and that He taught nothing but what He had heard of His Father — that is, *the Son received all from His Father in the eternal generation* (John xv. 15); and the Spirit receives all by procession from the Son in the same way as the Spirit of the Son.

The same thing is elsewhere set forth as follows: "*For He shall not speak of Himself* [better: *from Himself*] (af' eautou); but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak" (John xvi. 13). As the Son said regarding Himself: "What I hear, I speak," referring to His ineffable immanence in the Father, so the declaration that the Spirit should NOT SPEAK FROM HIMSELF, implies that He spoke nothing but what the Father and Son spoke by Him. There is a certain order, but no isolation of the one Person from the other; and the twice-repeated statement: "He shall receive of mine," — united as it is with the declaration that the Son has the essence, attributes, and perfections that the Father has, — enables us to understand what is involved in this procession — viz, that the Holy Ghost receives the same numerical divine essence with the Father and the Son.

Such has been the belief of the Church from the first as set forth in all the creeds. It must be accepted AS ESSENTIAL TO THE PERFECTION OF THE DIVINE NATURE that the Father have a Son, and that there should be a Spirit proceeding from them both. The phrase: *who proceedeth from the Father*, in the present tense (ἐκπορευεται), intimates an immanent, internal, ever-during act according to the unchangeable essence of the Deity.

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BASED ON THE PROCESSION.

The SUPREME DEITY OF THE SPIRIT is clearly established by the procession of the Spirit. The expression, through which we think, whenever we direct attention to this doctrine, is the designation THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Like the analogous designation "the Son of God," it sets forth a unique relation, or a personal distinction, before any work was done. And as we say that the only Son is supreme God, not although He is the Son, but *because* He was begotten

of the Father; so we say that the Spirit is supreme God, not although, but *because* He proceedeth from the Father and the Son.

The following fivefold line of proof, when carried out to its legitimate consequences, and all taking for granted the procession from the Father and the Son, furnishes conclusive proof of the supreme Deity of the Holy Spirit:

1. The incommunicable acts of creation and providence ascribed to the Spirit.
2. Divine attributes ascribed to Him.
3. Divine honours and worship paid to Him.
4. The co-ordinate rank in which He is placed with the Father and the Son.
5. The name of God indirectly given to Him.

1. The CREATION and CONSERVATION of all things are attributed to the Spirit of God (Gen. i. 6; Ps. xxxiii. 6; Job xxvi. 13). He who summoned the world into being, with its countless laws, adjustments, and concurrent adaptations, is supreme God. The conservation of the stupendous fabric by what is tantamount to a sustained creation, the knowledge necessary for a task beyond finite comprehension, the power that never faints, and the vigilance that never slumbers, argue the ever-present activity of supreme God. *But all that creative energy* which evoked the universe out of nothing, and *all the conserving Providence* which sustains it, are *ascribed to the Spirit of God*. To speak of delegation, as the Arians have done, is a hypothesis which needs but to be uttered to be repudiated. For to whom could such activity be delegated? Who could wield the perfections which such a task implies, but He to whom these divine perfections naturally belong? The prophet Isaiah, as if to laugh to scorn the notion of a delegated activity in such a sphere, thus exclaims: “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed *the Spirit of the Lord*, or, being His counsellor, hath taught Him?” A consideration of the universe with the light which modern science has shed upon its laws, adjusted as they are with the finest adaptation over all the realms of nature, affords such a view of the wisdom necessary to plan, and of the power necessary to uphold them, that none but a divine hand was equal to the task. *But that hand was the Spirit’s*. And the same argument applies to the great work of the Spirit in the RESURRECTION of our mortal bodies by His omnipotent power (Rom. viii. 11), and, in a word, to all the other omnipotent acts of the Spirit.

2. As to the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ascribed to the Spirit, we may choose out of the great supply of materials furnished to our hand a few of the properties of supreme Godhead which He is said to possess, such as omniscience, omnipresence, and eternity.

We find OMNISCIENCE affirmed of the Spirit when it is said: “God hath revealed them to us by *His Spirit*: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11). The apostle says that he was in a position to unfold the purposes of God, because God revealed them to him by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. This is elucidated in the following verse by an illustration of a man knowing the things of a man by the spirit of man which is in him. The term SEARCH, by analogy,

transferred from man to God, does not mean that the Spirit inquires to learn, but that He intimately knows. The language announces His perfect knowledge of the hidden counsels of God, and that the Spirit stands in the same relation to God that the soul of man does to man. The knowledge which the soul has of man's hidden purposes and resolutions is compared with the Spirit's knowledge of the secret purposes of God. For He is said (1) to know all things; (2) to know the deep things of God; (3) to have an intuitive knowledge with the precision and accuracy which the term *search* conveys; (4) to know them with the intimate knowledge with which a man knows his own counsels.

With regard to the attribute of OMNIPRESENCE or immensity ascribed to the Holy Spirit, we find a vivid description of it in the psalm specially prepared to guide the Church's worship on this point: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7). The remark of the anonymous writer in the Greek CATENA on this psalm, that His Spirit intimates the Holy Spirit, and His face the only-begotten Son, is not without probability.⁸ But the evidence of the Spirit's omnipresence is put beyond all doubt. And when we trace the Spirit's presence as the inhabitant and guide of the believing soul, and of the Christian Church in all lands at one and the same moment, it is evident that He is as truly omnipresent in essence as He is omniscient in knowledge. For a mere creature cannot be in two places at once, or act, at the same moment, in a great variety of ways in many lands. The attempt of the Socinians to blunt the force of this consideration by referring to Satan plucking away the seed sown in the heart of many hearers of the gospel, is not analogous, because it involves a multitude of evil spirits, and successive, not simultaneous action. To the other attributes we need not advert.

3. As to DIVINE WORSHIP paid to the Spirit, it is found in various religious exercises. It is the more necessary to put this matter in the proper light, because Arminian writers, with the concession too readily evinced by them, were in the habit of asserting, along with those who denied the doctrine of the Spirit, that we have neither example nor command in Scripture for the worship of the Spirit. That statement is groundless. Why it is not more frequently mentioned may, without difficulty, be ascertained. One reason why the Spirit is not more directly, as well as more frequently addressed in prayer, is, that He is THE PROMPTER OF PRAYER, and because no one can pray without the surrender of the heart to Him, and without full dependence on His help (Rom. viii. 26), who moulds within us the prayer which the Son presents. But it is not true, in point of fact, that there is no example of prayer to the Spirit. Of the texts which fully evince it, let me adduce THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM performed in the name of the Holy Ghost. We have only to consider the nature of the ordinance to perceive in it a solemn act of worship, an expression of faith, a testimony that He in whose name it is performed is our God, with a heartfelt surrender to Him in an act of new obedience. That all this is involved in it is clear from the words: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 13). That these three Persons cannot be put in any other category than entire equality, is obvious from the fact that if any one of them were not God, two irreconcilable opposites would equally be the object of our faith, which is impossible.

Another proof of the same thing is THE INVOCATION OF GRACE from the Spirit, as well as from the Father and from Christ (Rev. i. 4). The words used are: "the seven Spirits which are before His throne;" but the allusion is not to created spirits, but to the one Spirit of God, described in the plural by the

number SEVEN, to show the perfection of the gifts, or to point out their sufficiency for the Church's necessity and duties. That the reference is to the Spirit is clear, because Christ is said to "have the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. iii. 1); and there is no subordination in point of essential glory when He is equally invoked as the fountain of divine communications.

Another consideration evincing the DIVINE HONOUR to be paid to Him is derived from the declaration that THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST can never be forgiven. On the one hand, that could not be affirmed if He were not God; and, on the other hand, it by no means implies a superiority to the other Persons from whom He is sent. It is to be explained by the nature of the sin which rejects the testimony, or quenches the operations of the Spirit, by which alone men can be saved. The Holy Spirit is never represented as a worshipper, but always as the object of divine worship.

4. The CO-ORDINATE RANK in which the Spirit is placed with the Father and the Son, is brought out in not a few descriptive passages. We find the three Persons holding a co-ordinate rank when we look at Christ's baptism (Matt. iii. 16), or at the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit (Acts ii. 33), or at the Baptismal formula in the Christian Church, or at the fact which the Apostle Paul so emphatically adduces, that by Christ we have access in one Spirit to the Father (Eph. ii. 15). Without expounding all these passages, and others in this connection, let me adduce the apostolic benediction: "THE GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ, and THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE COMMUNION [communication] OF THE HOLY GHOST be With you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14); words containing an invocation to all the persons of the Godhead, and in point of import tantamount to saying: "O Lord Jesus Christ, let Thy grace; O Father, let Thy love; O Holy Ghost, let the communication of Thyself be with them all."

5. The name of GOD is indirectly given to the Spirit. In the early centuries, the opponents of the doctrine of the Spirit were wont to challenge the orthodox Church, asking, Where is the Spirit designated God? Dr. Samuel Clarke was in the habit of affirming, according to his Arian bias, that the Holy Ghost is never spoken of as God either in the Old or New Testament. The language they desiderate may not be found in the express form which they desire. But we find an ample use of divine names applied to the Holy Spirit; and when we compare one passage with another, and with the connections of the context in which they stand, no possible doubt can remain on an unbiased mind that the Spirit is supreme God, having a divine personality of the same kind with that of the Father and the Son, with whom He is named as of equal rank. It is happily remarked by Lampe: "It is befitting that *He who speaks by all the prophets and apostles*, as His scribes and amanuenses, *should speak less of Himself*, when the work abundantly commends the author;" a just and happy observation, by no means to be neglected. But there are express instances where He who is called THE HOLY GHOST in one clause is called GOD in another. The narrative of Ananias and Sapphira is of such a character (Acts v. 3, 4). If Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost, and his culpability lay in the fact that he lied not to man, but to God, it is very evident that in Peter's account the Holy Ghost is God. (Compare similar interchangeable phraseology in Ps. xcv. 7 and Heb. iii. 7.)

6. The predicates of supreme Deity, such as eternity and the authority of a divine director, are ascribed to Him. He is called the Eternal Spirit (Heb. ix. 14): "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through THE ETERNAL SPIRIT offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead

works to serve the living God.” The language intimates the absolute eternity of the Spirit of God; that is, that Jehovah never was or could be without the Spirit of God. As to His authority and wisdom as a divine director, it is said (Isa. xl. 13): “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? with whom took He counsel?” The words emphatically set forth that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are His.

It would be superfluous to pursue the proof of the supreme Deity of the Spirit at greater length. For having established the Personality of the Spirit, and proved that the Holy Scriptures uniformly describe the Spirit as a person, His Deity at once becomes manifest from all the actions which He is said to perform. It is always HE, not IT — a person, not an influence, and a person obviously divine.

On this point, before I pass from it, I cannot but advert to the excellences and defects of the Anglican theology. The Church of England has done more than any other Protestant Church to assert the great doctrine of the Trinity; and every other Church in this land and in other lands has received an invigorating impulse from her unhesitating testimony to the truth of this essential article. The literature produced by her great divines, and the peculiar form of her Church-services, have all acted in the most favourable manner to vindicate and uphold a trinitarian tone among the English-speaking race.

There the great writers of the English Church, such as Barrow, South, Burnet, Jackson, and others, stop short. But there is another division of the subject, viz, the office and work of the Holy Spirit, on which the Church of England has, for two centuries, bestowed far less study and attention than were due to such a theme. I cannot better describe the two parts of the subject than in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism (53rd question):

Q. “What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Spirit?”

A. “*First*, that He is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; *secondly*, that He is also given to me, to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits, that He may comfort me and abide with me for ever.”

The Anglican writers are very full on the first branch, but not so on the other. The reason of this one-sidedness in the Church of England, which I cannot but lament, must be traced to the Arminian theology, and to the ritualistic elements which found a large place within her pale, and turned away the mind from the Spirit’s inward work.

Notes

1. Dr. Kahnis says, in the preface to his work, *die Lehre vom Heiligen Geiste*, 1847, of which only a first part was published: “*was die neuere Theologie betrifft, so sagt Baumgarten-Crusius (compendium der Dogmen Geschichte, ii. p. 189, Anm. 4), dass tier neuere Protestantismus die Persönlichkeit des Heiligen Geistes aufgegeben hat. Das wenigstens ist wahr dass die strengkirchliche Dogmatik diese Lehre ziemlich unvermittelt hinstellt, die Vermittelnde Theologie der man Kirchlichen Grund und Boden nicht streitig machen kanu, meist negativ dazu steht.*”
2. See e.g. Dr. Weiss’ *Lehrbuch der Biblischen Theologie*, 1868; Grimm’s

- Wilke's *Lexicon*, 1868, — both in a Sabellian tendency.
3. Dr. Christ. Fried. Fritzsche, *Nova Opuscula Academica*, 1846.
 4. This is well brought out in Schmid's *Biblische Theologie*, p. 167.
 5. See Lampe's Latin *Disputations on the Spirit* (vol. ii. p. 151 ff.).
 6. See an excellent paper referring to the practical importance of this question, in Rudelbach's *Zeitschrift für Lutherische Theologie*, 1849, p. 45.
 7. *The Work of the Spirit*. By William Hendry Stowell. London 1849.
 8. He uses the words: to pneuma autou fhsi to agiou, proswton de ton monogenh uion.

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This particular article is taken from Smeaton's major work, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* which was first published in 1882 and more recently republished by the [Banner of Truth Trust](#).



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